

**VARIATION NO. 1 TO THE
GALWAY COUNTY
DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2015-2021**
Strategic Environmental Assessment
Environmental Report

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Galway County Council

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GLOSSARY

<i>Appropriate Assessment</i>	An assessment of the effects of a plan or project on the Natura 2000 network. The Natura 2000 network comprises Special Protection Areas under the Birds Directive, Special Areas of Conservation under the Habitats Directive and Ramsar sites designated under the Ramsar Convention (collectively referred to as European sites).
<i>Area of Influence</i>	Geographic area whose social, economic, and/or environmental conditions is significantly affected by changes in the study area
<i>Baseline environment:</i>	A description of the present state of the environment of the P/P area.
<i>Birds Directive:</i>	Council Directive of 2nd April 1979 on the conservation of wild birds (79/409/EEC).
<i>Cumulative effects:</i>	Effects on the environment that result from incremental changes caused by the strategic action together with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. These effects can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over time or space.
<i>Data:</i>	Includes environmental data, proxy data, and any other relevant statistical data.
<i>Designated authority</i>	An organisation that must be consulted in accordance with the SEA Regulations. For Ireland these are the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DoECLG), the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food & the Marine (DoAFM), Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Dept of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and adjoining Planning Authorities.
<i>Environmental Assessment:</i>	The preparation of an environmental report, the carrying out of consultations, the taking into account of the environmental report and the results of the consultations in decision-making and the provision of information on the decision (in accordance with Articles 4 to 9 of the SEA Directive).
<i>Environmental Characteristics:</i>	Environmental resources, issues and trends in the area affected by the P/P.
<i>Environmental indicator:</i>	An environmental indicator is a measure of an environmental variable over time, used to measure achievement of environmental objectives and targets.
<i>Environmental objective:</i>	Environmental objectives are broad, overarching principles which should specify a desired direction of environmental change.
<i>Environmental receptors:</i>	Include biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage (including architectural and archaeological) and landscape as listed in the SEA

	Directive. This list is not exhaustive, and can include other receptors which may arise for a particular P/P.
<i>Environmental Report (ER):</i>	A document required by the SEA Directive as part of an environmental assessment which identifies, describes and evaluates the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing a plan or programme.
<i>Environmental targets:</i>	A target usually underpins an objective often having a time deadline that should be met and should be accompanied by limits or thresholds.
<i>Evolution of the baseline:</i>	A description of the future state of the baseline in the absence of a plan or programme assuming 'business as usual' or 'do nothing' scenarios, depending on which is more reasonable for the P/P being proposed.
<i>Habitats Directive:</i>	Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.
<i>Hierarchy of Plans:</i>	Both higher and lower level P/P relevant to the P/P being assessed.
<i>Indirect effect:</i>	Any aspect of a P/P that may have an impact (positive or negative) on the environment, but that is not a direct result of the proposed P/P. May also be referred to as a secondary effect
<i>Interrelationships:</i>	Associations or linkages, related to environmental impact of the proposed P/P usually on environmental receptors.
<i>Issues Paper:</i>	Paper produced as part of the consultation process, usually for Land Use Plans, to facilitate consultation with stakeholders on key issues.
<i>Key environmental issues:</i>	Those significant environmental issues, which are of particular relevance and significance within a P/P area and/or the zone of influence of that P/P. These issues should be identified during SEA Scoping process.
<i>Key environmental receptors:</i>	Aspects of the environment likely to be significantly impacted by the proposed P/P.
<i>Material Assets:</i>	Critical infrastructure essential for the functioning of society such as: electricity generation and distribution, water supply, wastewater treatment transportation etc.
<i>Member States:</i>	Those countries that belong to the European Union.
<i>Mitigation measures:</i>	Measures to avoid/prevent, minimise/reduce, or as fully as possible, offset/compensate for any significant adverse effects on the environment, as a result of implementing a P/P.
<i>Monitoring:</i>	A continuing assessment of environmental conditions at, and surrounding, the plan or programme.

This determines if effects occur as predicted or if operations remain within acceptable limits, and if mitigation measures are as effective as predicted.

The primary purpose of monitoring is to identify significant environmental effects which arise during the implementation stage against those predicted during the plan preparation stage.

Monitoring Programme:

A detailed description of the monitoring arrangements to be put in place to carry out the monitoring of the impact of the proposed P/P on the environment including; frequency of monitoring, who has responsibility for monitoring, and responses if monitoring identifies significant negative impacts.

Non-technical summary:

A summary of the findings of the ER, summarized under the headings listed in Annex I of the SEA Directive that can be readily understood by decision-makers and by the general public. It should accurately reflect findings of ER.

Plan or Programme:

Including those co-financed by the European Community, as well as any modifications to them:

- which are subject to preparation and/or adoption by an authority at national, regional or local level or which are prepared by an authority for adoption, through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government, and
- which are required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions. In accordance with the SEA Directive, P/P that require SEA are those that fulfil the conditions listed in Article 2(a) and Article 3 of the SEA Directive.

Post-mitigation residual impacts:

Environmental effects that remain after mitigation measures have been employed.

Proxy data:

Is a measure of activity resulting from a P/P which provides information on environmental impact without the need for a direct measure of an environmental receptor for example, an increase in the number of vehicles (activity resulting from a P/P) can provide information on the impact on air quality and greenhouse gases without having to measure the concentration of these parameters in the receiving environmental receptor.

Public:

One or more natural or legal persons and, in accordance with national legislation or practice, their associations, organisations or groups.

Reasonable alternatives:

Alternatives should take into account the objectives and geographical scope of the P/P. There can be different ways of fulfilling the P/P objectives, or of dealing with environmental problems. The alternatives should be realistic, capable of implementation and should fall within the legal and geographical competence of the authority concerned.

<i>Scoping:</i>	The process of deciding the content and level of detail of an SEA, including the key environmental issues, likely significant environmental effects and alternatives which need to be considered, the assessment methods to be employed, and the structure and contents of the Environmental Report.
<i>Screening:</i>	The determination of whether implementation of a P/P would be likely to have significant environmental effects on the environment. The process of deciding whether a P/P requires SEA.
<i>SEA Directive:</i>	Directive 2001/42/EC 'on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment'.
<i>SEA Statement:</i>	A statement summarising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - how environmental considerations have been integrated into the P/P - how the ER, the opinions of the public and designated authorities, and the results of transboundary consultations have been taken into account - the reasons for choosing the P/P as adopted in the light of other reasonable alternatives.
<i>Secondary effect:</i>	Effects that are not a direct result of the P/P, same as indirect effect.
<i>Short-term effects:</i>	These are typical of those effects that may occur during construction stage of a development, for example, the increased traffic going to and from a site during construction, or, the noise associated with construction activities.
<i>Significant effects:</i>	Effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors.
<i>Statutory authority:</i>	The authority by which or on whose behalf the plan or programme is prepared.
<i>Statutory Instrument (S.I.):</i>	Any order, regulation, rule, scheme or bye-law made in exercise of a power conferred by statute.
<i>Synergistic effect:</i>	Effects that, when totaled, result in a greater or lesser effect than the sum of the individual effects.

1.0 Non-Technical Summary

1.1 Introduction

Galway County Council varied the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021 to incorporate the aims and measures of the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) that fall within the plan area of Galway County. The preparation of the GTS was also subject to a separate standalone SEA process.

This Environmental Report on Variation No. 1 to the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021 (CDP) has been prepared to provide a clear understanding of the likely environmental consequences, both positive and negative and to indicate where necessary, how improvements can be incorporated to improve its environmental performance.

This section of the Environmental Report is a Non-Technical Summary. The purpose of the Non-Technical Summary is to ensure that the key findings of the Environmental Report are readily understood by both decision makers and the general public. To this end, technical jargon has been avoided where possible.

The preparation of Variation No. 1 to the Galway CDP 2015-2021, hereafter referred to as the Variation, runs in parallel with the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment which have influenced the drafting of the Variation.


In this regard, environmental considerations have been considered throughout the Variation process and have been incorporated into the Variation ensuring a continuation of a qualitative environment.

The Environmental Report is the primary element in the SEA process and accompanied the Proposed Variation No. 1 to the Galway CDP 2015-2021 on public display.

1.2 Steps in the SEA Process

Table 1.1 below highlights the key stages in the SEA process and the progress made to date:

Table 1.1: Key Stages in SEA process

Stage	Description	Status
Scoping	<p>The scoping of the proposed Variation was carried out in accordance with Article 5(4) of the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC).</p> <p>The principal purpose of the scoping stage is to decide upon the range of issues to be included in the Environmental Report and level of detail appropriate to each subject. An overview of the relevant environmental issues requiring further analysis are given consideration in the Environmental Report and ultimately in the proposed Variation itself. By highlighting some of the significant issues at an early stage, it ensures that the matters are firmly to the forefront when considering each of the policies and objectives of the Variation and reduces the potential for relevant issues to be overlooked.</p>	<p>Completed</p> 
Consultation with Statutory Bodies	<p>Submissions have been received from the Environmental Protection Agency.</p>	Completed

Stage	Description	Status
		
Preparation of Proposed Variation No. 1 of the County Development Plan (CDP) & SEA Environmental Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A multi-disciplinary team has been established to create policy consistent documents and to examine the effects on the environment of implementing the objectives and policies. • Objectives created in the proposed Variation have been assessed in the Environmental Report and proposed measures for the area of influence examined. • Feedback has been received throughout the proposed Variation preparation process & Environmental Report preparation. • Mitigation measures have been discussed and chosen. • Monitoring incorporated into existing methods. 	Completed 
Consultation	Consultation on the proposed Variation and accompanying Environmental Report, Appropriate Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.	Completed 
Evaluation of submissions	Evaluation of submissions and observations made on the proposed Variation, Environmental Report, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Appropriate Assessment.	Completed 
Finalisation of the Variation, Environmental Report & SEA Statement	Finalisation of Variation No. 1 of the Galway CDP 2015-2021 and Environmental Report. SEA Statement prepared identifying how environmental considerations and consultations have been integrated into the final Variation No. 1 to the Galway CDP 2015-2021.	Completed 
Monitoring	Monitoring of significant environmental effects over the lifetime of Variation No. 1 to the Galway CDP 2015-2021	Ongoing

1.3 Content of Environmental Report

The Environmental Report considers all of the following in accordance with the requirements of the SEA Directive:

1. Biodiversity and Flora & Fauna
2. Population
3. Human Health
4. Soil and Geology
5. Water
6. Air Quality and Climate Change
7. Material Assets
8. Architectural, Archaeological and Cultural Heritage

9. Landscape
10. Interaction of the foregoing

Table 1.2 below summarises the content of the Environmental Report. In the first instance, the Environmental Report details the current condition of the environment of the area of influence of the proposed under each of the sub-headings set out above, and interrelationships between each of the environmental topics. The Environmental Report examines significant environmental pressures that may affect each of the environmental topics and the current (baseline) condition of the environment.

Table 1.2: Content of Environmental Report

Section	Description
1. Non-Technical Summary	A brief summary of the Environmental Report, its main points and conclusions.
2. Introduction & Background	A description of the type of Variation involved and a summary of its key aims and objectives. This section outlines the purpose of the SEA process, SEA requirements, and its benefits and how the Variation has progressed.
3. Methodology	The steps taken in preparation of the SEA, including the methods used and technical difficulties encountered.
4. Review of Relevant Policies, Plans and Programmes.	The relationship of the Variation to the Galway County Development Plan to other relevant plans and programmes is highlighted.
5. Baseline Environment	A description of the current environment of the Variation are of influence is given, highlighting any existing environmental problems. This exercise results in a comprehensive baseline against which the likely effects of implementing the Variation can be examined.
6. Strategic Environmental Objectives	A number of environmental protection objectives which have been established at International, EU or National Level and are relevant to the Variation are listed. Following this a description of how the objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account in the preparation of the proposed Variation is given.
7. Description of Alternatives	An assessment of proposed alternatives to the variation to the Variation are considered at this stage.
8. Environmental Assessment of the Variation	An examination of the Variation, its policies and objectives in terms of their potential effects on the various environmental parameters.
9. Mitigation Measures	Should potentially significant effects be discovered, measures to avoid, reduce or offset these effects are proposed and integrated into the Variation.
10. Variation Monitoring Programme	Proposals for monitoring the significant effects of the Variation on the environment are put forward. A number of indicators of change and targets are identified and existing monitoring arrangements are utilised.

11. Conclusion	A conclusion with regard to the overall potential impact on the environment resulting from the implementation of the Variation to the Galway CDP 2015-2021.
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1.4 Policy Context

The preparation of the Variation to the Galway CDP 2015 – 2021 was considered within the context of a hierarchy of policies, plans and strategies of international, national, regional and local level as detailed in Chapter 4 of this Environmental Report. Other relevant Plans, policies and programmes were considered in this report and are referenced throughout.

1.5 Appropriate Assessment

The Variation was screened in for full Appropriate Assessment and a Natura Impact Report (NIR) has been prepared.

As documented in the NIR, it has been objectively concluded that Variation No. 1 to the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021 does not pose a risk of adversely affecting the integrity of any European sites, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

1.6 Strategic Environmental Objectives, Targets and Indicators

Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) assist in the prediction, description and monitoring of impacts on the environment as a result of the Variation. The Strategic Environmental Objectives are protective objectives which have been established at International, EU or National Level, and are relevant to the Variation as set out in Table 1.3 below. The primary source used in formulating the proposed environmental protection objectives outlined below are taken from the SEA Environmental Report of the Galway CDP 2015 – 2021 (January 2015). These objectives remain relevant to the Variation while taking into account feedback from Statutory Authorities on the Scoping Report.

Table 1.3: Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs)

Environmental Component	Strategic Environmental Objectives
BIODIVERSITY, FLORA & FAUNA	B1: To ensure compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to the protection of Natura 2000 Sites and Annexed habitats and species
	B2: To ensure compliance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive with regard to the management of features of the landscape which - by virtue of their linear and continuous structure or their function act as stepping stones - are of significant importance for wild fauna and flora and/or essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species
	B3: To avoid significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites and to ensure compliance with the Wildlife Acts 1976-2010 with regard to the protection of species listed on Schedule 5 of the principal Act.
	B4: To sustain existing sustainable rural management practices - and the communities who support them - to ensure the continuation of long established managed landscapes and the flora and fauna that they contain.
POPULATION	PHH1: To protect populations and human health from exposure to incompatible landuses.

Environmental Component	Strategic Environmental Objectives
SOILS INCLUDING GEOLOGY	S1: To avoid damage to the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource in County Galway
WATER	W1: To maintain and improve, where possible, the quality and status of surface waters
	W2: To prevent pollution and contamination of ground water
	W3: To comply as appropriate with the provisions of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2009)
MATERIAL ASSESTS	M1: To serve new development with adequate and appropriate waste water treatment.
	M2: To serve new development with adequate drinking water that is both wholesome and clean.
	M3: To reduce waste volumes, minimise waste to landfill and increase recycling and reuse.
	M4: Prevent degradation or exhaustion of natural resources in implementing of the Variation to ensure the economic and social well-being.
AIR QUALITY, CLIMATE & NOISE	C1: To reduce travel related emissions to air and to encourage modal change from car to more sustainable forms of transport
	C2: Facilitate measures to reduces all forms of Air Pollution
CULTURAL HERITAGE	CH1: To protect archaeological heritage including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places and/or their context
	CH2: To protect architectural heritage including entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context
LANDSCAPE	L1: To avoid significant adverse impacts on the landscape – especially with regard to the County’s landscapes which are most valuable and most sensitive to change and protected focal points and views.

1.7 Alternatives Plan Scenarios

The SEA Directive requires the consideration of SEA Alternatives. This consideration is outlined in Chapter 7 of the Environmental Report. Alternatives to the proposed measures were also considered in the preparation of the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) and are presented in the GTS SEA Environmental Report.

Two alternatives were considered in the drafting of the SEA and the preparation of the proposed Variation:

- Alternative 1: Do-Nothing Approach or Continuance of Existing Galway CDP
- Alternative 2: Implementation of Variation comprising the transportation measures of the Galway Transport Strategy

The most preferable outcome from the Alternatives Assessment is Alternative 2, which provides for the 'Implementation of the Variation to integrate the relevant transport measures from the GTS into the Galway CDP.

A comparative assessment of the two alternatives has shown that the primary change between Alternative No. 1 and Alternative No. 2 comprises the inclusion of a high frequency bus service and cross-city network for commuters from the plan area into the City as well as other measures of the GTS such as the proposed greenways and the proposed N6 Galway City Ring Road (GCRR).

The most preferable outcome arising from the Alternatives Assessment is Alternative 2, which provides for the 'Implementation of the Variation' to integrate the transport measures from the Galway Transport Strategy into the Galway CDP.

A comparative assessment of the two alternatives has shown that the primary change between Alternative No. 1 and Alternative No. 2 comprises the inclusion of a high frequency bus service and cross-city network for commuters from the plan area into the city. Other measures of the GTS such as the proposed greenways and the proposed N6 GCRR.

In the absence of implementing the Variation, the measures of the GTS would not be adopted into the Galway CDP.

The absence of the incorporation of the GTS measures in the area would result in projects being reviewed and implemented on an individual project by project basis rather than a strategic and sequential approach. Continued reliance on private car use would prevail and no changes to the existing public transport would occur.

The introduction of a high frequency Cross-City Bus Network would have a positive impacts on the county population and human health, material assets and though potentially negative impacts may arise from the proposed N6 GCRR, the increase in public transport opportunities will serve to reduce the level of private vehicle transport, thereby reducing the overall contribution to Greenhouse Gas emissions.

Uncertain impacts arising from the proposed greenways and proposed N6 GCRR are present in Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 as both alternatives comprise of greenways, a Park & Ride Facilities, cycling networks, bus networks and new road infrastructure. Therefore, impacts relating to biodiversity arising from these developments are uncertain in both scenarios and would require further assessment at Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment Stage.

The medium to long-term outcome of Alternative 2 would allow for the provision of an effective high frequency bus network in Galway City resulting in both increased public transport usage in the city, improved corridors for alternative modes of transport and reduced congestion when travelling from the county into the city resulting in a positive impact on the population, health and air and climate that may not otherwise occur with an Alternative 1 approach.

1.8 Evaluation of Variation (Policies and Objectives)

The SEA aims to highlight the potential conflicts, if they are present, between the stated policies and objectives contained in the Variation with the Strategic Environmental Objectives. Furthermore, the assessment examines the potential impact arising from the implementation of the Variation on sensitive environmental receptors.

The process of SEA has informed all stages of Variation preparation. SEA is carried out in order for the potential for significant adverse effects arising from implementation of the Variation to be minimised. When the environmental assessment identifies significant adverse effects, consideration is given in the

first instance to avoid such impacts. Where avoidance is not possible, the Variation seeks to lessen or offset those effects through mitigation measures.

In some instances, there is little or no relationship between the policies/objectives of the Variation and the respective environmental receptor. Where this occurs, no further discussion is deemed necessary. In the case of the Variation, a range of amendments comprised a minor changes in text and resulted in no measurable change to the policy or objective. The screening process allowed the assessment to focus more efficiently on the pertinent issues.

The next phase of this assessment identified the potential impact of the policies and objectives of the Variation on the environment. Table 8.3 in the Environmental Report highlights where the impact may be either potentially positive; neutral; potentially negative; or uncertain. Where a neutral impact is identified, no further discussion was deemed necessary. However, it is acknowledged that localised issues may arise depending on site specific issues and the type of development proposed. The assessment contained in Table 9.1 deals with strategic issues alone. For potential localised impacts, the mitigation section contained in Chapter 9 should be consulted.

It has been determined that there are certain policies and objectives where the impact is potentially negative. The significant issues are discussed in Table 9.1 of this Report. A comprehensive and detailed set of mitigation and protection measures are provided in Chapter 9 which effectively reduces or eliminates identified potentially negative impacts. Similarly, monitoring the implementation of the Variation, as discussed in Chapter 10, ensure that if any negative impact becomes a reality, it will be identified at an early stage and appropriate actions taken by the relevant authority/agency to remedy the situation.

1.9 Mitigation Measures

While every effort will be taken to ensure that the impact of the Variation on the environment is neutral to positive, certain unavoidable negative impacts may occur as a result of its implementation. The Environmental Report details mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate identifiable adverse impacts.

Similarly, monitoring of the Variation, in accordance with the Planning and Development Act, 2000 – 2014 will incorporate proposals to monitor various environmental receptors. A schedule of monitoring and reporting is proposed in order to ensure that any unforeseen negative impact is identified at the earliest opportunity to subsequently identify appropriate mitigation measures and to eliminate or at a minimum limit the level of impact to an acceptable degree. Environmental Indicators, as prescribed in the EPA publication “Ireland’s Environment: An Assessment 2012” are provided where relevant and are presented as a yardstick against which the success of the Variation can be monitored.

In general terms, all proposals for development will be required to have due regard to the environmental considerations outlined in the Galway CDP 2015 - 2021. Proposals for development which are deemed contrary to the objectives and policies contained within the Galway CDP 2015 - 2021 will not normally be permitted, and if permitted, not without the appropriate site and development specific mitigation measures. In addition, certain individual applications for developments within the county may be subject to individual Environmental Impact Assessments and Appropriate Assessments.

1.10 Monitoring

Monitoring of the Variation and its implications on the environment is paramount to ensure that the environment of the area of influence is not adversely affected through the implementation of the Variation.

Monitoring criteria are developed on a series of indicators which measure changes in the environment, especially changes which are critical in terms of environmental quality, for example water or air pollution levels. A list of environmental indicators is provided in Table 10.1 in Chapter 10 of this Report. The indicators are based on the Strategic Environmental Objectives presented in Chapter 6 and have been derived from knowledge of the existing environmental issues within the plan area and also from legislation, guidelines and higher level plans.

Environmental indicator assessment during monitoring can show positive, neutral impacts or negative impacts on the environment. Where an indicator value highlights a positive, neutral impact on the environment, it is likely that the policies and objectives of the plan are well defined with regard to the environment. Conversely, where the objectives of the Variation have a negative impact on the environment, it may be necessary to review or change the objectives of the Variation.

Where significant effects such as positive, negative, cumulative and indirect effects have the potential to occur as a result of the undertaking of individual projects or multiple individual projects, such instances should be identified and recorded and should feed into the monitoring evaluation.

1.11 Sources

Measurements for indicators generally come from existing monitoring sources. Existing monitoring sources include those maintained by the relevant authorities such as the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and other bodies such as the National Transport Authority, and the Central Statistics Office. Monitoring can also be carried out by other bodies that have been deemed appropriate.

The output of lower-tier environmental assessment and decision making – including a review of project approvals granted and associated documents – will also be utilised as part of the Monitoring Programme.

Where significant effects - including positive, negative, cumulative and indirect - have the potential to occur as a result of the undertaking of individual projects or multiple individual projects, such instances should be identified and recorded and should feed into the monitoring evaluation.

2.0 Introduction & Background

2.1 Introduction to Environmental Report

Pursuant to Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended, Galway County Council gave notice of its intent to amend the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021 (hereafter known as the Galway CDP), by way of Variation.

This report comprises an Environmental Report prepared as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of Variation No. 1 to the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021 (Galway CDP). The purpose of the Environmental Report is to provide a clear understanding of the likely environmental consequences arising from implementation of the Variation to the Galway CDP.

The SEA is carried out in order to comply with the requirements of the 'SEA Directive' (2001/42/EC) and the provisions of the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (Statutory Instrument Number (SI No. 436 of 2004), as amended.

This Environmental Report should be read in conjunction with the Variation the Galway CDP, the Appropriate Assessment (AA) carried out under the provisions of the EU Habitats Directive (1992/43/EEC), and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

The SEA Environmental Report has been prepared by Brady Shipman Martin, Environmental, Planning and Landscape consultants.

2.2 Strategic Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the formal, systematic environmental assessment of the likely significant effects of implementing a plan or programme (P/P). It is carried out during the preparation period of the plan or programme to ensure that the environmental implications of implementing the P/P are taken into account in decision-making prior to the finalisation of the P/P.

2.2.1 SEA Legislative and Guideline Context

The requirement to undertake SEA derives from the 2001 European Community Directive 2001/42/EC (also known as the 'SEA Directive') on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. Article 1 of the SEA Directive states:

"The objective of this directive is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this Directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment."

The SEA Directive was subsequently transposed into Irish law through:

- **S.I. No. 435 of 2004** (*European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004*, as amended by **S.I. No. 200 of 2011** (*European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011*), and by
- **S.I. No. 436 of 2004** (*Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004*, as amended by **S.I. No. 201 of 2011** (*Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011*))

The preparation of the Environmental Report for the Variation has had regard to the above legislation and to a range of guidance documents on the implementation and practice of SEA, including:

Environmental Protection Agency

2016: GISEA Manual 2015.

2015: Development and Assessing Alternatives in Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

2015: Integrating Climate Change into Strategic Environmental Assessment in Ireland – A Guidance Note.

2015: SEA Scoping Guidance Document.

2015: SEA Spatial Information Sources May 2015.

2013: SEA Pack.

2013: Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment – Streamlining AA, SEA and EIA Processes: Practitioner’s Manual.

2013: SEA Resource Manual for Local and Regional Planning Authorities – Integration of SEA Legislation and Procedures for Landuse Plans (Draft).

2008: SEA Process Checklist – Consultation Draft.

2003: Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland.

Department of Environment, Community and Local Government

2011: Circular Letter PSSP 6/2011: Further Transposition of EU Directive 2001/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government

2008: Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08: Appropriate Assessment of Land Use Plans.

2004: Implementation of SEA Directive (2001/42/EC): Guidelines for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities.

European Commission

2003: Implementation of Directive 2001/42 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment.

2.3 Variation (No.1) to the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021

The Galway CDP 2015-2021 is the primary tool available to Galway County Council when assessing development for the county. It consists of a written statement and series of land use maps. This is to ensure that future developments in Galway County take place in a planned, structured and sustainable manner.

Galway County Council and Galway City Council in partnership with the National Transport Authority (NTA), have prepared a Galway Transport Strategy (GTS). The aims of the GTS work to address the current and future transport requirements of the city and the settlements within the city environs and to identify the requirements for each mode of transport including walking, cycling, public transport and the private vehicle.

Galway County Council varied the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021 to incorporate the aims and measures of the GTS within the county administrative boundary through inclusion of the following:

- The development of a high frequency bus service comprising a cross-city network of bus services serving major routes and destinations and providing direct services for passengers wishing to travel to work on either side of the city, and improve east-west connectivity to include Bearna to Oranmore. This measure entails the implementation of bus lanes and removal of pinch points.
- The development of a regional and long distance bus network providing greater direct access to the catchment within the environs of the county.
- Use of Ceannt Station as a multi modal transport interchange and expansion in frequency of rail services where passenger demand is sufficient.
- To supplement the existing public transport systems with Park & Ride Facilities
- Development of a high quality, dedicated cycling network in Galway City and environs comprising of three greenways connecting the Galway City into the county settlements. This includes Oranmore to the city centre and onwards to the Bearna Greenway; and the city centre to Oughterard Greenway.
- Development of an Orbital Route, identified as the N6 Galway City Ring Road project to accommodate the demand for car journeys that remain and is expected to increase in the future.

2.4 Purpose of the Variation

The study area for the GTS comprises the Galway County Council administrative area incorporating connectivity to the settlements of Bearna, Maigh Cuilinn, Baile Chláir, Oranmore and the Galway City Council administrative area.

The purpose of the Variation is to incorporate the measures of the GTS into the Galway CDP which aims to reduce travel by private car, provide a reliable high frequency transport network, supplement public transport with Park & Ride facilities, maximise connectivity by walking and cycling and to improve accessibility to and through residential areas with alternatives to the private car.

Chapter 2 of the Galway CDP has been amended to include for the Galway Transport Strategy and sets out the overall objective of the Strategy to address and alleviate the transportation issues within the study area.

Chapter 5 of the Galway CDP amends and introduces policies that seek to ensure the elements of the GTS are incorporated and adhere to the transportation objectives of the Galway CDP. The purpose of this Variation is to give effect to the policies and objectives contained in Chapter 5 of the Galway CDP on Roads and Transportation of the CDP as varied. Text introduced into objective or policy is underlined in green. Text removed from the Plan can be seen with a strikethrough e.g. ~~strikethrough~~ in red.

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

It is the policy of the Council to promote the development of an integrated and sustainable high quality transport system ~~that shall~~ for the county, which includes the specific areas identified in the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS), which shall:

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

Objective TI 1 – Sustainable Transportation

Support and facilitate ~~any~~ ‘Smarter Travel’ initiatives ~~that~~ contained in the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) and other initiatives together with the plan level environmental protection policies and mitigation measures set out in the GTS, which will improve sustainable transportation within the County including public transport, electric and hybrid vehicles, car clubs, public bike schemes, park and ride/park and stride facilities, improved pedestrian and cycling facilities, as appropriate.

Policy TI 7 – Protection of National Road Network

Protect the motorway and national road network and national road junctions in line with Government policies. Safeguard the carrying capacity, operational efficiency, safety and significant investment made in the ~~development of the~~ motorway and national road network within the County including the M6 Dublin to Galway Motorway, the M18 Gort to Crusheen Motorway and the M17/M18 Galway to Tuam, when completed, ~~and the N6 Galway City Ring Road (GCRR) if approved and completed~~

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

It is the policy of Galway County Council to work with Galway City Council and all relevant statutory bodies including the National Transport Authority (NTA) and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) to ~~develop~~ deliver an appropriate infrastructural response to the transportation needs of the Galway Gateway, its environs and the west of the County as part of the proposed measures of the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) including the plan level environmental protection policies and mitigation measures set out in the GTS. This shall include the provision of new infrastructure such as potential park and ride facilities, bus corridors, greenways, cycling and walking routes and the N6 Galway City Ring Road (GCRR); which are all integral in the delivery of the GTS with a view to relieving congestion, improving travel times, increased safety of all road users and enhancing connectivity and access within the region and enhanced accessibility of the western region in a national and international context.

Any such solution shall have due regard to the necessity to protect the environment and will comply fully with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

Policy TI 10 - Reclassification of Restricted Routes

It is a policy of Galway County Council to liaise with the ~~National Roads Authority~~ Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) on the re-classification of Restricted Routes as a result of the construction of motorways.

Policy TI 11 - Signage

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

Objective TI 5 – Roads and Transportation Network Improvements

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

Objective TI 7 – Service/Rest Areas and Scenic Viewpoints

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

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

Require all proposed new significant development proposals to be accompanied by a TTA and RSA, carried out by suitably competent consultants, which are assessed in association with their cumulative impact with neighbouring developments on the road network, in accordance with the requirements contained within ~~the NRA's~~ TII's *Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines*, having regard and with respect to *RSA GE-STY-01024 (HD19/15) Road Safety Audit* ~~NRA DMRB HD19/12 Road Safety Audit~~ (including any updated superseding document).

Objective TI 12 – Noise

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

Objective TI 13 – Signage On or Visible from all Roads

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

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

It is an objective of Galway County Council to work with all other relevant bodies including the National Transport Authority (NTA), Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and Galway City Council to deliver the necessary improvements to transportation infrastructure, including new infrastructure if necessary and the plan level environmental protection policies and mitigation measures set out in the GTS. This shall include the provision of new infrastructure such as potential park and ride facilities, bus corridors, greenways, cycling and walking routes and the N6 Galway City Ring Road (GCRR) as set out in the Priority Transportation Infrastructure Objectives 2015-2021 in Table 5.1 which are all integral in the delivery of the GTS with a view to help to secure the medium and long term economic and social development of Galway Gateway and the west of the County. Any such investment or project shall be carried out with due regard to the necessity to protect the environment and in full compliance with the provision of relevant legislation, including the Habitats Directive.

Objective TI 19 – Galway County Walking and Cycling Strategy

Implement the recommendations and proposals within *The National Cycle Network Scoping Study (2010)* and the *Galway County Walking and Cycling Strategy 2013* as outlined within Table 5.1: Priority Transportation Infrastructure Projects Objectives 2015-2021 for Co. Galway-2015-

Objective TI 21- Galway Transportation Strategy

It is an objective of Galway County Council to support and facilitate the implementation of the public transport element of the Galway Transport Strategy across all modes of transport.

2.5 Relationships with other relevant Plans and Programmes

The Variation to the Galway CDP sits within a hierarchy of strategic plans and programmes, including those listed below and detailed in Chapter 4 of this Report. The varied plan must comply with relevant higher level strategic actions such as policies and objectives of national and regional plans and strategies.

The Variation is subject to a number of high level environmental protection policies and objectives with which it must comply, including those which have been identified as Strategic Environmental Objectives in Chapter 6. Examples of Environmental Protection Objectives include the aim of the EU Habitats Directive - which is to contribute towards ensuring biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora in the European territory of Member States - and the purpose of the Water Framework Directive - which is to establish a framework for the protection of inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater which, among other things, avoids deterioration in the status of all water bodies and protects, enhances and restores all waters with the aim of achieving good status.

2.6 Implications for the Variation

Article 9 of the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004, as amended, sets out criteria for determining whether SEA should be undertaken on certain types of plans. Considering these criteria, Galway County Council concluded that an SEA was required for the Variation to the Galway CDP, as it comprises a variation which is likely to have significant environmental effects.

The findings of the SEA are set out in this Environmental Report, a draft of which accompanied the Variation on public display. Galway County Council took into account the findings of the Draft

Environmental Report during their consideration of the proposed Variation before it was finalised. On finalisation of the Variation, an SEA Statement was prepared summarising, inter alia, how environmental considerations have been integrated into the document.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The methodology used to carry out the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Variation reflects the requirements of the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC), SEA Regulations (S.I. 435 & 436 of 2004, as amended by S.I. 200 & 201 of 2011 respectively) and various SEA Guidance documentation as noted in sub-section 2.3.2 of this Environmental Report.

The SEA process follows a sequential step by step process as set out in Table 3.1 and the preparation of the Variation is integrated with the SEA and AA processes as illustrated in Figure 3.1.

Table 3.1 – Stages in the SEA Process

STAGE	DESCRIPTION
Screening	<p>The screening process is the first stage of the Strategic Environmental Assessment. Screening assesses the need to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment.</p> <p>The decision is made after having regard to the relevant criteria as set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive and Schedule 2A of S.I. No. 436/2004 - Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations, as amended, and whether the implementation of the Plan or Programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment. Having regard to the relevant criteria as set out in Schedule 2A of S.I. No. 436/2004 - Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations, as amended, screening concluded that the proposed Variation to the Galway CDP should be subject to full Strategic Environmental Assessment</p>
Scoping	<p>Scoping, which is the second stage in the SEA process, allows for determination of the range of key issues, to be addressed in the Environmental Report (Stage 3) as set out in S.I. 436/2004, as amended and in Annex I of the SEA Directive.</p> <p>Scoping ensures that the SEA is focused on the relevant environmental issues and examines issues at the appropriate level of detail. The Scoping Stage also allows for consultation via a Scoping Report with the Statutory Authorities. By highlighting some of the significant issues at an early stage, it ensures that the issues are firmly to the forefront when considering each of the policies and objectives of the Variation and reduces the possibility of relevant issues not being addressed.</p>
Consultation with Environmental Authorities	<p>Submissions were received from:</p> <p>The Environmental Protection Agency.</p> <p>This was reviewed and incorporated into the SEA process as appropriate</p>
Preparation of Proposed Variation to the Galway CDP &	<p>A multi-disciplinary team has been established to create policy consistent documents and to examine the effects on the environment of implementing the objectives and policies.</p>

STAGE	DESCRIPTION
SEA Environmental Report	<p>Policies and Objectives created in the proposed Variation to the Galway CDP have been assessed in the Environmental Report and proposed measures for the area examined.</p> <p>Feedback has been received throughout the proposed Variation preparation process & Environmental Report preparation</p> <p>Mitigation measures have been discussed and chosen.</p> <p>Monitoring of implementation of proposed Variation</p>
Consultation	Consultation on the proposed Variation and accompanying Environmental Report, Appropriate Assessment Screening and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.
Evaluation of submissions	Evaluation of submissions and observations made on the proposed Variation, Environmental Report, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Appropriate Assessment Screening.
Finalisation of the Variation No. 1 to the Galway County Development Plan, Environmental Report & SEA Statement	Finalisation of Variation of the Galway CDP and SEA Environmental Report. SEA Statement prepared identifying how environmental considerations and consultations have been integrated into the final Variation to the Plan.
Monitoring	Monitoring of significant environmental effects over the lifetime of the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021.

3.2 SEA Screening

The Regulations state that SEA is mandatory for certain plans while screening for SEA is required for other plans that fall below the specified thresholds. Where plans or programmes fall below or outside of the specified thresholds, a screening report is required to be carried out to determine whether the making and implementation of a particular plan will or will not, lead to significant environmental consequences for the plan area.

Article 13K of Planning and Development Regulations 2001, (as amended) states “Where a planning authority proposes to make a variation of a development plan under section 13 of the Act, it shall, before giving notice under section 13(2) of the Act, consider whether or not the proposed Variation would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, taking into account of relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A”. The criterion against which this is required to be measured and screened is set out in Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Variation) Regulations 2011.

The assessment for SEA screening concluded, in accordance with Article 9(3) of S.I. No. 436/2004 - European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004, as amended, and having regard to the relevant criteria as set out in Schedule 2A of S.I. No. 436/2004 - Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations, as amended, that the proposed Variation to the Galway CDP should be subject to full Strategic Environmental Assessment because the

implementation of the Variation will set a framework for the delivery of other projects, some of which have potential for significant (either positive or negative) effects on the environment, including effects upon human beings and sensitive landscapes.

3.3 Scoping

SEA Scoping allows for determination of the range of key issues, to be addressed in the environmental assessment and detailed in the Environmental Report. Scoping took place with the following environmental authorities:

- the Environmental Protection Agency
- the Minister of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government)
- the Minister of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources Communication Climate Action and Environment
- the Minister of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- the Minister of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht; and Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
- the surrounding planning authorities of Galway City Council, Mayo County Council, Roscommon County Council, Offaly County Council, Tipperary County Council, and Clare County Council.

3.3.1 Scoping Responses

Submissions were received from the following statutory consultees:

- The Environmental Protection Agency

Table 3.2 below outlines the issues raised in the submission and the response and how these issues have been addressed within the preparation of the Environmental Report.

Table 3.2 – Summary of Scoping Submissions

CONSULTEE AND COMMENTS	RESPONSE
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledged receipt of the Scoping Report for the proposed Variation to the Galway CDP. • Provided an SEA Integration guidance document setting out the key environmental issues to be taken into account in the preparation of the SEA and Variation. 	Comments and suggestions have been considered in the preparation of the Environmental Report

3.4 Environmental Report

The type of information to be provided in the Environmental Report is set out in Annex I of the SEA Directive - reproduced in Schedule 2B of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as inserted by article 12 of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004). This report contains the sections as outlined in Table 3.3.

In this SEA Environmental Report, which was placed on public display alongside the proposed Variation, the likely environmental effects of the proposed Variation and the alternatives were predicted and their significance evaluated. The Environmental Report provided stakeholders and the public with a clear understanding of the likely environmental consequences of implementing the Variation.

Mitigation measures to avoid or reduce potential negative effects posed by the Variation are identified in Chapter 9 and have been integrated into the final Variation.

The Environmental Report has been updated in order to take account of recommendations contained in submissions and in order to take account of changes which are made to the original proposed Variation that was placed on public display.

No significant difficulties have been encountered during the undertaking of the assessment.

Table 3.3: SEA Report Structure

SECTION	DESCRIPTION
Non-Technical Summary	A brief summary of the Environmental Report, its main points and conclusions.
Introduction & Background	This section outlines the purpose of the Environmental Report and Strategic Environmental Assessment as well as providing a brief description of the Variation.
Methodology	The steps taken in Strategic Environmental Assessment and in the preparation of the Environmental Report, including the methods used and technical difficulties encountered.
Review of relevant policies, plans and programmes.	The relationship of the Galway CDP to other relevant plans and programmes is highlighted.
Baseline Environment of Variation No. 1 to the Galway CDP 2015-2021	A description of the current environment of the relevant area of influence of the Variation is given, highlighting any existing environmental problems. This exercise results in a comprehensive baseline against which the likely effects of implementing the Variation to the Galway CDP can be examined.
Strategic Environmental Objectives	A number of environmental protection objectives which have been established at international, EU or national Level and are relevant to the Variation are listed. Following this, a description of how the objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account in the preparation of the Variation is given.
Description of Alternatives	An assessment of proposed alternatives to the approach as set out in the Variation are considered and assessed.
Environmental Assessment of the Variation to the Galway CDP 2015-2021	An examination of the measures and objectives of the Variation in terms of their potential effects on the various Environmental parameters.
Mitigation Measures	Should potentially significant effects be discovered, measures to avoid, reduce or offset these effects are proposed and integrated into the Variation, as appropriate.
Variation No. 1 of the Galway CDP 2015-2021 Monitoring Programme	Proposals for monitoring the significant effects of the Variation on the environment are put forward. A number of indicators of change and targets are identified and existing monitoring arrangements are utilised.

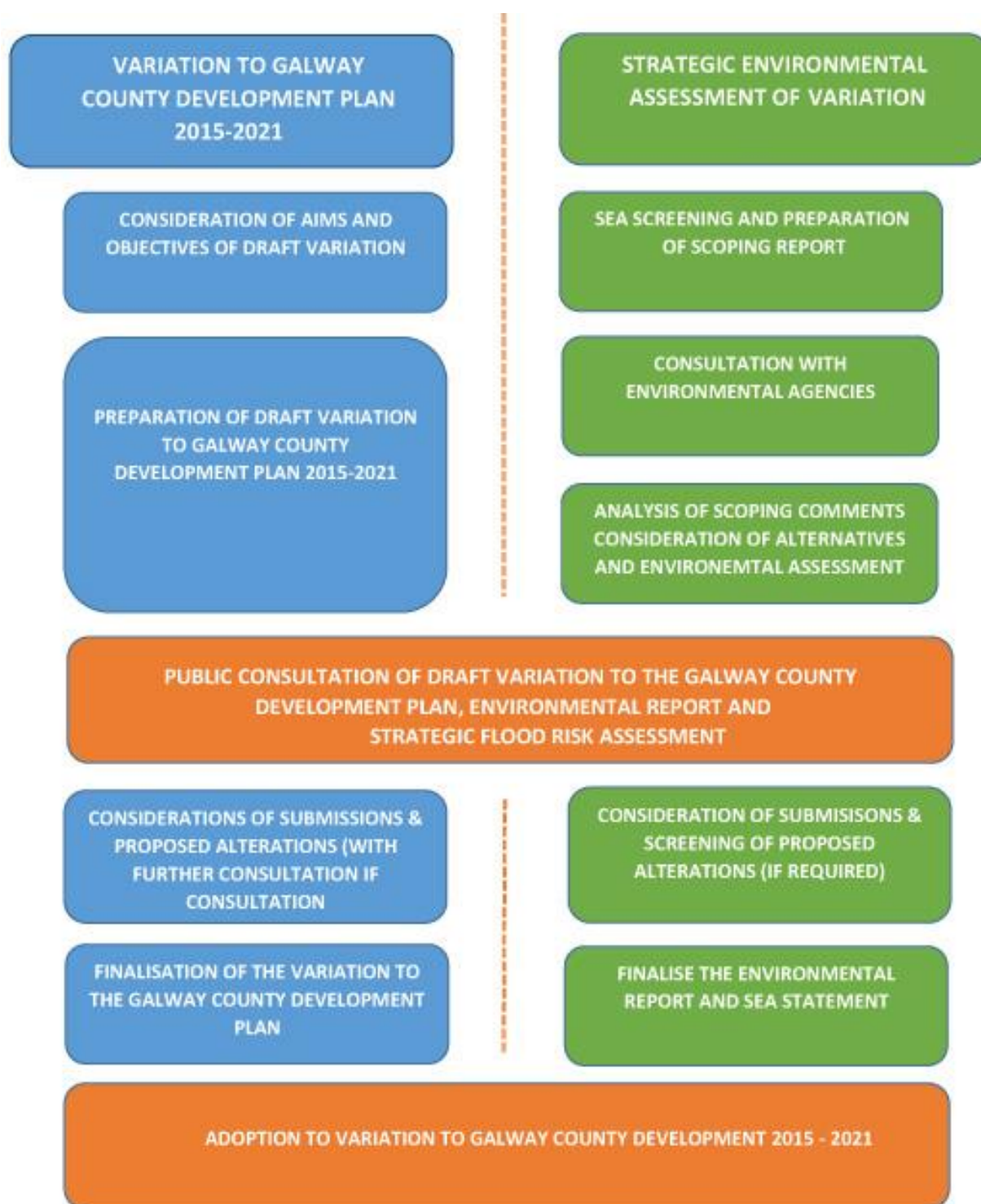


Figure 3.1 Outline of Variation No.1 to the Galway County Development Plan

3.5 SEA Statement

When Variation No. 1 to the Galway County Development Plan is finalised, an SEA Statement is prepared which includes information on:

- How environmental considerations have been integrated into the Variation, highlighting the changes to the Strategy which resulted from the SEA process

- How the SEA Environmental Report and consultations have been taken into account, summarising the key issues raised in consultations and in the Environmental Report indicating what action was taken in response
- The reasons for choosing the Variation in the light of other alternatives considered, identifying these alternatives, commenting on their potential effects and explaining why the Variation was selected; and the measures decided upon to monitor the significant environmental effects of implementing of the Strategy

3.4 Appropriate Assessment (AA)

The need for 'Appropriate Assessment' (AA) arises out of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) (on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora).

The Directive (92/43/EEC) requires that proposed plans and programmes (including amendments or variations) undergo screening for likely or potential effects on European sites (also Natura 2000 sites) arising from their implementation.

The Variation was screened in for Appropriate Assessment and a Natura Impact Report (NIR) has been prepared.

As documented in the NIR, following an examination, analysis and evaluation of the Variation No. 1 to the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021 (the primary purpose of which is to incorporate the GTS into the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021) in light of best scientific knowledge, including in particular the nature of the predicted impacts from the GTS elements and with the implementation of the mitigation measures proposed, which have been already incorporated into the GTS, it has been objectively concluded that the Variation No. 1 to the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021 does not pose a risk of adversely affecting the integrity of any European sites, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

3.5 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has also been carried out and accompanied the proposed Variation to the Galway CDP at public consultation. The findings of the SFRA have been considered in the preparation of this Environmental Report.

4.0 Review of Relevant Polices, Plans and Programmes

4.1 Introduction

The Variation is framed within a hierarchy of spatial plans which range from the international down to site specific level. These plans are informed by International, National and Regional level policy guidelines. This hierarchy of plans, programmes, policies and strategies sets the legislative and policy framework by which the CDP must be formulated. The National, Regional and County strategies and policies play a central role in establishing higher level agendas and the county level plan objectives. The Galway CDP and any Variation thereof is required to conform to and translate the objectives of these higher levels plans to a county area basis.

The SEA Directive requires that the SEA process should include a review of other plans or programmes, which are associated to and concern the assessment of the Variation. The key issue is that the Variation and its SEA has taken due consideration of the objectives set out in the legislative and policy framework. The following plans, programmes, policies, strategies and guidelines are relevant to the making of Variation No. 1 to the Galway CDP and were incorporated into the Variation where relevant.

4.1.1 International and European Legislation

- Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended)
- Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)
- EU Directives including the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EEC)
- Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)
- Birds Directive (2009/147/EEC)
- European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations) 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011)
- Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)
- Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (85/337/EEC) and as amended by (2011/92/EU)
- Urban Wastewater Directive (91/271/EEC)
- Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC)
- Drinking Water Directive (98/83/EC)
- Environmental Noise Directive (2002/49/EC)
- Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC)
- Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC)
- Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC)
- Flood Directive (2007/60/EC)
- Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC) & EU Directive 2001/77/EC
- EU Renewable Energy Road Map
- Renewable Energies in the 21st Century: Building a More Sustainable Future
- The Water Services Act (2007 & 2013)
- The National Monuments Act 1930-2004
- Wildlife Acts 1976-2000
- West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022

4.1.2 National & Regional Policy Documents

- Our Sustainable Future-A Framework for Sustainable Development for Ireland (2012);
- National Development Plan (NDP) (2007-2013) and Transport 21 as superseded by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform document titled Infrastructure and Capital Investment 2012-2016;
- National Spatial Strategy 2002–2022;

- National Policy Framework for Alternative Fuels Infrastructure for Transport
- National (Climate Change) Adaption Plan 2012
- Draft National (Climate) Mitigation Plan 2017
- National Landscape Strategy 2015-2025
- A Sustainable Transport Future—A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020;
- Ireland’s First National Cycle Policy Framework (2009);
- Actions for Biodiversity— Ireland’s National Biodiversity Plan 2011-2016;
- National Heritage Plan (2002);
- Geometric Design of Major/Minor Priority Junctions and Vehicular Access to National Roads, Volume 6, Section 2, Part 6, NRA TD 41-42/11, November 2011;
- Guidance on Minor Improvements to the National Roads, Volume 6, Section1, Part 1, NRA TA 85/11;
- Road Safety Audit, Volume 5, Section 2, Part 2, NRA HD 19/12;
- Metric Handbook Planning and Design Data 3rd Edition;
- Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010-2022;
- Galway County Development Plan2015-2021;
- Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023;
- Spatial Planning and National Roads (2012);
- The Planning System and Flood Risk Management (2009);
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland (2009);
- Implementation of SEA Directive(2001/42/EC): Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment (2004) and the Departmental Guidance Note on Core Strategies
- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2013);
- the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines (2012);
- the Traffic Management Guidelines (2003);
- the Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (2007) and any updated/superseding documents and any forthcoming guidelines in relation to street design and cycling facilities;
- Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011);

4.1.3 Local Planning Context

- The Biodiversity Action Plan for County Galway 2008-2013;
- The Galway County Heritage Plan 2009-2014;
- Galway Transportation and Planning Study 1999 and 2003;
- Developing Sustainable Tourism in Galway: A Framework for Action 2003-2012;
- Working Together: Shaping Our Future: Galway County Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development 2002-2012;
- Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future
- The River Basin Management Plan for the Western River Basin District in Ireland (2009-2015);
- Galway County Council’s Walking and Cycling Strategy Report (2013);
- Galway County Council’s Groundwater Protection Scheme for County Galway;
- Galway County Council’s Architectural Survey and Assessment Best Practice Guide.

4.2 SEA Guidance

The Environmental Report will reflect the requirements of the SEA Directive on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. The following principal sources of guidance will be used during the SEA process and during preparation of the Environmental Report:

- Integrating Climate Change into Strategic Environmental Assessment in Ireland - A Guidance Note, 2015, Environmental Protection Agency
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Pack, 2013, Environmental Protection Agency
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Checklist - Consultation Draft. January 2008. Environmental Protection Agency
- GISEA Manual – Consultation Draft. April 2009. Environmental Protection Agency
- Implementation of SEA Directive (2001/42/EC). Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment. Guidelines for Regional Planning Authorities. November 2004. Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government
- Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland. Synthesis Report. 2003. Environmental Protection Agency
- Guidelines on SEA. Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources
- Article 8 (Decision Making) of EU Directives 2001/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as amended, Circular Letter PL 9/2013. Department of Environment, Community and Local Government
- SEA Spatial Information Sources, May 2015, Environmental Protection Agency
- SEA Scoping Guidance Document, 2015, Environmental Protection Agency
- Further Transposition of EU Directive 2001/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Circular Letter PSSP 6/2011. Department of Environment, Community and Local Government
- Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment – Streamlining AA, SEA and EIA Processes: Practitioner’s Manual. EPA Strive Programme 2007-2013. Strive Report Series No. 106
- Guidance on Integrating Climate Change and Biodiversity into Strategic Environmental Assessment, European Commission 2013
- Guidance on Implementation Of Directive 2001/42/EC, European Commission (http://ec.europa.eu/environment/archives/eia/pdf/030923_sea_guidance.pdf)

5.0 Baseline Environment of Variation Area of Influence

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section of the Environmental Report is to describe the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment within the Variation area of influence. As the area of influence of the Variation relates to the plan area of Galway CDP 2015-2021, a comprehensive account of the environmental baseline is also detailed in Chapter 3 of the SEA Environmental Report for the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021.

This baseline information outlines the relevant environmental context to the Variation.

The aim of this chapter is therefore to identify the following parameters:

- The key environmental baseline resources and sensitivities;
- The key environmental threats and trends; and
- The likely evolution of the environment in the absence of the GTS.

The baseline data allows for the “State” of the environment to be identified in objective terms. Where possible and where data exists, a quantitative measurement of the environmental conditions is provided, however where such information is absent, qualitative descriptions of environmental themes are provided instead. Where important information deficits are noted, recommendations are provided in the mitigation measures section to ensure that any absence of critical information will be addressed as part of the ongoing monitoring and review of the Variation.

The headings provided are in accordance with the legislative requirements of the SEA Directive. An emphasis is placed on the strategic elements of each aspect and where potentially relevant to Variation. The topics addressed are:

- Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna
- Population
- Human Health
- Soil & Geology (incl. land use)
- Water
- Air Quality and Climate Change
- Material Assets
- Architectural, Archaeological and Cultural Heritage; and
- Landscape

5.2 Biodiversity and Flora & Fauna

Galway County contains a variety of natural habitats including many of international importance. It also contains a large number of threatened and uncommon species that are protected under National and European legislation.

Galway has an abundance of permanent freshwater lakes, the largest of which is Lough Corrib. The shores of Lough Corrib provide habitat for a number of rare plant species and has a relatively good water quality. As such, this water body supports a number of rare and important plant and animal species including important fisheries of salmon and brown trout.

The Variation entails the extension of the N6 on the east of Galway City across the River Corrib to the west of Galway in order to serve Connemara and County Galway.

Presence of freshwater pearl mussel can be found in soft water sites in the west of the county and is indicative of water of the highest quality as these habitats require particularly clean, clear and well oxygenated water to survive. White clawed crayfish are also found in Lough Corrib and are protected in Ireland under EU legislation.

Lough Corrib supports one of the largest areas of wetland vegetation consisting of reed, sedge and rush communities in the country. The site also supports the Otter and numerous rare and threatened plant and fish species. In this regard, any development adjacent to the River Corrib arising from the proposed Variation would be required to consider its impact on the integrity of protected areas.

Ecological networks are important in connecting areas of local biodiversity with each other and with nearby designated sites so as to prevent islands of habitat from being isolated entities. These networks are composed of linear features, such as treelines, hedgerows and rivers/streams, which provide corridors or linkages for wildlife species such as small birds and bats. The banks of Lough Corrib also provide ecological connectivity.

Hedgerows are a common feature of the lands to which the proposed Variation refers and provide food and shelter for insect's birds and other animals as well as acting as an ecological corridor for a diverse range of wildlife. Grassy roadside verges and other marginal grasslands act as important habitats for wild flowers and the invertebrates they support and have low management requirements.

Agricultural lands with natural vegetation are found near the banks of the River and Lough Corrib system. However, urbanisation of lands have also occurred due to the proximity of lands to Galway City resulting in a loss of natural and agricultural vegetation and their associated habitats. The extensive range of designated sites and protected species pose a challenge for accommodating land use planning and infrastructure development. A key challenge for the proposed Variation is to accommodate proposed measures while at the same time conserving and enhancing biodiversity and avoiding significant impact on the conservation status of designated sites and species.

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the Variation. This assessment has taken into account, inter alia, various flood risk indicators. All recommendations made by the SFRA have been incorporated into the Variation.

Further details on biodiversity within the study area are detailed in the Environmental Report of the Galway CDP 2015-2021.

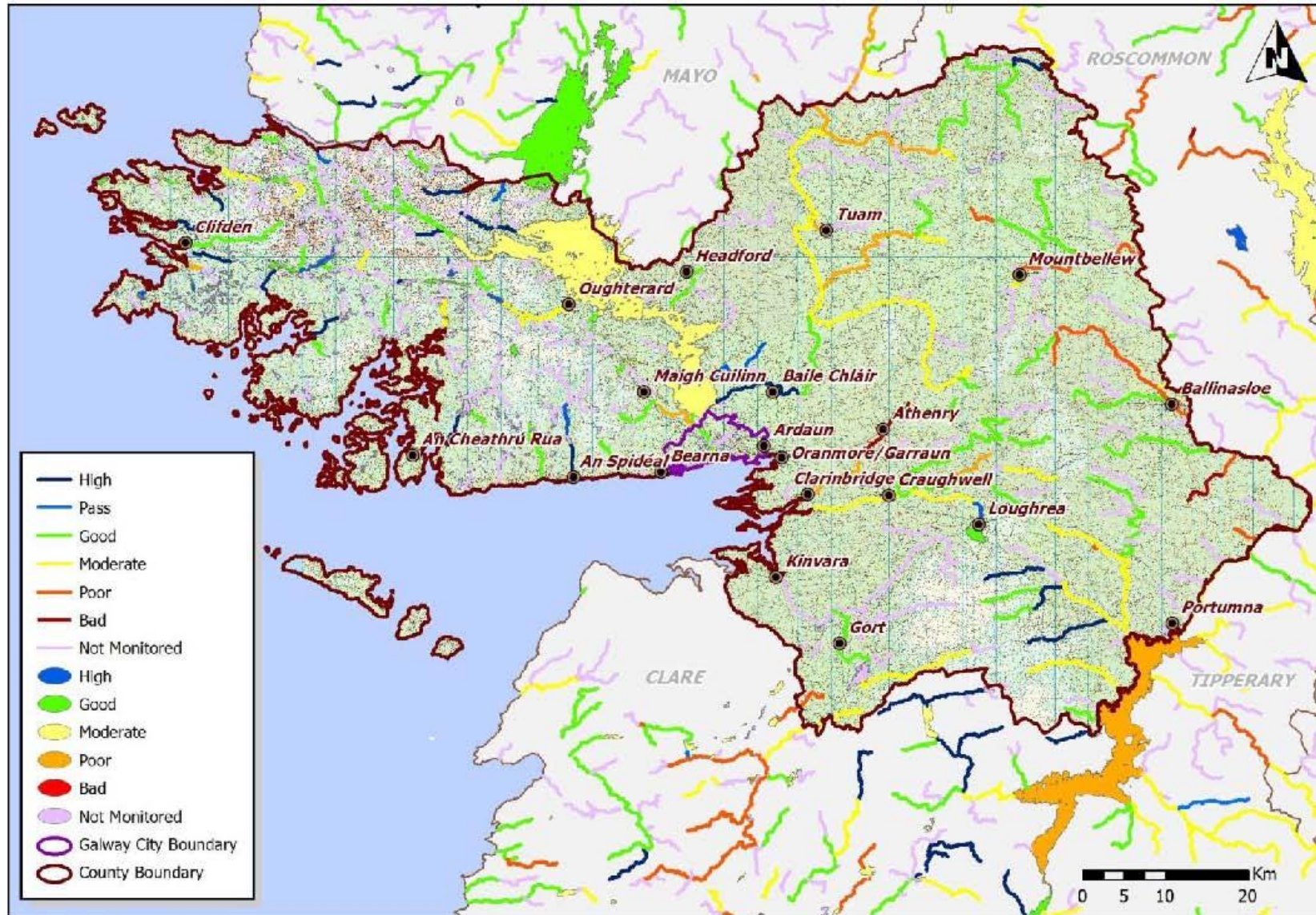


Figure 5.1: Status of Rivers and Lakes

5.3 Population & Human Health

The population of Galway County is 179,048 persons (Preliminary 2016 Census Data). Growth in population has mainly occurred in areas close to Galway City where the measures of the Variation occur. As a result, key issues revolve around balancing and managing development in the county and its transport needs with protecting the environment and delivering improved social and physical infrastructure.

Human health has the potential to be impacted upon by environmental factors such as air, water or soil through which contaminants could accumulate and have potential to cause harm through contact with human beings. In this regard, development arising from the Variation would be required to consider its impact on human beings.

A sustainable transport infrastructure will be needed to encourage healthy living. The Variation should ensure provision of adequate road and public transport infrastructure to serve the anticipated future population.

The introduction of a greenway also has the potential to promote healthy living through the enhancement of existing recreational opportunities and increasing connectivity arising from trails and alternative routes of transportation that cater for non-motorised modes of transport.

The Variation highlights factors that impact on quality of life arising from heavy traffic along main routes and intersections and the need for walking/cycling and non-motorised transports options in creating positive conditions for human health.

In the absence of the Variation, there would be no framework progressing transport infrastructure to serve the anticipated future population growth which would have the potential to result in adverse impacts upon human health and healthy living.

5.4 Soil and Geology

The principal soil types comprise 'Made Soils' or 'Urban soils', deep well drained mineral soils and peat soils. Urban soils are soils which have been disturbed, transported or manipulated by man's activities and are found in parts due to its proximity to the urban environment of Galway City.

The River Corrib is the boundary between granitic rocks to the west and limestone to the east. As granitic rocks are acidic and poorly drained and limestone is alkaline, the potential for the contamination of water resources is higher.

Relevant sites of geological interest include Bearna Drumlin Swarm, Mushroom Rock in Menlough, Knocknagreana and Menlough Quarry.

Soil has a role as a habitat and gene pool, serves as a platform for human activities, landscape and heritage and acts as a provider of raw materials. The Variation will seek to protect geological heritage from inappropriate measures. The distribution and diversity of habitats in the city reflects to a large extent the underlying geology (as well as climate and land-use history), this includes habitats protected under the Habitats Directive. The Western River Basin District (WRBD) River Basin Management Plan and future plan provide a mechanism for addressing potential water contamination and the Variation should have regard to its implementation.

Soil erosion can be caused by construction activities arising from urbanisation and infrastructure development. Erosion results in a loss of nutrients in the upper layers of the soils and also leads to reduced water-holding capacity. Erosion can also impact on surface water quality. Climate change is likely to increase soil erosion, as a result of higher rainfall intensity and possible loss of organic matter, which could result in reduced structural stability.

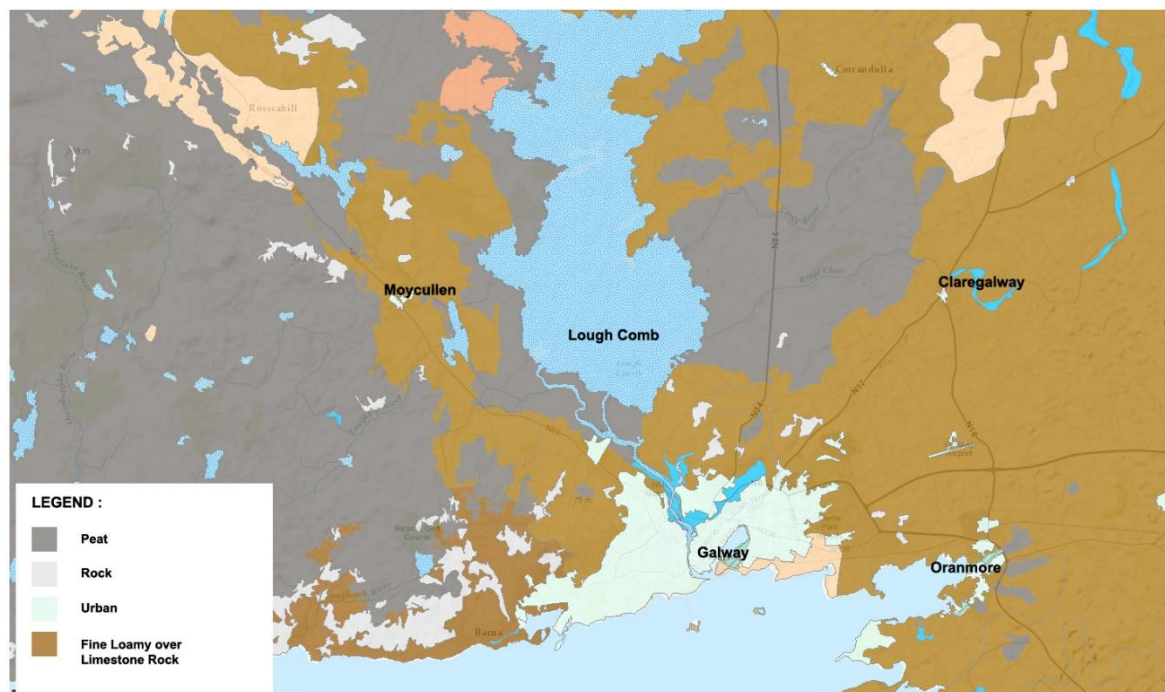


Figure 5.1: Status of Rivers and Lakes (Teagasc Soil Mapping)

5.5 Water

As Section 5.2 on Biodiversity demonstrates, water quality has a clear interaction and impact with other key environmental parameters making its protection key importance. Key challenges for the Variation area of influence include preventing the deterioration of water quality from municipal and agricultural activities whilst delivering physical infrastructure to meet population growth and allow for good agricultural management practice. Pressures from human activities, such as structural alterations to water bodies, can also cause deterioration in water quality. Structural alterations such as river straightening, construction of embankments etc. can create conditions that prevent the water body from supporting the natural ecology which existed prior to modifications.

Water quality is a key environmental condition supporting the integrity of European sites and areas identified on the Water Framework Directive Registers of Protected Areas. In the instance of the River Corrib, the overall status of the waterbody range from 'Good' to 'Poor' in the area of the proposed N6 Galway City Ring Road. The Variation should have regard to the protection of surface water, groundwater and coastal/estuarine resources and their associated habitats and species including fisheries.

Other water issues include promoting best practice in the design and construction of SUDS also play an important role in the management of water resources.

County Galway falls within the Shannon International and Western River Basin District (RBDs) which have been implemented to protect and improve waters in the county and wider RBDs. The Terryland River is used as one of the water sources relevant to the Variation area of influence and feeds from Lough Corrib and the Corrib Basin, the bulk of which lies in County Galway boundary. The issue of water quality in the Western River Basin District (WRBD) is of concern and areas in the district upstream of the city also contribute to impacts on water quality in the River Corrib and Galway Bay. At regional level, the WRBD River Basin Management Plan is currently under review and provides an integrated mechanism for setting standards and achieving objectives for water quality.

The DEHLG'S Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009) highlights that flooding can impact on people, property and the environment. A Stage 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has also been completed for the Variation which identifies flooding or surface water management issues related to the county that may warrant further investigation at the appropriate plan level or at planning application level; and suggests measures to be integrated into the Galway CPD that will contribute towards both flood risk management in the county and compliance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines. It was concluded that a range of measures exist within the Galway CDP to contribute towards both flood risk management in the county and compliance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines.

5.6 Air Quality, Climate Change and Noise

All developments, agriculture, energy generation, industry and commercial activity and waste generation contribute emissions to air and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions; however the emission of pollutants from vehicles is one of the main threats to air quality in Ireland and contributes significantly to the increase of greenhouse gases. Under the Kyoto Protocol Ireland agreed to a target of limiting its greenhouse gas emissions to 13% above 1990 levels by the first commitment period 2008 – 2012 as part of its contribution to the overall EU target.

The nearest monitoring station is Bodkin Junction in Galway City which measures that current air quality in the area of influence of the Variation is good, however high levels of traffic congestion can generate emissions and noise. The creation of a permeable street network which promotes walking, cycling and public transport would lead to reductions in vehicular traffic and less concentration of traffic and consequently of noise and air pollution. Consideration should be given to noise mitigation site design techniques where appropriate.

Possible impacts of climate change are unpredictable, diverse and subject to continued scientific study. The severity of the impact will depend on what 'adaption measures' are put in place, such measures include improvements in flood risk management and the prevention of inappropriate construction on flood plains. Greenhouse gas emissions from future activities can be reduced so as to minimise the impact of climate change.

The components of the Variation serve as part of a larger strategy to promote improved use of more sustainable modes of transport and encourage the transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable society.

The assessment and management of noise from the main infrastructural transport sources (roads, rail and airports) are governed by the Environmental Noise Directive and associated 2006 Environmental Noise Regulations (S.I.140 of 2006). The assessment shall have regard to the

implementation of this Directive and associated national regulations, as well as to the consideration of 'Quiet Areas' in rural locations.

5.7 Material Assets

The integration of land use and transportation continues to be an overarching strategic aim of the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021. The Variation will be influenced predominantly by the Galway Transport Strategy 2016-2036.

Addressing issues such as existing traffic congestion are not always solvable by non-car modes such as cycling or public transport, particularly outside of urban areas. Therefore, an improved transport network through the introduction of an N6 Galway City Ring Road around the city is considered most effective to improve connectivity and provide relief to roads within the city centre to re-allocate existing road space and develop sustainable transport measures.

5.8 Cultural Heritage

County Galway's archaeological heritage is protected under the National Monuments Acts (1930-2004), Natural Cultural Institutions Act 1997 and the Planning Acts.

Given its proximity to Galway City and coastal location, the potential Park & Ride facilities, bus corridors, greenways, cycling and walking routes and the N6 Galway City Ring Road (GCRR) are surrounded by valuable archaeological and architectural heritage such as ringforts, fullacht fiadhs, a quarry, gates and in particular, Menlo Castle and its demesne.

The Planning and Development Act (2000) allows for the listing of important structures in Development Plans in order to provide protection to these structures which must be of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. Details of protected structures are entered by the authority in its Record of Protected Structures, which is part of the Development Plan.

Balancing development pressures and the protection of this heritage can pose a challenge, however, protective measures can be implemented to ensure no adverse effects occur on Recorded Monuments or Protected Structures.

5.9 Landscape

Galway's landscape provides distinctiveness and continuity and is an important contributor to quality of life for people in the city, its environs and the economy. It is a resource to be used and managed in a sustainable manner, having regard to its sensitivity and character.

Galway County Council's (2003) Landscape Character Assessment classifies landscapes according to their sensitivity, their ability to accommodate change or intervention without suffering unacceptable effects to character and values. The most sensitive landscapes are 'Class 5 - Unique', 'Class 4- Special' and 'Class 3- High' while landscapes of lesser sensitivity are 'Class 2- Moderate' and 'Class 1- Low'.

The location of the N6 Galway City Ring Road is located predominately in a suburban area or agricultural lands which has been designated as a high landscape sensitivity area that straddles the urban fringes of Galway City.

Potential issues with regard to landscape include development of transport infrastructure that negatively impacts the local landscape character.

Another significant impact can relate to visual impact. Landscaped areas and planting associated with transport measures can have a positive visual impact within the built environment. Hedgerows, trees, and stone walls should also be incorporated into measures wherever possible.

There are also issues relating to integrating habitats of significance into measures in a satisfactory manner. Landscape areas and planting associated with measures can enhance the county's biodiversity and improve visual impacts on the built environment. Hedgerows, trees, and stone walls should also be incorporated wherever possible.

5.10 Overall Environmental Sensitivities

The baseline information outlined above identifies overall environmental sensitivities in the area within which the Variation measures are proposed. Where measures of the Variation and environmentally sensitive areas overlap or enter within an area of influence, there is an increased possibility that development will conflict with these sensitivities and cause environmental deterioration, if mitigation is not applied.

This does not preclude development, though highlights the need for mitigation measures to be integrated into the Variation prior to its implementation.

6.0 Strategic Environmental Objectives

6.1 Introduction

The primary objective of the SEA is to provide for a high level of environmental protection and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of the Variation to the Galway CDP.

Article 5 of the SEA Directive requires the identification of environmental protection objectives. These Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) assist in the prediction, description and monitoring of impacts on the environment as a result of the Variation. The primary source of the following environmental protection objectives is derived from Chapter 5 of the Environmental Report for the Galway CDP 2015-2021.

Indicators allow impacts to be assessed and highlighted in a simple and effective manner. Indicators can also be used as standards to form the basis of a monitoring programme for the Variation (outlined in Chapter 10 of this Environmental Report).

While Indicators facilitate the monitoring aspect of the SEA, targets provide a realistic and achievable target to which the Local Authorities can work towards.

All SEOs, indicators and targets are provided on Table 6.1 while background to these measures is provided in the subsections below.

Table 6.1: Strategic Environmental Objectives, Indicators and Targets of the Variation

Environmental Component	Strategic Environmental Objectives	Indicators	Targets
BIODIVERSITY, FLORA & FAUNA	<p>B1: To ensure compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to the protection of Natura 2000 Sites and Annexed habitats and species</p> <p>B2: To ensure compliance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive with regard to the management of features of the landscape which - by virtue of their linear and continuous structure or their function act as stepping stones (designated or not) - are of major importance for wild fauna and flora and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic</p>	<p>B1: Conservation status of habitats and species as assessed under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive</p> <p>B2: Percentage loss of functional connectivity without remediation resulting from development provided for by the Plan</p>	<p>B1: Maintenance of favourable conservation status for all habitats and species protected under national and international legislation to be unaffected by implementation of the Plan</p> <p>B2: No significant ecological networks or parts thereof which provide functional connectivity to be lost without remediation resulting from development provided for in the Plan</p>

Environmental Component	Strategic Environmental Objectives	Indicators	Targets
	exchange of wild species		
	B3: To avoid significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites ²⁸ and to ensure compliance with the Wildlife Acts 1976-2010 with regard to the protection of species listed on Schedule 5 of the principal Act	B3i: Number of significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites resulting from development provided for by the Plan B3ii: Number of significant impacts on the protection of species listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife Act 1976	B3i: Avoid significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites resulting from development provided for by the Plan B3ii: No significant impacts on the protection of species listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife Act 1976
	B4: To sustain existing sustainable rural management practices - and the communities who support them - to ensure the continuation of long established managed landscapes and the flora and fauna that they contain	B4: Population of the county involved in land management	B4: Sustain the population of the county involved in land management
POPULATION & HUMAN HEALTH	PHH1: To protect populations and human health from exposure to incompatible landuses	PHH1: Occurrence (any) of a spatially concentrated deterioration in human health arising from environmental factors resulting from development provided for by the Plan, as identified by the Health Service Executive and Environmental Protection Agency	PHH1: No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of implementing the Plan
SOILS INCLUDING GEOLOGY	S1: To avoid damage to the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource in County Galway	S1: Soil extent and hydraulic connectivity	S1: To minimise reductions in soil extent and hydraulic connectivity

Environmental Component	Strategic Environmental Objectives	Indicators	Targets
WATER	W1: To maintain and improve, where possible, the quality and status of surface waters	<p>W1i: Classification of Overall Status (comprised of ecological and chemical status) under the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (SI No. 272 of 2009)</p> <p>W1ii: Mandatory and Guide values as set by the EU Bathing Water Directive and transposing Bathing Water Quality Regulations (SI No. 79 of 2008)</p>	<p>W1i: Not to cause deterioration in the status of any surface water or affect the ability of any surface water to achieve 'good status' by 2015 and beyond.</p> <p>W1ii: To achieve - as a minimum - Mandatory values and, where possible, to achieve Guide values as set by the EU Bathing Water Directive and transposing Bathing Water Quality Regulations (SI No. 79 of 2008)</p>
	W2: To prevent pollution and contamination of ground water	W2: Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC	W2: Not to affect the ability of groundwater to comply with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC
	W3: To comply as appropriate with the provisions of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2009)	W3: Number of incompatible developments granted permission on lands which pose - or are likely to pose in the future - a significant flood risk	W3: Minimise developments granted permission on lands which pose - or are likely to pose in the future – a significant flood risk in compliance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities

Environmental Component	Strategic Environmental Objectives	Indicators	Targets
MATERIAL ASSETS	M1: To serve new development with adequate and appropriate waste water treatment	M1: Number of new developments granted permission which can be adequately and appropriately served with waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan	M1: All new developments granted permission to be connected to and adequately and appropriately served by waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan
	M2: To serve new development with adequate drinking water that is both wholesome and clean.	M2: Number of non-compliances with the 48 parameters identified in the European Communities (Drinking Water) Regulations (No. 2) 2007 which present a potential danger to human health as a result of implementing the Plan.	M2: No non-compliances with the 48 parameters identified in the European Communities (Drinking Water) Regulations (No. 2) 2007 which present a potential danger to human health as a result of implementing the Plan.
	M3: To reduce waste volumes, minimise waste to landfill and increase recycling and reuse.	M3i: Total collected and brought household waste	M3i: Minimise increases in and, where possible, reduce household waste generation
		M3ii: Packaging recovered (t) by self-complying packagers	M3ii: Maximise increases in packaging recovered (t) by self-complying packagers
	M4: Prevent degradation or exhaustion of natural resources in implementing of the Variation to ensure the economic and social well-being.	M4: Presence of existing natural resources.	M4: Retain the presence of existing natural resources.
AIR & CLIMATE	C1: To reduce travel related emissions to air and to encourage modal change from car to more sustainable forms of transport	C1: Percentage of population travelling to work, school or college by public transport or	C1: An increase in the percentage of the population travelling to work, school or college by

Environmental Component	Strategic Environmental Objectives	Indicators	Targets
		non-mechanical means	public transport or non-mechanical means
CULTURAL HERITAGE	CH1: To protect archaeological heritage including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places and/or their context	CH1: Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places - including Zones of Archaeological Potential (and the context of the above within the surrounding landscape where relevant) – protected from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan	CH1: Protect entries to the Record of Monuments and Places - including Zones of Archaeological Potential (and their context of the above within the surrounding landscape where relevant) from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan
	CH2: To protect architectural heritage including entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context	CH2: Percentage of entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan.	CH2: Percentage of entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan
LANDSCAPE	L1: To avoid significant adverse impacts on the landscape - especially with regard to the County's landscapes which are most valuable and most sensitive to change and protected focal points and views.	L1: Number of complaints received from statutory consultees regarding avoidable impacts on the landscape - especially with regard to the County's landscapes which are most valuable and most sensitive to change and protected focal	L1: No developments permitted which result in avoidable impacts on the landscape - especially with regard to the County's landscapes which are most valuable and most sensitive to change and protected focal points and views - resulting from development which is granted

Environmental Component	Strategic Environmental Objectives	Indicators	Targets
		points and views – resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan	permission under the Plan

7.0 Description of Alternatives

7.1 Introduction

Article 5 of the SEA Directive requires the Environmental Report to consider “reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the amended plan or programme” and the significant environmental effects of the alternatives selected.

The broader strategic policies for the County have already been determined through the County Development Plan process and cannot be revisited through this assessment. The alternatives considered here therefore address the specific issues of transportation in relation to the development of Galway County.

Two scenarios were considered at an early stage of the process as set out in section 7.2. As a mechanism of measuring the effects of each alternative on the environment, the alternatives will be tested against the Strategic Environmental Objectives from Chapter 6.

7.2 Description of Proposed Alternatives

Two main alternative scenarios were examined in the preparation of the Variation:

- Alternative 1: Do-Nothing Approach or Continuation of the Existing Galway CDP
- Alternative 2: Implementation of Variation comprising the transportation measures of the Galway Transport Strategy.

7.2.1 *Alternative 1: ‘Do-Nothing’ or Continuation of existing Galway CDP*

A ‘Do-Nothing’ or continuance of the existing Galway CDP envisages no interventions to the existing Plan. Specific objectives relating to transportation as set out in the Galway CDP would continue to be reviewed and implemented on an individual project by project basis. The principal characteristics of the ‘Do-Nothing’ approach are:

- No major changes proposed to existing public transport infrastructure
- Proposed N6 Galway City Ring Road would not be incorporated into the Galway CDP
- Continued reliance on private car use
- Continued prolonged journey times and delays on the current bus network
- Continued limitations on available road space for safe and comfortable cycling and pedestrian movement

7.2.2 *Alternative 2: Implementation of Variation comprising the transportation measures of the Galway Transport Strategy*

Alternative 2 comprises the implementation of the transportation measures relating to the Galway Transport Strategy within the plan area. The principal characteristics of this alternative comprise:

- A high frequency bus service and cross-city network for commuters from the plan area into the city
- Development of Park & Ride facilities within the plan area to commuter traffic entering the city area

- Development of a high quality, dedicated cycling network within the plan area including greenways, which will include measures which give priority to cyclists.
- Development of a new orbital route known as the proposed N6 Galway City Ring Road (N6 GCRR) to compliment an enhanced sustainable transport network. The integration of improvements to the public transport network, including provision of greenways and cycleways, whilst improving road based transport for private users commuting to and from Galway City include a combination of both public and private transport elements. This alternative provides a structured approach for the provision of transport related measures which are aimed at reducing existing congestion when travelling from the county to the city through an improved public transport service and improved infrastructure for alternative modes of transport such as walking and cycling.

The effective operational characteristics of this approach will lead to a reduction in private cars travelling through the city centre replaced by a reliable bus service operating on reallocated road space.

7.3 Evaluation of Alternatives

This section provides a comparative evaluation of the environmental effect of implementing the two main alternatives and determines which alternative is likely to have a positive, uncertain, neutral or negative relationship with the Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEO's) outlined in Chapter 6. Using the above SEOs, the two alternatives are evaluated against these environmental objectives, the results of the assessment are presented in Table 7.1.

7.4 Outcome of Alternatives Assessment

The most preferable outcome from the Alternatives Assessment is Alternative 2, which provides for the 'Implementation of the Variation' to integrate the transport measures from the Galway Transport Strategy into the Galway CDP.

A comparative assessment of the two alternatives has shown that the primary change between Alternative No. 1 and Alternative No. 2 comprises the inclusion of a high frequency bus service and cross-city network for commuters from the plan area into the city as well as other measures of the GTS such as the proposed greenways and the proposed N6 GCRR.

In the absence of implementing the Variation, the measures of the GTS would not be adopted in to the Galway CDP.

The absence of the 'incorporation of the GTS measures in the area would result in projects being reviewed and implemented on an individual project by project basis rather than a strategic and sequential approach. Continued reliance on private car use would prevail and no changes to the existing public transport would occur.

The introduction of a high frequency Cross-City Bus Network would have a positive impacts on the county population and human health, material assets and though potentially negative impacts may arise from the proposed N6 GCRR, the increase in public transport opportunities will serve to reduce the level of private vehicle transport, thereby reducing the overall contribution to Greenhouse Gas emissions.

Uncertain impacts arising from the proposed greenways and proposed N6 GCRR are present in Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 as both alternatives comprise of greenways, Park & Ride Facilities, cycle and bus networks and new road infrastructure. Therefore, impacts relating to biodiversity arising from

these developments are uncertain in both scenarios and would require further assessment at Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment Stage.

The medium to long-term outcome of Alternative 2 would allow for the provision of an effective high frequency bus network in Galway City resulting in both increased public transport usage in the city, improved corridors for alternative modes of transport and reduced congestion when travelling from the county into the city resulting in a positive impact on the population, health and air and climate that may not otherwise occur with an Alternative 1 approach.

Table 7.1 SEA Assessment of Alternative Scenarios

Assessment against SEA Objectives and Alternative Scenarios		
SEA Objective	Do-Nothing Approach/ Continuation of existing Galway CDP.	Implementation of Variation No. 1 to the Galway CDP
BIODIVERSITY, FLORA & FAUNA		
B1: To ensure compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to the protection of Natura 2000 Sites and Annexed habitats and species.	UNCERTAIN	UNCERTAIN
B2: To ensure compliance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive with regard to the management of features of the landscape which - by virtue of their linear and continuous structure or their function act as stepping stones (designated or not) - are of major importance for wild fauna and flora and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species	UNCERTAIN	UNCERTAIN
B3: To avoid significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites ²⁸ and to ensure compliance with the Wildlife Acts 1976-2010 with regard to the protection of species listed on Schedule 5 of the principal Act	UNCERTAIN	UNCERTAIN
B4: To sustain existing sustainable rural management practices - and the communities who support them - to ensure the continuation of long established managed landscapes and the flora and fauna that they contain	UNCERTAIN	UNCERTAIN
POPULATION & HUMAN HEALTH		
PHH1: To protect populations and human health from exposure to incompatible landuses	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
SOILS AND GEOLOGY		
S1: To avoid damage to the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource in County Galway	UNCERTAIN	UNCERTAIN

SEA Objective	Do-Nothing Approach/ Continuation of existing Galway CDP.	Implementation of Variation No. 1 to the Galway CDP
WATER		
W1: To maintain and improve, where possible, the quality and status of surface waters	UNCERTAIN	UNCERTAIN
W2: To prevent pollution and contamination of ground water	UNCERTAIN	UNCERTAIN
W3: To comply as appropriate with the provisions of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2009)	UNCERTAIN	UNCERTAIN
MATERIAL ASSETS		
M1: To serve new development with adequate and appropriate waste water treatment	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL
M2: To serve new development with adequate drinking water that is both wholesome and clean.	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL
M3: To reduce waste volumes, minimise waste to landfill and increase recycling and reuse.	NEUTRAL	UNCERTAIN
AIR & CLIMATE		
C1: To reduce travel related emissions to air and to encourage modal change from car to more sustainable forms of transport	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
CULTURAL HERITAGE		
CH1: To protect archaeological heritage including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places and/or their context	NEUTRAL	UNCERTAIN
CH2: To protect architectural heritage including entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context	NEUTRAL	UNCERTAIN
LANDSCAPE		
L1: : To avoid significant adverse impacts on the landscape - especially with regard to the County's landscapes which are most valuable and most sensitive to change and protected focal points and views.	POSITIVE	UNCERTAIN

8.0 Environmental Assessment of Variation No.1 to the Galway CDP 2015-2021

8.1 Introduction

This section provides a comparative evaluation of the environmental effect of implementing the specific measures and components of the Variation and determines whether each measure is likely to have a beneficial, neutral, uncertain or negative relationship with the Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEO's) outlined in Chapter 6. Using the above SEOs, the measures of the Variation are evaluated in the context of their impact on these environmental objectives, the results of the assessment are presented in a table format below. The potential effects are categorised as follows:

- Very significant beneficial impact
- Significant beneficial impact
- Not significant beneficial impact
- Uncertain impact
- Neutral or No relationship
- Not significant negative impact
- Significant negative impact
- Very significant negative impact

A number of policies comprise the renaming of the National Roads Authority to Transport Infrastructure Ireland and provides for the inclusion of references to statutory agencies in the text of the policy. Therefore, these policies can be screened out from any potential environmental impact and require no further environmental assessment. These proposed alterations are outlined below and do not alter the environmental assessment in this Environmental Report.

The following text formatting is used to highlight changes that are recommended as part of the proposed Variation to the Galway County Development Plan 2015 - 2021:

Existing Text – Shown in black

Proposed Addition – Shown in Green e.g. **Green**

Proposed Deletion – Shown with Strikethrough e.g. ~~Strikethrough~~ in red

Table 8.1 Screened out of Policies and Objectives of the Variation to the Galway CDP 2015-21

Recommended Variation	Screening for SEA Outcome
<p>Policy TI 2 - Development of an Integrated and Sustainable Transport System</p> <p>It is the policy of the Council to promote the development of an integrated and sustainable high quality transport system that shall for the county, which includes the specific areas identified in the Galway Transport Strategy(GTS), which shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Promote closer co-ordination between land use and sustainable transportation; b) Continue the provision of a range of transport options within the County Galway and in collaboration with Galway City Council, the National Transport Authority(NTA), Transport Infrastructure Ireland(TII), other statutory 	<p>Variation comprises inclusion of references to statutory agencies. The recommended Variation is screened out for SEA.</p>

<p>agencies and transport providers, including safe road network, a range of bus and rail services, adequate facilities for walking and cycling and opportunities of air and water-based travel.</p>	
<p>Policy TI 10 - Reclassification of Restricted Routes It is a policy of Galway County Council to liaise with the National Roads Authority Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) on the re-classification of Restricted Routes as a result of the construction of motorways.</p>	<p>Variation comprises the renaming of the National Roads Authority to Transport Infrastructure Ireland. The recommended Variation is screened out for SEA</p>
<p>Policy TI 11 - Signage It is a policy of Galway County Council to liaise with the National Roads Authority Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) in relation to increased signage for rural towns adjacent to motorways in order to promote service availability.</p>	<p>Variation comprises the renaming of the National Roads Authority to Transport Infrastructure Ireland. The recommended Variation is screened out for SEA</p>
<p>Objective TI 7 – Service/Rest Areas and Scenic Viewpoints a) Support the National Roads Authority Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) in the provision of service and rest area facilities that may be proposed by the NRA TII and have regard to the provisions of Section 2.8 of the DoECLG Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines and the NRA Service Policy (August 2014) with regard to any other proposals for roadside service facilities or off-line service facilities along National Roads and junctions that may be promoted by private developers. b) Support the development of scenic viewpoints on existing road infrastructure where appropriate, minimising environmental impact and having full regard to the DoECLG guidance documents on development along national roads</p>	<p>Variation comprises the renaming of the National Roads Authority to Transport Infrastructure Ireland. The recommended Variation is screened out for SEA</p>
<p>Objective TI 12 – Noise Require all new proposed development, which is considered to be noise sensitive within 300m of existing, new or planned national roads, or roadways with traffic volumes greater than 8,200AADT, to include a noise assessment and mitigation measures if necessary with their planning application documentation. The cost of mitigation measures shall be borne by the developer. Mitigation measures in order to protect the noise environment of existing residential development will be facilitated or enforced as necessary.</p>	<p>Variation proposed the removal of <i>'The cost of mitigation measures shall be borne by the developer. Mitigation measures in order to protect the noise environment of existing residential development will be facilitated or enforced as necessary'</i> but reverted to the original text of the CDP for Objective TII 12 after public display. The recommended Variation is screened out for SEA</p>
<p>Objective TI 13 – Signage On or Visible from all Roads</p>	

<p>Avoid the proliferation of non-road traffic signage on and adjacent to all roads in the interest of traffic safety and visual amenity, in accordance with the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012). The NRA TII document Policy and Provision of Tourist and Leisure Signage on National Roads March 2011 (including any updated/superseding document) shall also be considered in the assessment of relevant developments.</p>	<p>Variation comprises the renaming of the National Roads Authority to Transport Infrastructure Ireland. The recommended Amendment is screened out for SEA</p>
<p>Objective TI 19 – Galway County Walking and Cycling Strategy</p> <p>Implement the recommendations and proposals within The National Cycle Network Scoping Study (2010) and the Galway County Walking and Cycling Strategy 2013 as outlined within Table 5.1: Priority Transportation Infrastructure Projects Objectives 2015-2021 for Co. Galway 2015.</p>	<p>Variation comprises the change in title of Table 5.1. The recommended Variation is screened out for SEA</p>

Where the evaluation identifies a potential uncertain or negative impact with the status of an SEO, the relevant SEO code and provision is entered into a Mitigation Table (Table 9.1) to assess what mitigation is available to offset uncertain or potentially negative impacts arising from the provision.

8.2 Interrelationship between Environmental Components

The environment is both complex and dynamic and the various elements of the environment interact in an equally complex and dynamic manner. The permutations can be numerous; however at a simplistic level the principal interactions can be either qualified or quantified in most instances.

These interactions can be either benign or unfavourable; can be either proportionate or synergistic; can be short lived or permanent. In addition an event, an individual action or an ongoing activity can have an effect on one or more aspects of the environment. This effect may differ in magnitude, type and duration across several different aspects of the environment.

For example the potential exists for discharges of treated effluent from wastewater plants to surface water systems to impact negatively on water quality. Similarly the use of septic tanks can impact negatively on the quality of ground water resources if working inefficiently or inappropriately sited. This report has attempted to deal with the issues at a 'root' level thereby diminishing the necessity to discuss further the possible and numerous interactions between the various environmental receptors.

This environmental report has approached each of the environmental receptors on an individual basis though it is fully cognisant of the relationship between the various elements. The report has therefore attempted to present the data in such a way as to indicate fully the potential for impacts on other aspects of the environment where they may occur or indeed are likely to occur.

To highlight the extent of the relationship between the various elements of the environment the matrix presented in Table 8.1 provides an indication of the interactions present between environmental receptors. Categories highlighted in **blue** identify where interactions between environmental receptors occur.

The significant aspect of the matrix is the relationship between human beings and all aspects of the environment. There are three simple conclusions to be drawn from the matrix; people benefit most from a high quality environment; people are collectively responsible for the adverse impacts that can occur; and people are most seriously affected by deterioration in environmental quality.

Table 8.2 Interrelationship between Environmental Receptors

		Biodiversity - Flora and Fauna	Human Beings - Population	Human Beings - Health	Soil and Geology	Water	Landscape and Visual Issues	Material Assets - Transportation	Material Assets - Other	Cultural Heritage	Air Quality	Noise
Is this aspect of the environment likely to interact with other aspects of the environment?	Biodiversity - Flora and Fauna											
	Human Beings - Population											
	Human Beings - Health											
	Soils and Geology											
	Water											
	Landscape and Visual Issues											
	Material Assets - Transportation											
	Material Assets - Other											
	Cultural Heritage											
	Air Quality											
	Noise											

Table 8.3 Environmental Assessment of Variation No. 1 to the Galway CDP 2015-2021

Specific Components Of Variation No. 1	Potentially Very Significant Negative Impact	Potentially Significant Negative Impact	Potentially Not Significant Negative Impact	Potentially Uncertain Impact	Potentially Neutral or No relationship	Potentially Not Significant Beneficial Impact	Potentially Significant Beneficial Impact	Potentially Very Significant Beneficial impact	Comments on Interactions
Proposed Policies & Objectives									
Objective TI1 – Sustainable Transportation Support and facilitate any 'Smarter Travel' initiatives that contained in the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) and other initiatives together with the plan level environmental protection policies and mitigation measures set out in the GTS, which will improve sustainable transportation within the County including public transport, electric and hybrid vehicles, car clubs, public bike schemes, park and ride/park and stride facilities, improved pedestrian and cycling facilities, as appropriate.				W3, M3, CH2	B2, B4, S1, B1, B3, W1, CH1, L1, M4	P1	C1		<i>This Variation supports the implementation of the GTS with specific regard to inclusion of travel initiatives and supports SEOs on air, climate and the population. These initiatives comprise the improvement of public transport facilities in the city centre and its environs and take place in developed urban and suburban areas, there having no impact on the counties biodiversity, views and prospects and surface water. Potentially uncertain impacts may arise with regard to the Park & Ride Facilities which have potential uncertain impacts to archaeological heritage, disposal of waste volumes from its development and uncertain flood risk until such time as a specific location for a Park & Ride can be established and further studies can be carried to ensure avoidance or mitigation of such impacts.</i>
Policy TI7 – Protection of National Road Network Protect the motorway and national road network and national road junctions in line with Government policies. Safeguard the carrying capacity, operational efficiency, safety and significant investment made in the development of the motorway and national road network within the County including the M6 Dublin to Galway Motorway, the M18 Gort to Crusheen Motorway and the M17/M18 Galway to Tuam, when completed and the N6 Galway City Ring Road(GCRR) if approved and completed		B1, B2, B3, S1, W1, W2, W3, M3, C1, L1		CH1	B4, P1, M1, M2, CH2, M4				<i>This Variation supports the development of the N6 GCRR though has potential to negatively impacts SEO's relating to Biodiversity, water, air & Climate, Soils and Landscape. In isolation, the development of the N6 GCRR has potential to negatively impact on a range of SEO's relating to biodiversity, water. Soils, landscape and Air and Climate but is integral component of the GTS in order to be able to implement other transport objectives.</i>
Policy TI8 - Transportation Infrastructure Requirements for the Gateway and West of the County.		B1, B2, B3, B4, S1, W1, W2,		CH1, CH2	M1, M2		P1, C1		<i>This Variation supports the implementation of the GTS, in particular the provision of</i>

<p>It is the policy of Galway County Council to work with Galway City Council and all relevant statutory bodies including the National Transport Authority (NTA) and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) to develop—deliver an appropriate infrastructural response to the transportation needs of the Galway Gateway, its environs and the west of the County as part of the proposed measures of the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) including the plan level environmental protection policies and mitigation measures set out in the GTS. This shall include the provision of new infrastructure such as potential park and ride facilities, bus corridors, greenways, cycling and walking routes and the N6 Galway City Ring Road (GCRR); which are all integral in the delivery of the GTS with a view to relieving congestion, improving travel times, increased safety of all road users and enhancing connectivity and access within the region and enhanced accessibility of the western region in a national and international context.</p> <p>Any such solution shall have due regard to the necessity to protect the environment and will comply fully with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.</p>	<p>W3, M3, L1, M4</p>								<p><i>associated infrastructure. Components such as the N6 GCRR and greenways will positively impact human beings and the transport measures when considered collectively will have a positive influence on Air and climate. However, the greenways and N6 GCRR has potential to negatively impact biodiversity, soil, water and landscape.</i></p>
<p>Objective TI5 Roads and Transportation Network Improvements Galway County Council will Facilitate the progression of the necessary infrastructure improvements including new roads/projects and implement improvements to the existing National and Regional/Local Road networks including the priority transportation schemes, listed in Table 5.1: Priority Transportation Infrastructure Objectives 2015-2021 Projects for Co. Galway 2015-2021 and those listed within Table 5.2: Regional/Local Transportation Infrastructure Objectives 2015-2021 Projects Proposed 2015-2021 subject to relevant Irish planning and European environmental legislation including Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and/or other</p>	<p>B1, B2, B3, B4, S1, W1, W2, W3, M3, L1, C1, M4</p>		<p>CH1</p>	<p>CH2, M1, M2</p>		<p>P1,C1</p>			<p><i>This Variation supports the development of the N6 GCRR though has potential to negatively impacts SEO's relating to Biodiversity, water, air & Climate, Soils and Landscape. In isolation, the development of the N6 GCRR has potential to negatively impact on a range of SEO's relating to biodiversity, water. Soils, landscape and Air and Climate but is integral component of the GTS in order to be able to implement other transport objectives.</i></p>

<p>environmental assessment, where appropriate.</p>									
<p>Objective TI15 - Transportation Infrastructure Requirements for the Gateway and West of the County It is an objective of Galway County Council to work with all other relevant bodies including the National Transport Authority (NTA), Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and Galway City Council to deliver the necessary improvements to transportation infrastructure, including new infrastructure if necessary and the plan level environmental protection policies and mitigation measures set out in the GTS. This shall include the provision of new infrastructure such as potential park and ride facilities, bus corridors, greenways, cycling and walking routes and the N6 Galway City Ring Road (GCRR) as set out in the Priority Transportation Infrastructure Objectives 2015-2021 in Table 5.1 which are all integral in the delivery of the GTS with a view to help to secure the medium and long term economic and social development of Galway Gateway and the west of the County. Any such investment or project shall be carried out with due regard to the necessity to protect the environment and in full compliance with the provision of relevant legislation, including the Habitats Directive.</p>		<p>B1, B2, B3, B4, S1, W1, W2, W3, M3, L1, C1, M4</p>		<p>CH1</p>	<p>CH2, M1, M2</p>		<p>P1, C1</p>		<p><i>This Variation supports the implementation of the GTS, in particular the provision of associated infrastructure. Components such as the N6 GCRR and the greenways will positively impact human beings and the transport measures when considered collectively will have a positive influence on Air and climate. However, the greenways and N6 GCRR has potential to negatively impact biodiversity, soil, water and landscape.</i></p>
<p>Objective TI21- Galway Transportation Strategy It is an objective of Galway County Council to support and facilitate the implementation of the public transport element of the Galway Transport Strategy across all modes of transport.</p>				<p>CH2</p>	<p>B1, B2, B3, B4, S1, W1, W2, W3, M1, M2, M3, CH1, L1, M4</p>		<p>P1</p>		<p><i>This Variation supports the implementation of the public transport element of the GTS into the County Development Plan. This will have a positive impact on human beings though uncertain impacts of the architectural heritage within the villages of Bearna, Moycullen, Claregalway and Oranmore which must be protected from negative impacts arising from its implementation.</i></p>

9.0 Mitigation Measures

9.1 Introduction

This section outlines the mitigation measures identified, as necessary, to address the potential negative impacts arising from the adoption of the Variation. While every effort will be taken to ensure that the impact of the Variation on the environment is neutral to positive, particular unavoidable negative impacts may occur as a result of its implementation. The Environmental Report details mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate identified negative impacts.

Similarly, monitoring of the Variation, in accordance with the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, will incorporate proposals to monitor various environmental receptors. A schedule of monitoring and reporting is set out in Table 9.1 in order to ensure that any unforeseen negative impact is identified at the earliest opportunity and subsequently appropriate mitigation measures are put in place to eliminate or at a minimum, limit the level of impact to an acceptable degree. Environmental Indicators, as prescribed in the EPA publication "Ireland's Environment: An Assessment 2012" are provided where relevant to this Variation and presented as a yardstick against which the success of the Variation can be monitored.

In general terms, all proposals for development will be required to have due regard to the environmental considerations outlined in the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021.

Measures within the GTS itself that correlate with the proposals of the Variation are further protected by a range of protective policies and objectives from the relevant statutory Development Plans and mitigation measures from the Natura Impact Statement for the GTS.

The policies and objectives set out in the Variation which run contrary to the objectives and policies contained within the Development Plans will not normally be permitted, and if permitted, not without the detailing of appropriate site and development specific mitigation measures. In addition, particular measures will in themselves be subject to further project specific environmental assessment by means of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA).

At the project-level, Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment stage, detailed mitigation measures for all projects will be developed. For example, the proposed N6 GCRR and the greenways will identify a suite of measures aimed at reducing the adverse impacts of that scheme on environmental topics such as Biodiversity, Noise, Archaeology and Cultural Heritage, Architectural Heritage and Landscape & Visual etc.

9.2 Mitigation Measures

Given the environmental designations, landscape and cultural heritage sensitivities in the Variation area, there were occasional uncertain and potential negative impacts identified as a result of interactions between the Variations policies and objectives and the Strategic Environmental Objectives. In these instances, potential uncertainties or negative impacts could be mitigated against by the protective policies already contained within the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021 which has an overarching role in ensuring the protection of designated European sites. These environmental protection policies will serve, in many cases, to safeguard against the Variation resulting in adverse effects on the integrity of any European sites. The AA process has also identified mitigation measures to safeguard against potentially adverse effects.

A detailed assessment of the Variations policies and objectives which were screened in for potential environmental impacts was undertaken and the proposed mitigation and protection policies are presented in Table 9.1 of this document. These protective policies and objectives are derived from the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021 and are outlined in Appendix II of this report.

Table 9.1 Mitigation Measures

Proposed Policies & Objectives	Potentially Very Significant Negative Impact	Potentially Significant Negative Impact	Potentially Not Significant Negative Impact	Potentially Uncertain Impact	Mitigation
<p>Objective TI1 – Sustainable Transportation Support and facilitate any ‘Smarter Travel’ initiatives that contained in the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) and other initiatives together with the plan level environmental protection policies and mitigation measures set out in the GTS, which will improve sustainable transportation within the County including public transport, electric and hybrid vehicles, car clubs, public bike schemes, park and ride/park and stride facilities, improved pedestrian and cycling facilities, as appropriate.</p>				W3, M3, CH2	<p>Potential uncertain impacts on SEO W3 will be protected by Policy FL 1 on Flood Risk Management Guidelines and Objective WM7 on Site Provision for Waste Storage and Segregation</p> <p>Potential uncertain impacts on SEO M3 will be protected by Objective WM 1 – Replacement Connacht Waste Management Plan 2006 – 2011 and Objective WM7 – On Site Provision for Waste Storage and Segregation while uncertain impacts on SEO CH2 will be protected by Policy AH 1 on Architectural Heritage and Objective AH 1 to AH 6 on Architectural Heritage.</p>
<p>Policy TI7 – Protection of National Road Network Protect the motorway and national road network and national road junctions in line with Government policies. Safeguard the carrying capacity, operational efficiency, safety and significant investment made in the development of the motorway and national road network within the County including the M6 Dublin to Galway Motorway, the M18 Gort to Crusheen Motorway and the M17/M18 Galway to Tuam, when completed, and the N6 Galway City Ring Road (GCRR) if approved and completed.</p>		B1, B2, B3, S1, W1, W2, W3, M3, C1, L1		CH1	<p>Potentially significant negative impacts on the SEO’s relating to biodiversity will be protected by Objective NHB 1 on Protected Habitats and Species, Objective NHB 2 on Biodiversity and Ecological Networks and Objective DS 10 on Impacts of Developments on Protected Sites</p> <p>Potentially significant negative impacts on the SEO’s relating to SEO W1 and SEO W2 will be protected by Objective FL 2 – Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) and Objective FL 3 – Protection of Waterbodies and Watercourses.</p> <p>Potential uncertain impacts on SEO W3 will be protected by Policy FL 1 on Flood Risk Management Guidelines</p> <p>Potentially significant negative impacts on the SEO L1 on landscape will be protected by Policy GH1, Policy GH3 ND Policy GH4 on General Heritage whilst air and climate is protected by Policy CC 1 to Policy CC 8 and Objective CC 1 to Objective CC 5 on Climate Change.</p> <p>Potential uncertain impacts on SEO CH1 will be protected by Policy GH 3 on general heritage polices and Policy ARC 1 to ARC 5 on Archaeological Heritage Polices.</p>
<p>Policy TI8 - Transportation Infrastructure Requirements for the Gateway and West of the County. It is the policy of Galway County Council to work with Galway City Council and all relevant statutory bodies including the National Transport Authority (NTA) and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) to develop deliver an appropriate infrastructural response to the transportation needs of the Galway Gateway, its environs and the west of the County as part of the proposed measures of the Galway Transport Strategy</p>		B1, B2, B3, B4, S1, W1, W2, W3, M3, L1, M4		CH1, CH2	<p>Potentially significant negative impacts on the SEO’s relating to biodiversity will be protected by Objective NHB 1 on Protected Habitats and Species, Objective NHB 2 on Biodiversity and Ecological Networks and Objective DS 10 on Impacts of Developments on Protected Sites. Projects arising out of the implementation of this variation will be carried out in accordance with the various environmental regulations and EU Directives including SEA, EIA, Habitats, WFD and Floods directives, as relevant and appropriate.</p> <p>Potentially significant negative impacts on the SEO’s relating to SEO W1 and SEO W2 will be protected by will be protected by Objective FL 2 – Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) and Objective FL 3 – Protection of Waterbodies and Watercourses.</p> <p>Potential uncertain impacts on SEO W3 will be protected by Policy FL 1 on Flood Risk Management Guidelines and Policy FL 4 – Principles of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines</p>

<p>(GTS) including the plan level environmental protection policies and mitigation measures set out in the GTS.</p> <p>This shall include the provision of new infrastructure such as potential park and ride facilities, bus corridors, greenways, cycling and walking routes and the N6 Galway City Ring Road (GCRR), which are all integral in the delivery of the GTS with a view to relieving congestion, improving travel times, increased safety of all road users and enhancing connectivity and access within the region and enhanced accessibility of the western region in a national and international context.</p> <p>Any such solution shall have due regard to the necessity to protect the environment and will comply fully with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.</p>					<p>Potentially significant negative impacts on the SEO L1 on landscape will be protected by Policy GH1, Policy GH3 ND Policy GH4 on General Heritage whilst air and climate is protected by Policy CC 1 to Policy CC 8 and Objective CC 1 to Objective CC 5 on Climate Change.</p> <p>Potential negative impacts on SEO M3 will be protected by Objective WM 1 – Replacement Connacht Waste Management Plan 2006 – 2011 and Objective WM7 – On Site Provision for Waste Storage and Segregation.</p> <p>Potential negative impacts on SEO M4 will be protected by Strategic Aim 2 on Environmental Protection.</p> <p>Potential uncertain impacts on SEO CH1 will be protected by Policy GH 3 on general heritage polices and Policy ARC 1 to ARC 5 on Archaeological Heritage Polices while uncertain impacts on SEO CH2 will be protected by Policy AH 1 on Architectural Heritage and Objective AH 1 to AH 6 on Architectural Heritage.</p> <p>Note: Furthermore, at the project-level Environmental Impact Assessment and Habitat Directive Assessment stage for the Greenway, detailed mitigation measures for the N6 Galway City Ring Road Project will be developed. This will identify a suite of measures aimed at reducing adverse impacts that scheme on environmental topics such as Archaeology and Cultural Heritage, Architectural Heritage and Landscape & Visual.</p>
<p>Objective T15 Roads and Transportation Network Improvements</p> <p>Galway County Council will facilitate the progression of the necessary infrastructure improvements including new roads/projects and implement improvements to the existing National and Regional/Local Road networks including the priority transportation schemes listed in Table 5.1: Priority Transportation Objectives 2015-2021 Projects for Co. Galway 2015-2021 and those listed within Table 5.2: Regional/Local Transportation Infrastructure 2015-2021 Proposed Projects 2015-2021 subject to relevant Irish planning and European environmental legislation including Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and/or other environmental assessment, where appropriate.</p>		<p>B1, B2, B3, B4, S1, W1, W2, W3, M3, L1, C1, M4</p>		<p>CH1</p>	<p>Potentially significant negative impacts on the SEO’s relating to biodiversity will be protected by Objective NHB 1 on Protected Habitats and Species, Objective NHB 2 on Biodiversity and Ecological Networks and Objective DS 10 on Impacts of Developments on Protected Sites. Projects arising out of the implementation of this variation will be carried out in accordance with the various environmental regulations and EU Directives including SEA, EIA, Habitats, WFD and Floods directives, as relevant and appropriate.</p> <p>Potentially significant negative impacts on the SEO’s relating to water will be protected by Objective NHB 3 on Water Resources and by Objective FL 2 on Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) and Objective FL 3 on Protection of Waterbodies and Watercourses.</p> <p>Potentially significant negative impacts on the SEO S1 (Soils) Objective NHB 4 – Geological and Geo-Morphological Systems and Objective NHB 12 – Soil/Ground Water Protection.</p> <p>SEO C1 (air and climate) is protected by climate change policies Policy CC 1 to Policy CC 8 and Objective CC 1 to Objective CC 5 on Climate Change.</p> <p>Potential uncertain impacts on SEO CH1 will be protected by Policy GH 3 on general heritage polices and Policy ARC 1 to ARC 5 on Archaeological Heritage Polices</p> <p>Potentially significant negative impacts on the SEO L1 on landscape will be protected by Policy GH1, Policy GH3 ND Policy GH4 on General Heritage whilst air and climate is protected by Policy CC 1 to Policy CC 8 and Objective CC 1 to Objective CC 5 on Climate Change.</p> <p>Potential negative impacts on SEO M3 will be protected by Strategic Aim 2 on Environmental Protection.</p>

<p>Objective TI15 - Transportation Infrastructure Requirements for the Gateway and West of the County</p> <p>It is an objective of Galway County Council to work with all other relevant bodies including the National Transport Authority (NTA), Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and Galway City Council, including new infrastructure if necessary and the plan level environmental protection policies and mitigation measures set out in the GTS. This shall include the provision of new infrastructure such as potential park and ride facilities, bus corridors, greenways, cycling and walking routes and the N6 Galway City Ring Road (GCRR) as set out in the Priority Transportation Infrastructure Objectives 2015-2021 in Table 5.1 which are all integral in the delivery of the GTS with a view to help to secure the medium and long term economic and social development of Galway Gateway and the west of the County. Any such investment or project shall be carried out with due regard to the necessity to protect the environment and in full compliance with the provision of relevant legislation, including the Habitats Directive.</p>		B1, B2, B3, B4, S1, W1, W2, W3, M3, L1, C1, M4		CH1	<p>Potentially significant negative impacts on the SEO's relating to biodiversity will be protected by Objective NHB 1 on Protected Habitats and Species, Objective NHB 2 on Biodiversity and Ecological Networks and Objective DS 10 on Impacts of Developments on Protected Sites. Projects arising out of the implementation of this variation will be carried out in accordance with the various environmental regulations and EU Directives including SEA, EIA, Habitats, WFD and Floods directives, as relevant and appropriate.</p> <p>Potentially significant negative impacts on the SEO's W1, SEO W2 will be protected by Objective FL 2 on Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) and Objective FL 3 on Protection of Waterbodies and Watercourses.</p> <p>While SEO W3 will be protected Policy FL 1 on Flood Risk Management Guidelines and Policy FL 4 on Principles of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines</p> <p>Potential negative impacts on SEO M3 will be protected by Objective WM 1 – Replacement Connacht Waste Management Plan 2006 – 2011 and Objective WM7 – On Site Provision for Waste Storage and Segregation. Potential negative impacts on SEO M4 will be protected by Strategic Aim 2 on Environmental Protection.</p> <p>Potentially significant negative impacts on the SEO S1 (Soils) Objective NHB 4 on Geological and Geo-Morphological Systems and Objective NHB 12 on Soil/Ground Water Protection.</p> <p>Potentially significant negative impacts on the SEO L1 on landscape will be protected by Policy GH1, Policy GH3 ND Policy GH4 on General Heritage whilst SEO C1 (air and climate) is protected by Objective CC 3 on Green Infrastructure and Objective CC1 on Climate Change adaption.</p> <p>Note: Furthermore, at the project-level Environmental Impact Assessment and Habitat Directive Assessment stage for the Greenway, detailed mitigation measures for the N6 Galway City Ring Road Project will be developed. This will identify a suite of measures aimed at reducing adverse impacts that scheme on environmental topics such as Archaeology and Cultural Heritage, Architectural Heritage and Landscape & Visual.</p>
<p>Objective TI21- Galway Transportation Strategy</p> <p>It is an objective of Galway County Council to support and facilitate the implementation of the public transport element of the Galway Transport Strategy across all modes of transport.</p>				CH2	<p>Potential uncertain impacts on SEO CH2 will be protected by Policy AH 1 on Architectural Heritage and Objective AH 1 to AH 6 on Architectural Heritage.</p>

10.0 Monitoring Programme

10.1 Introduction

Monitoring of the Variation and its implications on the environment is paramount to ensure that the environment is not adversely affected through its implementation. Under Article 10 of the SEA Directive, monitoring must be carried out of the significant environmental effects directly related to the implementation of the Plan *“in order to, inter alia, identify at an early stage unforeseen adverse effects and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action.”* The SEA Guidelines state that monitoring should concentrate on likely significant environmental effects, which have been identified in the Environmental Report, and measures identified as necessary to avoid, reduce and offset any significant adverse effects.

The Galway Transport Strategy was itself subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment and the implementation of the strategy will also be subject to monitoring in its own right.

10.2 Monitoring Indicators

Baseline monitoring is proposed on a series of indicators which measure changes in the environment, especially changes which are critical in terms of environmental quality, for example water or air pollution levels. The indicators aim to simplify complex interrelationships and provide information about environmental issues which is easy to understand. A list of environmental indicators is provided in Table 10.1. The indicators are based on the Strategic Environmental Objectives presented in Chapter 6 and have been derived from knowledge of the existing environmental issues within the Variation area and also from legislation, guidelines and higher level plans.

It is considered that a monitoring report on the implementation of the policies and objectives within the Variation is important for the on-going and future implementation of the Strategy within the plan area of the Galway CDP. It is also considered appropriate that the monitoring on the implementation of the policies and objectives within the Variation is incorporated into the monitoring programme for the Galway CDP.

Environmental indicator assessment during monitoring can show positive/neutral impacts or negative impacts on the environment. Where an indicator value highlights a positive/neutral impact on the environment, it is likely that the policies and objectives of the Variation are well defined with regard to the environment. Conversely, where the objectives of the Variation have a negative impact on the environment, it may be necessary to review the policies or objectives of the Variation or to take some other form of intervention. For example, if an objective or policy is having a significant adverse impact, a change may be considered during the lifetime of the Variation.

10.3 Sources

Measurements for indicators generally come from existing monitoring sources. Existing monitoring sources include those maintained by the relevant authorities including the National Transport Authority, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Central Statistics Office.

The output of lower-tier environmental assessment and decision making – including a review of project approvals granted and associated documents – will also be utilised as part of the monitoring programme.

Where significant effects - including positive, negative, cumulative and indirect - have the potential to occur as a result of the undertaking of individual projects or multiple individual projects, such instances should be identified and recorded and should feed into the monitoring evaluation.

Table 10.1 Monitoring Environmental Measures

Environmental Component	Indicators	Targets	Responsibility	Frequency / Timing
BIODIVERSITY, FLORA & FAUNA	B1: Level of compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to the protection of Natura 2000 Sites and Annexed habitats and species	B1: Maintenance of favourable conservation status for all habitats and species protected under national and international legislation to be unaffected by implementation of the Plan	B1: Galway County Council, National Parks & Wildlife, Dept of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government.	Monitoring of environmental likely significant effects on measure by measure basis as particular elements of the Variation are developed and advanced. National Monitoring Report under Article 12 of the Birds Directive. (c. every 6 years).
	B2: Level of compliance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive with regard to the management of features of the landscape which - by virtue of their linear and continuous structure or their function act as stepping stones (designated or not) - are of major importance for wild fauna and flora and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species	B2: No significant ecological networks or parts thereof which provide functional connectivity to be lost without remediation resulting from development provided for in the Plan	B2: Galway County Council, National Parks & Wildlife, Dept of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government.	Monitoring of environmental likely significant effects on measure by measure basis as particular elements of the Variation are developed and advanced.
	B3: Impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in	B3i: Number of significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining	B3: Galway County Council, National Parks & Wildlife, Dept of Housing, Planning,	Monitoring of environmental likely significant effects on measure by measure basis as particular elements of the

Environmental Component	Indicators	Targets	Responsibility	Frequency / Timing
	designated sites including Wildlife Sites and level of compliance with the Wildlife Acts 1976-2010 with regard to the protection of species listed on Schedule 5 of the principal Act	resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites resulting from development provided for by the Plan. B3ii: Number of significant impacts on the protection of species listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife Act 1976.	Community and Local Government.	Variation are developed and advanced.
	B4: Sustainability of existing sustainable rural management practices - and the communities who support them - to ensure the continuation of long established managed landscapes and the flora and fauna that they contain	B4: Sustain the population of the county involved in land management	B4: Galway County Council, National Parks & Wildlife,	Monitoring of Statutory Consultee inputs on environmental effects as particular elements of the Variation are developed and advanced.
POPULATION & HUMAN HEALTH	P1: Level of protection to populations and human health from exposure to incompatible land uses	P1: No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of implementing the Plan	P1: Galway County Council, EPA,	On-going regular monitoring supplemented by data arising from the development and delivery of the Variation
SOILS INCLUDING GEOLOGY	S1: Level of damage to the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource in County Galway	S1: Soil extent and hydraulic connectivity	S1: Galway County Council, EPA, GSI.	Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects on a project by project basis where potential

Environmental Component	Indicators	Targets	Responsibility	Frequency / Timing
				for interaction with historical landfill sites occur. Review of CORINE mapping (every c.5 years).
WATER	W1: The quality and status of surface waters	W1i: To maintain and improve, where possible, the status of any surface water or affect the ability of any surface water to achieve 'good status' by 2015 W1ii: To achieve - as a minimum - Mandatory values and, where possible, to achieve Guide values as set by the EU Bathing Water Directive and transposing Bathing Water Quality Regulations (SI No. 79 of 2008)	W1i: Galway County Council, EPA, Western River Basin District Plan stakeholders	On-going regular monitoring supplemented by data arising from development and delivery of measures within the Variation.
	W2: Level of pollution and contamination of ground water	W2: Not to affect the ability of groundwater to comply with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC	W2: Galway County Council, EPA, Western River Basin District Plan stakeholders	On-going regular monitoring supplemented by data arising from development and delivery of measures within the Variation.
	W3: Compliance with the provisions of the Planning System and Flood Risk	W3: Minimise developments granted permission on lands which pose - or are likely to	W3: Galway County Council, EPA	On-going regular monitoring supplemented by data arising from development

Environmental Component	Indicators	Targets	Responsibility	Frequency / Timing
	Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2009)	pose in the future – a significant flood risk in compliance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities		and delivery of measures within the Variation.
MATERIAL ASSETS	M1: Adequacy of new development and appropriate waste water treatment	M1: All new developments granted permission to be connected to and adequately and appropriately served by waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan	M1: Galway County Council, EPA	On-going regular monitoring supplemented by data arising from development and delivery of measures within the Variation.
	M2: Adequacy of drinking water that is both wholesome and clean.	M2: No non-compliances with the 48 parameters identified in the European Communities (Drinking Water) Regulations (No. 2) 2007 which present a potential danger to human health as a result of implementing the Plan.	M2: Galway County Council, EPA	On-going regular monitoring supplemented by data arising from delivery of measures within the variation.
	M3: Level of reduction in waste volumes, waste to landfill and improvement in recycling and reuse.	M3i: Minimise increases in and, where possible, reduce household waste generation M3ii: Maximise increases in packaging recovered (t) by self-complying packagers	M3: Galway County Council, EPA	Annually
	M4: Presence of existing natural resources.	M4: Prevent degradation or exhaustion of natural	M4: Galway County Council, EPA	Annually

Environmental Component	Indicators	Targets	Responsibility	Frequency / Timing
		resources in implementing of the Variation to ensure the economic and social well-being		
AIR & CLIMATE	C1: Level of travel related emissions to air and to encourage modal change from car to more sustainable forms of transport.	<p>C1: An increase in the percentage of the population travelling to work, school or college by public transport or non-mechanical means</p> <p>C1: Promote minimisation of greenhouse gas emissions to the atmosphere</p>	C1: Galway County Council, TII, DTTAS, EPA	On-going regular monitoring supplemented by data arising from development and delivery of the measures within the Variation (every c.2 years).
CULTURAL HERITAGE	CH1: Protection of archaeological heritage including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places and/or their context	CH1: Protect entries to the Record of Monuments and Places - including Zones of Archaeological Potential (and their context of the above within the surrounding landscape where relevant) from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan	CH1: Galway County Council, DAHG, Galway County Heritage Plan stakeholders	Monitoring of Statutory Consultee inputs on environmental effects as particular elements of the Variation are developed and advanced.

Environmental Component	Indicators	Targets	Responsibility	Frequency / Timing
	CH2: Protection of architectural heritage including entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context.	CH2: Percentage of entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan	CH2: Galway County Council, DAHG,	Monitoring of Statutory Consultee inputs on environmental effects as particular elements of the Variation are developed and advanced.
LANDSCAPE	L1: Impacts on the landscape with regard to the County's landscapes which are most valuable and most sensitive to change and protected focal points and views.	L1: No developments permitted which result in avoidable impacts on the landscape - especially with regard to the County's landscapes which are most valuable and most sensitive to change and protected focal points and views - resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan.	L1: Galway County Council, Failte Ireland	Monitoring of Statutory Consultee inputs on environmental effects as particular elements of the Variation are developed and advanced.

EPA: Environmental Protection Agency
Galway LECP: Galway Local Economic and Community Plan
NPWS: National Parks and Wildlife Service
NTA: National Transport Authority
TII: Transport Infrastructure Ireland

DAHRRGA: Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
DCCAE: Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment
DHPCLG: Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government
DTTAS: Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport

11.0 Conclusion

Variation No. 1 to the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021, its policies and objectives are key to the development of a sustainable transport system for Galway City and its environs. The Variation sets out the infrastructural, operational and policy measures located within the Galway County boundary that are necessary to provide Galway County and Galway City with a clear transport implementation framework over the next 20 years.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment process has been carried out in conjunction with the Appropriate Assessment, a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and the preparation of the Variation itself. This allows for an early indication of the potential environmental effects likely to occur as a result of the implementation of the objectives within the Variation. As a result, changes or alterations to the Variation are made throughout the course of its preparation. The benefit of preparing the Variation, the NIR, the SFRA and the Environment Report simultaneously ensures that these issues are highlighted at an early stage in the process. This allows any potential negative impacts arising from the Variation to be predicted early on, evaluated and effectively prevented or mitigated.

The objectives of the Variation were assessed against the Strategic Environmental Objectives and indicate that the full implementation of the Variation will not result in a significant negative or adverse impact on the environmental resources within the plan area. As a result, the Variation will have a neutral to positive impact on the environment as a whole.

Where the SEA has found potential for negative impacts on the environment as a result of the implementation of the Variation, mitigation measures have been proposed. The implementation of these measures, coupled with the monitoring procedures will ensure the Variation is acceptable from an environmental perspective.

In summary, the assessment of the Variation has concluded that its policies and objectives are acceptable and represent a balanced and fair approach to the development of a sustainable transport system for Galway City and its environs. Monitoring of the Variation throughout its lifetime will ensure that any potential adverse environmental impacts, unforeseen at this stage will be identified early, so as to prevent any deterioration of the environment. This Variation, as currently presented, can contribute to the delivery of a sustainable transport system for the inhabitants of the Galway County, Galway City and its environs.

Appendix I: Scoping Submissions

Marian Donohue

From: Planning
Sent: 19 August 2016 15:10
To: Marian Donohue
Subject: FW: EPA Scoping Submission Re: Variation No. 1 of the Galway CDP 2015-2021
Attachments: SCP160706.1 EPA Scoping Submission Var 1 Galway CDP 2015-21.pdf; Generic EPA Scoping Template 2016 For Web.pdf; SCP160402.1 EPA ScopingComments_GalwayTransportStrategy_Cover.pdf; SCP160402.1 EPA ScopingGuidance_GalwayTransportStrategy.pdf

From: Cian O'Mahony [mailto:c.omahony@epa.ie]
Sent: 19 August 2016 12:31
To: Planning <planning@GalwayCoCo.ie>
Subject: EPA Scoping Submission Re: Variation No. 1 of the Galway CDP 2015-2021

Re: SEA Scoping for the Variation No. 1 of the Galway CDP 2015-2021

Dear Ms. Donoghue,

I refer to and acknowledge your correspondence, dated 28th July, in relation to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping for the Proposed Variation No. 1 of the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021 (the Variation).

Specific Comments to be considered

We refer you to the comments made by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in relation to the SEA Scoping of the Galway Transportation Strategy, which should be taken into account at this time also, and which is attached for reference purposes.

Additional comments on the Variation may be provided upon receipt of the Draft Environmental Report and Plan and associated documents during the next statutory consultation phase of the SEA Process.

Scoping Process Guidance

Guidance on the SEA Scoping Process, including an SEA Pack, Integration Guidance, SEA Checklist, SEA Spatial Information Sources and guidance on Integrating Climate Change into SEA, is available on the EPA website and should be considered in the preparation of the SEA. This can be consulted at the following address:
<http://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/ea/>

Guidance on *Developing and Assessing Alternatives in SEA* (EPA, 2015) is also available at:
<http://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/ea/developingandassessingalternativesinsea.html>

SEA WebGIS Search and Reporting Tool

The EPA has launched a new application for the purposes of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for public authorities. It is a GIS based web application that allows users to explore, interrogate and produce an indicative report on key aspects of the environment in specific geographic areas. These reports are indicative and will provide an overview of key aspects of the environment within a specific plan area. This may be used to inform the SEA screening and scoping stages for Plans and Programmes with particular reference in the first instance to the land use sector, though it is also applicable to other sector plans. It may be accessed via www.edenireland.ie

Environmental Authorities

Under the SEA Regulations (*S.I. 436 of 2004*), as amended by *S.I. No. 201 of 2011* notice should also be given to the following:

- The Minister for the Environment, Community & Local Government

- Minister for Agriculture, Marine and Food, and the Minister for Communications Energy and Natural Resources, where it appears to the planning authority that the plan or programme, or modification of the plan or programme, might have significant effects on fisheries or the marine environment
- where it appears to the competent authority that the plan or programme, or amendment to a plan or programme, might have significant effects in relation to the architectural heritage or to nature conservation, the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht Affairs, and
- any adjoining planning authority whose area is continuous to the area of a planning authority which prepared a draft plan, proposed variation or local area plan.

Should you have any queries or require further information in relation to the above please contact the undersigned. I would be grateful if an acknowledgement of receipt of this submission could be sent electronically to the following address: sea@epa.ie.

Yours Sincerely,



*Cian O'Mahony
Scientific Officer
SEA Section
Office of Evidence and Assessment
Environmental Protection Agency
Regional Inspectorate
Inniscarra, County Cork*

This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the EPA postmaster - postmaster@epa.ie

The opinions contained within are personal to the sender and do not necessarily reflect the policy of the Environmental Protection Agency.

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Ms Marian Donoghue
Forward Planning Section
Galway County Council
Áras an Chontae
Prospect Hill
Galway

19th August 2016

Our Ref: SCP160706.1

Re: SEA Scoping for the Variation No. 1 of the Galway CDP 2015-2021

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- Minister for Agriculture, Marine and Food, and the Minister for Communications Energy and Natural Resources, where it appears to the planning authority that the plan or programme, or modification of the plan or programme, might have significant effects on fisheries or the marine environment
- where it appears to the competent authority that the plan or programme, or amendment to a plan or programme, might have significant effects in relation to the architectural heritage or to nature conservation, the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht Affairs, and
- any adjoining planning authority whose area is continuous to the area of a planning authority which prepared a draft plan, proposed variation or local area plan.

Should you have any queries or require further information in relation to the above please contact the undersigned. I would be grateful if an acknowledgement of receipt of this submission could be sent electronically to the following address: sea@epa.ie.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Cian O'Mahony'.

Cian O'Mahony
Scientific Officer
SEA Section
Office of Evidence and Assessment
Environmental Protection Agency
Regional Inspectorate
Inniscarra, County Cork



This guidance document contains information to assist Planning Authorities in the preparation and implementation of SEA for Plans / Programmes / Strategies in Ireland, required to comply with the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC), as transposed into National legislation.

It includes guidance on the SEA Scoping process, the integration of environmental considerations into Plans and reference to key Environmental Legislation/Guidelines. Where references to particular EPA Reports/Publications are referred to, please note that further updated guidance may be available on the EPA website (www.epa.ie), which should also be taken into consideration and incorporated as appropriate.

Please note: This document is regularly updated to incorporate new & updated guidance, legislation etc. While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of this document, this aim of this document is to highlight particular potentially relevant sources of information to included, rather than to provide a definitive list of sources to be used during the scoping process.

SEA Team– Updated: May 2016

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EPA SEA Scoping Submission SEA Process Guidance

EPA SEA Pack

The EPA's SEA Pack, is available as a separate downloadable file. It has been compiled by the EPA and is based on our experience to date as a statutory SEA Environmental Authority and on current best practice in the SEA process. It is a matter for the relevant Local Authorities (the LA) to ensure that the contents of the Pack are taken into account and followed, as appropriate, during the SEA process.

Up-to-date Environmental Monitoring Data etc.

The current state of the environment should be described using most recent and up-to-date environmental data, information and reports. Where updating of significant environmental data and associated reports become available during the SEA process, where possible, this information should be incorporated into the description of the current state of the environment and where relevant related environmental problems. In addition the current state of drinking water quality and treatment, along with waste water effluent quality and treatment infrastructure, should be described using the most recent and up-to-date data, information and reports.

The full range of Water and Air Quality Reports prepared by the EPA are available at <http://www.epa.ie/monitoringassessment/>

Geographical Information Systems

SEA WebGIS & Reporting Tool

The EPA has launched a new application for the purposes of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for public authorities. This is a GIS based web application that will allow users to explore, interrogate and produce an indicative report on key aspects of the environment in specific geographic areas. These reports are indicative and will provide an overview of key aspects of the environment within a specific plan area. This will inform the SEA screening and scoping stages for Plans and Programmes with particular reference in the first instance to the land use sector, though it is also applicable to other sector plans.

This tool is accessible to registered public authorities via EDEN (Environment Data Exchange Network) which is available at the following link www.edenireland.ie

Envision

The EPA's web based Environmental Mapping / Geographical Information System (GIS) ENVision is available at: <http://gis.epa.ie/Envision/>

SEA related Spatial Information Source List

A list of available SEA Spatial Information Sources is available on the EPA website and should be considered in the preparation of the SEA. This can be consulted at the following address: <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/ea/>

The use, and application, of GIS should be considered where possible at the various key stages in the SEA process. GIS could, along with other methodologies, and depending on the availability of relevant spatial data, assist in determining the cumulative vulnerability of various environmental resources within the Plan area. GIS could also demonstrate visually how the Plan might impact on these resources. In undertaking the SEA, all the environmental data and information presented on these GIS based maps should be taken into account.

Status of Current EPA SEA Related Guidance / Research

- [SEA & Climate Change](#) (Available)

- [SEA & Alternatives](#) (Available)
- [GISEA Manual Update](#) (Available)
- Cumulative Effects Assessment (Estimated publication date Q2 2016)
- SEA & Energy (Estimated publication date Q2 2016)

Appropriate Assessment

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) should be taken into account. Appropriate Assessment, in accordance with this 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...”

The LA 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 SEA Environmental Report and 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

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/provision_of_art6_en.pdf

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

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/natura_2000_asses_s_en.pdf

National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2009. Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland http://www.npws.ie/publications/archive/NPWS_2009_AA_Guidance.pdf

National Parks and Wildlife Service, Natura 2000 Screening Protocol – Water Service Plans and Projects <http://www.npws.ie>

Scoping Meetings/Workshops

As part of the SEA Scoping process, we would suggest that the convening of a Scoping Meeting / Workshop with key staff internally within the LA (planning, roads, environment, heritage etc.) be considered. There would also be merits in having personnel from NPWS, DCENR, DECLG and EPA, as appropriate, at this meeting.

For any environmental issue(s) determined to be scoped out of the SEA process, clear justification should be included in the Environmental Report as to why the specific environmental issues were not considered likely to be potentially affected by the Plan.

Alternatives

In considering and assessing alternatives, the alternatives proposed should be reasonable and realistic and should be set at the appropriate strategic level at which the Plan will be

implemented operating within the national planning hierarchy. They should be assessed against the relevant environmental objectives established for the key environmental aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected. Clear justification should be provided for the selection of the preferred alternative/ combination of alternatives.

Where relevant, the development of alternatives should be clearly described. In addition, the methodology applied in the assessment of alternatives along with any assumptions made should be described. The Agency has published an EPA Guidance document [*Developing and Assessing Alternatives in Strategic Environmental Assessment - Good Practice Guidance \(EPA, 2015\)*](#), which should be considered.

Consultation

In order to promote “Best Practice” in SEA in the context of consultation, it is recommended that the public be given an opportunity to make submissions on the issues to be addressed in the SEA process for the Plan. To this effect consideration should be given to the publication of relevant and appropriate notices etc. to inform and engage the wider public in the SEA process.

Following completion of the Draft Scoping Report consideration should be given to the making available of this document on the LA website or other relevant websites.

Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

In assessing the likely significant effects of the Plan on the full range of environmental issues likely to be significantly affected, the full range of effects as set out in Annex I of the SEA Directive – likely significant effects should include- secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long term, permanent, temporary, positive and negative effects, should be assessed and reported on.

Particular reference should be made to the potential for cumulative effects associated with the implementation of the Plan in association with other relevant Plans / Programmes and projects within the Plan area and adjoining areas.

The methodology applied in the assessment of the preferred alternative along with any assumptions made should be described. Where possible and practical, quantitative assessments should be undertaken of the assessment of the preferred alternative/ combination of alternatives.

Mitigation of Significant Effects

Where significant adverse effects are identified associated with the implementation of the Plan, there should be a clear link with relevant and appropriate mitigation measure(s). The emphasis should, in the first instance, be on avoidance of significant adverse effects.

Monitoring Proposals

Monitoring arrangements should be clearly set out along with responsibilities, frequency of monitoring, analysis, and reporting on monitoring. Monitoring arrangements should be sufficiently flexible so as to be able to react to unforeseen / unexpected events. Maximum use should be made of existing environmental monitoring programmes. To this effect, the significant environmental monitoring required under the Water Framework Directive should fulfil most if not all of the requirements with respect to water quality.

The monitoring arrangements and related monitoring programme for the Plan should include relevant and appropriate thresholds which should trigger when remedial action should be undertaken for the particular aspect of the environment being monitored.

Process and SEA-Environmental Report Compliance

The SEA Process for the Plan should comply fully with the procedural and output requirements set out in the SEA Directive, and the relevant national SEA Regulations. The Environmental Report should be prepared in accordance with the specific information specified in Article 5 – Environmental Report, Paragraphs 1 – 3 and Annex I of the SEA Directive.

Integration of SEA and Plan/Programme

Particular emphasis should be given during the SEA and Plan-making process to ensuring that both processes are fully integrated from the outset. Appropriate SEA Team /Plan Team Workshops should be held at key stages during both processes to ensure full engagement, interaction, and sharing of information with key members of both teams and to ensure full integration of environmental considerations in the Plan.

Consideration could also be given to the assigning a facilitator either within or external to the LA with the specific role of ensuring full integration takes place during the SEA process and the Plan making process. This can be particularly beneficial where SEA is being undertaken by the LA.

Documentation of the SEA Process

Where key decisions are made during the SEA process e.g. Scoping In/Out environmental topics, selection of preferred alternative (s) etc. these decisions should be documented as part of an overall SEA/ Plan making process.

Possible Proposed Amendments to the Draft Plan

You are referred to the requirement for any amendments proposed to the Draft Plan, to be assessed for likely significant effects in accordance with the SEA Regulations.

Information on the Decision/ SEA Statement

Following adoption of the Plan the competent authority is required to make available the adopted P/P and a statement setting out relevant “Information on the Decision” as set out in Article 9 of the SEA Directive.

The requirement to prepare an SEA Statement outlining “Information on the Decision” as required by the relevant SEA Regulations in relation to Development Plans should be completed upon adoption of the Plan.

This SEA Statement should summarise the following: how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan; how the Environmental Report, submissions, observations and consultations have been taken into account during the preparation of the Plan; the reasons for choosing the Plan adopted in the light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and, the measures decided upon to monitor the significant environmental effects of implementation of the Plan.

A copy of the SEA Statement with the above information should be sent to any environmental authority consulted during the SEA process.

While not a mandatory requirement consideration should be given at the Draft Plan stage to providing summary key information on: the key findings of the environmental assessment and how these findings have been integrated within the Plan.

SEA Guidance /Methodology

Your attention is brought to the following Guidance/ Methodology, which should be referred to along with other relevant and appropriate SEA and related Guidance during the SEA process:

- *Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland –Synthesis report* (EPA, 2003)

<http://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/ea/developmentofseamethodologiesforplansandprogrammesinireland.html>

- The Department of Environment Community and Local Government Guidelines: “*Implementation of SEA Directive 92001/42/EC): Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment –Guidelines for Local Authorities and Planning Authorities*” (DEHLG, 2004) While the focus is on Land use Planning, this SEA guidance is of relevance.

<http://www.environ.ie/en/Publications/DevelopmentandHousing/Planning/FileDownload,1616,en.pdf>

In addition, to the above, it is brought to your attention that a Draft Consultation SEA Process Checklist has been published on the EPA website. The Checklist can be accessed at the following link: <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/consultation/strategicenvironmentalassessment.html>

The EPA’s SEA Process Checklist in the *Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland –Synthesis report* (EPA, 2003) should also be taken into consideration.

Updated SEA Regulations / Circular

Your attention is brought to the new SEA Regulations, which should be referenced and integrated into the Plan and SEA process.

Two amending SEA Regulations were signed into Irish law on 3 May 2011, amending the original SEA Regulations:

- European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011, (S.I. No. 200 of 2011), amending the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 435 of 2004), and
- Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011, (S.I. No. 201 of 2011), amending the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 436 of 2004).

Your attention is also brought to the DECLG Circular (PSSP 6/2011) issued on the 26th July 2011 to each County/City Manager, Director of Services and Town Clerk in relation to ‘Further Transposition of the EU Directive 2001/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)’ which should also be referred to and integrated into the Plan/Variation/Amendment.

European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011

The requirements of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, (S.I. No. 477 of 2011), should also be taken into account in implementing the Plan. These Regulations consolidate the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997 to 2005 and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) (Control of Recreational Activities) Regulations 2010, as well as addressing transposition failures identified in the CJEU judgements.

Environmental Authorities

Under the SEA Regulations, and as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011 or S.I. No. 200 of 2011, SEA consultation notices should also be made to the following statutory authorities:

- The Minister for the Environment, Community & Local Government
- Minister for Agriculture, Marine and Food, and the Minister for Communications Energy and Natural Resources, where it appears to the planning authority that the plan or programme, or modification of the plan or programme, might have significant effects on fisheries or the marine environment
- Where it appears to the competent authority that the plan or programme, or amendment to a plan or programme, might have significant effects in relation to the architectural heritage or to nature conservation, the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht Affairs, and

[Below bullet only for land use plans]

- Any adjoining planning authority whose area is continuous to the area of a planning authority which prepared a draft plan, proposed variation or local area plan.

A copy of your decision regarding the determination should be made available for public inspection at your offices, local authority website and should also be notified to any Environmental Authorities already consulted.

Integration Of Environmental Considerations

Summary of Latest Updates in 2016

Changes	Comments
19/02/16	Link to Urban Water Treatment Report for 2014 (EPA, 2015)
11/03/16	Link to GIS-SEA Manual
11/03/16	Updated Noise section
24/04/16	Updated link to Bathing Water Quality Report for 2015
19/05/16	Added link to CORINE 2012 Data in Appendix II
19/05/16	Added link to EPA/WRA Draft SEA Resource Manual in Appendix I
30/05/16	Added link to LA Adaptation Strategy Development Guidelines (EPA, 2016)
30/05/16	Added link to Catchments.ie in Appendix I

The Plan should be set in the context of the planning hierarchy and a clear statement should be provided as to the function of the Plan and what the Plan can and cannot do. Where other Plans/Programmes/Strategies are responsible for implementing relevant policies / objectives / initiatives, these should be acknowledged and fully referenced in the Plan.

The Agency responds to Plans on a priority basis. The attached integration document sets out the key environmental issues, as relevant and appropriate, to be taken into account in the preparation of the SEA and the Plan. Specific comments/Further comment will/may be provided upon receipt of the Environmental Report and Draft Plan and associated documents during the next statutory consultation phase of the SEA Process.

The comments below relate to the integration of the environmental considerations and recommendations that have been set out in the Environmental Report, as well as the additional information highlighted by the EPA, within the Plan. Suggestions are put forward for consideration with a view to addressing the integration of a number of key environmental considerations within the Plan.

The EPA is a statutory Environmental Authority under the SEA Regulations. The EPA's role in SEA in relation to Land Use Plans focuses on promoting full integration of the findings of the Environmental Assessment into the Plan. It is not the function of the EPA to either approve or enforce Land Use Plans.

In addition to the generic guidance below, specific environmental information is highlighted in red). Both the generic and specific information should be taken into account in the preparation of the Plan and SEA in the context of integrating the protection of environmental vulnerabilities / sensitivities into the Plan, where relevant and as appropriate.

Status of Current EPA SEA Related Guidance / Research

- [SEA & Climate Change](#) (Available)
- [SEA & Alternatives](#) (Available)
- [GISEA Manual Update](#) (Available)
- Cumulative Effects Assessment (Estimated publication date Q2 2016)
- SEA & Energy (Estimated publication date Q2 2016)

Water

Water Framework Directive

The Plan should promote the protection of surface water, groundwater and coastal/estuarine resources and their associated habitats and species, including fisheries.

Provisions should be made in the Plan for the incorporation of the specific relevant objectives and measures for individual water bodies set out in the relevant River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) and associated Programme of Measures (POM). The Plan should not hinder, and where possible promote the achievement of these specific objectives at water body level. In addition the plan should outline the current water quality status and the status to be achieved by 2015 in any receiving waters covered by the Plan.

You are in particular referred to the Water Maps GIS Tool within this weblink:

<http://www.wfdireland.ie/maps.html>

The full range of Protected Areas within each of the River Basin Districts (RBD's) as set out in Annex IV 1(i) – (v) inclusive of the Water Framework Directive should be taken into account in the Drafting of the Plan.

The EU's *Common Implementation Strategy for the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) – Guidance Document No. 20*, in particular *Section 3.5 Key Issues for Article 4.7 should be taken into account*. Provisions should also be included in the Plan to ensure that any proposed land use zoning or development associated with the Plan is not in breach of the requirements of the Water Framework Directive. The guidance document can be found at:

http://circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/env/wfd/library?l=/framework_directive/guidance_document/documentn20_mars09pdf/EN_1.0_&a=d

The Plan should refer to and incorporate the Surface Water legislation '*Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009*' 2009 (S.I. No 272 of 2009), where relevant and appropriate. You are referred to the Legislation at:

<http://www.environ.ie/en/Environment/Water/WaterQuality/EnvironmentalObjectivesSurfaceWatersRegulations2009/>

The Plan should refer to the recent '*Water Quality in Ireland 2010 – 2012*' (EPA, 2015) as appropriate and relevant. You are referred to the Report at:

<http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/water/waterqua/>

Your attention is brought to the most recent water quality reports for the Western and Southern regions in 2013 (EPA, 2014) which should be integrated as relevant and appropriate. <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/water/waterqua/> . Other water quality reports are available at this link also.

The *European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2014 (S.I. No. 350 of 2014)* have recently been published and is available from the address below. It sets out the roles, and responsibilities of the various stakeholders and the associated requirements in relation to river basin management planning.

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/pdf/2014/en.si.2014.0350.pdf>

Drinking Water/Water Supply

It is noted that since 1st Jan 2014, responsibility for the provision of adequate and appropriate drinking water and waste water services has passed to Irish Water. The SEA and Plan making processes should address (in collaboration with other stakeholders) drinking water supply capacity, leakage and quality in the Plan area. Future predicted increases in population and

demand should be taken into consideration in the context of current drinking water supply and future requirements.

The Plan should implement the European Communities (Drinking Water)(No.2) Regulations 2007 and should include a commitment to include, as appropriate, the relevant recommendations set out in *Drinking Water Report 2014* (EPA, 2015). This Report is available at: <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/water/drinking/>.

The Plan should seek to implement best practice in the provision of appropriate drinking water to service the Plan area.

The Plan should include, where applicable, specific objectives for the improvement of any water supplies in the Plan area. In particular, the Plan should address the specific objectives to be achieved where these water supplies are included on the EPA's Remedial Action List (RAL). The RAL published in the most recent annual Drinking Water report (Q4 of 2015) can be found at: <http://www.epa.ie/downloads/pubs/water/drinking/>. It should be noted that the RAL is a dynamic list which is reviewed quarterly by the EPA, so the current list may differ from that published in the most recent annual Drinking Water Report. Guidance on the Remedial Action List has been prepared by the EPA and is available in Section 6 of the Drinking Water Handbook mentioned above and available at: <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/water/drinking/>

The EPA has published a series of Drinking Water Advice Notes which are available at <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/drinkingwater/> The Planning Authority must develop appropriate solutions that may involve abandoning or replacing drinking water sources, upgrading the treatment facilities or improving management and operational practices.

Waste Water Treatment

The Plan should highlight the requirement under *The Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations* for all wastewater discharges, including storm water discharges which come within the scope of these Regulations to be licensed (for agglomerations over 500pe) or certified (for agglomeration below 500p.e). In this regard, the Plan should highlight the specific requirements of Regulations 43 & 44 of the *Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations, 2007*, S.I. No. 684 of 2007, regarding the consideration of proposals and consultation on such proposals by Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála, where applications for proposed development are being considered and decided upon.

The Plan should include as appropriate measures to improve water quality impacted by waste water discharges as identified in the EPA Waste Water Report and the Water Quality in Ireland reports.

The Plan should implement the Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations 2001 and 2004 and promote, as appropriate, specific provisions for the implementation of the relevant recommendations set out in the *Focus on Urban Waste Water Discharges in Ireland Report in 2014* (EPA, 2015), available at <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/water/wastewater/>

The EPA has published a *Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (p.e ≤ 10)*, (EPA, 2009). The code of practice (CoP) establishes an overall framework of best practice in relation to the development of wastewater treatment and disposal systems, in unsewered rural areas, for protection of our environment and specifically water quality and is available at the following link: <http://www.epa.ie/water/wastewater/guidance/cop/>

The Plan should, where possible and appropriate, include/ and /or promote the inclusion of specific Policies and Objectives regarding the provision and maintenance of adequate and appropriate wastewater treatment infrastructure to service zoned lands and developments within the Plan area.

Where the introduction of additional lands for development is being proposed within the Plan area, relevant Policies/objectives should be included in the Plan, and as appropriate, to promote assessment of the adequacy of the existing wastewater treatment facility (ies) in terms of both capacity and performance and the potential risk to human health and water quality. Where relevant, the potential impact on habitats and species of ecological importance should be addressed.

The Plan should include as appropriate measures to ensure that trade effluent in the area covered by the Plan is managed properly and discharged to sewer in accordance with relevant discharge licences where appropriate.

Groundwater Protection

The Plan should include clear Policy and Objective for the protection of groundwater resources and associated habitats and species. The Plan should make reference to the requirements of the Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC) on the protection of groundwater against pollution and deterioration, which came into force on the 12th December 2006.

This Directive addresses the main elements of groundwater protection as required by Article 17 of the WFD. It establishes underground water quality standards and introduces measures to prevent or limit inputs of pollutants into groundwater. You are referred to the following legislation *European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations 2010* (S.I.9 of 2010) at:

<http://www.environ.ie/en/Environment/Water/WaterQuality/GroundwaterRegulations2010/>

The GSI have launched a new groundwater GIS application which can be accessed at: <http://j.mp/gsigroundwater>. The Agency has also published a number of reports in relation to groundwater which should be integrated as appropriate into the Plan. You are referred to these reports at: <http://www.epa.ie/downloads/pubs/water/ground/>

The Plan should take account of any Groundwater Protection Schemes and Groundwater Source Protection Zones data available at the Geological Survey of Ireland: <http://www.gsi.ie>. Where not already available, the Plan should promote the development of a Groundwater Protection Scheme for the relevant local authority areas covered by the Plan.

Consideration should also be given, where relevant and appropriate, to promotion of the inclusion of Policies and Objectives in the Plan for the following:

- *Enforcement of Planning Conditions related to installation, operation and maintenance of on-site wastewater treatment / septic tank systems.*
- *Connection of all remaining houses within Town Boundary to the Wastewater Treatment Plant.*
- *The development of a wastewater leak detection programme. The use of a strategic metering system to aid in leak detection should be considered*
- *The implementation and enforcement of the European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2009 and associated European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice For Protection Of Waters) Regulations 2010- S.I.610 of 2010.*

Bathing Water

The most recent report on bathing water quality ‘*The Quality of Bathing Water in Ireland – A Report for the Year 2015, (EPA, 2016)*’ sets out the status of Irish Seawater and Freshwater Bathing areas. This report is available at: <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/water/bathing/>

“*The purpose of the Bathing Water Regulations is the protection of human health*”, and the relevant local authorities, where appropriate, “*should ensure that where any bathing water fails the mandatory bathing standards that the public are made ware of this fact by means of information notices posted at the bathing area.*” To this effect the Plan should include as appropriate a Policy/ Objective to ensure this requirement is complied with.

You are also referred to the “*Directive on bathing water (Directive 2006/7/EC)*”. This Directive is implemented in Ireland by the *Bathing Water Quality Regulations 2008 (S.I. No. 79) of 2008*.

The Plan should promote the protection of waters within the Plan area that are used for bathing. In this regard, the EPA’s bathing water GIS resource “*Splash*” is available at: <http://splash.epa.ie/#>

Water Conservation

The Plan should include measures to promote conservation of water. In this context, the development of a Water Conservation Strategy should be considered, and where relevant addressed in combination with adjoining local authorities. The Strategy should address new and existing developments within the Plan area. Where such a Strategy is being developed, specific timescales should be assigned to its preparation with clear responsibilities and timescales for its implementation.

Flood Prevention and Management

The Plan should promote the appropriate zoning of lands and restriction of use in areas liable to flooding to avoid increased risk of flooding of the lands either within or adjoining the zoned areas. A specific Policy should be included to provide for/promote appropriate flood risk assessments to be undertaken, where development(s) and zoning are being proposed in the Plan area where there is risk of flooding.

The Plan should make reference to the E.U Directive (2007/60/EC) on the assessment and management of flood risks entered into force on 12 December 2007. The provisions of this Directive include the development of flood risk management plans.

The Flood Risk Management approach as adopted by the Office of Public Works (OPW) should be promoted, as appropriate, in consultation with the OPW where there is potential risk of flooding in the Plan area. You are referred to the Planning Guidelines on flooding in “*The Planning System and Flood Risk Management - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Environment, Heritage and Local Government – OPW, November 2009* which can be consulted at:

<http://www.environ.ie/en/Publications/DevelopmentandHousing/Planning/NationalSpatialStrategy/Flood%20Risk%20Management/>

The Plan should promote the development, where appropriate, of adaptation measures to account for the likely increased risk of flooding due to Climate Change within the Plan area.

The Plan should include measures to promote the implementation of adequate and appropriate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems.

The Plan should provide for protection, management, and as appropriate, enhancement of existing wetland habitats where flood protection/management measures are necessary. See definition of “Wetlands” in - *Wetlands Conservation and Protection in EPA Code of Practice: Environmental Risk Assessment for Waste Sites (EPA, 2007)*. The full report is available at: <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/waste/waste/>.

Integration of infrastructure, zoning and development

Where zoning/rezoning of lands and the introduction of new development is being proposed within the Plan area, the Plan should ensure the adequacy of the existing water supply/wastewater treatment facilities and associated networks are assessed. This should address both capacity and performance and the potential risk to human health, water quality and water quantity. The potential impact on habitats and species of ecological importance should also be addressed as appropriate, from pressures impacting on water quality and quantity.

Zoning for development within the Plan area should be linked to availability and adequacy of water supply/waste water treatment infrastructure and capacity. The provision of adequate and appropriate infrastructure in advance of development within the Plan area should be promoted through the Plan.

The implications of Flood Risk likely to be associated with already zoned and undeveloped lands in the Plan area should also be considered. This should be considered in the context of possible rezoning options as appropriate.

The above requirements should be promoted in the Plan and as appropriate should be reflected in relevant Policies/Objectives.

Biodiversity

The Convention on Biological Diversity defines biodiversity as “*the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part.*” This includes sites, habitats, species and networks of importance at the international, national or local level, and which may occur within or outside the Plan area. The Plan should include clear Objectives to conserve and protect all designated sites within and adjacent to the Plan area (including the habitats and/or species for which they have been selected, or which they support), and should also promote the protection of undesignated sites and local biodiversity features.

- The main elements of biodiversity are:
 - European (Natura 2000) sites (SACs and SPAs, and candidate SACs and SPAs),
 - NHAs, National Parks, Nature Reserves, Wildfowl Sanctuaries, Refuges for Fauna or Flora or sites proposed for designation,
 - Undesignated sites such as proposed NHAs (pNHAs), local biodiversity areas,
 - Sites and habitats that can be considered to be corridors or stepping stones for the purpose of Article 10 of the Habitats Directive,
 - ‘Natural habitats and protected species’ for the purposes of the Environmental Liability Directive, including habitats and species listed under the Habitats Directive (Annex I habitats, Annex II and Annex IV species and their habitats) and Birds Directives (Annex I species and their habitats, and regularly occurring migratory birds) wherever they occur,
 - Legally protected species including protected flora under the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 and Wildlife Acts 1976-2000,
 - Sites identified under the Bern, Ramsar and Bonn Conventions,

- Biodiversity in general including habitats important for birds, red listed and BoCCI listed species, natural and semi-natural habitat areas including wetlands, woodlands, waterbodies, etc.

EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland

Habitats Directive

The Plan should include, where relevant, a specific commitment to deliver the requirement of the Habitats Directive (Article 4, Paragraph 4) for the maintenance or restoration of annexed habitats and species within SACs at a “favourable conservation status”. In particular, the Plan should include a specific Policy/Objective for promoting the maintenance and, as appropriate, achievement of favourable conservation status of habitats and species, in association with the NPWS and other stakeholders. (See section on Annex I, II and IV below)

In addition, provisions should be made in the Plan to deliver the requirements of Article 3, Paragraph 3, to “*improve the ecological coherence of Natura 2000 by maintaining, and where appropriate developing, features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora*”. (see section on green infrastructure below)

Further, the Plan should include a Policy/Objective to reflect the provisions of Article 10 of the Habitats Directive:

“Member States shall endeavour, where they consider it necessary, in their land-use planning and development policies, and in particular, with a view to improving the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 Network, to encourage the management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora. Such features are those which, by virtue of their linear and continuous structure (such as rivers with their banks or the traditional systems for marking field boundaries) or their function as stepping stones (such as ponds or small woods), are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.”

Annex I/ Annex II /Annex IV Habitats Directive

The Plan should also commit to the protection of SACs, Annex I habitats and Annex II and Annex IV species and their key habitats which occur within and adjoining the Plan area as per the Habitats Directive and Environmental Liability Directive.

Birds Directive

The Plan should include a commitment to protect SPAs, Annex I bird species, and regularly occurring migratory bird species and their habitats, and to avoid pollution or deterioration of important bird habitats outside SPAs (as per Article 4(4) of the Birds Directive). The Plan should also promote the protection of wetlands and, in particular, wetlands of international importance as required by Article 4, Paragraph 2 of the Birds Directive.

Appropriate Assessment

The Plan should promote the setting up of procedures to ensure compliance with the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, and should be itself subject to Appropriate Assessment (AA). The Plan also should include a clear Policy/Objective that sets out a requirement for AA Screening for new, reviewed or amended Plans and proposed projects being prepared by the local authority for the Plan area, which may have the potential to impact on European sites. Potential for cumulative/in-combination effects associated with other relevant Plans/Programmes/Projects should also be determined.

A determination for the requirement for an Appropriate Assessment of all Land Use Plans and related variations should be made in consultation with the DAHG - National Parks and Wildlife Service, and this should be highlighted in the Plan.

The Plan should promote the application of the Guidance set out in the recent DoEHLG Publication ‘*Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland- Guidance for Planning Authorities* (2009; revision 2010)’, which can be found at:

<http://www.npws.ie/en/media/NPWS/Publications/CodesofPractice/AA%20Guidance.pdf>

Other NPWS and EU guidance on Appropriate Assessment for planning authorities is available here: <http://www.npws.ie/planning/appropriateassessment/>

The Plan should also promote the application of the EU Guidance “*Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites*” and “*Managing Natura 2000 Sites*”, which can be found at the links below. Section 3.6 “*Habitats Directive Article 6(3) and (4) Assessment Review Package*” of the former is of particular relevance and can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/natura_2000_asses_s_en.pdf

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/provision_of_art6_en.pdf

The Plan should include Policies/Objectives to ensure that the local authority, in fulfilling its responsibilities in the supply of services, zoning of lands and undertaking and authorisation of development, addresses the potential effects on biodiversity and the needs of priority habitats and species which occur within or adjoining the LA areas, as identified in the National Parks and Wildlife Service Report “*The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland*”, (NPWS, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2008). <http://www.npws.ie/en/media/Media,6440,en.pdf>

Water Framework Directive

The Water Framework Directive Register of Protected Areas (www.wfdireland.ie), and in particular those protected areas relating to biodiversity. The Plan should include policies/objectives for the protection of these areas occurring within and adjacent to the Plan area.

The *Plan* should incorporate, as relevant, the objectives of the Water Framework Directive River Basin Management Plans. Consideration should also be given to the protection of Freshwater Pearl Mussels. Copies of the Draft Management Plans and Programmes of Measures for this species can be accessed at: http://www.wfdireland.ie/docs/5_FreshwaterPearlMusselPlans/

Fisheries

The Plan should promote the protection of salmonid waters, designated fisheries and shellfisheries where relevant and appropriate within each Plan area and adjoining LA areas.

The Plan should promote the guidance from Inland Fisheries Ireland (formed from the amalgamation of the Regional Fisheries Boards in July 2010), including where appropriate and relevant:

- *Guidelines to the Planning, Design, Construction and Operation of Small Scale Hydro Electric Schemes and Fisheries*
- *10 steps to environmentally friendly drainage maintenance*

See: <http://www.fisheriesireland.ie/Research/recent-publications.html>

Nationally Designated Habitats and Species

The Plan should include policies/objectives for the protection of NHAs, National Parks, Nature Reserves, Wildfowl Sanctuaries, Refuges for Fauna or Flora and sites proposed for designation. In addition, species protected under the Wildlife Acts including protected flora (Flora (Protection) Order, 1999 – S.I. No. 94 of 1999) should be taken into account. Consideration should be given to protecting proposed NHAs in a similar way to fully designated NHAs.

Other (Undesignated) Biodiversity Considerations

The Plan should promote the protection of non-designated areas including the protection of habitats, species and local biodiversity features including rivers, wetlands, hedgerows, individual trees, streams, grassland, coastal areas etc.). The protection of habitats in undesignated areas such as pNHAs, and species found on Irish Red Lists and Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (BoCCI), should also be promoted in the Plan. These can be found at: <http://www.npws.ie/publications/redlists/>

Buffer Zones / Linkages

The Plan should promote the provision/application of appropriate buffer zones between designated ecological sites and areas zoned for development, and should take cognisance of potential boundary changes to designated sites made during the lifetime of the Plan. Where the application of buffer zones is being considered, you should consult with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG). Inland Fisheries Ireland should also be consulted where fisheries protection is a concern/objective.

The provision of appropriate buffer zones between local (undesignated) biodiversity features and areas zoned for development should be considered. The Plan should promote the protection of linkages between local biodiversity features and ecological networks, e.g. hedgerows, watercourses etc. Opportunities for enhancement of local biodiversity features should be promoted where appropriate.

A relevant policy should be included to maintain or enhance biodiversity richness by protecting rivers, stream corridors and valleys by reserving riparian zones/ecological corridors, maintaining them free from inappropriate development, discouraging culverting or realignment, and promoting natural flood functions.

Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure is the network of green spaces, habitats and ecosystems, including wild, semi natural and developed environments, which provide multiple social, environmental and economic benefits to society (including ecosystem services). Consideration should be given to including policies/objectives in the Plan for the development of green infrastructure within the Plan area. You are referred to the EPA funded *EcoPlan* project for information on current green infrastructure practice in Ireland, available at www.ecoplanresearch.org

Consideration should be given to providing a Plan lead approach to the inclusion of green infrastructure taking into account the above guidelines as relevant and appropriate.

Habitat Mapping

Plans with landuse zoning should be supported/informed by available habitat information and maps (including wetland mapping) and other ecological surveys. Where these are not available, consideration should be given to including a policy/objective in the Plan for carrying out future habitat mapping. Consideration should also be given to reviewing existing

Habitat Maps with a view to updating as appropriate. This Habitat Mapping should be undertaken at an appropriate scale and in accordance with the Heritage Council's "*Best Practice Guidance to Habitat Mapping and Survey*" available at <http://www.heritagecouncil.ie/wildlife/publications/>. It should be undertaken on a phased basis and should have specific timescales assigned. The scope of the proposed habitat mapping should be agreed in consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, DAHG, the Heritage Council, Inland Fisheries Ireland, and other relevant statutory and non-statutory nature conservation interest groups.

Biodiversity Action Plans

The Plan should, where relevant and appropriate, refer to and integrate the new National Biodiversity Action Plan, *Ireland's National Biodiversity Plan – Actions for Biodiversity 2011-16* (DoAHG, 2011). You are referred to this at:

<http://www.npws.ie/legislationandconventions/nationalbiodiversityplan/>

The Plan also should support/acknowledge existing Local Heritage/Biodiversity Plans and should promote the implementation of key actions set out in these Plans. Where not already prepared and adopted through County Development Plans, the Plan should promote the preparation of County and, where relevant and appropriate, Local Heritage/Biodiversity Plans. These county/local plans should reflect the actions/goals of the National Biodiversity Action Plan.

Data Sources / Resources

Alien Species & Noxious Weeds

The *Plan* should promote the implementation of measures to control and manage alien/invasive species (e.g. Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed, Zebra Mussel etc.) and noxious weeds (e.g. Ragwort, Thistle, Dock etc.) within the Plan area according to best practice (as per the new Birds and Habitats Regulations).

Management Plans for Designated Areas

The availability of conservation objectives and Management Plans for European sites within the Plan area should be determined. Where available, the Plan should include a specific Policy/Objective in local authority land use Plans to take into account the objectives and management practices proposed in the available Management Plans.

Air, Noise And Climatic Factors

Noise

The objectives of EU and Irish noise legislation is "*to avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole*", and this includes noise nuisance. To this effect the Plan should ensure this requirement is complied with. **The assessment and management of noise from the main infrastructural transport sources (roads, rail, and airports) are governed by the Environmental Noise Directive and associated 2006 Environmental Noise Regulations (S.I. 140 of 2006). In this context, as appropriate, the Plan should also promote the implementation of Environmental Noise Directive and associated national regulations.**

Available Noise Action Plans should be taken into account also and reviewed as required, to reflect the Plan period and associated development proposals. Consideration should be given to any relevant noise maps, and action plans. Strategic noise maps are designed to assess noise exposure resulting from major roads, railways and airports. Noise action plans are designed to act as a means of managing environmental noise through land use planning, traffic management and control of noise sources. The third round of noise mapping is



currently underway in Ireland and will be completed in 2018.
<http://noise.eionet.europa.eu/help.html>.

Consideration should be given to protect any designated quiet areas in open country. In 2003, the EPA commissioned a [research project](#) to establish baseline data for the identification of quiet areas in rural locations. Quiet Areas are defined as “*an area in open country, substantially unaffected by anthropogenic noise.*” A range of minimum distance criteria from man-made noise sources such as urban areas, industry and major road sources were defined, and the report includes a number of key recommendations for the identification and control of Quiet Areas.

Air & Climatic Factors

Consideration should be given to promoting specific Policies / Objectives in the Plan for the protection and improvement, as appropriate, of air quality within the Plan area, particularly in areas zoned for increased urban and transport related development.

The Plan should promote specific Policies/Objectives and associated provisions for the development and promotion of appropriate climate change adaptation and mitigation measures that can be implemented through relevant land use plans and/or specific plans e.g. Flood Risk Management Plans, Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plans etc.

The Plan should also promote the inclusion of specific Policies, which promote the integration of the implications of Climate Change at a regional and local level, in land use planning within the Plan area. In particular the Plan should refer to *Ireland's National Climate Strategy 2007 – 2012*. This is available at:
<http://www.environ.ie/en/Environment/Atmosphere/ClimateChange/>

The Plan should also address how climate change might impact on the implementation of the *Plan*. In this regard you are referred to the potential impact of climate change on “increased risk of flooding” and possible “increased occurrence of drought conditions”

You are referred to *Air Quality in Ireland 2014, (EPA, 2015)*, which sets out the most recent status in each of the four air quality zones in Ireland. You are referred to this report at: <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/air/quality/>. A number of useful reports on air quality indices and health related aspects are also available for download at the same link.

The objectives of EU and Irish air quality legislation is “*to avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole*”, and the relevant local authorities, where appropriate, “*shall promote the preservation of best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development.*” To this effect the Plan should include as appropriate a Policy/Objective to ensure this requirement is complied with.

Consideration should be given to promoting specific Policies / Objectives in the Plan for the protection and improvement, as appropriate, of air quality within the Plan area, particularly in areas zoned for increased urban and transport related development.

Radon

The Plan should consider the significant concentrations of radon, which may occur within the Plan area. Radon Maps are now provided by the EPA at:
<http://www.epa.ie/radiation/radonmap/> and should be consulted with regard to assessing the risk of radon, which should be taken into account as appropriate into the Plan.

Energy Conservation/Renewable Energy

Consideration should be given to the inclusion in the Plan, as appropriate, of a Policy/Objective in relation to the preparation and implementation of “An Energy Conservation Strategy” and associated awareness campaign within the Plan area. Specific timescales should be assigned to the preparation of such a strategy.

The Plan should promote, where appropriate, the use of renewable energy systems (e.g. solar, wind, geothermal etc.) within the Plan area. The Plan should also provide for promotion of energy conservation measures in buildings. Relevant guidance can be found on the website of Sustainable Energy Ireland: www.sei.ie.

Landscape Character Assessment

The Plan should promote the protection of designated scenic landscapes, scenic views, scenic routes and landscape features of regional, county and local value. Where not already available the Plan should promote the undertaking of Landscape Character Assessment in accordance with the relevant Guidance from the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and the Heritage Council.

The Plan should also take into account the landscape character adjoining the Plan area. There is a need to take into account landscape features and designations adjoining the Plan area.

Consideration should also be given to promoting the requirement for an appropriate “Visual Impact Assessment” for proposed development with potential to impact adversely on significant landscape features within the Plan area. The Plan should promote the application of standard impact assessment methodology for all such development.

Consideration should also be given to the promotion of the designation, and use of, agreed and appropriate viewing points for these assessments. The scope of each assessment should be agreed in consultation with the relevant Planning Department staff.

The Plan should promote the recognition of visual linkages between established landmarks and landscape features and views which should be taken into account when land is being zoned and when individual development proposals are being assessed / considered within the Plan area.

Geology / Geomorphology

Where relevant and appropriate, the Plan should promote the protection of any designated Geological and Geomorphological NHAs/pNHAs, which may be present within or adjacent to the Plan area. The Geological Survey of Ireland should be consulted in this regard.

Human Health / Quality Of Life

The Plan should ensure provision of adequate and appropriate infrastructure and to serve both the existing community and likely future predicted increases in population within the Plan area.

In preparing the Plan, there would be merits in exploring current practice and opportunities with respect to promoting the protection and, as appropriate, improvement of “Quality of Life”. Where relevant, the application of existing “Quality of Life Indices” would be considered in consultation with relevant statutory and non-statutory bodies/organisations.

You are also referred the relevant aspects already referred to above under water, biodiversity, air, energy.

Transportation

The Plan should promote and, as appropriate provide for, the provision of sustainable modes of transport. The *Department of Transport 2020 Vision – Sustainable Travel and Transport Public Consultation Document (February 2009)* should be reviewed in the context of possible initiatives which could be included as Objectives within the Plan.

Tourism

The Plan should promote where relevant and appropriate long term, sustainable planning for tourism within the Plan area. There may be merits in considering the promotion of the preparation of Integrated Sustainable Regional Tourism Strategy for the region.

Infrastructure Planning

The Plan should promote the integrated planning for adequate and appropriate infrastructure to service any development proposed and authorised during the lifetime of the Plan.

In particular, the Plan should promote the provision of adequate and appropriate wastewater treatment, water supply, surface and storm water drainage, transport, waste management, community services and amenities etc. on planned and phased basis to address any current problems and/or deficits and to reflect predicted increases in population during the life of individual plans adopted within the Plan area.

The Plan should promote the development of traffic management measures to reduce the potential for traffic congestion and associated vehicular emissions within the Plan area. In particular the preparation of Integrated Traffic Management Plans, where relevant and appropriate, for the existing urban areas and proposed new urban developments should be promoted as appropriate through the Plan. This approach should address the short, medium and long-term traffic management requirements within the Plan area.

Urban Waste Water Discharge Licensing

The Plan should refer to the requirement under The Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations (as described in *Section 1.3 Wastewater Treatment* above) for all wastewater discharges, including storm water discharges which come within the scope of these Regulations to be licensed. The EPA is currently in the process of licensing discharges from wastewater treatment facilities.

Waste Management

The Plan should promote the integration of land use zoning and development to existing and planned availability of waste infrastructure and capacity. Priority should be given to provision of adequate and appropriate waste related infrastructure in advance of any development.

The Plan should seek to incorporate relevant guidance and legislation to address issues such as Waste Prevention, Food Wastes, Identification of Historic Landfill Sites, Backyard Burning, Illegal Dumping, Brown Field Development etc

The Plan should promote and incorporate the information, and any recommendations, in the following EPA reports:

- *The Nature and Extent of Unauthorised Waste Activity in Ireland (Sep 2005)* - This report sets out the findings of a nationwide investigation by the EPA's Office of Environmental Enforcement (OEE) on unauthorised waste activities in Ireland and sets out an Action Plan to deal with the issue. You are referred to the report at: <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/waste/unauthorisedwaste/>
- *National Waste Report 2012 (EPA, 2014)* and *Ireland-Progress towards EU waste targets*. These are available at: <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/waste/stats/>
- *National Hazardous Waste Management Plan 2014-2020* – available at <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/waste/haz/>
- *Ireland's Environment 2012* – State of the Environment report - This fifth state of the environment report evaluates the state of the environment across a number of themes including, water quality, air quality and emissions, waste, chemicals, land and soil. You are referred to this report at: <http://www.epa.ie/irelandsenvironment/>

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

The Plan should highlight that, under the EIA and Planning and Development Regulations, certain projects arising during the implementation of the Plan may require an Environmental Impact Assessment. There are also requirements with regard to EIA for sub-threshold development. In this regard, you are referred to the following Publications:

- “*Guidelines on Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements*” (EPA, 2002).
- “*Advice Notes on Current Practice in the preparation of Environmental Impact Statements*”, (EPA, 2003).

These documents are available at: <http://www.epa.ie/monitoringassessment/assessment/eia/>

In addition to the above, you are referred to the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government's Publication: “*Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidance for consent Authorities regarding sub-threshold development*”, (DEHLG, 2003), which can be downloaded

at <http://www.environ.ie/en/DevelopmentHousing/PlanningDevelopment/EnvironmentalAssessment/EIASEAGuidance/>

An unofficial consolidated version of the Planning and Development Regulations, which includes all recent amendments to the threshold levels for EIA is available at

<http://www.environ.ie/en/DevelopmentHousing/PlanningDevelopment/Planning/PlanningLegislation-Overview/PlanningRegulations/>. You are also referred to the European Commission's review of the EIA Directive which can be found, along with an informal consolidated version of the EIA Directive, at <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eia/review.htm>

It should be noted that Projects may also require Appropriate Assessment screening with respect to the requirement for Habitats Directive, as required by Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. In this context, you are also referred to the DEHLG guidance available in relation to Appropriate Assessment ‘*Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland*’ (DEHLG, 2009) at:

<http://www.npws.ie/en/media/NPWS/Publications/CodesofPractice/AA%20Guidance.pdf>

Strategic Environmental Assessment(SEA)

Consideration should be given to the inclusion of a specific Policy/Objective in the Plan to ensure full compliance, with the requirements of *Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment* – The SEA Directive and the associated *Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations, 2004*.

The Plan should promote the development and implementation of Procedures to ensure compliance with the requirements of the SEA Directive and related SEA Regulations.

EPA Report: Ireland’s Environment 2012 “Main Environmental Challenges“

The Plan should include relevant Policies and Objectives to address, where appropriate, the “Environmental Challenges and Priorities” for Ireland as set out in Chapter 10 of EPA *Ireland’s Environment 2012* (EPA, 2012). These are as follows:

Environmental Goals

- Limiting and Adapting to Climate Change
- Protecting Water Resources
- Sustainable Use of Resources
- Clean Air
- Protection of Soil and Biodiversity
- Integration and Enforcement

Environmental Challenges

- Valuing and Protecting our Natural Environment
- Building a Resource-Efficient, Low Carbon Economy
- Implementing Environmental Legislation
- Putting the Environment at the Centre of Decision Making
- Meeting the Challenges to Build a Sustainable Ireland

The Report can be downloaded at:

<http://www.epa.ie/irelandsenvironment/irelandsenvironment2012/#d.en.44040>

The LA in implementing the Plan and in fulfilling its responsibilities should ensure Plan – making authorities take into account and address, where appropriate, the relevant Environmental Challenges” set out above.

Additional Environmental Resources

SEA WebGIS & Reporting Tool

The EPA has launched a new application for the purposes of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for public authorities. This is a GIS based web application that will allow users to explore, interrogate and produce an indicative report on key aspects of the environment in specific geographic areas. These reports are indicative and will provide an overview of key aspects of the environment within a specific plan area. This will inform the SEA screening and scoping stages for Plans and Programmes with particular reference in the first instance to the land use sector, though it is also applicable to other sector plans.

This tool is accessible to registered public authorities via EDEN (Environment Data Exchange Network) which is available at the following link www.edenireland.ie

Envision

The EPA's web based Environmental Mapping / Geographical Information System (GIS) ENVision is available at: <http://gis.epa.ie/Envision/>

SEA related Spatial Information Source List

A list of available SEA Spatial Information Sources is available on the EPA website and should be considered in the preparation of the SEA. This can be consulted at the following address: <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/ea/>

Hydrometrics

Consideration should be given to incorporating hydrometric information, as relevant and appropriate, into the Plan, particularly in relation to water services and wastewater treatment. You are referred to the Agency's available information in this regard at: <http://www.epa.ie/water/wm/hydrometrics/network/>

Mineral Abstraction and Natura 2000 Sites

The EU guidance in relation to “*Undertaking Non-Energy Extractive Activities in Accordance with Natura 2000 Requirements*”

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/nee_i_n2000_guidance.pdf

Port Development, Dredging and Natura 2000 sites

The European Commission's guidelines on ‘*The implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives in Estuaries and Coastal Zones - with particular attention to port development and dredging*’ (European Commission, 2011) should be taken into account as appropriate. These guidelines are available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/maritime/doc/guidance_doc.pdf.

Wind Energy Developments and Natura 2000 Sites

EU Guidance: “*Wind Energy Developments and Natura 2000 sites*” (October 2010):

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/Wind_farms.pdf

European Environmental Agency “10 Message” Publications

The European Environment Agency (EEA) has released a series of publications which provide a short assessment of European Biodiversity and associated climate change impacts on a range of ecosystems. These topics include: *Protected Areas, Freshwater Ecosystems, Marine Ecosystems, Forest Ecosystems, Urban Ecosystems, Agriculture Ecosystems, Mountain Ecosystems, Coastal Ecosystems and Cultural landscapes and biodiversity heritage*. These are available at: <http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/10-messages-for-2010>

Ramsar “Wise Use of Wetlands” Handbooks

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands has released a series of handbooks on the “wise use of wetlands” which can be found at http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-pubs-handbooks/main/ramsar/1-30-33_4000_0 “*Handbook 13 Inventory, Assessment and Monitoring*” of wetlands may be of particular relevance: <http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/lib/hbk4-13.pdf>

Invasive Species

Invasive Species Action Plans are available for a number of species on the Invasive Species Ireland website. Information on invasive species can be found at: <http://www.invasivespeciesireland.com/>

The National Biodiversity Data Centre website <http://invasives.biodiversityireland.ie/> contains online maps and information showing the distribution of invasive species on a national level which should be consulted where relevant.

The National Roads Authority has produced a report entitled the “Management of Noxious Weeds and Non-Native Invasive Plant Species on National Roads” which can be found at: <http://www.nra.ie/Publications/DownloadableDocumentation/Environment/file.16172,en.pdf>

Green Infrastructure

- <http://www.irishlandscapeinstitute.com/home.html>
- <http://www.uep.ie/news/greencity.htm>
- <http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/green-infrastructure-and-territorial-cohesion>
- <http://www.comharsdc.ie/files/Comhar%20Green%20infrastructure%20report%20final.pdf>

National Parks and Wildlife Service

The National Parks and Wildlife Service holds data and information on nature conservation sites, ecological survey datasets, including data on certain habitats and species inside and outside designated sites, ecological survey reports and ecological monitoring reports, including as summarised in *The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland* (NPWS, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2008).
<http://www.npws.ie/en/media/Media,6440,en.pdf>

National Biodiversity Data Centre (the Data Centre)

The National Biodiversity Data Centre website, <http://www.biodiversityireland.ie/>, is a national resource, presenting data and information on all aspects of biodiversity. It also serves as a link between the Data Centre knowledgebase and the provision of high quality information to improve decision making. Key features of the website include:

- Easy access to detailed information on over 1.5 million observations of Ireland’s wildlife (as of July 2011).
- a dedicated mapping tool for information on Ireland’s threatened habitats and species which serves as a portal to data and information on all species protected under legislation in Ireland and all Red Listed species, available at: <http://maps.biodiversityireland.ie/>
- An inventory of the primary sources of data on Ireland’s biodiversity resource <http://biodiversity.biodiversityireland.ie/>

- A latest news feature to highlight any new developments in wildlife recording and surveying in Ireland

Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland

The SEAI have produced a guidance document entitled '*Methodology for Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategies*' (2013) which should be taken into consideration by local authorities in the preparation of renewable energy strategies. This document is available at http://www.seai.ie/Publications/Renewables_Publications/Wind_Power/Methodology_for_Local_Authority_RE_Strategies/Methodology_for_Local_Authority_Renewable_Energy_Strategies.pdf

Scottish Government - SEA Guidance (2013)

This guidance is available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/08/3355>

The **Scottish SEA Database** provides many examples of completed SEA reports, which practitioners can feel free to use as a guide. www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/environmental-assessment/sea/SEAG

SEPA has also updated the Scottish information in the SEA guidance website on how to take into account air, soil and water in Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

www.seaguidance.org.uk. This website provides:

- sources of information and details of current legislation and other relevant plans and programmes, state of the environment and trends;
- advice on assessment methods such as setting objectives for air, soil and water;
- Examples of cumulative effects, mitigation and enhancement measures; monitoring frameworks and significance criteria for assessing effects.

Appendix I: Some Useful Environmental Resources

Environmental Criteria	Selected Resources
State of Environment	http://www.epa.ie/irelandsenvironment
Surface Water	http://www.wfdireland.ie/index.html http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/water/waterqua/ http://www.catchments.ie (launching June 2016)
Ground Water	http://j.mp/gsigroundwater http://www.epa.ie/downloads/pubs/water/ground/
Drinking Water	http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/water/drinking/
Waste Water	http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/water/wastewater/
Bathing Water	http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/water/bathing http://splash.epa.ie/#
Marine	http://www.marine.ie/Home/site-area/home/home
Biodiversity	http://www.npws.ie/guidance-appropriate-assessment-planning-authorities http://www.npws.ie/publications http://maps.biodiversityireland.ie/#/Home
Flood Prevention and Management	www.floodmaps.ie www.cfram.ie
Air	http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/air/quality/
Climate	http://www.environ.ie/en/Environment/Atmosphere/ClimateChange/ http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/research/climate/
Waste Management	http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/waste/
Radon	http://www.epa.ie/radiation/radonmap
Energy Conservation	www.sei.ie
Landscape Character Assessment	http://www.heritagecouncil.ie/
Geology / Geomorphology	http://www.gsi.ie/Mapping.htm
Transportation	https://www.nationaltransport.ie/planning-policy/ http://www.nra.ie/environment/
SEA	www.edenireland.ie (SEAGIS Reporting Tool) http://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/ea/ http://www.epa.ie/pubs/consultation/manual/
EIA	http://www.environ.ie/en/DevelopmentHousing/PlanningDevelopment/EnvironmentalAssessment/EIASEAGuidance

Environmental Criteria	Selected Resources
Spatial Planning GIS	www.myplan.ie http://www.epa.ie/soilandbiodiversity/soils/land/corine/
DECLG Guidelines / Legislation	http://www.environ.ie/en/DevelopmentHousing/PlanningDevelopment/Planning/
Flood Risk	www.cfram.ie www.floodmaps.ie



Ms Sharon Connolly
Senior Engineer
Planning and Transportation Department
Galway City Council
City Hall
College Road
Galway

19th May 2016

Our Ref: SCP160402.1

Re: Scoping Report for Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Galway Transport Strategy 2016-2036

Dear Ms. Connolly,

I refer to and acknowledge your correspondence, dated 28th April, in relation to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping for the Galway Transport Strategy 2016-2036 (the Strategy).

Comments to be considered

A number of key aspects to be considered are outlined below and should be taken into account in the draft Strategy and SEA.

Supporting Achievement of a Low Carbon Economy

We welcome the intention to promote the increased use of public transport, cycling and walking within the Strategy. In seeking to support achieving a low carbon economy, it is important to consider and manage transport related emissions within the Strategy area.

Traffic Management

The Strategy should consider the development of traffic management measures to reduce the potential for traffic congestion and associated vehicular emissions. Traffic/transport management planning should consider and address the short, medium and long-term traffic management requirements within the Strategy area over the lifetime of the Strategy.

Noise

The assessment and management of noise from the main infrastructural transport sources (roads, rail, and airports) are governed by the Environmental Noise Directive and associated 2006 Environmental Noise Regulations (S.I. 140 of 2006). The Strategy should promote the implementation of this Directive and associated national regulations. <http://www.environ.ie/environment/noise/si-140-2006-environmental-noise-regulations-2006>

Available Noise Action Plans should be taken into account also and reviewed as required, to reflect the Strategy period and associated development proposals. Incorporating any relevant noise maps, and action plans may also be useful. Strategic noise maps are designed to assess noise exposure resulting from major roads, railways and airports. Noise action plans are



designed to act as a means of managing environmental noise through land use planning, traffic management and control of noise sources. The third round of noise mapping is currently underway in Ireland and will be completed in 2018. Further information on this is available at <http://noise.eionet.europa.eu/help.html>.

The Strategy should consider protecting, where relevant, any designated quiet areas in open country. In 2003, the EPA commissioned a [research project](#) to establish baseline data for the identification of quiet areas in rural locations. Quiet Areas are defined as “*an area in open country, substantially unaffected by anthropogenic noise.*” A range of minimum distance criteria from man-made noise sources such as urban areas, industry and major road sources were defined, and the report includes a number of key recommendations for the identification and control of Quiet Areas.

Air Quality

The need to protect and improve, (as appropriate), air quality within the Strategy area, particularly in areas zoned for increased urban and transport related development should be highlighted in the Strategy. Air quality legislation in Ireland highlights the need “*to avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole*”. In addition, it requires that Local Authorities where appropriate “*shall promote the preservation of best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development*”. These requirements should be incorporated by means of a specific objective.

Some Additional Plans / Programmes to Consider

- National Planning Framework
- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy
- National Mitigation Plan
- Wild Atlantic Way
- Galway Port-related Development
- Dublin - Galway Greenway
- River Basin Management Planning (second cycle currently under preparation)

The attached integration document sets out the key environmental issues, as relevant and appropriate, to be taken into account in the preparation of the SEA and Strategy.

Specific comments may be provided upon receipt of the Draft Environmental Report and Strategy and associated documents during the next statutory consultation phase of the SEA Process.

Scoping Process Guidance

Guidance on the SEA Scoping Process, including an SEA Pack, Integration Guidance, SEA Checklist, SEA Spatial Information Sources and guidance on *Integrating Climate Change into SEA* and *Developing SEA Alternatives*, is available on the EPA website and should be considered in the preparation of the SEA. These can be consulted at the following address: <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/ea/>.

SEA WebGIS Search and Reporting Tool

The EPA WebGIS Search and Reporting application is an online GIS based web application that will allow users to explore, interrogate and produce an indicative report on key aspects of the environment in specific geographic areas. These reports are indicative and will provide an overview of key aspects of the environment within a specific area. This may be used to inform the SEA screening and scoping stages for Plans and Programmes with particular reference in the first instance to the land use sector, though it is also applicable to other sector plans. It may be accessed via www.edenireland.ie



Environmental Authorities

Under the SEA Regulations (*S.I. No. 435 of 2004*), as amended by *S.I. No. 200 of 2011*, notice should also be given to the following:

- The Minister for the Environment, Community & Local Government
- Minister for Agriculture, Marine and Food, and the Minister for Communications Energy and Natural Resources, where it appears to the planning authority that the plan or programme, or modification of the plan or programme, might have significant effects on fisheries or the marine environment
- where it appears to the competent authority that the plan or programme, or amendment to a plan or programme, might have significant effects in relation to the architectural heritage or to nature conservation, the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht Affairs, and
- any adjoining planning authority whose area is continuous to the area of a planning authority which prepared a draft plan, proposed variation or local area plan.

Should you have any queries or require further information in relation to the above please contact the undersigned. I would also be grateful if an acknowledgement of receipt of this submission could be sent electronically to the following address: sea@epa.ie.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Cian O'Mahony'.

Cian O'Mahony
Scientific Officer
SEA Section
Office of Environmental Assessment
Environmental Protection Agency
Regional Inspectorate
Inniscarra, County Cork

INTEGRATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Summary of Latest Updates in 2016

Changes	Comments
29/10/15	Link to Air Quality in Ireland Report for 2014 (EPA, 2015)
19/02/16	Link to Urban Wastewater Treatment Report for 2014 (EPA, 2015)
11/03/16	Updated link to GIS SEA Manual now available
11/03/16	Updated Noise section
24/04/16	Updated link to EPA Bathing Water Quality Report for 2015 (EPA, 2016)
19/05/16	Added link to CORINE 2012 Data in Appendix II
19/05/16	Added link to EPA/WRA Draft SEA Resource Manual in Appendix I

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is a statutory Environmental Authority under the SEA Regulations. Our role in SEA in relation to Land Use Plans focuses on promoting full integration of the findings of the Environmental Assessment into the Strategy. It is not the function of the EPA to either approve or enforce Land Use Plans. The EPA is focusing our efforts/resources in influencing the preparation of key national and regional plans within the planning hierarchy.

In light of the above, we intend to provide a ‘self-service approach’ to responding to submissions on plans lower in the planning hierarchy through use of this template. In this respect, where specific comments are not provided on this particular Strategy (and at this stage of the SEA process), we recommend that you take this guidance document into account, and also incorporate the more detailed available guidance and other available resources on our website at <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/ea/>. These resources include:

- SEA process guidance,
- Integration of environmental considerations in land use planning guidance,
- List of available environmental spatial data sets.
- [SEA GIS Search and Reporting Tool](#) for local authority plan-makers which may be useful in the preparation of the SEA and Draft Strategy.
- Recent EPA SEA related guidance on [Integrating Climate Change into SEA, Developing and Assessing Alternatives in SEA](#) and [GIS SEA Manual](#).

The Strategy should be consistent with key relevant higher level plans / programmes in the planning hierarchy (at a regional and national level) and be set in the context of national SEA Regulations, Planning & Development Regulations and associated DECLG Guidelines including *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* (DECLG, 2004) and the *Development Plans - Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DECLG, 2007).

Ireland’s environment is a key national strategic and valuable asset which needs to be protected and proactively managed to ensure it forms the basis of Ireland’s economic wellbeing and a healthy society. The Strategy should ensure that the natural resources and environmental conditions that are fundamental to the economic and social wellbeing of future generations are protected and are not degraded or exhausted. Four key environmental challenges for Ireland have been identified in *Ireland’s Environment 2012* (EPA, 2012) which should be taken into account in the Strategy. There are as follows: *Valuing and Protecting our Natural Environment, Building a Resource-Efficient Low-Carbon Economy, Implementing Environmental Legislation and Putting the Environment at the Centre of our decision making*,

Section II of *Ireland’s Environment 2012* describes the six key thematic areas which should be considered and assessed in the Strategy. These are *Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change, Air Quality (and Transboundary Air Emissions), Water, Sustainable Resource Use, Consumption and Waste, Nature and Biodiversity and Land & Soil*. The Strategy should consider how to address the challenges above, taking into account the thematic areas described, in order to ensure proper planning and sustainable development is promoted in the lifetime of



the Strategy. The EPA also has available as reference the Irelands Environment section on its website. This provides an overview of key issues in thematic areas and links to environmental indicator data.

In addition to the high level goals and challenges described above, the EPA has summarised the key environmental aspects which should be incorporated, as appropriate, in the preparation of the SEA and Draft Strategy.



KEY SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS TO CONSIDER

Water

Water Framework Directive

Protection of Surface and Ground Water Resources

Protecting our valuable surface and ground water resources is of vital importance to protect both human health and provide for a healthy environment. In this context, the Strategy should provide clear commitments to protect surface water, groundwater and coastal/estuarine resources and their associated habitats and species, including fisheries within and adjacent to the Strategy area. Where specific recommendations/concerns for water bodies within the Strategy area are identified in EPA water quality reports, including the *Water Quality in Ireland 2010 – 2012* (EPA, 2015) and relevant regional water quality reports, these should also be addressed/considered at an appropriate level in the Strategy.

The Strategy should also ensure that any specific relevant objectives and measures for individual water bodies, within the Strategy area as set out in the existing relevant Water Framework Directive River Basin Management Plan, are provided for in order to ensure water quality is protected/improved/maintained. The Strategy should consider that subsequent water management plans (including catchment management plans) may arise out of current review of the second cycle of WFD River Basin Management Planning should be integrated as appropriate upon their adoption.

The [European Union \(Water Policy\) Regulations 2014](#) (S.I. No. 350 of 2014) sets out the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders and the associated requirements in relation to river basin management planning and should be integrated as appropriate. These responsibilities should be reflected in the Strategy and the associated environmental monitoring.

Protection of Groundwater Resources

Groundwater aquifers form important sources of drinking water both locally and regionally. Much of the summer seasonal flow in many rivers is also derived from groundwater sources. To maintain high quality water resources within the Strategy area, it is important that development is controlled and managed appropriately, in particular in areas of high groundwater vulnerability to avoid transmission of pollutants into important aquifers.

The Strategy should include a clear Policy / Objective for the protection of groundwater resources and associated habitats and species. The Strategy should also include a commitment to integrate any existing Groundwater Protection Schemes and Groundwater Source Protection Zones, as relevant and appropriate within the Strategy area. The Strategy should also include a commitment to comply with the [European Communities Environmental Objectives \(Groundwater\) Regulations 2010](#) (S.I. No. 9 of 2010).

Protection and Management of Bathing Waters

The obligation to protect bathing waters within (and adjacent to) the Strategy area should also be reflected in the Strategy. Bathing Waters are afforded protection under Directive 2006/7/EC, known as the '*Directive on bathing water*', which is transposed into National legislation by the *Bathing Water Quality Regulations 2008* (S.I. No. 79) of 2008. In addition, under the Water Framework Directive, recreational waters/bathing water areas are included on the Register of Protected Areas. The Strategy should provide for the protection of any waters which are used for bathing within or adjacent to the Strategy area.

The EPA's most recent report on bathing water quality '[The Quality of Bathing Water in Ireland – A Report for the Year 2015](#), (EPA, 2016)' sets out the status of Irish Seawater and Freshwater Bathing areas and should be integrated as appropriate. The EPA's available bathing water advice/guidance includes an online GIS resource called "[Splash](#)" which should be considered.

Water Framework Directive & Biodiversity

Any sites of significant biodiversity value within or adjacent to the Strategy area listed on the Water Framework Directive Register of Protected Areas, (such as Fresh Water Pearl Mussel Catchments, designated Salmonid waters, fisheries / shellfisheries), should be protected in preparing the Strategy.

Flood Prevention and Management

The Strategy should fully comply with [*The Planning System and Flood Risk Management - Guidelines for Planning Authorities*](#) (OPW/DEHLG, 2009). These Guidelines place requirements on planning authorities to carry out strategic flood risk assessments and also to ensure that development/zoning of vulnerable land uses, in areas at significant risk of flooding (flood zones A and B) is avoided. In effect, only flood/water compatible uses should be built in flood plains. Where this is not possible, any proposal for development/zoning is required to include a 'Justification Test' in accordance with the Guidelines.

A specific Policy should be included to provide for/promote appropriate flood risk assessments to be undertaken, where development / zoning is being proposed in the Strategy area where there is significant risk of flooding, in accordance with the Guidelines referred to above.

The Strategy should also promote the development, where appropriate, of adaptation measures to account for the likely increased risk of flooding due to climate change within the Strategy area, including implementation of adequate and appropriate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems. Additionally, the Strategy should provide for protection, management, and as appropriate, enhancement of existing wetland habitats where flood protection/management measures are necessary.

Integrated Coastal Zone Management should also be considered as relevant and appropriate, to inform the preparation of coastal plans and programmes.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity within the Strategy area may include designated and undesignated sites, habitats, species and networks of importance at an international, national, regional or local level. The protection of ecological resources is a key consideration which needs to be addressed. In this regard, the Strategy should include clear Policies/Objectives to conserve and protect all designated sites within and adjacent to the Strategy area (including the habitats and/or species for which they have been selected, or which they support), and should also promote the protection of undesignated sites and local biodiversity features.

The Strategy should also promote the need to protect wider aspects of biodiversity including ecological corridors / linkages / green infrastructure, areas of important local biodiversity, the provision of buffer zones between developments and areas of significant biodiversity and ensuring appropriate control and management measures for invasive species.

Plans should be supported / informed by available habitat mapping (including wetland mapping) and other ecological surveys as relevant. The Strategy should refer to and reflect the relevant commitments in *Ireland's National Biodiversity Plan – Actions for Biodiversity 2011-16* (DAHG, 2011). Local Heritage/Biodiversity plans should be highlighted and should promote the implementation of key actions set out in these plans. Where not established, commitments should be included to prepare these plans.

Appropriate Assessment

The Strategy should promote the application of the guidance set out in the DECLG Publication '[*Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland- Guidance for Planning Authorities*](#)' (2009; revision 2010), in relation to the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

The Strategy should include a commitment to ensure compliance with the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. The Strategy should also be subject to Appropriate Assessment (AA). The Strategy should



include a clear Policy/Objective that sets out a requirement for AA Screening for new, reviewed or amended Plans and proposed projects, which may have the potential to impact on European sites. Potential for cumulative/in-combination effects associated with other relevant Plans/Programmes/Projects should also be determined.

Air, Noise And Climatic Factors

Noise

The objectives of EU and Irish noise legislation is “*to avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole*”, and this includes noise nuisance. To this effect the Strategy should ensure this requirement is complied with. **The assessment and management of noise from the main infrastructural transport sources (roads, rail, and airports) are governed by the Environmental Noise Directive and associated 2006 Environmental Noise Regulations (S.I. 140 of 2006). In this context, as appropriate, the Strategy should promote the implementation of Environmental Noise Directive and associated national regulations.** <http://www.environ.ie/environment/noise/si-140-2006-environmental-noise-regulations-2006>

Available Noise Action Plans should be taken into account also and reviewed as required, to reflect the Strategy period and associated development proposals. Consideration should be given to any relevant noise maps, and action plans. Strategic noise maps are designed to assess noise exposure resulting from major roads, railways and airports. Noise action plans are designed to act as a means of managing environmental noise through land use planning, traffic management and control of noise sources. The third round of noise mapping is currently underway in Ireland and will be completed in 2018. <http://noise.eionet.europa.eu/help.html>.

Consideration should be given to protect, where relevant, any designated quiet areas in open country. In 2003, the EPA commissioned a [research project](#) to establish baseline data for the identification of quiet areas in rural locations. Quiet Areas are defined as “*an area in open country, substantially unaffected by anthropogenic noise.*” A range of minimum distance criteria from man-made noise sources such as urban areas, industry and major road sources were defined, and the report includes a number of key recommendations for the identification and control of Quiet Areas.

Air & Climatic Factors

The need to protect and improve, (as appropriate), air quality within the Strategy area, particularly in areas zoned for increased urban and transport related development should be highlighted in the Strategy.

The integration of climate change adaptation and mitigation measures should be reflected in the Strategy, at the appropriate level either through relevant land use plans and/or specific sectoral plans e.g. Flood Risk Management Plans, Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plans etc. In this context, *Ireland’s National Climate Strategy 2007 – 2012*, (DECLG, 2007) should be referred to.

Air quality legislation in Ireland highlights the need “*to avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole*”. In addition, it requires that Local Authorities where appropriate “*shall promote the preservation of best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development.*”. These requirements should be incorporated by means of a specific plan objective / policy.

Recent [EPA reports on air quality](#) include the *Air Quality in Ireland 2014 Report*, (EPA, 2015) which sets out the most recent status in each of the four air quality zones in Ireland.

The EPA manages the national ambient air quality monitoring network and measures the levels of a number of atmospheric pollutants. The pollutants of most concern are those whose main source is traffic such as Particulate Matter and Nitrogen Dioxide should be taken into account. Information in relation to these aspects is available at: <http://www.epa.ie/air/quality/monitor/#>

Waste Management

The Strategy should promote the integration of land use zoning and development to existing and planned availability of waste infrastructure and capacity. The Strategy should also refer to and incorporate the relevant aspects of the relevant Regional Waste Management Plan.

In addition, the Strategy should promote and incorporate the relevant recommendations in the following series of EPA reports including:

- *The Nature and Extent of Unauthorised Waste Activity in Ireland (EPA, 2005)*
- *National Waste Report 2012 (EPA, 2014)*
- *National Hazardous Waste Management Plan 2014-2020 (EPA, 2015)*

Landscape

The Strategy should provide for the protection of designated scenic landscapes, scenic views, scenic routes and landscape features of national, regional, county and local value. The Strategy should also take into account the landscape character adjoining the Strategy area. Visual linkages between established landmarks and landscape features and views should be taken into account when land is being zoned and when individual development proposals are being assessed / considered. The *National Landscape Strategy (DECLG, 2015)* should be taken into account and integrated as appropriate into the Strategy.

Geology / Geomorphology

The Strategy should protect any designated Geological and Geomorphological NHAs/pNHAs, which may be present/designated within or adjacent to the Strategy area in consultation with the Geological Survey of Ireland.

Transportation

In seeking to support achieving a low carbon economy, it is important to consider and manage transport related emissions within the Strategy area. In this regard the Strategy should promote, and as appropriate provide for sustainable modes of transport. The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport Report '*Smarter Transport – A Sustainable Transport Future*' (DTTS, 2009) should be reviewed in the context of possible initiatives which could be included as objectives within the Strategy.

Promoting the development of traffic management measures to reduce the potential for traffic congestion and associated vehicular emissions should be considered. In particular, it would be useful to prepare (and review existing) Integrated Traffic Management Plans, where relevant and appropriate, for the existing urban areas and proposed new urban developments to consider and address the short, medium and long-term traffic management requirements within the Strategy area.

Infrastructure Planning

Where zoning/rezoning of lands and the introduction of new development is being proposed within the Strategy area, the Strategy should promote the need for an integrated planning approach to service any development proposed and authorised during the lifetime of the Strategy in collaboration with key stakeholders.

The Strategy should, (when considering additional development proposals), support and promote the provision of adequate and appropriate critical service infrastructure, surface and storm water drainage, public transport, waste management, community services and amenities etc. on a planned and phased basis. This is in the context of taking into account and addressing existing infrastructural inadequacies to meet the expected needs of predicted increases in population associated with the Strategy implementation.



The potential impact on human health, habitats and species of ecological importance, flood risk and water quality should be taken into account in considering proposed additional infrastructure or in proposed upgrading of existing infrastructure.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

The Strategy should highlight that, under the EIA and Planning & Development Regulations, certain projects arising during the implementation of the Strategy may require an EIA. It should be noted that projects may also require Appropriate Assessment screening, as required by Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. It should be noted that the EPA's role in relation to EIA relates only to facilities/sites which are licensable by the EPA, namely IPPC, waste water and waste sites.

APPENDIX I: Some Useful Environmental Resources

Environmental Criteria	Selected Resources
State of Environment	http://www.epa.ie/irelandsenvironment
Surface Water	http://www.wfdireland.ie/index.html http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/water/waterqua/
Ground Water	http://j.mp/gsigroundwater http://www.epa.ie/downloads/pubs/water/ground/
Drinking Water	http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/water/drinking/
Waste Water	http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/water/wastewater/
Bathing Water	http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/water/bathing http://splash.epa.ie/#
Marine	http://www.marine.ie/Home/site-area/home/home
Biodiversity	http://www.npws.ie/guidance-appropriate-assessment-planning-authorities http://www.npws.ie/publications http://maps.biodiversityireland.ie/#/Home
Flood Prevention and Management	www.floodmaps.ie www.cfram.ie
Air	http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/air/quality/
Climate	http://www.environ.ie/en/Environment/Atmosphere/ClimateChange/ http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/research/climate/
Waste Management	http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/waste/
Radon	http://www.epa.ie/radiation/radonmap
Energy Conservation	www.sei.ie
Landscape Character Assessment	http://www.heritagecouncil.ie/
Geology / Geomorphology	http://www.gsi.ie/Mapping.htm
Transportation	https://www.nationaltransport.ie/planning-policy/ http://www.nra.ie/environment/
SEA	www.edenireland.ie (SEAGIS Reporting Tool) http://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/ea/ http://www.epa.ie/pubs/consultation/manual/
EIA	http://www.environ.ie/en/DevelopmentHousing/PlanningDevelopment/EnvironmentalAssessment/EIASEAGuidance

Appendix II: Some Useful Planning Related Resources

Environmental Criteria	Selected Resources
Spatial Planning GIS	www.myplan.ie http://www.epa.ie/soilandbiodiversity/soils/land/corine/
DECLG Guidelines / Legislation	http://www.environ.ie/en/DevelopmentHousing/PlanningDevelopment/Planning/
Flood Risk	www.cfram.ie www.floodmaps.ie

Appendix III: Suggested High Level Plans/Programmes/Strategies (PPS) to Consider*

Environmental Criteria	Suggested High Level Plans/Programmes/Strategies (PPS)
National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Spatial Strategy (DECLG) - National Development Plan (DECLG) - Rural Development Programme (DECLG) - National CFRAMS Programme (DECLG) - National Renewable Electricity Policy Framework (in preparation DCENR) - Grid 25 Implementation Strategy (Eirgrid) - National Hazardous Waste Management Plan (EPA) - Food Harvest 2020 / FoodWise 2025 (DAFM) - National Forestry Programme / Forestry Policy Review (DAFM) - Seafood Operation Programme / Strategic Aquaculture Programme (DAFM) - Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth (DAFM) - National Broadband Plan (DCENR) - National Landscape Strategy (DECLG) - National Peatland Strategy, SAC Raised Bog Management Plan (DAHG) - National Biodiversity Plan (DAHG) - Water Services Strategic Plan (Irish Water) - Capital Investment Programme (Irish Water) - Sectoral Climate Change Adaptation Strategies and Low Carbon Roadmaps - Smarter Transport / Strategic Framework for Integrated Land Transport (DTTAS) - Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (DCENR) - Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration (DCENR) - State of the Environment Report 2012 (EPA)
Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies - Regional Planning Guidelines - River Basin Management Plans (and Programme of Measures) - Relevant CFRAMS - Pollution Reduction Programmes for Shellfish Waters - Freshwater Pearl Mussel Sub-basin Management Plans - Forestry and Freshwater Pearl Mussel Plan (DAFM, in preparation) - Regional Waste Management Plan - National Transport Strategy for Greater Dublin Area - Wild Atlantic Way - Shannon Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) - County Renewable Energy / Wind Energy Strategies - County Tourism Strategies

Note: *Plan-makers should consider and identify key relevant PPS in the SEA. List of Plans is indicative only and some may not always be relevant to a particular plan.

Appendix II: Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021: Policies and Objectives

Chapter 1: Introduction

Strategic Aim 1 - Promote Regional Development

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

Strategic Aim 2 - Environmental Protection

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

Strategic Aim 3 - Living Landscapes

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

Strategic Aim 4 - Balanced Urban and Rural Areas

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

Strategic Aim 5 - Inclusive Communities

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

Strategic Aim 6 - Integrated Development

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

Strategic Aim 7 - Sustainable Transportation

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

Strategic Aim 8 - An Ghaeltacht

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

Strategic Aim 9 - Infrastructural Projects

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

Strategic Aim 10 - Heritage

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

Strategic Aim 11 - Climate Change Adaptation

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

Chapter 2: Spatial Strategy, Core & Settlement Strategy**Objective DS 1**

It is the overarching objective of Galway County Council to support and facilitate the sustainable development of County Galway in line with the preferred development strategy option: Option 4 – To Develop the Hub town of Tuam, supporting the Gateway and Key Towns while Encouraging the Development of Other Settlement Centres and Appropriate Development in Rural Areas, which will allow County Galway to develop in a manner that maintains and enhances the quality of life of local communities, promotes opportunities for economic development, sustainable transport options, social integration, and protects the cultural, built, natural heritage and environment while also complying with relevant statutory requirements.

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

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

Objectives DS 3 – Integrated Land Use and Sustainable Transportation

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

Objective DS 4 – Supporting and Securing Investment

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

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

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

Objectives DS 6 – Natura 2000 Network and Habitats Directive Assessment

Protect European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network (Including Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation) in accordance with the requirements in the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010, the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No.477 of 2011) (and any subsequent amendments or updated legislation) and having due regard to the guidance in the Appropriate Assessment Guidelines 2010 (and any updated or subsequent guidance). A plan or project (e.g. proposed development) within the Plan Area will only be authorised after the competent authority (Galway County Council) has ascertained, based on scientific evidence, Screening for Appropriate Assessment, and/or a Habitats Directive Assessment where necessary, that:

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

Objectives DS 7 – Flood Risk Management and Assessment

Ensure that proposals for developments located within identified or potential flood risk areas, or which may exacerbate the risk of flooding elsewhere, are assessed in accordance with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009 (or any updated /superseding document) and the relevant policies, objectives and guidelines within this Plan.

Objective DS 8 – Climate Change

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

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

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

Objective DS 10 – Impacts of Developments on Protected Sites

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

Objectives DS 11 – Strategic Development Corridors

Co-ordinate new growth within the transportation and economic corridors throughout the County in order to create more sustainable development patterns and to optimise public and private investment made within in the County and support the appropriate development of the Strategic Economic Corridor.

Core Strategy Objectives**Objectives CS 1 – Provision of a Settlement Hierarchy**

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

Objectives CS 2 – Development Consistent with the Core Strategy

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

Objectives CS 3 – Economic and Employment Development

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

Objectives CS 4 – Development of Serviced Lands

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

Objectives CS 5 – Phasing of Development of Lands The zoning of residential zoned lands within the urban areas shall be based on a phased, sequential approach with a strong emphasis placed on consolidating existing patterns of development, encouraging infill opportunities and promoting sustainable transport options.

Objectives CS 6 – Local Area Plans

Galway County Council shall seek to prepare Local Area Plans for all settlements which have a population in excess of 1,500 persons either on an individual basis or in an electoral area Local Area Plan.

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

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

Objectives SS 1 – Galway Metropolitan Area

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

Objectives SS 2 – Ardaun

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

Objectives SS 3 – Hub Town : Tuam

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

Objectives SS 4 – County Town: Ballinasloe

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

Objectives SS 5 – Development of Key Towns

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

Objective SS 6 – Development of Other Villages

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

Objectives SS 7 – Development of Small Settlements

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

Objectives SS 8 – Development of Rural Communities

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

Chapter 3: Urban Housing

Policy UHO 1- Land Use Availability

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

Policy UHO 2 - Housing Strategy

Ensure, in accordance with Part V of the Planning & Development Act 2010 (as amended) that arrangements for the provision of Housing are made in accordance with the current Housing Strategy. Secure the provision of social and specialist housing accommodation where possible, to meet the needs of all households and the disadvantaged sectors in the County, including the elderly, first time buyers, those building their first homes, single person households on modest incomes, people with disabilities, special needs, Travellers etc.

Urban Housing Objectives

Objective UHO 1 - Housing Strategy

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

Objective UHO 2 - Social and Specialist Housing

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

Objective UHO 3 - Special Needs

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

Objective UHO 4 - Homelessness

Facilitate the provision of suitable accommodation for the homeless and for those in need of emergency accommodation. Objective UHO 5 - Traveller Accommodation Support and implement the Draft Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018 for County Galway (or any updated/superseding document).

Objective UHO 6 - Elderly Accommodation

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

Objective UHO 7 - High Quality/Mix and Sensitive Design

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

Objective UHO 8 – Urban Design

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

Objective UHO 9 - Vacant Properties/Unfinished Housing

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

Rural Housing Policies**Policy RHO 1 - Management of New Single Houses in the Countryside**

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

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

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

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

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

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

OR

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

OR

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

2. (a) Those applicants who lived for substantial periods of their lives in the rural area, then moved away and who now wish to return and build their first house as their permanent residence, in this local area, to reside near other family members, to work locally, to care for elderly family members, or to retire. Documentary evidence shall be submitted to the Planning Authority to illustrate their links to the area in order to justify the proposed development and it will be assessed on a case by case basis.

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

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

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

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

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

Those Applicants seeking to construct individual houses in the open countryside in areas located in Landscape Categories 3, 4 and 5 are required to demonstrate their Rural Links* to the area and are required to submit a Substantiated Rural Housing Need*. In addition an Applicant maybe required to submit a visual impact assessment of their development, where the proposal is located in an area identified as "Focal Points/Views" in the Landscape Character Assessment of the County or in Class 4 and 5 designated landscape areas. Documentary evidence shall be submitted to the Planning Authority

to justify the proposed development and will be assessed on a case by case basis. Enurement condition shall apply for a period of 7 years, after the date that the house is first occupied by the person or persons to whom the enurement clause applies.

Objective RHO 4 - Rural Housing Zone 4 (Gaeltacht)

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

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

OR

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

Objective RHO 5 - Building Conversions in Gaeltacht Areas

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

Objective RHO 6 - Replacement Dwelling

It is an objective of the Council that the refurbishment of existing habitable dwelling houses would be encouraged, as a more sustainable option than the demolition and construction of a new dwelling house. The demolition and construction of a new dwelling house shall be resisted, unless a conclusive case based on technical evidence is made for the Planning Authority's consideration on a case by case basis. It will be a requirement that any new dwelling house be designed in accordance with the Galway County Council's Design Guidelines for Rural Housing in the countryside.

Objective RHO 7 - Renovation of existing derelict dwelling/semi ruinous dwelling

It is an objective of the Council that proposals to renovate, restore or modify existing derelict or semi-derelict dwellings in the County are generally dealt with on their merits on a case by case basis, having regard to the relevant policies and objectives of this Plan, the specific location and the condition of the structure and the scale of any works required to upgrade the structure to modern standards. The derelict/semi ruinous dwelling must be structurally sound, have the capacity to be renovated and/or

extended and have the majority of its original features/walls in place. A structural report will be required to illustrate that the structure can be brought back into habitable use, without comprising the original character of the dwelling. Where the total or substantial demolition of the existing dwelling is proposed an Enurement Clause will apply.

Objective RHO 8 - Design Guidelines

It is an objective of the Council to have regard to Galway County Councils' Design Guidelines for the Single Rural House with specific reference to the following: (a) It is an objective to encourage new dwelling house design that respects the character, pattern and tradition of existing places, materials and built forms and that fit appropriately into the landscape. (b) It is an objective to promote sustainable approaches to dwelling house design and encouraging proposals to be energy efficient in their design and layout. (c) It is an objective to require the appropriate landscaping and screen planting of proposed developments by using predominately indigenous/local species and groupings. (d) It is an objective to discourage linear development (defined as five or more houses alongside 250 metres of road frontage). The Council will assess on a case by case basis whether a given proposal will exacerbate such linear development.

Objective RHO 9 - Vacant/Unfinished Housing

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

Objective RHO10 - Urban/Rural Demarcation

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

Chapter 4: Economic Development & Tourism

Policy EDT 1 – Economic Development

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

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

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

Policy EDT 3 – Regional Synergy

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

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

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

Policy EDT 5 – County Tourism

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

Policy EDT 6 – Tourism Product

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

Policy EDT 7– Food & Craft

Support the development and marketing of the foods and crafts of the County through global networking and developing trade links with regions internationally.

Economic Development & Tourism Objectives

Objective EDT 1–Strategic Economic Corridor

The objectives for the Strategic Economic Corridor include:

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

Objective EDT 2 – County Economic Development Strategy

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

Objective EDT 3 – Research, Innovation, Incubation & Training

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

Objective EDT 4 – Provision of Land & Infrastructure

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

Objective EDT 5 – Infrastructural Investment

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

Objective EDT 6 – Optimise the Benefits of Serviced Lands

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

Objective EDT 7 – Align Enterprise to Serviced Lands

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

Objective EDT 8 – Design Standards

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

Objective EDT 9 – Small Scale Enterprise & Community Services

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

Objective EDT 10 – Former Galway Airport Site

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

Objective EDT 11 – Rural Enterprise

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

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

Objective EDT 12 – Farm Diversification

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

Objective EDT 13 – Seveso II Directive

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

Objective EDT 14 – Tourism Infrastructure & Services

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

Objective EDT 15 – Connemara Infrastructure & Interpretation Plan

Support in the delivery of the vision as set out in the ‘Connemara Infrastructure and Interpretation Plan 2012’ within the lifetime of the Plan.

Objective EDT 16 – Teach an Phiarsaigh

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

Objective EDT 17 – Outdoor Pursuits

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

Objective EDT 18 – Holiday Accommodation in Serviced Settlements

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

Objective EDT 19 – Holiday Accommodation in Open Countryside

(a) Consider the reuse of existing buildings for holiday homes/guest accommodation outside of settlements where it can be demonstrated that there is a justifiable tourist product/demand. Any renovation work shall be similar in scale and design to the existing building(s). In such cases, documentary evidence shall be submitted to substantiate the proposed development and each individual application will be assessed on its merits.

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

Objective EDT 20 – Off Shore Island Tourism

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

Objective EDT 21 – Gaeltacht Tourism

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

Objective EDT 22 – East Galway, Lough Derg & The Burren

Facilitate the sustainable development of East Galway, Lough Derg and the Burren as cultural and tourist destinations while simultaneously safeguarding their integrity.

Objective EDT 23 – Food and Craft

Support and facilitate the development of the Food and Craft sector including the formation of regularised farmers markets & festivals at appropriate locations throughout the County.

Chapter 5: Roads and Transportation**Land Use Integration & Sustainable Transportation Strategy Policies****Policy TI 1 – Transportation Strategy and Compliance with Legislation**

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

Policy TI 2 – Development of an Integrated & Sustainable transport System

It is the policy of the Council to promote the development of an integrated and sustainable high quality transport system ~~that shall~~ for the county, which includes the specific areas identified in the Galway Transport Strategy(GTS), which shall: a) Promote closer co-ordination between land use and sustainable transportation; b) Continue the provision of a range of transport options within ~~the County~~ Galway and in collaboration with Galway City Council, the National Transport Authority (NTA), Transport Infrastructure Ireland(TII), other statutory agencies and transport providers, including a safe road network, a range of bus and rail services, adequate facilities for walking and cycling and opportunities for air and water-based travel.

Policy TI 3 – Sustainable Travel Measure

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

Policy TI 4 – Land Use Integration and Transportation

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

1. Promoting the consolidation of development through the implementation of the Core Strategy/Settlement Strategy as outlined within this Plan;

2. Encouraging intensification and mixed use development at public transport hubs and nodes identified within the county.
3. Prioritise walking, cycling and public transport alternatives within, and providing access to, new development proposals, as appropriate.

Land Use Integration & Sustainable Transportation Strategy Objectives

Objective TI 1 – Sustainable Transportation

Support and facilitate ~~any~~ 'Smarter Travel' initiatives ~~that contained in the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) and other initiatives which~~ that will improve sustainable transportation within the county including public transport, electric and hybrid vehicles, car clubs, public bike schemes, park and ride/park and stride facilities, improved pedestrian and cycling facilities, as appropriate.

Objective TI 2 – Sustainable Travel Measures

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

1. Facilitate improvements to existing public transport infrastructure and services through commuter rail and park and ride facilities;
2. Collaborate with service providers in the improvement of fuel efficiency of motorised transport;
3. Encourage the use of electric vehicles and bicycles, in line with Council and National policy;
4. The Council shall continue to promote/implement the cycle to work scheme for all employees;
5. Support the provision of suitable infrastructure to encourage an increase in the use of electric vehicles including the piloting of charging points on-street at key areas subject to the availability of resources and the provision of charging points in non-residential developments.

Objective TI 3 – Mobility Management Plans

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

Objective TI 4 – Transportation Hub Development

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

Road and Transportation Policies

Policy TI 5 – Roads, Streets and Parking

It is policy of Galway County Council in conjunction with all relevant statutory agencies and infrastructure providers to provide road and street networks that are safe and convenient, that have adequate capacity to accommodate motorised traffic and non-motorised movements, that have a high environmental quality with appropriate adjacent development and built form, particularly in the case of urban streets and streetscapes, and that adequate parking facilities are provided to serve the needs of towns and villages within the County.

Policy TI 6 – Protection of Strategic Transportation Infrastructure

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

Policy TI 7 – Protection of National Road Network

Protect the motorway and national road network and national road junctions in line with Government policies. Safeguard the carrying capacity, operational efficiency, safety and significant investment made in [the development of the](#) motorway and national road network within the County including the M6 Dublin to Galway Motorway, the M18 Gort to Crusheen Motorway and the M17/M18 Galway to Tuam, when completed, [and the N6 Galway City Ring Road\(GCRR\) if approved and completed.](#)

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

It is the policy of Galway County Council to work with Galway City Council and all relevant statutory bodies [including the National Transport Authority \(NTA\) and Transport Infrastructure Ireland \(TII\)](#) to ~~develop~~ deliver an appropriate infrastructural response to the transportation needs of the Galway Gateway, its environs and the west of the County [as part of the proposed measures of the Galway Transport Strategy \(GTS\) including the plan level environmental protection policies and mitigation measures set out in the GTS. This shall include the provision of new infrastructure such as potential park and ride facilities, bus corridors, greenways, cycling and walking routes and the N6 Galway City Ring Road \(GCRR\), which are all integral in the delivery of the GTS with a view to relieving congestion, improving travel times, increased safety of all road users and enhancing connectivity and access within the region and enhanced accessibility of the western region in a national and international context.](#)

Any such solution shall have due regard to the necessity to protect the environment and will comply fully with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

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

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

Policy TI 10 - Reclassification of Restricted Routes

It is a policy of Galway County Council to liaise with ~~the National Roads Authority~~ [Transport Infrastructure Ireland \(TII\)](#) on the re-classification of Restricted Routes as a result of the construction of motorways.

Policy TI 11 - Signage

It is a policy of Galway County Council to liaise with ~~the National Roads Authority~~ [Transport Infrastructure Ireland \(TII\)](#) in relation to increased signage for rural towns adjacent to motorways in order to promote service availability.

Road and Transportation Objectives

Objective TI 5 – Roads and Transportation Network Improvements

Galway County Council will facilitate the progression of the necessary infrastructure improvements including new roads/projects and implement improvements to the existing National and Regional/Local Road networks including the priority transportation schemes, listed in *Table 5.1: Priority Transportation Infrastructure Objectives 2015-2021* and those listed within *Table 5.2: Regional/Local Transportation Infrastructure Objectives 2015-2021* subject to relevant Irish planning and European environmental legislation including Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and/or other environmental assessment, where appropriate.

Objective TI 6 – Direct Access onto National Routes

Galway County Council will not normally permit development proposals for future development that include direct access onto any national primary or secondary road outside of the 50-60kph speed limit zone for towns and villages.

Objective TI 7 – Service/Rest Areas & Scenic Viewpoints

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

Objective TI 8 – Traffic Management Plans Consider the review of Traffic Management Plans in Ballinasloe, Portumna, Gort, Athenry, Oranmore, Loughrea, Cill Rónain, Oughterard, Tuam and Cleggan. Carry out Traffic Management Plans for Craughwell, Headford, Kinvara, Bearna, Baile Chláir, Maigh Cuilinn, Leenane and Dunmore.

Objective TI 9 – Car Parking. Provide/improve parking facilities in towns and villages as development and traffic demand. The requirements for car parking shall be in accordance with the standards and guidelines as set out within Section 13: Development Management Standards and Guidelines of this Plan under Guidelines for Transportation, Roads, Parking, Loading and Storage.

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

Require all proposed new significant development proposals to be accompanied by a TTA and RSA, carried out by suitably competent consultants, which are assessed in association with their cumulative impact with neighbouring developments on the road network, in accordance with the requirements contained within the NRA's TII's *Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines*, having regard and with respect to *RSA GE-STY-01024 (HD19/15) Road Safety Audit* (including any updated superseding document).

Objective TI 11 – Urban Street Network and the Design Manual for Urban Roads & Streets Support the treatment of the route network within the built areas of the towns as urban streets that prioritise the needs of pedestrians, that facilitate cyclists wherever possible and that support public and private transport movements, stopping and parking, as appropriate. In this regard, the principles approaches,

and standards set out in the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets 2013 (including any updated/superseding document) shall be applied to new development as appropriate.

Objective TI 12 – Noise

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

Objective TI 13 – Signage on or visible from all Roads

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

Objective TI 14 – Road Safety Schemes

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

Objective TI15 - Transportation Infrastructure Requirements for the Gateway and West of the County

It is an objective of Galway County Council to work with all other relevant bodies including the National Transport Authority (NTA), Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and Galway City Council to deliver the necessary improvements to transportation infrastructure, including new infrastructure if necessary and the plan level environmental protection policies and mitigation measures set out in the GTS. This shall include the provision of new infrastructure such as potential park and ride facilities, bus corridors, greenways, cycling and walking routes and the N6 Galway City Ring Road (GCRR) as set out in the Priority Transportation Infrastructure Objectives 2015-2021 in Table 5.1 which are all integral in the delivery of the GTS with a view ~~to help~~ to secure the medium and long term economic and social development of Galway Gateway and the west of the County. Any such investment or project shall be carried out with due regard to the necessity to protect the environment and in full compliance with the provision of relevant legislation, including the Habitats Directive.

Public Transport Objectives

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

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

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

a) Support the provision of public and private bus services and ancillary infrastructure including bus shelters, park and ride facilities at appropriate locations.

b) Support and help implement the Rural Transport Initiative including any revisions to same. Work with the HSE/local communities including the Galway Transport Co-ordination Unit (TCU) in order to encourage and promote a sustainable community-based public transport scheme

Objective TI 18 – Public Transport Plan

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

Objective TI 19 – Galway County Walking and Cycling Strategy

Implement the recommendations and proposals within the National Cycle Route Network Guidelines and the Galway County Walking and Cycling Strategy 2013 as outlined within Table 5.1: Priority Transportation Infrastructure **Projects Objectives 2015-2021** for Co. Galway **2015**.

Objective TI 20 - Dualing of Rail Tracks

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

Objective TI 21- Galway Transportation Strategy

It is an objective of Galway County Council to support and facilitate the implementation of the public transport element of the Galway Transport Strategy across all modes of transport.

Air Transport Objectives

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

Objective TI 22 – Local Airstrips

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

Objective TI 23 – Helipad Facilities

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

Ports, Harbours, Piers & Slipways Objectives**Objective TI 24 – Sustainable Development of Ros an Mhíl Sea Port & Galway Harbour**

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

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

Objective TI 25 – Sustainable Development of Ports, Harbours, Piers and Slipways

- 1) Support the development of Ros an Mhíl as a deep water port and facilitate the maintenance and improvement of, existing ports, harbours, piers and slipways and consider any new marine infrastructure where appropriate and as resources allow;
- 2) Facilitate the safe and convenient access to the water for the purpose of public transport, industry commerce, sea rescue, tourism, aquaculture and recreation where appropriate and as resources allow.

Objective TI 26 – Harbour Bye-Laws

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

Objective TI 27 – Water Bourne Transport

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

Chapter 6: Water, Wastewater, Waste Management & Extractive Industry**Water Policies Policy WS 1 – Irish Water**

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

Policy WS 2 – Water Services Investment Programme

Support the implementation of the current Water Services Investment Programme and any subsequent Water Services Investment Programmes.

Policy WS 3 – Water Conservation

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

Policy WS 4 – Water Quality

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

Water Objectives**Objective WS 1 – Protection of Ground Waters**

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

Objective WS 2 – EU Policies and Directives

Protect, conserve and enhance existing and potential water resources of the County, in accordance with the EU Water Framework Directive, the River Basin Management Plans, the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (SI No. 272 of 2009), and implement the

European Communities (Drinking Water) Regulations (No. 2) 2007 and ensure that water supplies comply with the parameters in these regulations.

Objective WS 3 – Irish Water

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

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

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

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

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

Objective WS 5 – Water Safety Plan

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

Objective WS 6 – Regional Water Supply Networks

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

Objective WS 7 – Source Management & Protection Zones

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

Objective WS 8 – Water Conservation

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

Objective WS 9 – River Basin Management Plans 2009 - 2015

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

Objective WS 10 – Investment in Water Services Infrastructure

Support the extension or upgrading of existing water infrastructure facilities in the County through the implementation of the current Water Services Investment Programme 2010 - 2013 and any subsequent Water Services Investment Programmes.

Objective WS 11 – Regionally & Locally Important Aquifers

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

Objective WS 12 – Adequate Provision & Supply of Drinking Water

Ensure that new developments are adequately serviced with a suitable quantity and quality of drinking water supply and require that all new developments provide for water supply metering.

Objective WS 13 – Connection to Public Water Supplies

Require new developments to connect to public water supplies where services are available.

Objective WS 14 – Private Water Supply

It is an objective of the Council that where connection to a public water supply is not possible, or the existing supply does not have sufficient capacity, the provision of a private water supply will be permitted, only where it can be demonstrated that the proposed water supply meets the standards set out in the EU and national legislation and guidance including adherence to Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive, and would not be prejudicial to public health or would not significantly impact negatively on the source or yield of an existing supply.

Objective WS 15 – Provision & Quality of Drinking Water

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

Objective WS 16 – Water Services Plan

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

Wastewater Policies and Objectives Wastewater Policies**Policy WW 1 – Collaborative Provision of Wastewater Collection & Treatment Systems**

Co-operate with Irish Water to increase capacity to service settlements, to jointly investigate proposals for future upgrades of treatment plants; and participate in the provision of a long term solution for wastewater treatment in the West Region.

Wastewater Objectives**Objective WW 1 – EU Policies and Directives**

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

Objective WW 2 – Provision of Wastewater Collection & Treatment Systems

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

Objective WW 3 – East Galway Main Drainage Scheme

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

Objective WW 4 – Sludge Management Plan

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

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

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

Objective WW 6 – Adherence to Environmental Standards

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

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

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

Objective WW 8 – Substandard Wastewater Treatment Plants

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

Waste Management Policies and Objectives**Waste Management Policies****Policy WM 1 – Waste Prevention & Reduction**

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

Policy WM 2 – Polluter Pays Principle

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

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

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

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

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

Objective WM 3 – Provision of Recycling Centres

Strive to provide and maintain an equitable distribution of recycling centres throughout the County and support the provision of additional recycling centres in the south Connemara and south Galway areas of the County. Objective WM 4 – User Friendly Waste Management Services Seek to provide a high standard of customer service provision in regard to waste management and maintain user friendly opening hours at recycling centres throughout the County.

Objective WM 5 - Bring Bank Facilities

Support the provision of additional bring bank facilities at appropriate and strategic locations throughout the County in an effort to reach the overall regional ratio per head of population target for

such infrastructure as set out in the Evaluation Report 2012 of the Replacement Connacht Waste Management Plan for the Connacht Region 2006 – 2011.

Objective WM 6 - Provision of Voluntary Waste Management Infrastructure

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

Mineral Extraction and Quarry Policies and Objectives

Mineral Extraction and Quarry Policies

Policy EQ 1 – Environmental Management Practice

Have regard to evolving best environmental management practice as set out in Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Guidelines ‘Environmental Management in the Extractive Industry: Non Scheduled Minerals’.

Policy EQ 2 - Adequate Supply of Aggregate Resources

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

Mineral Extraction and Quarry Objectives

Objective EQ1 – Protection of Natural Assets

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

Objective EQ 2 – Management of Aggregate Extraction

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

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

- f) Protect all known un-worked deposits from development that might limit their scope for extraction.

Objective EQ 3 – Sustainable Reuse of Quarries

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

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

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

Chapter 7: Energy, Renewable Energies & Communications Technology

Energy and Renewable Energy Policies

Policy ER 1 – Sustainable Energy Policy and Targets

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

Policy ER 2 – Development of Renewable Energy

The Council shall support proposals for renewable energy developments (including transmission grid development, ocean energy/wave and tidal technologies and ancillary facilities) at appropriate locations within the County having regard to residential amenities, biodiversity and landscape sensitivities, where such proposals are in compliance with the County Development Plan 2015-2021 and the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

Policy ER 3 – Security of Supply

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

- a) Promoting and supporting the provision of secure and efficient energy supply and storage including electricity, gas, and renewable energy including wind, wave/tidal, solar, bio-energy and heat energy distribution;
- b) Supporting infrastructural renewal, strengthening and development of electricity networks within the County including the overhead infrastructure required to provide the networks including proposals under EIRGRID Grid West Project which is part of the Grid 25 Strategy;
- c) Facilitating the extension of a natural gas distribution network to serve both the County and West Region.

Policy ER 4 – Sustainable Development and Energy Efficiency

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

Energy and Renewable Energy Objectives

Objective ER 1 – Electricity and Renewable Energy Infrastructure

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

Objective ER 2 – Priority Transmission Infrastructure Projects

Facilitate the progression of and implement improvements to the existing electricity networks listed in Table 7.1 Priority Transmission Infrastructure Projects for County Galway that might be brought forward during the lifetime of this Plan, subject to relevant Irish planning and European environmental legislation including Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and/or other environmental assessment Map ER1 outlines existing and proposed energy transmission infrastructure corridors.

Objective ER 3 – Low Carbon County

Promote County Galway as a low carbon County by 2020. Encourage and favourably consider proposals for renewable energy developments and ancillary facilities in order to meet national, regional, county energy targets and to facilitate a reduction in CO2 emissions.

Objective ER 4 – Renewable Energy

1. Support and facilitate the development and use of renewable energy sources and associated infrastructure within the County, including
 - Wind Energy;
 - Wave/Tidal Energy;
 - Hydro-Power;
 - Solar Energy;
 - Bio-Energy,
 - Geo-Thermal
 - Combined Heat Power (CHP):
 - Heat Energy Distribution (such as District Heating/Cooling Systems); and
 - Other renewable energy sources, as appropriate and in line with national guidelines for sustainable development.
2. The Council shall prepare a County Renewable Energy Strategy as resources permit.

Objective ER 5 - Wind Energy Developments

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

Objective ER 6 – Wind Energy Strategy

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

Objective ER 7 – Energy Efficiency Technology in Buildings

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

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

Objective ER 8 – Promoting Energy Hubs

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

Objective ER 9 – Oileáin Árann an Energy Transition Community

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

Information & Communications Technology Policies & Objectives

Information & Communications Technology Policies

Policy ICT 1 – Information & Communications Technology Infrastructure

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

Policy ICT 2 – Installation of Information & Communications Technology

Infrastructure in High Amenity Areas It is a policy of the Council that where feasible proposed developments pertaining to the installation of potentially obtrusive information and communications technology infrastructure shall be located in landscape categories 1-3. Where they must be located on sensitive landscapes (those being a Class 4 (Special) or 5 (Unique) landscape category areas or in proximity to a National Monument, Protected Structure/Architectural Conservation Areas or within a

focal point/view) shall be accompanied by visual impact assessments as part of the planning application process.

Information & Communications Technology Objectives

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

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

Objective ICT 2 – Assimilation of Telecommunications Infrastructure into the Landscape

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

Objective ICT 3 – Co-Location of Telecommunications Infrastructure.

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

Objective ICT 4 – Open Access Fibre Ducting

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

Chapter 8: Climate Change & Flooding

Climate Change Policies

Policy CC 1 – Climate Change Policy

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

Policy CC 2 – Climate Change Adaptation Plans

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

Policy CC 3 – Increase Awareness of Climate Change

The Council shall work collaboratively with regional/local authorities and other agencies to adapt to climate change and to increase the awareness of the impacts of climate change to enable people to

understand and respond to the challenges that they face as a result of current and future climate change.

Policy CC 4 – Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation

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

Policy CC 5 – Climate Change and the Natural Environment

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

Policy CC 6 – Adapting Infrastructure to Climate Change

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

Policy CC 7 – Local Authority Action Regarding Climate Change

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

Air Quality Objectives

Objective CC 6– Air Quality

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

Objective CC 7– Air Purification

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

Objective CC 8 – Radon

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

Flood Risk Management Policies and Objectives

Flood Risk Management Policies

Policy FL 1 – Flood Risk Management Guidelines

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

Policy FL 2 – Catchment Planning

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

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

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

Policy FL 4 – Principles of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines

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

- 1) Avoid development that will be at risk of flooding or that will increase the flooding risk elsewhere, where possible;
- 2) Substitute less vulnerable uses, where avoidance is not possible; and
- 3) Mitigate and manage the risk, where avoidance and substitution are not possible. Development should only be permitted in areas at risk of flooding when there are no alternative, reasonable sites available in areas at lower risk that also meet the objectives of proper planning and sustainable development. Development in areas which have the highest flood risk should be avoided and/or only considered in exceptional circumstances (through a prescribed Justification Test) if adequate land or sites are not available in areas which have lower flood risk.

Policy FL 5 – SFRA of Lower Tier Plans

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

Objective FL 1 – Flood Risk Management and Assessment

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

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

d) Galway County Council shall work with other bodies and organisations, as appropriate, to help protect critical infrastructure, including water and wastewater, within the County, from risk of flooding.

Objective FL 2 – Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) Maintain and enhance, as appropriate, the existing surface water drainage system in the County. Ensure that new developments are adequately serviced with surface water drainage infrastructure and promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems in all new developments. Surface water runoff from development sites will be limited to pre-development levels and planning applications for new developments will be required to provide details of surface water drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems proposals.

Objective FL 3 – Protection of Waterbodies and Watercourses

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

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

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

Objective FL 5 – SFRA/FRA & Climate Change

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

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

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

Chapter 9: Heritage, Landscape & Environment Management

General Heritage Policies

Policy GH 1

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

Policy GH 2

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

Policy GH 3

Implement the legislative provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), which offers protection to the architectural, archaeological and natural heritage. Policy GH 4 – Engage with all relevant stakeholders (and in particular local communities) in matters relating to the protection of natural, built and cultural heritage.

Architectural Heritage Policies & Objectives

Architectural Heritage Policies

Policy AH 1 – Architectural Heritage

Protect the Architectural Heritage of County Galway which is a unique and special resource.

Policy AH 2 – Traditional Skills

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

Architectural Heritage Objectives

Objective AH 1 – Legislative Context

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

Objective AH 2 – Protected Structures

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

Objective AH 3 – Architectural Conservation Area

Protect, conserve and enhance the essential character of any Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) through the appropriate management and control of the design, location and layout of new development, alterations or extensions to existing structures, surviving historic plots and street patterns and/or modifications to the character or setting of the Architectural Conservation Area. The

identification of areas of special interest may be considered during the lifetime of the Plan in either urban or rural settings. (See Map AH1)

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

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

- a) Works materially affecting the character of a Protected Structure or the exterior of a building/structure within an ACA will require planning permission.
- b) Any works carried out to a Protected Structure or the exterior of a building/structure within an ACA shall be in accordance with best conservation practice and use sustainable and appropriate materials. Works within the ACA shall ensure the conservation of traditional features and building elements that contribute to the character of the area. New proposals shall have appropriate regard to scale, plot, form, mass, design, materials, colours and function.

Objective AH 5 – Demolition

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

Objective AH 6 – Vernacular Architecture

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

Objective AH 7 – Local Place Names

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

Objective AH 8 – Energy Efficiency and Traditionally Built Structures

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

Objective AH 9 – Local Landscape and Place Assessment

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

Objective AH 10 – Designed Landscapes

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

Objective AH 11 – Custodianship

Promote an inter-disciplinary approach demonstrating best practice with regard to the custodianship of Protected Structures, Recorded Monuments and elements of built heritage.

Archaeological Heritage Policies & Objectives**Archaeological Heritage Policies****Policy ARC 1 – Legislative Context**

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

Policy ARC 2 – Archaeological Sites

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

Policy ARC 3 – Consultation

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

Policy ARC 4 – Management of Archaeological Sites and Monuments

Support the preservation, conservation and management of archaeological sites and monuments, together with the settings of these monuments.

Policy ARC 5 – Archaeological Heritage

Ensure the protection and sympathetic enhancement of Archaeological Heritage in the Plan Area, in particular by implementing the relevant provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), The National Monuments Act, 1930 (as amended), and The National Policy on Town Defences 2008 (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government).

Archaeological Heritage Objectives**Objective ARC 1 – Protection of Archaeological Sites**

Protect archaeological sites and monuments and their settings, archaeological objects and underwater archaeological sites that are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places, in the ownership/guardianship of the State, or that are subject of Preservation Orders or have been registered in the Register of Historic Monuments and seek to protect important archaeological landscapes.

Objective ARC 2 – Development Management

All planning applications for new development, redevelopment, any ground works, refurbishment, and restoration, etc. within areas of archaeological potential or within close proximity to Recorded Monuments or within the historic towns of County Galway (Ardrahan, Athenry, Dunmore, Eyrecourt, Loughrea and Tuam) will take account of the archaeological heritage of the area and the need for archaeological mitigation.

Objective ARC 3 – Protection of new Archaeological Sites Protect and preserve archaeological sites, which have been identified subsequent to the publication of the Record of Monuments and Places.

Objective ARC 4 – Burial Grounds Protect the burial grounds, identified in the Record of Monuments and Places, in co-operation with the National Monument Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. Encourage the local community to manage burial grounds in accordance with best conservation and heritage principles.

Objective ARC 5 – Battlefield Sites Protect the Battle of Aughrim site and other battlefield sites and their settings. Refer all planning applications within the battlefield sites and their environs to the Monument Service of The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht for their consideration.

Objective ARC 6 – Underwater Archaeological Sites To protect and preserve the underwater archaeological sites in rivers, lakes, intertidal and sub-tidal locations.

Objective ARC 7 – Recorded Monuments

Ensure that any development in the immediate vicinity of a Recorded Monument is sensitively designed and sited and does not detract from the Monument or its visual amenity.

Natural Heritage & Biodiversity Policies & Objectives

Natural Heritage and Biodiversity Policies

Policy NHB 1 – Natural Heritage and Biodiversity

It is the policy of Galway County Council to support the protection, conservation and enhancement of natural heritage and biodiversity, including the protection of the integrity of European sites, that form part of the Natura 2000 network, the protection of Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas and the promotion of the development of a green/ecological network within the Plan Area, in order to support ecological functioning and connectivity, create opportunities in suitable locations for active and passive recreation and to structure and provide visual relief from the built environment.

Policy NHB 2 – Non-Designated Sites

Recognise that nature conservation is not just confined to designated sites and acknowledge the need to protect non-designated habitats and landscapes and to conserve the biological diversity in the county.

Policy NHB 3 – Green Infrastructure

Protect existing green infrastructure and provide additional green infrastructure where possible.

Policy NHB 4 – Water Resources

Protect, conserve and enhance the water resources of the county, including, rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, springs, turloughs, surface water and groundwater quality, as well as surface waters, aquatic and wetland habitats and freshwater and water dependant species and seek to protect and conserve the quality, character and features of inland waterways by controlling developments close to navigable and non-navigable waterways.

Policy NHB 5 – Geological and Geo-Morphological Systems

Protect, conserve and enhance important geological and geo-morphological systems in the county.

Policy NHB 6 – National Biodiversity Plan, Galway County Heritage Plan & Galway County Biodiversity Plan

It is the policy of the Council to support the implementation of the National Biodiversity Plan and Galway County Biodiversity Plan and Galway County Heritage Plan in partnership with relevant stakeholders subject to available resources.

Policy NHB 7 - Invasive Species

It is a policy of the Council to support measures for the prevention and eradication of invasive species. This will include the dissemination of information to raise public awareness, consultation with relevant stakeholders, the promotion of the use of native species in amenity planting and landscaping and the recording of invasive/native species as the need arises and resources permit.

Policy NHB 8 – National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) Management Plans

It shall be the policy of the Council to ensure that development takes into account any relevant Management Plans prepared by NPWS for SACs and SPAs.

Natural Heritage and Biodiversity Objectives**Objective NHB 1 – Protected Habitats and Species**

Support the protection of habitats and species listed in the Annexes to and/or covered by the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) (as amended) and Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), and regularly occurring-migratory birds and their habitats, and species protected under the Wildlife Acts 1976-2000 and the Flora Protection Order.

Objective NHB 2 – Biodiversity and Ecological Networks

Support the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and ecological connectivity within the Plan Area, including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, semi-natural grasslands, rivers, streams, natural springs, wetlands, stonewalls, geological and geo-morphological systems, other landscape features and associated wildlife where these form part of the ecological network and/or may be considered as ecological corridors or stepping stones in the context of Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.

Objective NHB 3 – Water Resources

Protect the water resources in the Plan Area, including rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, springs, turloughs, surface water and groundwater quality, as well as surface waters, aquatic and wetland habitats and freshwater and water dependent species in accordance with the requirements and guidance in the EU Water Framework Directive 2000 (2000/60/EC), the European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (as amended), the Western River Basin District Management Plan 2009- 2015, Shannon International River Basin Management Plan 2009-2015 and other relevant EU Directives, including associated national legislation and policy guidance (including any superseding versions of same).

Objective NHB 4 – Geological and Geo-Morphological Systems

Protect and conserve geological and geo-morphological systems, sites and features from inappropriate development that would detract from their heritage value and interpretation and ensure that any Plan

or project affecting karst formations, eskers or other important geological and geomorphological systems are adequately assessed with regard to their potential geophysical, hydrological or ecological impacts on the environment.

Objective NHB 5 – Control of Invasive and Alien Invasive Species

Where the potential for spread of invasive species are identified as part of a development proposal the developer will be required to submit an invasive species management plan. A landscaping plan will be required for developments near water bodies and ensure that such plans do not include alien invasive species.

Objective NHB 6 – Protection of Bats and Bats Habitats

Seek to protect bats and their roosts, their feeding areas, flight paths and commuting routes. Ensure that development proposals in areas which are potentially important for bats, including areas of woodland, linear features such as hedgerows, stone walls, watercourses and associated riparian vegetation which may provide migratory/foraging uses shall be subject to suitable assessment for potential impacts on bats. This will include an assessment of the cumulative loss of habitat or the impact on bat populations and activity in the area and may include a specific bat survey. Any assessment shall be carried out by a suitably qualified professional and where development is likely to result in significant adverse effects on bat populations or activity in the area, development will be prohibited or require mitigation and/or compensatory measures, as appropriate.

Objective NHB 7 – Eskers

Assess applications for quarrying and other proposed developments that are in close proximity to eskers that have the potential to impact on their landscape, scientific or amenity value.

Objective NHB 8 – Coastal Zone Conservation works undertaken in coastal areas will be in accordance with best practice and support measures to protect the coast, the coastal edge and coastal habitats. Control the unauthorised removal of sand and related beach material. Protect, enhance and conserve the beaches in the county from inappropriate development. Seek to maintain the current status of the designated Blue Flag beaches and Green Coasts and to increase the number of beaches and coasts holding this status in the future. Facilitate and Integrated Coastal Zone Management approach to ensure the conservation, management and protection of man-made and natural resources of the coastal zone.

Objective NHB 9 – Inland Waterways

Protect the amenity and recreational value of navigable and non-navigable waterways.

Objective NHB 10 – Protection of the Coastal Zone Protect the amenity, character, visual, recreational, economic potential and environmental values of the coast. Ensure that natural coastal defences including sand dunes, beaches and coastal wetlands are not compromised by inappropriate development. Conserve the character, quality and distinctiveness of seascapes.

Objective NHB 11 – Trees, Parkland/Woodland, Stone Walls and Hedgerows

- a) Protect important trees, tree clusters and hedgerows within the county and ensure that development proposals take cognisance of significant trees/tree stands. Ensure that all planting schemes use suitable native variety of trees, of Irish provenance.
- b) Seek to retain natural boundaries, including stone walls, hedgerows and tree boundaries, wherever possible and replace with a boundary type similar to the existing boundary where removal

is unavoidable. Discourage the felling of mature trees to facilitate development and encourage tree surgery rather than felling where possible. All works to be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Forestry Act, 1946.

Objective NHB 12 – Soil/Ground Water Protection Developments shall ensure that adequate soil protection measures are undertaken, where appropriate, including investigations into the nature and extent of any soil/groundwater contamination.

Objective NHB 13 – NPWS & Integrated Management Plans Galway County Council shall engage with the National Parks & Wildlife Service to ensure Integrated Management Plans are prepared for all Natura sites and ensure that plans are fully integrated with all land use and water management plans in the county, with the intention that such plans are practical, achievable and sustainable and have regard to all relevant ecological, cultural, social and economic considerations and with special regard to local communities.

Landscape Conservation & Management Policies & Objectives

Landscape Conservation & Management Policies

Policy LCM 1– Preservation of Landscape Character

Preserve and enhance the character of the landscape where, and to the extent that, in the opinion of the Planning Authority, the proper planning and sustainable development of the area requires it, including the preservation and enhancement, where possible of views and prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest.

Landscape Conservation & Management Objectives

Objective LCM 1 – Landscape Sensitivity Classification

The Planning Authority shall have regard to the Landscape Sensitivity Classification of sites in the consideration of any significant development proposals and, where necessary, require a Landscape/Visual Impact Assessment to accompany such proposals. This shall be balanced against the need to develop key strategic infrastructure to meet the strategic aims of the Plan.

Objective LCM 2 – Landscape Sensitivity Ratings

Consideration of Landscape Sensitivity Ratings shall be an important factor in determining development uses in areas of the County. In areas of high Landscape sensitivity, the design and the choice of location of proposed development in the landscape will also be critical considerations.

Objective LCM 3 – Open/Unfenced Landscape

Preserve the status of traditionally open/unfenced landscape. The merits of each case will be considered in light of landscape Sensitivity Ratings and views of amenity importance.

Focal Point and Views Objective

Objective FPV 1 – Development Management

Preserve the focal points and views as listed in Map FPV1 from development that in the view of the Planning Authority would negatively impact on said focal points and views.

World Heritage Objective

World Heritage Objective WH 1 - Tentative World Heritage Sites

Protect the outstanding universal value of the tentative World Heritage Sites in County Galway namely the Western Stone Forts and the Burren that are included in the UNESCO Tentative List, Ireland 2010 and engage with other national and international initiatives which promote the special built, natural and cultural heritage of places in the county.

Chapter 10: Cultural, Social and Community Development

Gaeltacht Policies

Policy G 1 – Preserving and Promoting the Gaeltacht in the Planning Process

The Council through the Gaeltacht Local Area Plan 2008-2018 has outlined Policies and Objectives to protect and encourage the social, cultural and linguistic heritage of the Gaeltacht, whilst seeking to realise the economic and development potential of the Gaeltacht in a balanced and sustainable manner over the lifetime of the Plan.

Policy G 2 – Economic Development in the Gaeltacht

Galway County Council, through its Economic Development role, is committed to working closely with all the statutory development agencies, especially Údarás na Gaeltachta, to achieve sustainable development in the Galway Gaeltacht while protecting and promoting the Irish language as the first community language of the area.

Policy G 3 – The Irish Language as an Asset

Recognise the economic, social and cultural importance of Irish in the Gaeltacht and throughout the county.

Policy G 4 – Official Languages Act 2003

Support and implement the recommendations of the Official Languages Act 2003 (or any superseding or updated version of same.)

Gaeltacht Objective

Objective G 1 – Linguistic and Cultural Heritage of the Gaeltacht

It shall be an objective of the Council to protect the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht and to promote Irish as the community language.

Islands Policies and Objectives

Islands Policies Policy IS 1 – Supporting the Islands

Support the inhabited islands in County Galway and recognise the special planning and development needs of islands and islands communities, particularly access, infrastructure and services.

Islands Objectives

Objective IS 1 – Economic and Tourism

Development on the Islands Support the economic and tourism development of the islands for the benefit of island communities generally and to encourage the development of speciality or niche economic sectors that might be appropriate to different islands.

Objective IS 2 – Development Proposals on the Islands

- (a) Support sustainable development proposals that contribute to the long term economic and social development of the islands
- (b) Priority shall be given to development that contributes to retention of the year-round population on the islands, that has a clear and identifiable economic and social benefit and that is compatible with the capacity of the local community to accommodate it.
- (c) Ensure that new development of any kind is sympathetic to the individual form and character of the islands landscapes and traditional building patterns.

Community Facilities & Services Policies & Objectives

Community Facilities and Services Policies

Policy CF 1 – Community Facilities

Assist where possible the development of community facilities and services within the county. Encourage and facilitate, where feasible the provision and extension of integrated community facilities to serve the needs of communities in the County.

Policy CF 2 – Community & Voluntary Sector

Support the strengthening of the Community and Voluntary sector throughout the County.

Policy CF 3 – Education & Childcare Facilities

Promote the provision of education opportunities for all groups in the County and the provision of day care and childcare facilities by both the public and private sectors in settlements and communities throughout the County.

Policy CF 4 – Library Services

Continue to promote the use of the library service and further develop each library as a community gathering place and learning hub.

Policy CF 5 – Community & Cultural Needs

Recognise the community and cultural needs of new communities in the county and promote the sharing of facilities in our towns and villages.

Policy CF 6 – Burial Grounds

Implement the ongoing programme for the provision and extension of burial grounds within available resources. The planning authority will seek to acquire lands where the extension of public burial grounds in the ownership or charge of the Council is likely to be necessary during the Plan period. Archaeologically significant medieval burial grounds will not be considered for extension if such an extension would constitute a proven risk to the archaeological heritage.

Policy CF 7 – Art, Sports & Social Inclusion

Support the implementation of the Council's Art's, Sports, Social Inclusion, the 'Integration and Diversity Strategy 2013-2015', 'Galway Age Friendly Strategy 2014-2019', and a Youth Support Programme and other appropriate plans and programmes that may be developed during the lifetime of this Plan.

Policy CF 8 – Cultural Development in the County

Actively encourage and support Arts organisations to achieve their full potential, while enhancing the artistic life of County Galway. The Council supports and develops organisations and individuals working in the Cultural and Creative Services.

Community Facilities and Services Objectives**Objective CF 1 – Universal Accessibility, Universal Design and Social Inclusion**

Promote and support where possible the concept of universal accessibility, universal design and facilitate social inclusion through high standards of design in projects and plans.

Objective CF 2 – Education Provision & Facilities

Work closely with the Department of Education and Skills and the Office of Public Works to identify and protect suitable sites for new educational facilities. Site reservations for primary and post primary schools shall be considered when developing Local Area Plans and this may include campus arrangements.

Objective CF 3 – Crèche Facilities

Require the provision of crèche facilities in mixed use/residential developments in accordance with the ministerial guidelines for Planning Authorities on Childcare Facilities published in 2001. The Planning Authority shall encourage the development of a broad range of childcare facilities, i.e. parttime, full day-care, after-school care, etc., including those based in residential areas, in employment areas and in areas close to where users of such facilities live. In general, childcare facilities outside of established settlements shall only be permitted adjacent to or in close proximity to existing educational or social facilities (national schools, rural shops/post offices, etc).

Objective CF 4 – Sport, Amenity and Recreation

Support and facilitate local communities, sporting organisations in the development of sport and recreational facilities. Seek to develop open spaces throughout the county which will support a range of recreational and amenity activities that provides for active and passive needs.

Objective CF 5 – Play Facilities

Support the development of Play facilities at suitable locations in the county in accordance with the National Play Strategy 'Ready Steady Play!'.

Objective CF 6 – Burial Grounds

Acquire lands where the extension of public burial grounds in the ownership or charge of the Council is likely to be necessary during the Plan period. Archaeologically significant medieval burial grounds will not be considered for extension if such an extension would constitute a proven risk to the archaeological heritage.

Objective CF 7 – Elderly Services

Consider favourably projects throughout the county that deliver services for the elderly or that integrate services for elderly and children.

Objective CF 8 – Health Services

Promote the continued improvement and expansion of health and medical care facilities within the county in a planned and co-ordinated way, by accommodating projects that assist in providing such medical care facilities, together with their necessary support services and developments, as well as their infrastructural requirements.

Objective CF 9 – Support the Development of the Unique Culture of the County

Facilitate the development of cultural infrastructure within communities throughout the County that will further enhance the cultural vibrancy of the County.

Recreation & Amenity Policies & Objectives**Recreation and Amenity Policies****Policy RA 1 – Promotion of Recreation & Amenity**

Co-operate with various stakeholders in promoting and developing the recreational and amenity potential of the County and carry out appropriate development as and when resources permit.

Policy RA 2 – Protection of Sensitive Areas

Protect the amenity of scenic and environmentally sensitive areas and promote the knowledge and appreciation of the natural amenities of the County.

Policy RA 3 – Walking and Cycle Routes

Support cycling and walking and other such recreational groups and organisations in promoting their disciplines and developing routes and facilities.

Policy RA 4 – Sports, Recreation, Amenity and Play Policy

Develop and implement a Sports, Recreation, Amenity and Play Policy for the County within the lifetime of the Plan based on the recommendations of the Recreational Needs Study being undertaken by Galway County Council.

Recreation and Amenity Objectives**Objective RA 1 – Swimming Facilities**

It is an objective of the Council to enhance the provision of swimming facilities throughout the county and ensure the quality of bathing water is maintained and to contribute towards the achievement of the requirements of the EU Bathing Water Directive and to transposing Bathing Water Quality

Regulations (SI No. 79 of 2008) and EU Mandatory Values, as a minimum and EU Guide Values, where possible.

Objective RA 2 – Recreation Outlets

It is an objective of the Council to support the provision of age friendly recreation outlets, including public parks, play areas, community allotments and walkways.

Objective RA 3 – Recreation Facilities

It is an objective of the Council to develop sport, recreation and amenity facilities in appropriate locations consistent with proper planning and sustainable development in the County and in partnership with local community and sports groups and/or private parties.

Objective RA 4 – Allotments

It is an objective of the Council to consider positively the provision of, or permission for, the development of allotments within rural and agricultural areas where they are accessible from the built-up area of the County, to be available to the community.

Objective RA 5 – Clifden Greenway

It is an objective of the Council to protect the alignment of the Clifden Railway Line as a Greenway and to support its completion.

Objective RA 6 – Walking Routes/Rights of Ways

Prohibit the intrusion of development along public walking routes and public rights of way, particularly those in scenic areas, the sea coast and along inland waterways.

Objective RA 7 – Walking and Cycle Routes

Support and promote programmes to develop walking and cycle routes including the Irish Trails Strategy and the Cycle Strategy for the Western Region.

Public Rights of Way Policy & Objective

Public Rights of Way Policy

Policy PRW 1 – Preservation of Public Rights of Way

It is the Policy of the Council to preserve and protect verified public rights of way which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other place of natural beauty or recreational utility. Public Rights of Way Objective

Objective PRW 1 – Identification of Existing Public Rights of Way

Seek to identify, map and protect verified existing public rights of way that give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other place of natural beauty or recreational utility as they become available to the Planning Authority over the lifetime of the Plan.

Social Inclusion and Universal Access Policies & Objectives

Social Inclusion and Universal Access Policies

Policy SI 1 – Social Inclusion and Universal Access

Support the principles of social inclusion and universal access and ensure that all individuals have access to goods, services, facilities and buildings in order to assist them to participate in and contribute to social and cultural life within County Galway.

Policy SI 2 – Social Inclusion Programmes/Interventions

Support the implementation of the requirements and provisions as set out in the Disability Act 2005, the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016 (including any updated or superseding document), including RAPID and CLÁR which support locally-based social inclusion interventions with emphasis on supporting people and communities suffering disadvantage and exclusion through a wide spectrum of locally promoted actions.

Policy SI 3 – Implementation of Policy

Implement the provisions of the County Galway Local Authorities Disability Action Plan 2007-2015 and the Social Inclusion Strategy (including any updated/superseding documents), Galway Age Friendly Strategy 2014-2019, Integration and Diversity Strategy 2013-2015, Galway Traveller Interagency Strategy, Galway LGBT Diversity Strategy; Irish National Positive Ageing Strategy.

Policy SI 4 – Lifelong Learning

Galway County Council shall support the concept of lifelong learning.

Policy SI 5 – Ageing & the Family

Work with NUI Galway and other partners to make County Galway a flagship for the integration of research and practice in the areas of ageing and family needs.

Social Inclusion and Universal Access Objectives

Objective SI 1 – Recognised Special Needs

Consideration shall be given to individuals with recognised special needs in the location, layout and design of housing developments, communal facilities, public spaces and transport services.

Objective SI 2 – Housing for the Elderly & People with Other Special Needs

Ensure that appropriate units are developed in the housing market for the elderly, people with disabilities and other special needs households.

Objective SI 3 – Proofing of Traffic Management Infrastructure

Ensure that traffic management infrastructure is developed in accordance with road design manuals and in accordance with the DM Standards and Guidelines of this Plan to cater for all needs.

Objectives SI 4 – Services and Rural Transport Networks

The Council will support the development of new rural transport networks where gaps in services are identified.

Objective SI 5 – Priorities for Traffic Management Policies in Urban Areas

Progress traffic management policies that facilitates pedestrians and cycle users in conjunction with vehicular movement in urban centres and towns and villages.

Objective SI 6 – Integrated Transport Strategy and Older Residents

Develop a transport policy and integrated transport strategy to address the transport concerns of all residents and the broader community.

Objective SI 7 – Community Safety and Infrastructure

Promote and support the development of infrastructure that improves community safety.

Objective SI 8 – World Health Organisation and Age Friendly Cities

Consider the World Health Organisation (WHO) Checklist of Essential Features of Age Friendly Cities when implementing the County Development Plan.

Objective SI 9 – Life Long Communities

Facilitate all members of the community living at home in their own homes and communities for as long as possible.

Chapter 11: Agriculture, Fishing, Marine Resources & Forestry**Agriculture, Fishing/Marine Resources and Forestry Policies****Policy AFF 1 – Agri-Food Sector, Fisheries/Marine Resources and Forestry**

The Council shall recognise innovative strategies in the agri-food sector, fisheries/marine resources and forestry within the County.

Policy AFF 2 – Sustainable Management of Natural Resources

Support the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Report titled 'Food Harvest: A Vision for Agri-Food and Fisheries 2020'.

Agricultural Policies and Objectives**Agriculture Policies Policy AFF 3 – Sustainable Development of the Countryside**

Facilitate the sustainable development of the countryside. The Council recognises that the diversification of appropriate uses on rural landholdings may be necessary in order to ensure the continued viability of agriculture.

Policy AFF 4 – Organic Farming and Rural Tourism

The Council shall promote and support the organic farm sector (including the development of niche markets) and rural tourism initiatives including appropriate infrastructure to support such initiatives.

Agriculture Objectives

Objective AFF1 – Sustainable Agriculture

The Council shall support the sustainable development of agriculture, with an emphasis on a high quality, traceable primary production methods, the promotion of local food supply and agriculture diversification.

Objective AFF 2 – Rural Diversification

Galway County Council shall support those who live and work in agriculture and /or related activities in rural areas and who wish to remain on their land holding. Accordingly the Council will favourably consider rural diversification intended to supplement farm income where the activity remains ancillary and compatible to the ongoing agricultural use of the farm and does not have an adverse impact on residential amenity:

- a) Specialist farming practices e.g. specialised animal breeding, equine facilities, poultry, mushroom growing, vegetable and fruit growing;
- b) Farm enterprises such as processing, animal pet farms/horse riding schools with an element of retail activity;
- c) The production of organic and speciality foods to meet the increase in demand for such products;
- d) The conversion of disused buildings/existing farm buildings for appropriate owner run, rural oriented, enterprises, as a way of supporting a viable rural community, subject to proper planning and sustainable development of the area;
- e) Support the development of appropriate agri-tourism activities and eco-tourism development proposals and promote the County as a green tourist destination.

Objective AFF 3 – Farmers Markets

Support the establishment or facilitation of regularised local farmers markets within the towns and villages as outlined in the Core/Settlement Strategy in accordance with best practice and in a manner that is complementary to the existing market and retail activities of those towns and villages.

Objective AFF 4 – Intensive Agriculture Developments

Have regard to S256 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) which amends the EPA Act 1992 regarding the control of emissions when assessing intensive agricultural developments.

Objective AFF 5 – Compliance with the EU Habitats Directive

New agricultural projects that may potentially affect Natura 2000 Sites, individually or in combination with other plans and projects shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment to ensure that there are no likely significant effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 Sites in the County.

Objective AFF 6 – Drainage or Reclamation of Wetlands

The Council will implement the relevant parts of the Planning and Development (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2011 and the European Communities (Amendment to Planning and Development) Regulations 2011 which require planning permission to be applied for where the area impacted by works relating to the drainage or reclamation of a wetland exceeds 0.1 hectares or where such works may

have a significant effect on the environment. Such planning applications would need to be supported by an Appropriate Assessment where necessary.

Fishing & Marine Resource Policies and Objectives

Fishing and Marine Resource Policies

Policy AFF 5 – Implementation of the Shellfish Waters Directive

Galway County Council will continue to work with local communities, relevant stakeholders and with the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine to ensure the proper and successful implementation of the Shellfish Waters Directive along County Galway's coastline

Policy AFF 6 – Sustainable Growth within Fishing and Marine Resource Sectors

The Council shall support the sustainable development of fishing, marine resource enterprises and marine/ecotourism that is consistent with other policies of this Plan, so as to maximise their contribution to jobs and growth within the coastal and rural communities of the county and to the growth of the national economy.

Policy AFF 7 – Integrated Approach

The Council shall promote County Galway as a coastal county and shall seek to increase our awareness of the value, opportunities and social benefits of the sea. Galway County Council shall also support an integrated or ecosystem approach as outlined within the document 'An Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland Harnessing our Ocean's Wealth 2012 regarding future maritime development proposals in ensuring that ecological limits are respected and that development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment both on land and sea.

Policy AFF 8 – Marine Research

Promote and collaborate with NUIG and with the Galway Marine Institute in their Research and Development initiatives in harnessing employment opportunities in the marine sector (e.g. SmartBay Project). Fishing and Marine Resource Objectives

Objective AFF 7 – Commercial Sea Fishing

Galway County Council shall encourage and facilitate the sustainable development and expansion of the fishing industry while providing for the management and conservation of coastal habitats and ecosystems. Objective AFF 8 – Aquaculture The Council shall support and promote the sustainable development of the aquaculture sector in order to maximize its contribution to employment creation and growth in coastal communities whilst balancing environmental considerations.

Objective AFF 9 – Inland Fishery Resources

The Council shall support the County's valuable inland fishery resource and support its sustainable development and expansion through the protection of water and habitat quality and facilitation of ancillary infrastructure and improvements at appropriate locations.

Objective AFF 10 – Marine Research

Continue to support the further development of the existing NUIG marine research station at Mainis having regard to its long established land use on the site and its importance to the aquaculture industry to the local community and to the development of scientific knowledge.

Objective AFF 11 – Development of Offshore Resources

Galway County Council shall promote and support the development of sustainable off-shore resources such as offshore energy generating sites subject to the provisions of EU Directives including the Habitats Directive and Shellfish Directive.

Objective AFF 12 – Marina Developments

The Council shall support proposals for sustainable marina developments and associated amenities that are located at both existing marinas and at other appropriate and fully justified locations.

Objective AFF 13 – Water Borne Transport

Support the continued operation of ferry services between the islands and mainland in order to support coastal communities and to increase access for the tourism sector.

Objective AFF 14 – Provision of Infrastructure

Facilitate the provision of infrastructure, which is necessary for the development of the fishing, seaweed and Mari-culture industry. The provision of infrastructure, which is necessary for the development of the fishing and Mari-culture industry, should be located in proximity to established landing facilities.

Objective AFF 15 – Aquaculture, Marine Enterprise and Biotechnology

The Council shall encourage and support an integrated approach to marine enterprise as set out within the national Integrated Marine Plan titled 'Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth 2012'. The Council shall consider appropriately located marine resourced enterprises within the County subject to proper planning and in compliance with environmental legislation. Ros an Mhíl shall be promoted as a location for a 'maritime/marine cluster'.

Forestry Policies and Objectives Forestry Policies**Policy AFF 9 – Forestry Recreation**

Co-operate with Coillte Teoranta, the Forest Service and private landowners in promoting greater public access and recreational use in the County. Support and promote the Forest Service 'Neighbourhood Scheme' which seeks to provide public access, recreation and enjoyment on such land in or near villages, towns within the country. Policy AFF 10 – Forestry and Climate Change In accordance with the National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012 (including any updated/superseding Strategy) Galway County Council shall promote sustainable forestry development of appropriate scale within the County in order to address climate change directly through sequestration and indirectly through the displacement of fossil fuel.

Forestry Objectives**Objective AFF 16– Sustainable Management**

Encourage sustainable forestry development and related management activities, including the promotion of mixed species forestry, particularly deciduous forestry as an alternative agriculture use.

Encourage phased and selective rather than clear felling and the promotion of green infrastructure networks.

Objective AFF 17 – Sustainable Afforestation

Facilitate afforestation in appropriate locations, in co-operation with Coillte and the Forest Service and in line with EU environmental and national legislation and policy.

Objective AFF 18 – Afforestation and Landscape

Consider the likely impact of forestry on landscape quality and visual amenity in any afforestation proposals brought before the Local Authority for comment. Refer to the Landscape Character Assessment and to the DM Standards and Guidelines of this Plan when considering such proposals.

Objective AFF 19 – Bio-Energy

Support the development of the bio-energy sector as an alternative agricultural use and have regard to the Bio-Energy Action Plan for Ireland 2007 (including any updated or superseding document), to the Department of Agriculture and Food Best Practice Manuals and Guidelines and to the Landscape Character Assessment when considering significant planting of bio-energy crops.