

SEA STATEMENT

FOR THE

GORT LOCAL AREA PLAN 2025-2031

for: **Galway County Council**



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

by: **CAAS Ltd.**



SEPTEMBER 2025

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Section 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction and Legislative Context

This is the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Statement for the Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031.

SEA is a systematic process of predicting and evaluating the likely environmental effects of implementing a plan, or other strategic action, in order to ensure that these effects are appropriately addressed at the earliest appropriate stage of decision-making on a par with economic and social considerations.

Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of Ministers, of 27th June 2001, on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment, referred to hereafter as the SEA Directive, introduced the requirement that SEA be carried out on plans and programmes which are prepared for a number of sectors, including land use. The SEA Directive was transposed into Irish Law through the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004. The Regulations have been amended by the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011.

1.2 Content of the SEA Statement

Where SEA is undertaken, the Regulations require that a Statement is made available to the public and the competent environmental authorities after the making of the Plan.

This Statement is referred to as an SEA Statement.

The SEA Statement is required to include information summarising:

- a) how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan;
- b) how the following have been taken into account during the preparation of the Plan:
 - the environmental report,
 - submissions and observations made to the planning authority on the Draft Plan and Environmental Report, and
 - any transboundary consultations (these are not relevant to this SEA).
- c) the reasons for choosing the Plan in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and
- d) the measures decided upon to monitor the significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan.

1.3 Implications of SEA for the Plan

SEA has been undertaken on the Plan and the findings of the SEA are expressed in an Environmental Report, the first published version of which accompanied the Draft Plan on public display. The Environmental Report was updated in order to take account of changes to the original Draft Plan that were made on foot of submissions and recommendations in the submissions.

Galway County Council have been provided with the findings of SEA output during their consideration of the Plan and before the Plan was adopted.

Section 2 How Environmental Considerations were integrated into the Plan

2.1 Overview

Environmental considerations were presented to the Council for its consideration through:

1. Consultations;
2. Communication of environmental sensitivities throughout the SEA process;
3. Appropriate Assessment;
4. Strategic Flood Risk Assessment;
5. Consideration of alternatives;
6. Integration of environmental considerations into the Plan's Zoning provisions; and
7. Integration of individual SEA and AA provisions into the Plan.

All parts of the Plan-preparation process were informed by the SEA, AA and SFRA processes - this includes the preparation of the Draft Plan, Proposed Material Amendments and Further Modifications.

2.2 Consultations

As environmental authorities identified under the Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations, as amended, the following authorities were sent SEA scoping notices indicating that submissions or observations in relation to the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the environmental report could be made to: the Environmental Protection Agency; Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (now Department of Climate, Energy and Environment); Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine; Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; Galway City Council; Mayo County Council; Roscommon County Council; Offaly County Council; Tipperary County Council; and Clare County Council.

Detail on submissions made on foot of the SEA scoping notice is provided under Section 3.2.

Detail is also provided on submissions that were made on the Draft Plan and/or the SEA

Environmental Report while they were on public display (see Section 3.3).

2.3 Communication of environmental sensitivities throughout the SEA process

Environmental considerations were integrated into the Plan before it was placed on public display. Individual sensitivities that were considered by the Planning Team preparing the Plan included the following:

- European Sites (Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas);
- Other Ecological Designations;
- Status of Surface and Ground Waters;
- Various entries to the Water Framework Directive's Register of Protected Areas;
- Groundwater Vulnerability;
- Water Services Capacity, Performance and Demand;
- Cultural heritage (archaeological and architectural) sensitivities; and
- Landscape Designations.

A number of these sensitivities are mapped on Figures 2.1 to 2.3.

2.4 Appropriate Assessment

Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening and Stage 2 AA have been undertaken alongside the Plan. The requirement for AA is provided under the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 1992/43/EEC). The conclusion of the AA is that the Plan will not affect the integrity of any European Site, alone or in combination with other plans or projects.¹ The preparation of the Plan, SEA and AA has taken place

¹ Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be: (a) no alternative solution available, (b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the plan to proceed; and (c) adequate compensatory measures in place.

concurrently and the findings of the AA have informed the SEA.

2.5 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the Plan. The requirement for SFRA is provided under 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of Environment and Office of Public Works, 2009) and associated Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government Circular PL2/2014. The preparation of the Plan, SEA and SFRA has taken place concurrently and the findings of the SFRA have informed both the Plan and the SEA.

2.6 Consideration of Alternatives

Consideration of the environmental effects arising from a variety of different alternatives for the Plan (see Section 4) has contributed towards the protection and management of the environment within the Plan area.

2.7 Integration of environmental considerations into the Plan's Zoning provisions

Environmental considerations, including those relating to ecology, cultural heritage, landscape and water, were integrated into the Local Area Plan's zoning through an interdisciplinary approach which was informed by the environmental considerations identified by the SEA, AA and SFRA processes.

Zoning has been applied in a way that, in general, primarily seeks to achieve sustainable and compact growth, taking into account the various requirements set out in the higher-level NPF, Northern and Western RSES and Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 (for exceptions to this approach please refer to Section 2.10).

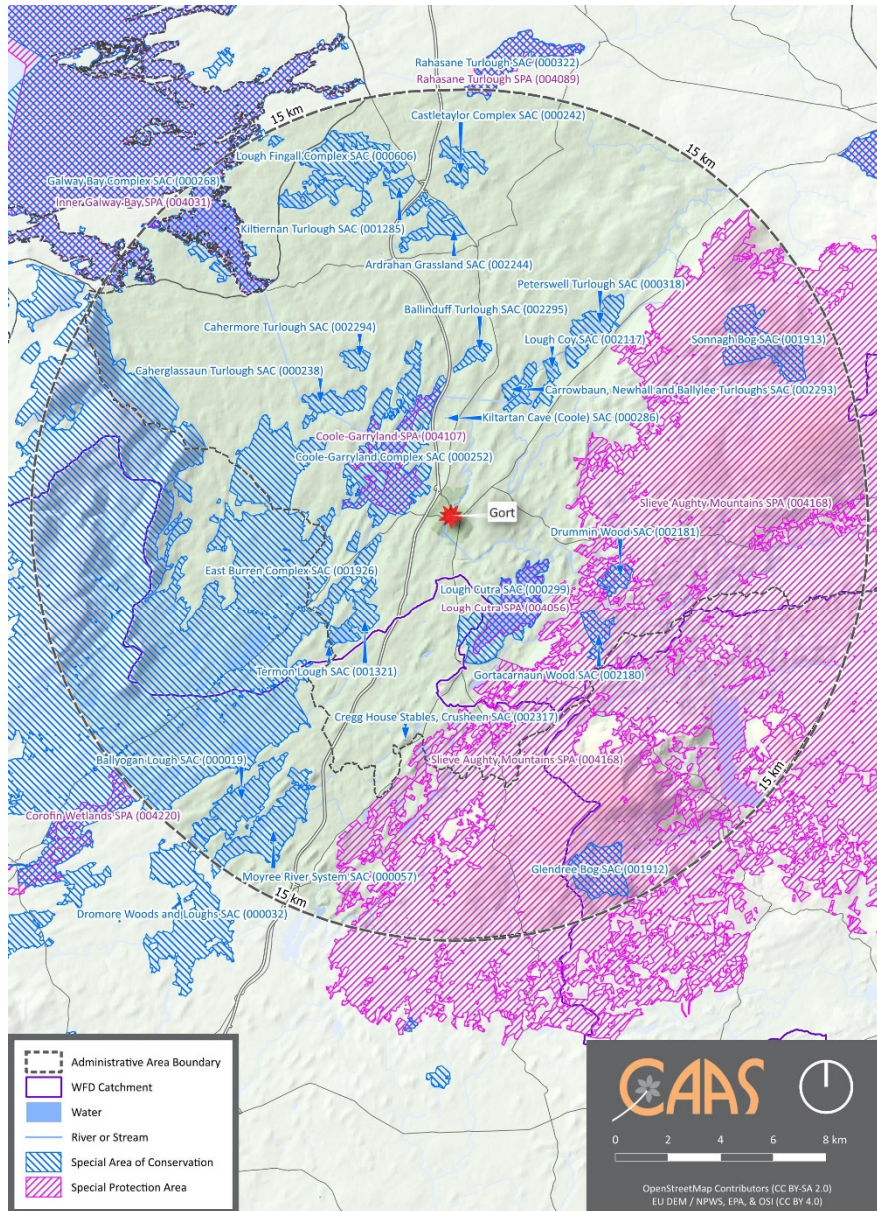
Flood risk management and drainage provisions are already in force through the County Development Plan and related provisions have been integrated into the LAP. In addition, land use zoning contained within the Plan has been informed by the SFRA process and associated delineation of flood risk zones. The detailed Plan preparation process undertaken by the Planning Department combined with specialist input from the SFRA process facilitated zoning that helps to avoid inappropriate development being permitted in areas of high flood risk.

2.8 Integration of individual provisions into the text of the Plan

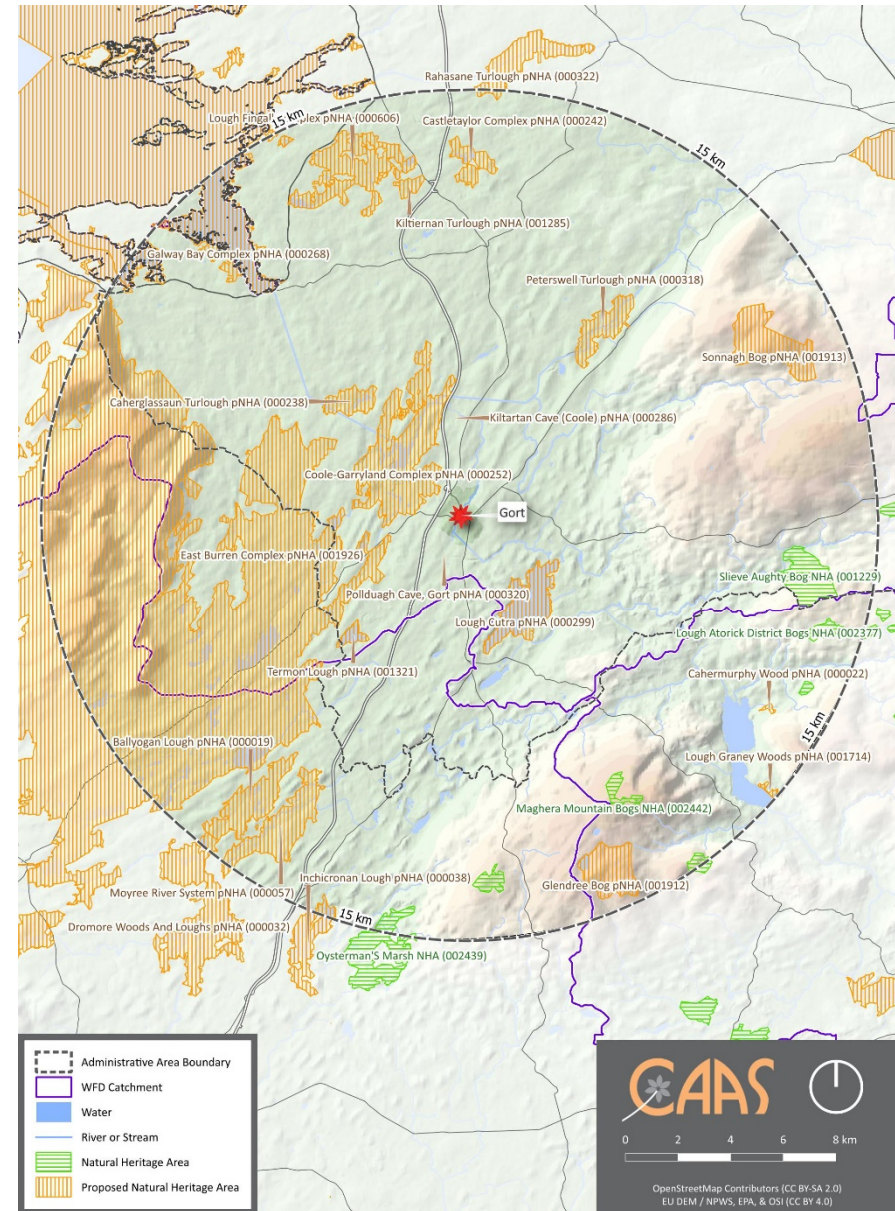
Various provisions have been integrated into the text of the Plan through the Plan-preparation and SEA, SFRA and AA processes. Both the Planning and the assessment teams contributed towards the mitigation which was developed over multiple iterations and was informed by, inter alia, various communications through the SEA, AA and SFRA processes. Table 2.1 links key mitigation measure(s) to the likely significant effects of implementing the Plan, if unmitigated. The measures generally benefit multiple environmental components i.e. a measure providing for the protection of biodiversity, flora and fauna could beneficially impact upon the minimisation of flood risk and the protection of human health, for example.

2.9 Integration of individual provisions into the text of the County Development Plan

In addition to the individual provisions integrated into the text of the Local Area Plan, individual provisions relating to environmental protection and management have been integrated into the existing Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028. These measures, which must be complied with by development under the Local Area Plan, are identified alongside the Local Area Plan measures on Table 2.1.

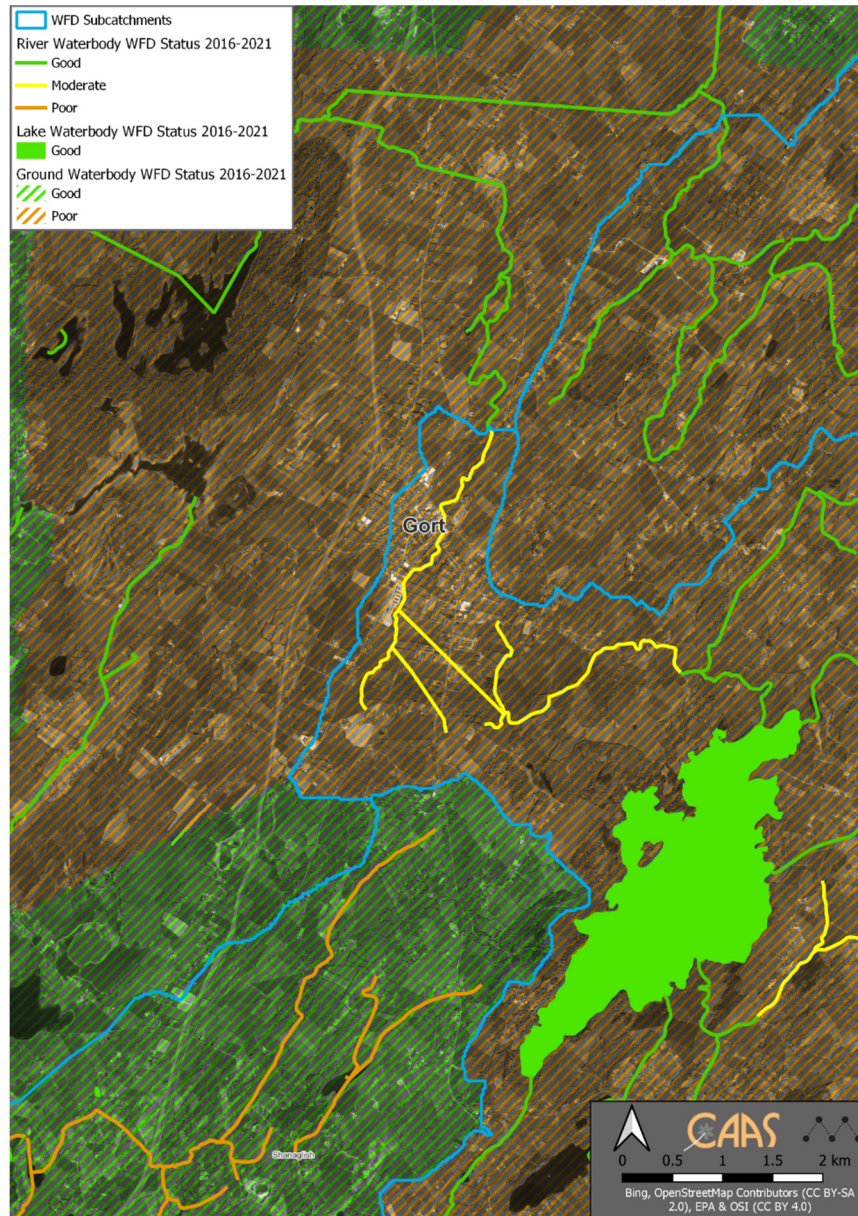


European Sites within and within 15 km buffer of Plan area

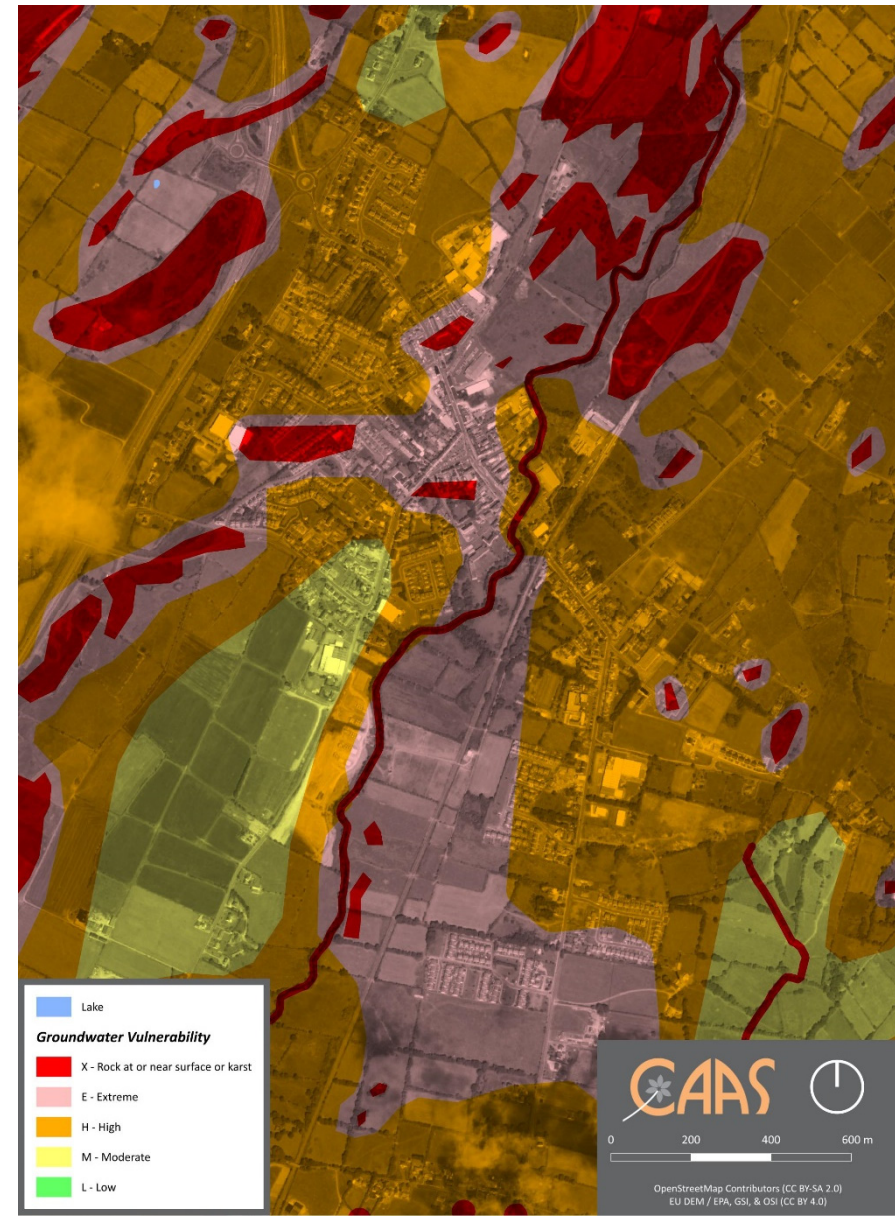


NHAs and pNHAs within and within 15 km buffer of Plan area

Figure 2.1 Selection of Individual Environmental Sensitivities taken into account (1 of 3)



WFD Surface Waterbodies and WFD Ground Waterbodies Status (2016-2021)

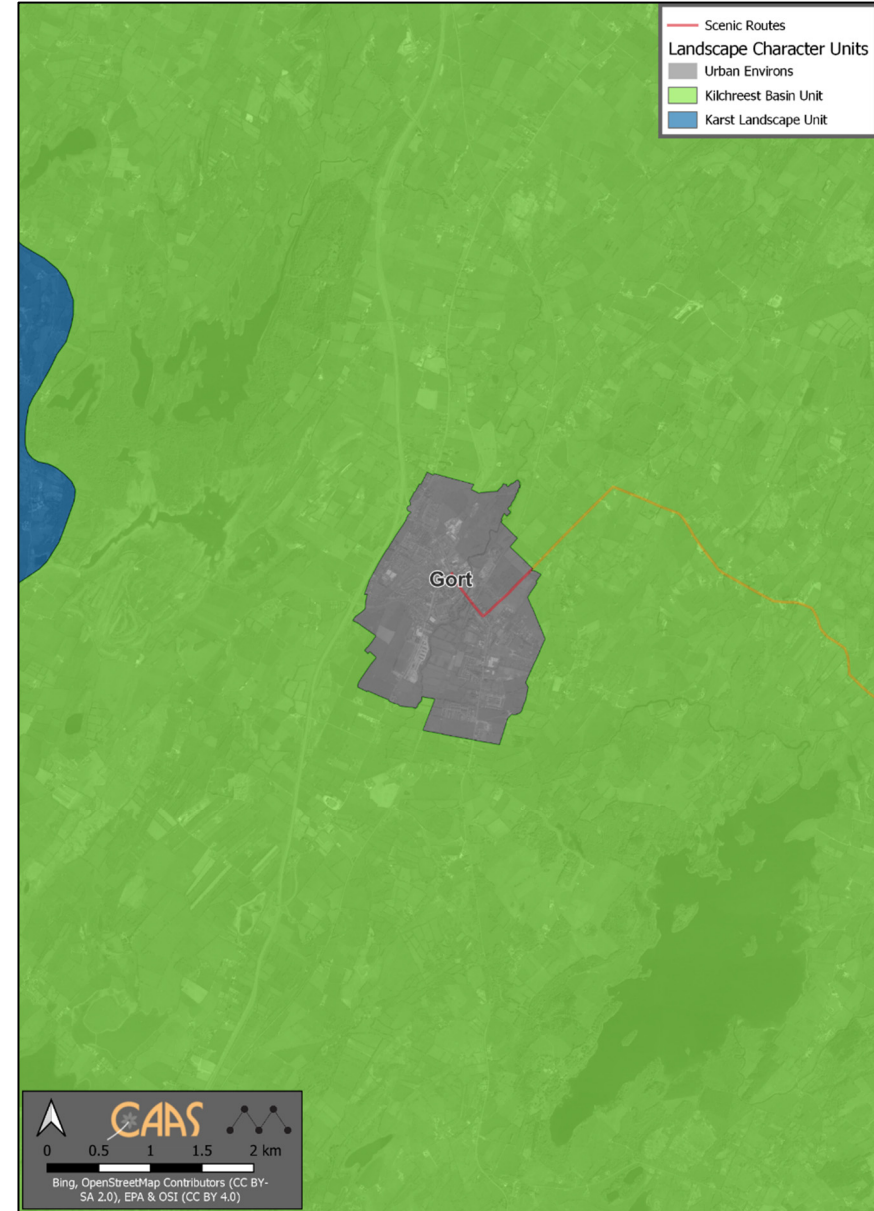


Groundwater Vulnerability

Figure 2.2 Selection of Individual Environmental Sensitivities taken into account (2 of 3)



Archaeological and Architectural Heritage



Landscape Character Units and Scenic Routes

Figure 2.3 Selection of Individual Environmental Sensitivities taken into account (3 of 3)

Table 2.1 Integration of Environmental Considerations into the Plan²

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Galway County Development Plan measures, including:
Various – see below	Various – see below	<p>Strategic Aims</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Gort as a Self-Sustaining Town as set out in the GCDP 2022 – 2028 and continue to support a sustainable level of population growth as established in the Core Strategy up to 2028 and beyond. Support the delivery of residential units on appropriately zoned land targeted in the Housing Strategy set out in Chapter 2 of the GCDP 2022 – 2028, encouraging sequential and compact growth in the town. Promote the reuse of existing buildings for residential use, where appropriate, having regard to the receiving environment, access to services, capacity of public infrastructure, and the delivery of a high quality of residential amenity. The strategic location of Gort shall be harnessed to enhance the economic and employment potential of the town, by creating sustainable employment opportunities, supported by investment on appropriately zoned lands. Maintain a strong and vibrant town centre that sustains the ability to attract new businesses, which meets the retail and service needs of the town and surrounding areas. Support the principle of the Gort Inse Guaire Town Centre First Plan (September 2023) which seeks to deliver holistic sustainable regeneration for the current and future needs of the local community through engagement with local business owners, community representatives, and stakeholders. Encourage and foster appropriate tourism opportunities that capitalise on Gort's tourist potential and better promote itself as a traditional Irish market town, with strong links to its natural, cultural and architectural heritage. Provide suitable recreation facilities, amenities and support services that shall promote an inclusive and cohesive local environment and serve the needs of the whole community. Support the redevelopment of underutilised buildings within the town centre to accommodate multi-functional community and cultural spaces, to facilitate the growth of remote-working, cultural, creative and community sectors in the town centre. Protect and enhance the heritage and character of Gort, including the natural assets, environment, built heritage, public realm, local character, and amenity for the benefit of current and future generations. Actively encourage sustainable mobility, including walking and cycling, in accordance with the aspirations of the LTP and support the continued provision of investment in public transport and active travel infrastructure. <p>GSST 1 Consistency with Core Strategy Galway County Council will ensure that developments permitted within the settlement of Gort are consistent with the zoned land allocations in the Core Strategy and associated provisions of the Galway County Development Plan 2022 - 2028.</p>	<p>MM1 Monitoring. The Council shall, in conjunction with the Regional Assembly and other sources as relevant, implement the monitoring programme as set out in the SEA Environmental Report and Statement. This will include the preparation of stand-alone SEA Monitoring Reports:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To accompany the report required of the manager under section 15(2) of the Act, including information in relation to progress on, and the results of, monitoring the significant environmental effects of implementation of the Development Plan On the significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan, in advance of the beginning of the review of the next Plan. <p>PRP 2 Corridor and Route Selection Process. Policy objectives relating to new roads and other transport infrastructure projects that are not already provided for by existing plans/ programmes or are not already permitted, are subject to the undertaking of feasibility assessment, taking into account planning need, environmental sensitivities as identified in the SEA Environmental Report and the policy objectives of the Plan relating to sustainable mobility. Where feasibility is established, a Corridor and Route Selection Process will be undertaken where appropriate, for relevant new road infrastructure in two stages: Stage 1 – Route Corridor Identification, Evaluation and Selection; and Stage 2 – Route Identification, Evaluation and Selection.</p> <p>WM 5 Construction and Environmental Management Plans. Construction Environment Management Plans shall be prepared in advance of the construction of relevant projects and implemented throughout. Such plans shall incorporate relevant mitigation measures which have been integrated into the Plan and any lower tier Environmental Impact Statement or Appropriate Assessment. CEMPs typically provide details of intended construction practice for the proposed development, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> location of the sites and materials compound(s) including area(s) identified for the storage of construction refuse; location of areas for construction site offices and staff facilities; details of site security fencing and hoardings; details of on-site car parking facilities for site workers during the course of construction; details of the timing and routing of construction traffic to and from the construction site and associated directional signage; measures to obviate queuing of construction traffic on the adjoining road network; measures to prevent the spillage or deposit of clay, rubble or other debris; alternative arrangements to be put in place for pedestrians and vehicles in the case of the closure of any public right of way during the course of site development works; details of appropriate mitigation measures for noise, dust and vibration, and monitoring of such levels; containment of all construction-related fuel and oil within specially constructed bunds to ensure that fuel spillages are fully contained (such bunds shall be roofed to exclude rainwater); disposal of construction/demolition waste and details of how it is proposed to manage excavated soil, including compliance with 2006 Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government; a water and sediment management plan, providing for means to ensure that surface water runoff is controlled such that no silt or other pollutants enter local water courses or drains. <p>WM 6 Waste Management. To continue to meet the duties under the Waste Management (certification of historic unlicensed waste disposal and recovery activity) Regulations 2008, including those in relation to the identification and registration of closed landfills.</p> <p>WM7 Recycling Infrastructure. To provide for the provision of recycling infrastructure throughout the county where it is considered necessary and support the provision of additional recycling infrastructure throughout the county.</p> <p>WM 8 Sustainable Waste Management Practices. Promote and facilitate communities to become involved in environmental awareness activities and community based recycling initiatives or environmental management initiatives that will lead to local sustainable waste management practices.</p> <p>WM 9 Separate Collection of Waste. Encourage and support the provision of separate collection of waste in accordance with the requirements of the Waste Management (Food Waste) Regulations 2009, the Waste Framework Directive Regulations, 2011 and other relevant legislation.</p> <p>MAS 1 Separation Distances from SEVESO Sites. To ensure that appropriate distances are maintained between any proposed development and any existing Seveso II establishment, in the interest of the health and safety of the occupiers of the proposed development.</p> <p>MAS 2 Soil Protection Measures. To require that, the siting of new establishments, or modification of existing establishments classified under the Seveso II Directive, and new development in the vicinity of existing establishments shall take into account the need to prevent major accidents involving hazardous substances and safeguard both the public and the environment.</p> <p>MAS 3 SEVESO III Sites. Take into account the provisions of the Major Accidents Directive, relating to the control of major</p>

² Note that non-material changes to individual Plan provisions referenced in this report may be updated during the finalisation of the Plan, including numbering, formatting and graphic design.

SEA Statement for the Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Galway County Development Plan measures, including:
		<p>GSST 2 Service - Led Development Development under the plan shall be preceded by sufficient capacity in the public wastewater infrastructure and potable water infrastructure. Potential developers shall make a Pre-Connection Enquiry to Uisce Éireann in order to establish the feasibility of a connection to the public network.</p> <p>GSST 3 Environmental Assessment To require the preparation and assessment of all planning applications in the plan area to have regard to the information, data and requirements of the Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Report, SEA Environmental Report and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Report that accompany this LAP.</p> <p>GSST 4 Compact Growth Galway County Council shall support the delivery of new homes within the existing built-up footprint of Gort, by sites such as infill or opportunity sites in the settlement and prioritising underutilised land in preference to greenfield sites.</p> <p>GSST 6 Residential Development Phasing Support the development of lands designated as Residential (Phase 1) within the lifetime of the plan, subject to normal planning, access and servicing requirements, and reserve the lands designated as Residential (Phase 2) for the longer-term growth needs of Gort. Residential (Phase 2) lands are generally not developable for housing within the lifetime of this plan, with the exception of the following developments, which may be considered by the Planning Authority, subject to a suitable evidence-based case being for the proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Single house developments for local family members on family-owned lands, subject to a 7-year occupancy clause. b) Non-residential developments that are appropriate to the site context, residential amenities, the existing pattern of development in the area and the policy objectives in the plan. c) Where it is apparent that Residential (Phase 1) lands cannot or will not be developed for residential purposes within the plan period, residential development may be considered in limited cases in a phased manner on suitable Residential (Phase 2) lands, in exceptional circumstances; • Development on Residential (Phase 2) lands will normally only be considered where 50% of the lands in Residential (Phase 1) are committed to the development • Residential developments on Residential (Phase 2) lands will be subject to compliance with the Core Strategy, the principles of proper planning and sustainable development, connectivity, including infrastructure and public footpath and lighting to the town centre, the sequential approach, avoidance of leap-frog developments, and subject to meeting normal planning, environmental, access and servicing requirements. The development will only be permitted where a substantiated evidence-based case has been made to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority and the development will not prejudice the future use of the lands for the longer-term growth needs of each settlement. <p>GSST 8 Sequential Development Endeavour to promote the orderly and phased development of residential development in accordance with the principles of the sequential approach as set out in the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2024 (or as updated). This shall include a positive</p>	<p>accident hazards involving dangerous substances, and the recommendations of the Health and Safety Authority in the assessment of all planning applications located within the consultation distance of such sites.</p> <p>TI 4 Tourism and Infrastructure Capacity. The potential environmental effects of a likely increase in tourists/tourism-related traffic volumes in particular locations/along particular routes shall be considered and mitigated as appropriate. Such a consideration should include potential impacts on existing infrastructure (including drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) resulting from tourism proposals. Galway County Council will support Irish Water and Fáilte Ireland to ensure that tourism is serviced by adequate and appropriate water services infrastructure.</p> <p>MCH 2 Marine Based Environment. It is a policy objective of the Local Authority to protect and enhance where appropriate marine biodiversity in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.</p> <p>MCC 1 Environmental Values of the Coast. 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.</p> <p>MCC 2 Protection of Coastal Habitats. To strictly control the nature and pattern of development within coastal areas and ensure that it is designed and landscaped to the highest standards and sited appropriately so as not to detract from the visual amenity of the area.</p> <p>(a) Development shall be prohibited where the development poses a significant or potential threat to coastal habitats or features, and/or where the development is likely to result in altered patterns of erosion or deposition elsewhere along the coast;</p> <p>(b) To prohibit development along the coast outside existing towns and villages where such development is not adequately safeguarded over the lifetime of the development without the need to construct additional coastal defences.</p> <p>MCC 3 Protection of Coastal Area. It is a policy objective to protect the Coastal Area through the following measures:</p> <p>(a) Ensure that conservation works undertaken in coastal areas are in accordance with best practice and measures to protect the coast, the coastal edge and coastal habitats are supported;</p> <p>(b) Seek to prevent the unauthorised removal of sand and related beach material;</p> <p>(c) Protect, enhance and conserve beaches in the County from inappropriate development and seek to maintain the current status of the designated Blue Flag beaches and Green Coasts and to increase the number of beaches and coasts holding this status in the future;</p> <p>(d) Facilitate an Integrated Coastal Zone Management approach to ensure the conservation, management and protection of man-made and natural resources of the coastal zone;</p> <p>MCC 4 Integrated Framework Management Plan. Support the preparation of an Integrated Galway Bay Framework Management Plan by all relevant stakeholders to provide for the sustainable and integrated development of the Galway Bay Area in a co-ordinated manner</p> <p>GICT 3 Tourism Development within An Gaeltacht and Islands. (a) Encourage and facilitate the development of the tourism potential of the Gaeltacht and Islands in a manner that respects, builds on, protects and enhances the cultural, built and natural heritage and local amenities of the area;</p> <p>(b) Provide where feasible, and support the provision of tourism infrastructure and services including, walking, cycling and water-based infrastructure and short-term guest accommodation facilities throughout the Gaeltacht area in appropriate locations. Such infrastructure and services shall seek to manage any increase in visitor numbers in order to avoid significant effects including loss of habitat and disturbance and ensuring that any new projects, such as greenways, are developed at suitable locations.</p> <p>AD1 Sustainable Agriculture Practices. To facilitate the development of sustainable agricultural practices and facilities within the county, subject to complying with best practice guidance, normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management standards in Chapter 15 Development Management and Standards.</p> <p>AD3 Modernisation of Agriculture Buildings. To facilitate the modernisation of agriculture and to encourage best practice in the design and construction of new agricultural buildings and installations to protect the environment, natural and built heritage and residential amenity.</p>

SEA Statement for the Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Galway County Development Plan measures, including:
		<p>presumption in favour of the sequential development of suitably serviced Residential Phase 1 lands emanating outwards from the town core and/or sequential extensions to the existing residential fabric of suitably serviced Residential Phase 1 lands within the LAP boundary, subject to the principles of proper planning and sustainable development and the current County Development Plan.</p> <p>GSST 9 Town Centre</p> <p>1) It is a policy objective of Galway County Council that Gort Town Centre will remain the primary focus for the location of new retail and commercial development. The Planning Authority will ensure that the location of future retail development is consistent with the key policy principles and order of priority as set out in the Guidelines for Planning Authorities: Retail Planning 2012 (and any updated/superseded document) and will require Retail Impact Assessments, including details of the sequential approach and Design Statements for retail developments in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines.</p> <p>2) This plan will also promote the development of commercial and complementary mixed uses, on suitable lands that can provide a focal point for the provision of services to the town and opportunities for commercial enterprises, retail developments and employment creation</p> <p>3) The plan will protect and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre by ensuring that it remains the primary retail, commercial and mixed use centre of Gort and prohibit a proliferation of any individual use or other uses, which in the opinion of the Planning Authority do not contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centre.</p> <p>GSST 21 Tourism</p> <p>Galway County Council shall encourage and foster appropriate tourism opportunities that capitalise on Gort's tourist potential and better promote itself as a traditional Irish market town, with strong links to its natural, cultural and architectural heritage.</p> <p>Any proposals shall be required to comply with environmental considerations and the relevant DM Standards.</p> <p>GSST 73 Development Management Standards, Guidelines and Other Provisions</p> <p>Ensure that all of the provisions and general development management standards and guidelines set out in this LAP and the current Galway County Development Plan 2022 - 2028, or any subsequent variation or review shall apply as appropriate in the plan area. Provisions from the County Development Plan identified as mitigation in the SEA Environmental Report and Natura Impact Report shall apply regardless of whether the County Development Plan expires and/or is reviewed.</p>	
Biodiversity and flora and fauna	<p>Arising from both construction and operation of development and associated infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of/damage to biodiversity in designated sites (including European Sites and Wildlife Sites) and Annexed habitats and species, listed species, 	<p>GSST 19 Open Space, Recreation and Amenity</p> <p>Promote the sustainable management, use and/or development, as appropriate, of open space/recreation and amenity lands. This will include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of open spaces and recreational activities, in accordance with best practice and on suitable lands with adequate access to the local community; Existing open space, sport and recreational facilities should be retained unless it can be clearly demonstrated to the satisfaction of Galway County Council that these uses are surplus to requirements of the local community or are to be replaced by an equivalent or better provision; Appropriate management and use of any flood risk areas within the OS zone to avoid, reduce and/or mitigate, as appropriate, the risk and 	<p>Also refer to detailed measures for settlements contained in Volume 2 of the Plan.</p> <p>LP 1 Lighting Schemes. To require that all developments shall ensure lighting schemes are designed so that excessive light spillage is minimised to ensure light pollution in the surrounding environment including residential amenity, wildlife and near public roads is limited. Such lighting schemes shall be submitted and agreed with the Planning Authority.</p> <p>LP 2 Lighting and Climate Action. To require the use of low energy LED (or equivalent) lighting in support of Climate Action.</p> <p>LP 3 Dark Skies. To encourage the maintenance of dark skies in rural areas and to limit light pollution in urban and rural areas.</p> <p>F2 Sustainable Development. To encourage the development of a well-managed sustainable forestry sector, which is compatible with the protection of the environment including the avoidance of likely significant effects on European sites (SACs and SPAs) and is planted, managed and harvested in accordance with the Forest Service Guidelines for Landscape, Forest Harvesting and Environmental, Archaeology, Biodiversity and Water Quality.</p> <p>F3 Native Woodlands. To ensure that existing native woodlands are protected and enhanced and, where appropriate, encourage the conversion of coniferous forest to native woodlands with a focus on opportunities for habitat linkage and wider eco-services.</p> <p>F4 Forestry Development. To encourage forestry and forestry related development, as a means of diversifying from traditional</p>

SEA Statement for the Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Galway County Development Plan measures, including:
	<p>ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats; and disturbance to biodiversity and flora and fauna;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Habitat loss, fragmentation and deterioration, including patch size and edge effects; and Disturbance (e.g. due to noise and lighting along transport corridors) and displacement of protected species such as birds and bats. 	<p>potential impact of flooding;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 species that are protected under the Wildlife Acts, 1976-2000, and stepping stones or ecological corridors in the context of Article 10 of the Habitats Directive Tourism Encourage and assist the development of the tourist potential within Gort in a manner that protects the architectural, archaeological and cultural significance of the town and its environs in a sustainable manner. <p>GSST 21 Tourism Galway County Council shall encourage and foster appropriate tourism opportunities that capitalise on Gort's tourist potential and better promote itself as a traditional Irish market town, with strong links to its natural, cultural and architectural heritage. Any proposals shall be required to comply with environmental considerations and the relevant DM Standards.</p> <p>GSST 22 The River Walk Protect and enhance walkways along the Cannahowna/Gort River including the Kinincha and Pound Road in a sustainable manner where possible. Regard should be had to the protection of Otters and Otter breeding sites and resting places along the river walk. Any proposals shall be required to comply with environmental considerations and the relevant DM Standards.</p> <p>GSST 23 Agriculture To promote the development of agriculture and agriculture-related uses in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development. There will be a general presumption against residential development on Agricultural zoned lands, located within the plan boundary except for single house developments for family members on farm family-owned lands.</p> <p>GSST 35 Green Infrastructure Galway County Council shall promote the benefit of open spaces and implement the integration of green infrastructure/networks (e.g., interconnected network of green spaces (including aquatic ecosystems) and other physical features on land) into new development and regeneration proposals in order to mitigate and adapt to climate change.</p> <p>GSST 55 European Sites Protect European Sites including Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) that form part of the Natura 2000 network. In accordance with the requirements in the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010, the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011) (and any subsequent amendments or updated legislation) and having due regard to the guidance in the Appropriate Assessment Guidelines 2010 (and any updated/superseding guidance). A plan or project (e.g., proposed development) within the plan area will only be authorised after the competent authority (Galway County Council) has ascertained, based on scientific evidence and an Appropriate Assessment where necessary, that: 1.The plan or project will not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of any European Sites</p>	<p>agriculture activity with a preference for native species. F5 Deforestation. To promote the avoidance of deforestation or commercial afforestation within European sites unless directly relating to the management of the site for its qualifying interests. MEQ2 "Protection of the Environment. 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 21 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) Require Development Proposals to assess the potential impact of extraction in areas where geo-morphological interest, groundwater and important aquifers, important archaeological features and Natural Heritage Areas are located; (d) Have regard to the Landscape Character Assessment of the County and its recommendations; (e) Ensure that any quarry activity has minimal adverse impact on the road network and that the full cost of road improvements, including during operations and at time of closure, which are necessary to facilitate those industries are borne by the industry itself. (f) Ensure that the extraction of minerals or aggregates does not adversely impact on residential or environmental amenity; (g) Protect all known un-worked deposits from development that might limit their scope for extraction."</p> <p>NHB 1 Natural Heritage and Biodiversity of Designated Sites, Habitats and Species. Protect and where possible enhance the natural heritage sites designated under EU Legislation and National Legislation (Habitats Directive, Birds Directive, European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 and Wildlife Acts) and extend to any additions or alterations to sites that may occur during the lifetime of this plan. Protect and, where possible, enhance the plant and animal species and their habitats that have been identified under European legislation (Habitats and Birds Directive) and protected under national Legislation (European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI 477 of 2011), Wildlife Acts 1976-2010 and the Flora Protection Order (SI 94 of 1999). Support the protection, conservation and enhancement of natural heritage and biodiversity, including the protection of the integrity of European sites, that form part of the Natura 2000 network, the protection of Natural Heritage Areas, proposed Natural Heritage Areas, Ramsar Sites, Nature Reserves, Wild Fowl Sanctuaries (and other designated sites including any future designations) and the promotion of the development of a green/ ecological network."</p> <p>NHB 2 European Sites and Appropriate Assessment. To implement Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and to ensure that Appropriate Assessment is carried out in relation to works, plans and projects likely to impact on European sites (SACs and SPAs), whether directly or indirectly or in combination with any other plan(s) or project(s). All assessments must be in compliance with the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011. All such projects and plans will also be required to comply with statutory Environmental Impact Assessment requirements where relevant.</p> <p>NHB 3 Protection of European Sites. No plans, programmes, or projects etc. giving rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on European sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans, programmes, etc. or projects.*</p> <p>NHB 4 Ecological Appraisal of Biodiversity. Ensure, where appropriate, the protection and conservation of areas, sites, species and ecological/networks of biodiversity value outside designated sites. Where appropriate require an ecological appraisal, for development not directly connected with or necessary to the management of European Sites, or a proposed European Site and which are likely to have significant effects on that site either individually or cumulatively.</p> <p>NHB 5 Ecological Connectivity and Corridors. Support the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and ecological connectivity in non-designated sites, including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, semi-natural grasslands, rivers, streams, natural springs, wetlands, stone walls, geological and geo-morphological systems, other landscape features and associated wildlife areas where these form part of the ecological network and/or may be considered as ecological corridors in the context of Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.</p> <p>NHB 6 Implementation of Plans and Strategies. Support the implementation of any relevant recommendations contained in the National Heritage Plan 2030, the National Biodiversity Plan, the All Ireland Pollinator Plan and the National Peatlands Strategy and any such plans and strategies during the lifetime of this plan.</p> <p>NHB 7 Mitigation Measures. Require mitigating measures in certain cases where it is evident that biodiversity is likely to be affected. These measures may, in association with other specified requirements, include establishment of wildlife</p>

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		<p>(either individually or in combination with other plans or projects); Or 2.The plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of any European Sites (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 European Sites; Or 3.The plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of any European Sites (that hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, restricted to reasons of human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of European Sites.</p> <p>GSST 56 Trees, Parkland/Woodland and Hedgerows a) Protect important trees, tree clusters and hedgerows in the plan area and ensure that development proposals take cognisance of significant trees/tree stands. Ensure that all planting schemes use suitable native variety of trees. 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 where possible. All works to be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Forestry Act, 1946 (as amended); c) Carry out a tree survey on important tree stands within the plan area by suitably qualified personnel (excluding Ash).</p> <p>GSST 57 Biodiversity & Ecological Networks Support the protection of biodiversity and ecological connectivity within the Plan Area including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, rivers, streams, natural springs, peatlands, wetlands, stonewalls, and other landscape features, where these form part of the ecological network. Seek to retain and/or incorporate these natural features into developments, to avoid ecological fragmentation and maintain ecological corridors.</p> <p>GSST 65 River Basin Management Plan and Protection of Waters Support the implementation of the relevant recommendations and measures as outlined in the National River Basin Management Plan or any other plan that may supersede same during the lifetime of this Local Area 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 water, groundwater quality and quantity, river corridors and associated wetlands. Galway County Council will support the protection and, where appropriate, the restoration of all water bodies in order to reach good status and will</p>	<p>areas/corridors/parks, hedgerow, tree planting, wildflower meadows/marshes and other areas. With regard to residential development, in certain cases, these measures may be carried out in conjunction with the provision of open space and/or play areas.</p> <p>NHB 8 Increased Awareness of the County's Biodiversity and Natural Heritage. Facilitate increased awareness of the County's biodiversity and natural heritage through the provision of information to landowners and the community generally, in cooperation with statutory and other partners.</p> <p>NHB 9 Protection of Bats and Bats Habitats. Seek to protect bats and their roosts, their feeding areas, flight paths and commuting routes. Ensure that development proposals in areas which are potentially important for bats, including areas of woodland, linear features such as hedgerows, stonewalls, watercourses and associated riparian vegetation which may provide migratory/foraging uses shall be subject to suitable assessment for potential impacts on bats. This will include an assessment of the cumulative loss of habitat or the impact on bat populations and activity in the area and may include a specific bat survey. Assessments 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. The impact of lighting on bats and their roosts and the lighting up of objects of cultural heritage must be adequately assessed in relation to new developments and the upgrading of existing lighting systems.</p> <p>NHB 10 NPWS & Integrated Management Plans. Article 6(1) of the Habitats Directive requires that Member States establish the necessary conservation measures for European sites involving, if need be, appropriate management plans specifically designed for the sites or integrated into other development plans. The NPWS's current priority is to identify site specific conservation objectives; management plans may be considered after this is done. Where Integrated Management Plans are being prepared by the NPWS for European sites (or parts thereof), the NPWS shall be engaged with in order to ensure that plans are fully integrated with the Plan and other plans and programmes, with the intention that such plans are practical, achievable and sustainable and have regard to all relevant ecological, cultural, social and economic considerations, including those of local communities.</p> <p>NHB 11 Increases in Visitor Numbers to Semi-Natural Areas, Visitor and Habitat Management. Seek to manage any increase in visitor numbers in order to avoid significant effects including loss of habitat and disturbance, including ensuring that any new projects, such as greenways, are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities, such as riparian zones. Where relevant, the Planning Authority and those receiving permission for development under the Plan shall seek to manage any increase in visitor numbers and/or any change in visitor behaviour in order to avoid significant effects, including loss of habitat and disturbance. Management measures may include ensuring that new projects and activities are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities. Visitor/Habitat Management Plans will be required for proposed projects as relevant and appropriate.</p> <p>WTWF 1 Wetland Sites Protect and conserve the ecological and biodiversity heritage of the wetland sites in the County. Ensure that an appropriate level of assessment is completed in relation to wetland habitats that are subject to proposals which would involve drainage or reclamation that might destroy, fragment or degrade any wetland in the county. This includes lakes and ponds, turloughs, watercourses, springs and swamps, marshes, fens, heath, peatlands, some woodlands as well as some coastal and marine habitats. Protect Ramsar sites under The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (especially as Waterfowl Habitat).</p> <p>P 1 Protection of Peatlands. Ensure that peatland areas which are designated (or proposed for designation) as NHAs, SACs or SPAs are conserved for their ecological, climate regulation, education and culture, archaeological potential including any ancient walkways (toghers) through bogs.</p> <p>P 2 Best Practice in Peatland conservation and management. Work in partnership with relevant stakeholders on all suitable peatland sites to demonstrate best practice in sustainable peatland conservation, management and restoration techniques and to promote their heritage and educational value subject to Ecological Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment Screening, as appropriate.</p> <p>P3 Framework Plans. Seek to support relevant agencies such as Bord na Mona in advancing rehabilitation works for the peatlands and related infrastructure, to provide for the future sustainable and environmentally sensitive use of peatlands sites including for amenity purposes.</p> <p>IS 1 Control of Invasive and Alien Invasive Species. It is a policy objective of the Planning Authority to support measures for the prevention and eradication of invasive species.</p> <p>IS 2 Invasive Species Management Plan. Ensure that proposals for development do not lead to the spread or introduction of invasive species. If developments are proposed on sites where invasive species are currently or were previously present, an invasive species management plan will be required. A landscaping plan will be required for developments near water bodies and such plans must not include alien invasive species.</p> <p>PO 1 Delivery of All Ireland Pollinator Plan To facilitate the delivery of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan where possible. In the interest of preserving and enhancing biodiversity and working in conjunction with the All Ireland Pollinator Plan, it shall be the policy objective of the Planning</p>

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		<p>seek to prevent deterioration in the status of all water bodies.</p>	<p>Authority to ensure that at least 20% of the green space on all housing estates being built will have to be dedicated, developed and maintained as a pollinator zone. The area dedicated can be confined to one single lot or various lots around the site providing that the total area of the lots meets the minimum requirement of 20%. The pollinator zones should be planted with a mix of pollinator friendly-bulbs, self-seeding annuals and biennials, perennials, shrubs, trees, fruit trees and fruit bushes and the majority of this planting should consist of native plants.</p> <p>TWHS 1 Trees, Hedgerows, Natural Boundaries and Stone Walls</p> <p>Protect and seek to retain important trees, tree clusters and tree boundaries, ancient woodland, natural boundaries including stonewalls, existing hedgerows particularly species rich roadside and townland boundary hedgerows, where possible and replace with a boundary type similar to the existing boundary. Ensure that new development proposals take cognisance of significant trees/tree stands and that all planting schemes developed are suitable for the specific site and use suitable native variety of trees of Irish provenance and hedgerows of native species. Seek Tree Management Plans to ensure that trees are adequately protected during development and incorporated into the design of new developments.</p> <p>TWHS 2 Planting of Trees and Woodlands</p> <p>Encourage and promote in co-operation with Coillte and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and other organisations, the planting of trees and woodlands, as an important means of contributing to its objective of sustaining, protecting and enhancing the County's biodiversity, natural resources, amenity, landscape and developing tourism product. Encourage community woodlands in urban/urban fringe areas utilising funding available through schemes such as the NeighbourWood and Native Woodland Schemes.</p> <p>TWHS 3 Protection of Forestry</p> <p>Protect all substantial areas of deciduous forest, other than areas of commercial forestry. Proposals for development in these areas should seek to interact with the landscape character of the forested areas and its limits while also enhancing the forested areas so as to increase biodiversity value.</p> <p>BMSP 8 Jetty/Marina Development.</p> <p>Support the preparation of a feasibility study for a jetty/marina development in the vicinity of Bearna Pier and any necessary marine/foreshore works to facilitate public access to and use of the area around the pier, such as breakwaters. This feasibility study shall take account of the requirements to comply with the European Habitats Directive</p> <p>CT 2 Water Sports</p> <p>To encourage the development of coastal tourism in areas such as water-sports and water-related activities and events subject to normal planning and environmental criteria</p> <p>CT3 Tourism Development</p> <p>To support proposals for tourism development in coastal areas where it can be demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the amenities of the area, the integrity of the natural environment or the economic value of the County's coastline and beaches.</p> <p>CT 4 Blue Flags</p> <p>To continue to work with An Taisce, the local community and other relevant stakeholders to retain and increase the number of Blue Flag awards in the County.</p> <p>CT 5 Tourism Products</p> <p>To support the protection and enhancement of our islands, coastline and waterways as tourism products and attractions, subject to community and environmental carrying capacity.</p> <p>HT 3 Sustainable Tourism Industry</p> <p>To support the development of a more sustainable tourism industry which minimises adverse impacts on local communities, the built heritage, landscapes, habitats and species; leaving them undiminished as a resource for future generations, while supporting social and economic prosperity.</p> <p>GICT 3 Tourism Development within An Ghaeltacht and Islands</p> <p>(a) Encourage and facilitate the development of the tourism potential of the Gaeltacht and Islands in a manner that respects, builds on, protects and enhances the cultural, built and natural heritage and local amenities of the area;</p> <p>(b) Provide where feasible and support the provision of tourism infrastructure and services including, walking, cycling and water-based infrastructure and short-term guest accommodation facilities throughout the Gaeltacht area in appropriate locations. Such infrastructure and services shall seek to manage any increase in visitor numbers in order to avoid significant effects including loss of habitat and disturbance and ensuring that any new projects, such as greenways are developed at suitable locations.</p> <p>RE4 Solar Energy Developments.</p> <p>Promote and facilitate solar farm developments in suitable locations, having regard to areas of the County designated for this purpose in the Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy. The Planning Authority will assess any planning application proposals for solar energy production having due regard to the Habitats Directive and to the detailed policy objectives and Development Standards set out in the Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy.</p>

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Population and human health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential adverse effects arising from flood events. Potential interactions if effects arising from environmental vectors. 	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Soil, Water and Air and Climatic Factors.</p> <p>Strategic Aims</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Gort as a Self-Sustaining Town as set out in the GCDP 2022 – 2028 and continue to support a sustainable level of population growth as established in the Core Strategy up to 2028 and beyond. Support the delivery of residential units on appropriately zoned land targeted in the Housing Strategy set out in Chapter 2 of the GCDP 2022 – 2028, encouraging sequential and compact growth in the town. Promote the reuse of existing buildings for residential use, where appropriate, having regard to the receiving environment, access to services, capacity of public infrastructure, and the delivery of a high quality of residential amenity. The strategic location of Gort shall be harnessed to enhance the economic and employment potential of the town, by creating sustainable employment opportunities, supported by investment on appropriately zoned lands. Maintain a strong and vibrant town centre that sustains the ability to attract new businesses, which meets the retail and service needs of the town and surrounding areas. Support the principle of the Gort Inse Guaire Town Centre First Plan (September 2023) which seeks to deliver holistic sustainable regeneration for the current and future needs of the local community through engagement with local business owners, community representatives, and stakeholders. Encourage and foster appropriate tourism opportunities that capitalise on Gort's tourist potential and better promote itself as a traditional Irish market town, with strong links to its natural, cultural and architectural heritage. Provide suitable recreation facilities, amenities and support services that shall promote an inclusive and cohesive local environment and serve the needs of the whole community. Support the redevelopment of underutilised buildings within the town centre to accommodate multi-functional community and cultural spaces, to facilitate the growth of remote-working, cultural, creative and community sectors in the town centre. Protect and enhance the heritage and character of Gort, including the natural assets, environment, built heritage, public realm, local character, and amenity for the benefit of current and future generations. Actively encourage sustainable mobility, including walking and cycling, in accordance with the aspirations of the LTP and support the continued provision of investment in public transport and active travel infrastructure. 	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Soil, Water and Air and Climatic Factors.</p> <p>AQ 1 Ambient Air Quality To 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 ensure that all air emissions associated with new developments are within Environmental Quality Standards as set out in the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (SI No. 180 of 2011) (or any updated/superseding documents).</p> <p>AQ 2 Assessment of Air Quality To require developments which would have the potential to have adverse impacts on air quality to carry out assessments of the impact of the development on air quality.</p> <p>AQ 3 Air Quality Mitigation Measures To require the use of appropriate mitigation measures such as dust dampeners to minimise the potential impacts of developments on air quality.</p> <p>AQ 4 Air Purification Galway County 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.</p> <p>AQ 5 Radon Galway County 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).</p> <p>NP 1 Galway County Council Noise Action Plan 2019-2023 To implement the Galway County Council Noise Action Plan 2019-2023 (and any subsequent Plan) in order to avoid, prevent and reduce the harmful effects, including annoyance, due to environmental noise exposure.</p> <p>NP 2 Developments within Noise Maps (Noise Action Plan 2019-2023) To require that where new developments are proposed within the noise limits of the noise maps for the designated sections of roads in the County, appropriate mitigation measures are undertaken so as to prevent harmful effects from environmental noise.</p> <p>NP3 Noise Impact Assessments To require an assessment of impact of the development on noise levels, having regard to the provisions of the Environmental Protection Agency Acts 1992 and 2003 and the EPA Noise Regulations 1994 when assessing planning application.</p> <p>NP 4 Noise Pollution and Regulation Restrict development proposals causing noise pollution in excess of best practice standards and regulate and control activities likely to give rise to excessive noise, other than those activities which are regulated by the EPA</p> <p>NP 5 Noise Mitigation Measures Require activities likely to give rise to excessive noise to install noise mitigation measures and monitors. The provision of a noise audit may be required where appropriate.</p> <p>SQ 3 Soil Protection, Contamination and Remediation Adequate and appropriate investigations shall be carried out into the nature and extent of any soil and groundwater contamination and the risks associated with site development work, where brownfield development is proposed. All undeveloped, contaminated sites shall be remediated to internationally accepted standards prior to redevelopment. All applications shall be accompanied by a report from a qualified, expert consultant remediation incorporating international best practice and expertise on innovative ecological restoration techniques including specialist planting and green initiatives that create aesthetically improved sites, healthy environments and contribute to the provision of new green open spaces as integral parts of newly created areas. Treatment/management of any contaminated material shall comply as appropriate with the Waste Management Act 1996 (waste licence, waste facility permit), as amended, and under the EPA Act 1992 (Industrial Emissions licensing, in particular the First Schedule, Class 11 Waste), as amended. These measures will ensure that contaminated material will be managed in a manner that removes any risk to human health and ensures that the end use will be compatible with any risk.</p> <p>MAS 1 Separation Distances from SEVESO Sites To ensure that appropriate distances are maintained between any proposed development and any existing Seveso II establishment, in the interest of the health and safety of the occupiers of the proposed development.</p> <p>MAS 2 Soil Protection Measures To require that, the siting of new establishments, or modification of existing establishments classified under the Seveso II Directive, and new development in the vicinity of existing establishments shall take into account the need to prevent major accidents involving hazardous substances and safeguard both the public and the environment.</p>

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			<p>MAS 3 SEVESO III Sites</p> <p>Take into account the provisions of the Major Accidents Directive, relating to the control of major accident hazards involving dangerous substances, and the recommendations of the Health and Safety Authority in the assessment of all planning applications located within the consultation distance of such sites.</p>
Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential adverse effects on the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource, including as a result of development on contaminated lands. Potential for riverbank erosion. 	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna and Water.</p> <p>GSST 4 Compact Growth Galway County Council shall support the delivery of new homes within the existing built-up footprint of Gort, by sites such as infill or opportunity sites in the settlement and prioritising underutilised land in preference to greenfield sites.</p> <p>GSST 8 Sequential Development Endeavour to promote the orderly and phased development of residential development in accordance with the principles of the sequential approach as set out in the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2024 (or as updated). This shall include a positive presumption in favour of the sequential development of suitably serviced Residential Phase 1 lands emanating outwards from the town core and/or sequential extensions to the existing residential fabric of suitably serviced Residential Phase 1 lands within the LAP boundary, subject to the principles of proper planning and sustainable development and the current County Development Plan.</p>	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Water.</p> <p>SQ 1 Soil Impact Assessments Ensure good soil quality throughout the county by requiring developments of a certain nature (as specified in the relevant environmental legislation) to carry out assessments of the impact of the development on soil quality.</p> <p>SQ 2 Soil Protection Measures To ensure that adequate soil protection measures are undertaken where appropriate.</p> <p>SQ 3 Soil Protection, Contamination and Remediation Adequate and appropriate investigations shall be carried out into the nature and extent of any soil and groundwater contamination and the risks associated with site development work, where brownfield development is proposed. All undeveloped, contaminated sites shall be remediated to internationally accepted standards prior to redevelopment. All applications shall be accompanied by a report from a qualified, expert consultant remediation incorporating international best practice and expertise on innovative ecological restoration techniques including specialist planting and green initiatives that create aesthetically improved sites, healthy environments and contribute to the provision of new green open spaces as integral parts of newly created areas. Treatment/management of any contaminated material shall comply as appropriate with the Waste Management Act 1996 (waste licence, waste facility permit), as amended, and under the EPA Act 1992 (Industrial Emissions licensing, in particular the First Schedule, Class 11 Waste), as amended. These measures will ensure that contaminated material will be managed in a manner that removes any risk to human health and ensures that the end use will be compatible with any risk.</p> <p>PG 1 Geological and Geo-Morphological Systems Protect and conserve geological and geo-morphological systems, county geological heritage sites and features from inappropriate development that would detract from their heritage value and interpretation and ensure that any plan or project affecting karst formations, eskers or other important geological and geo-morphological systems are adequately assessed with regard to their potential geophysical, hydrological or ecological impacts on the environment.</p> <p>PG 2 Geological Heritage of County Galway Support the implementation of recommendations made in the Geological Heritage of County Galway – An Audit of County Geological Sites in County Galway (2019). Consult with the Geological Survey of Ireland when undertaking, approving or authorising developments which are likely to impact on County Geological Sites or involve significant ground excavations including sites identified as part of the Geological Heritage of County Galway – An Audit of County Geological Sites in County Galway (2019).</p> <p>PG 3 Promotion of and Access to Geological Sites Encourage greater awareness of the geological heritage sites of the county and promote, where appropriate, public access to geological and geomorphological sites and avoid inappropriate development.</p> <p>ESK 1 Protection of Eskers Systems Protect and conserve the landscape, natural heritage and biodiversity value of esker systems in the county. Assess applications for quarrying and other proposed developments with reference to their status or relative importance, for example, amenity, landscape and scientific value in the context of the overall esker system.</p> <p>ESK 2 Esker Areas Have regard to the Landscape Character Assessment of the County of Galway and its recommendations relating to the Esker areas and any other subsequent relevant reports/ data.</p> <p>UGG 1 UNESCO Global Geopark Status. To continue to work in partnership with all relevant stakeholders to facilitate and support the ongoing work of the Joyce Country and Western Lakes aspiring Geopark and its application for full UNESCO Global Geopark status. Support initiatives in relation to the Burren Lowlands, The Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark that relate to the county.</p>
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential adverse effects upon the status of water bodies and entries to the WFD Register of Protected Areas (ecological and human value), arising from changes in 	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna, Soil and Material Assets.</p> <p>GSST 22 The River Walk Protect and enhance walkways along the Cannahowna/Gort River including the Kinincha and Pound Road in a sustainable manner where possible. Regard should be had to the protection of Otters and Otter breeding sites and resting places along the river walk. Any proposals shall be required to comply with environmental considerations and the relevant DM Standards.</p>	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Soil and Material Assets.</p> <p>RH 11 Waste Water Treatment provision. Provide for sustainable rural housing in the county in accordance with the EPA Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment Systems for Single Houses (2009).</p> <p>AD4 Agriculture Waste. To ensure agricultural waste is managed and disposed of in a safe, efficient and sustainable manner having regard to the environment and in full compliance with the European Communities Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters Regulations (2014) and relevant best practice guidelines.</p>

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Galway County Development Plan measures, including:
	<p>quality, flow and/or morphology.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in flood risk and associated effects associated with flood events. 	<p>GSST 25 Constrained Land Use To facilitate the appropriate management and sustainable use of land within Flood Zones A and B. New development in these areas will generally be limited (apart from where the Plan-level Justification Test outlined in the accompanying SFRA has been passed or where the uses comprise minor developments in existing developed areas, as outlined in Section 5.28 of the Guidelines as amended by Circular PL 2/2014) to water-compatible uses in Flood Zone A, and less vulnerable or water compatible uses in Flood Zone B, and a detailed site-specific Flood Risk Assessment will be required in these areas. This limitation shall take primacy over any other provision relating to land use zoning objectives. The Plan-level Justification Test has been passed for all lands zoned Town Centre overlapping within Flood Zone A or B.</p> <p>GSST 35 Green Infrastructure Galway County Council shall promote the benefit of open spaces and implement the integration of green infrastructure/networks (e.g., interconnected network of green spaces (including aquatic ecosystems) and other physical features on land) into new development and regeneration proposals in order to mitigate and adapt to climate change.</p> <p>GSST 57 Biodiversity & Ecological Networks Support the protection of biodiversity and ecological connectivity within the Plan Area including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, rivers, streams, natural springs, peatlands, wetlands, stonewalls, and other landscape features, where these form part of the ecological network. Seek to retain and/or incorporate these natural features into developments, to avoid ecological fragmentation and maintain ecological corridors.</p> <p>GSST 58 Flood Risk Management Guidelines It is the policy objective 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) and Department Circular PL2/2014 or any updated / superseding version.</p> <p>GSST 59 Flood Risk Management and Assessment It is a Policy Objective of the Council to 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); Any flood risk assessment should include an assessment of the potential impacts of climate change, such as an increase in the extent or probability of flooding, and any associated measures necessary to address these impacts;</p>	<p>WS 1 Enhancement of Water Supply Infrastructure Liaise with Irish Water, to maximise the potential of existing capacity and to facilitate the timely delivery of new water services infrastructure, to facilitate existing and future growth.</p> <p>WS 2 Protection of Water Supplies Collaborate with Irish Water and the Group Water Federation Scheme to protect, conserve and enhance all existing and potential water resources in the County to ensure compliance with the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014 (as amended) and compliance of water supplies with the parameters identified in these Regulations.</p> <p>WS 3 River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021 Support the implementation of the relevant recommendations and measures as outlined in the relevant River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021, and associated Programme of Measures, or any such plan that may supersede same during the lifetime of this plan.</p> <p>WS 4 Requirement to Liaise with Irish Water – Water Supply Ensure that new developments are adequately serviced with a suitable quantity and quality of drinking water supply and require that all new developments intending to connect to a public water supply liaise with Irish Water with regard to the water (and wastewater) infrastructure required.</p> <p>WS 5 Private Water Supply Support the provision of a private water supply in instances where there is no public water supply or where the existing supply does not have sufficient capacity to serve the proposed development. This will only be considered 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."</p> <p>WS 6 Water Framework Directive Support the preparation of Drinking Water Safety Plans and Source Protection Plans to protect sources of public water supply, in accordance with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.</p> <p>WS 7 Water Quality Require that new development proposals would ensure that there would not be an unacceptable impact on water quality and quantity including surface water, ground water, designated source protection areas, river corridors and associated wetlands.</p> <p>WS 8 Proliferation of Septic Tanks Encourage the use of high standard treatment plants to minimise the risk of groundwater pollution.</p> <p>CWS 1 Water Conservation with all Developments To ensure all developments incorporate water conservation measures such as rainwater harvesting to minimise wastage of water supply.</p> <p>CWS 2 Water Mains Rehabilitation To assist Irish Water in their commitment to water conservation and support efforts to tackle leakage through find and fix (active leakage control) and water mains rehabilitation.</p> <p>CWS 3 Promotion of Water Conservation To support Irish Water in promoting public awareness and involvement in water conservation measures by households, business and industry.</p> <p>WW 1 Enhancement of Wastewater Supply Infrastructure Work in conjunction with Irish Water to maximise the potential of existing capacity and to facilitate the delivery of new wastewater services infrastructure, to facilitate future growth in the county.</p> <p>WW 2 Delivery of Wastewater Infrastructure Liaise and co-operate with Irish Water in the implementation and delivery of the Water Services Strategic Plan (2015) and the Irish Water Investment Plan 2020-2024 and other relevant investment works programmes of Irish Water in the delivery of infrastructure within the county.</p> <p>WW 3 The Greater Galway Area Strategic Drainage Study To seek to accelerate and support the delivery of the Greater Galway Area Strategic Drainage Study and the associated solutions as identified in the RSES as an essential infrastructure requirement in conjunction with the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, Irish Water and Galway City Council.</p> <p>WW 4 Requirement to Liaise with Irish Water – Wastewater Ensure that new developments will only be permitted which are adequately serviced with sufficient capacity for appropriate collection, treatment and disposal (in compliance with the Water Framework Directive and River Basin Management Plan) to the public sewer unless provided for otherwise by the plan. Developers shall liaise with Irish Water with regard to the wastewater (and water) infrastructure to ensure sufficient capacity is available prior to the submission of a planning application. "</p>

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		<p>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;</p> <p>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.</p> <p>GSST 60 A Principles of 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:</p> <p>a) Avoid development that will be at risk of flooding or that will increase the flooding risk elsewhere, where possible;</p> <p>b) Substitute less vulnerable uses, where avoidance is not possible; and,</p> <p>c) Mitigate and manage the risk, where avoidance and substitution are not possible.</p> <p>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. Vulnerable 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.</p> <p>GSST 60 B Gort Lowlands Flood Relief Scheme The Council will have full regard to the ongoing design planning and implementation of the Gort Lowlands Flood Relief Scheme, and the maintenance requirements of the Gort River (Bridge Street) drainage scheme to ensure zoning or development proposals do not impede or prevent the progression or maintenance of the schemes. Following the completion of the Gort Lowlands Flood Relief Scheme, the Council will consider the integration of a register of key flood risk infrastructure into the Plan/future land use plans for the town.</p> <p>GSST 61 Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) Maintain and enhance, as appropriate, the existing surface water drainage system in Gort. 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. To maximise the capacity of existing collection systems for foul water, the discharge of additional surface water to combined (foul and surface water) sewers is not permitted. Refer also to Section 3.5 of the accompanying SFRA, "Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and Surface Water Guidance and Strategy".</p> <p>GSST 62 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 the riverine, wetland and coastal areas as appropriate.</p> <p>To contribute towards protection and improvement of the status of surface and ground waters in accordance with the Water Framework Directive.</p>	<p>WW 5 Serviced Sites Support the servicing of small towns and villages including initiatives to provide an alternative to one-off housing in the countryside, in accordance with the National Planning Framework.</p> <p>WW 6 Private Wastewater Treatment Plants Ensure that private wastewater treatment plants, where permitted, are operated in compliance with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Code of Practice for Domestic Waste Water Treatment System 2021 (Population Equivalent ≤10).</p> <p>WW 7 Sustainable Drainage Systems To require the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems to minimise and limit the extent of hard surfacing and paving and require the use of SuDS measures be incorporated in all new development (including extensions to existing developments). All development proposals shall be accompanied by a comprehensive SuDS assessment including run-off quantity, run off quality and impacts on habitat and water quality.</p> <p>WW 8 Storm Water Infrastructure To support the improvement of storm water infrastructure and to increase the use of sustainable drainage and reduce the risk of flooding in urban environments.</p> <p>WW 9 Integrated Wetland Wastewater Treatment Systems Galway County Council will encourage the use of integrated wetland wastewater treatment systems for both one off and multi-unit housing developments that accord with the prevailing regulations and standards including the relevant EPA Code of Practice.</p> <p>WW10 Surface Water Drainage To require all new developments to provide a separate foul and surface water drainage system and to incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems where appropriate in new development and the public realm.</p> <p>WW11 Protection of Irish Water Collection Systems To prohibit the discharge of additional surface water to combined (foul and surface water) sewers in order to maximise the capacity of existing collection systems for foul water.</p> <p>AF 1 Marine Aquaculture To support the sustainable development of marine aquaculture and fishing industries, so as to maximise their contribution to jobs and growth in coastal communities where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment.</p> <p>SF 1 Shellfish Waters Directive To 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.</p> <p>SF 2 Protection of Shellfish Waters To seek to protect the quality of designated shellfish waters off the County Galway coast.</p> <p>WR 1 Water Resources Protect the water resources in the plan area, including rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, springs, turloughs, surface water and groundwater quality, as well as surface waters, aquatic and wetland habitats and freshwater and water dependant species in accordance with the requirements and guidance in the EU Water Framework Directive 2000 (2000/60/EC), the European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (as amended), the River Basin District Management Plan 2018 – 2021 and other relevant EU Directives, including associated national legislation and policy guidance (including any superseding versions of same) and also have regard to the Freshwater Pearl Mussel Sub-Basin Management Plans.</p> <p>WR 2 River Basin Management Plans It is a policy objective of the Planning Authority to implement the programme of measures developed by the River Basin District Projects under the Water Framework Directive in relation to: Surface and groundwater interaction, Dangerous substances, Hydro-morphology, Forestry, On site wastewater treatment systems, Municipal and industrial discharges, Urban pressures, Abstractions.</p> <p>WTWF 1 Wetland Sites Protect and conserve the ecological and biodiversity heritage of the wetland sites in the County. Ensure that an appropriate level of assessment is completed in relation to wetland habitats that are subject to proposals which would involve drainage or reclamation that might destroy, fragment or degrade any wetland in the county. This includes lakes and ponds, turloughs, watercourses, springs and swamps, marshes, fens, heath, peatlands, some woodlands as well as some coastal and marine habitats. Protect Ramsar sites under The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (especially as Waterfowl Habitat).</p> <p>IW 1 Inland Waterways (a) Protect and conserve the quality, character and features of inland waterways by controlling developments close to navigable and non-navigable waterways in accordance with best practice guidelines. (b) Preserve, protect and enhance Galway's inland lakes and waterways for their amenity and recreational resource amenity.</p>

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Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Galway County Development Plan measures, including:
		<p>Applications for development under the Plan must demonstrate that the proposed development would not adversely affect a water body's ability to meet its objectives under the Water Framework Directive, individually as a result of the proposed development or cumulatively, in combination with other developments.</p> <p>GSST 63 Flood Risk Assessment for Planning Applications and CFRAMS</p> <p>Protect Flood Zone A and Flood Zone B from inappropriate development and direct developments/land uses into the appropriate Flood Zone in accordance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009 (or any superseding document) and the guidance contained in Development Management Standards 2 and 3. Site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is required for all planning applications in areas at elevated 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. Where a development/land use is proposed that is inappropriate within the Flood Zone, then the development proposal will need to be accompanied by a Development Management Justification Test in addition to the site-specific Flood Risk Assessment. In Flood Zone C, where the probability of flooding is low (less than 0.1%, Flood Zone C), site-specific Flood Risk Assessment may be required, and the developer should satisfy themselves that the probability of flooding is appropriate to the development being proposed.</p> <p>GSST 64 Flood Risk Assessment and Climate Change</p> <p>Flood Risk Assessment in Gort shall provide information on the implications of climate change with regards to flood risk in relevant locations. The Flood Risk Management – Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan 2019 (or any superseding document) shall be consulted with to this effect.</p> <p>GSST 65 River Basin Management Plan and Protection of Waters</p> <p>Support the implementation of the relevant recommendations and measures as outlined in the National River Basin Management Plan or any other plan that may supersede same during the lifetime of this Local Area 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 water, groundwater quality and quantity, river corridors and associated wetlands. Galway County Council will support the protection and, where appropriate, the restoration of all water bodies in order to reach good status and will seek to prevent deterioration in the status of all water bodies.</p> <p>GSST 66 Flood Vulnerable Zones</p> <p>It is a policy objective of the Council to ensure that applications pertaining to existing developments in flood vulnerable zones provide details of structural and non-structural risk management measures to include, but not be limited to specifications of the following – floor levels, internal layout, flood resilient construction, flood resistant construction, emergency response planning, access and egress during flood events.</p> <p>GSST 67 Flood Risk Management</p> <p>Ensure each flood risk management activity is examined to determine</p>	<p>(c) Protect the riparian zones of watercourse systems throughout the County, recognising the benefits they provide in relation to flood risk management and their protection of the ecological integrity of watercourse systems and ensure they are considered in the land use zoning in Local Area Plans.</p> <p>(d) The Planning Authority will support in principle the development and upgrading of the Inland Waterways and their associated facilities in accordance with legislation, best practice and relevant management strategies, key stakeholders and bodies including Waterways Ireland.</p> <p>(e) Ensure all abstractions of water will be subject to assessment for compliance with the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.</p> <p>(f) Seek to provide additional accesses to lake shores and rivers for public rights of way, parking and layby facilities, where appropriate.</p> <p>(g) Developments shall ensure that adequate soil protection measures are undertaken, where appropriate, including investigations into the nature and extent of any soil/groundwater contamination.</p> <p>FL 1 Flood Risk Management Guidelines</p> <p>It is the policy objective 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) and Department Circular PL2/2014 or any updated / superseding version.</p> <p>FL 2 Flood Risk Management and Assessment</p> <p>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:</p> <p>(a) Avoid, reduce and/or mitigate, as appropriate in accordance with the Guidelines;</p> <p>(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); Any flood risk assessment should include an assessment of the potential impacts of climate change, such as an increase in the extent or probability of flooding, and any associated measures necessary to address these impacts;</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(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.</p> <p>FL 3 Principles of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines</p> <p>The Planning Authority shall implement the key principles of flood risk management set out in the Flood Risk Management Guidelines as follows:</p> <p>(a) Avoid development that will be at risk of flooding or that will increase the flooding risk elsewhere, where possible;</p> <p>(b) Substitute less vulnerable uses, where avoidance is not possible; and</p> <p>(c) Mitigate and manage the risk, where avoidance and substitution are not possible.</p> <p>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. Vulnerable 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</p> <p>FL 4 Flood Relief Schemes</p> <p>The Planning Authority shall support and co-operate with the Office of Public Works (OPW) in the delivery of Flood Relief Schemes.</p> <p>FL 5 Catchment Planning</p> <p>The Planning Authority will support the OPW'S CFRAM Programme and catchment-based Flood Planning Groups, especially 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.</p> <p>FL 6 Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs)</p> <p>Maintain and enhance, as appropriate, the existing surface water drainage system in the County. Ensure that new developments are adequately serviced with surface water drainage infrastructure and promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems in all new developments. Surface water run-off from development sites will be limited to pre-development levels and planning applications for new developments will be required to provide details of surface water drainage and sustainable drainage systems proposals.</p> <p>FL 7 Protection of Waterbodies and Watercourses</p> <p>Protect waterbodies and watercourses within the County from inappropriate development, including rivers, streams, associated</p>

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		<p>actions required to embed and provide for effective climate change adaptation as set out in the OPW Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan for Flood Risk Management applicable at the time.</p>	<p>undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains. This will include protection buffers in riverine, wetland and coastal areas as appropriate.</p> <p>FL 8 Flood Risk Assessment for Planning Applications and CFRAMS Protect Flood Zone A and Flood Zone B from inappropriate development and direct developments/land uses into the appropriate Flood Zone in accordance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009 (or any superseding document) and the guidance contained in Development Management Standard 69. Site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is required for all planning applications in areas at elevated 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 Planning Authority shall have regard to the results of any CFRAM Studies in the assessment of planning applications. Development proposal will need to be accompanied by a Development Management Justification Test in addition to the site-specific Flood Risk Assessment. Where only a small proportion of a site is at risk of flooding, the sequential approach shall be applied in site planning, in order to seek to ensure that no encroachment onto or loss of the flood plain occurs and/or that only water compatible development such as Open Space would be permitted for the lands which are identified as being at risk of flooding within that site. In Flood Zone C, where the probability of flooding is low (less than 0.1%, Flood Zone C), site-specific Flood Risk Assessment may be required and the developer should satisfy themselves that the probability of flooding is appropriate to the development being proposed.</p> <p>In addition to the County Plan SFRA datasets (including the Flood Zones, CFRAMS mapping, historical and predictive groundwater mapping, predictive pluvial mapping and historical flood risk indicator mapping, such as the Benefitting Lands mapping), new and emerging datasets (such as the OPW's National Fluvial Mapping that will supersede existing PFRA fluvial mapping for catchments greater than 5km2) must be consulted by prospective applicants for developments and will be made available to lower-tier Development Management processed in the Council. Applications for developments in coastal areas and associated assessments shall also consider wave overtopping and coastal erosion.</p> <p>FL 9 SFRA of Lower Tier Plans Lower tier plans shall undertake SFRA (Strategic Flood Risk Assessment) in compliance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines.</p> <p>FL 10 SFRA/FRA and Climate Change SFRAs and site-specific FRAs shall provide information on the implications of climate change with regard to flood risk in relevant locations. The 2009 OPW Draft Guidance on Assessment of Potential Future Scenarios for Flood Risk Management (or any superseding document) shall be consulted with to this effect.</p> <p>FL 11 FRA and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Flood risk may constitute a significant environmental effect of a development proposal that in certain circumstances may trigger a sub-threshold EIA. FRA should therefore be an integral part of any EIA undertaken for projects within the County.</p> <p>FL 12 Inland Fisheries It is a policy objective of the Planning Authority to consult, where necessary, with Inland Fisheries Ireland, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and other relevant agencies in the construction of flood alleviation measures in County Galway.</p> <p>FL 13 CFRAM It is a policy objective of the Planning Authority to take account of and incorporate into local planning policy and decision making, including possible future variations to this plan, CFRAM measures that may be published in the future, including planned investment measures for managing and reducing flood risk.</p> <p>FL 14 Flood Vulnerable Zones It is a policy objective of the Planning Authority to ensure that applications pertaining to existing developments in flood vulnerable zones provide details of structural and non-structural risk management measures to include, but not be limited to specifications of the following - floor levels, internal layout, flood resilient construction, flood resistant construction, emergency response planning, access and egress during flood events.</p> <p>FL 15 Flood Risk Management Ensure each flood risk management activity is examined to determine actions required to embed and provide for effective climate change adaptation as set out in the OPW Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan for Flood Risk Management applicable at the time.</p> <p>FL 16 Benefitting Land Applications for development on land identified as benefitting land may be prone to flooding, and as such site-specific flood risk assessments may be required in these areas.</p> <p>FL 17 Consultation with OPW Consult with the OPW in relation to proposed developments in the vicinity of drainage channels and rivers for which the OPW are responsible and retain a strip on either side of such channels where required, to facilitate maintenance access thereto. In addition, promote the sustainable management and uses of water bodies and avoid culverting or realignment of these</p>

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			<p>features.</p> <p>FL 18 Inappropriate Development on Flood Zones</p> <p>Where a development/land use is proposed within any area subject to this objective the development proposal will need to be accompanied by a detailed hydrological assessment and robust SUDS design which demonstrates the capacity to withstand potential flood events to maintain water quality and avoid potential effects to ecological features.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any development proposals should be considered with caution and will be required to comply with The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities/Circular PL2/2014 & the associated Development Management Justification Test. Climate Change should be duly considered in any development proposal. Protect the riparian zones of watercourse systems throughout the plan area through a general 10 metre protection buffer from rivers within the plan area as measured from the near riverbank, (this distance may be increased and decreased on a site by site basis, as appropriate). Any development proposals submitted for this site will require a detailed ecological report (s), carried out by suitably qualified personnel for the purposes of informing Appropriate Assessment Screening by Galway County Council, the competent authority. The relevant lands will be outlined and flagged with a symbol on the land use zoning map and on the GIS system of Galway County Council so that staff and the public are aware of the special conditions/constraints attached. A briefing will be provided to relevant staff within Galway County Council on the special conditions and constraints on relevant lands. <p>DM Standard 67 DM Standard 68</p>
Air and Climatic Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential conflict between development under the Plan and aiming to reduce carbon emissions in line with local, national and European environmental objectives. Potential conflicts between transport emissions, including those from cars, and air quality. Potential conflicts between increased frequency of noise emissions and protection of sensitive receptors. Potential conflicts with climate adaptation measures including those relating to flood risk management. 	<p>GSST 44 Local Transport Plan Support the implementation of the Local Transport Plan as set out in the accompanying LTP document, in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.</p> <p>GSST 45 Transportation Infrastructure Facilitate the provision and maintenance of essential transportation infrastructure. This shall include the reservation of lands to facilitate public roads, footpaths, cycle ways, bus stops and landscaping together with any necessary associated works, as appropriate.</p> <p>GSST 46 Sustainable Transportation Facilitate any Smarter Travel initiatives that will improve sustainable transportation within the plan area and facilitate sustainable transportation options including public transportation, rail freight, electric vehicles rentals, car clubs, public bike schemes, cycle parking as appropriate.</p> <p>GSST 47 Pedestrian and Cycle Network Facilitate the improvement of the pedestrian and cycling environment and network so that it is safe and accessible to all, through the provision of the necessary infrastructure. New development shall promote and prioritise walking and cycling, shall be permeable, adequately linked and connected to neighbouring areas, the town centre, recreational, educational, residential and employment destinations and shall adhere to the principles contained within the national policy document Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future 2009 – 2020, the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) and NTA document Permeability: Best Practice Guide.</p> <p>GSST 48 Pedestrian Crossings Facilitate the provision of pedestrian crossings adjacent to schools and at other appropriate locations within the plan area.</p> <p>GSST 49 Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) and Road Safety Audits (RSA) Require all significant development proposals to be accompanied by a Road Safety Audit and Traffic & Transport Assessment carried out by suitably competent consultants, which are assessed in association with their cumulative impact with neighbouring developments on the road</p>	<p>AQ 1 Ambient Air Quality To 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 ensure that all air emissions associated with new developments are within Environmental Quality Standards as set out in the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (SI No. 180 of 2011) (or any updated/superseding documents).</p> <p>AQ 2 Assessment of Air Quality To require developments which would have the potential to have adverse impacts on air quality to carry out assessments of the impact of the development on air quality.</p> <p>AQ 3 Air Quality Mitigation Measures To require the use of appropriate mitigation measures such as dust dampeners to minimise the potential impacts of developments on air quality.</p> <p>AQ 4 Air Purification Galway County 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.</p> <p>AQ 5 Radon Galway County 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).</p> <p>NP 1 Galway County Council Noise Action Plan 2019-2023 To implement the Galway County Council Noise Action Plan 2019-2023 (and any subsequent Plan) in order to avoid, prevent and reduce the harmful effects, including annoyance, due to environmental noise exposure.</p> <p>NP 2 Developments within Noise Maps (Noise Action Plan 2019-2023) To require that where new developments are proposed within the noise limits of the noise maps for the designated sections of roads in the County, appropriate mitigation measures are undertaken so as to prevent harmful effects from environmental noise.</p> <p>NP3 Noise Impact Assessments To require an assessment of impact of the development on noise levels, having regard to the provisions of the Environmental Protection Agency Acts 1992 and 2003 and the EPA Noise Regulations 1994 when assessing planning application.</p> <p>NP 4 Noise Pollution and Regulation Restrict development proposals causing noise pollution in excess of best practice standards and regulate and control activities likely to give rise to excessive noise, other than those activities which are regulated by the EPA</p> <p>NP 5 Noise Mitigation Measures Require activities likely to give rise to excessive noise to install noise mitigation measures and monitors. The provision of a noise audit may be required where appropriate.</p>

SEA Statement for the Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

Topic	Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated	Local Area Plan measures, including:	Existing Galway County Development Plan measures, including:
		<p>network, in accordance with the requirements contained within the TII's Traffic & Transport Assessment Guidelines (PE-PDV-02045) 2014 (including any updated/superseding document) and 'Road Safety Audit' (GE-STY-01024) December 2017.</p> <p>GSST 50 Preservation of Routes, Road Upgrades and Infrastructure Provision Prohibit development on lands which are reserved for proposed road/street corridors and associated buffers and where development would affect a route, line, level or layout of any proposed new roadway or any junction required between a proposed and existing road.</p> <p>GSST 51 Reservation of Access Points Reserve access points for future development and the development of backlands that may be identified for reservation by the Planning Authority during the plan period, to ensure adequate vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access to backlands, in order to facilitate efficient development of these lands and to ensure connectivity and accessibility to lands with limited road frontage.</p> <p>GSST 52 Road Junction Improvements Continue to carry out road junction improvements where improvements to traffic flow and safety can be achieved, subject to normal planning and environment considerations.</p> <p>GSST 53 Climate Change Support and encourage sustainable compact growth and settlement patterns, integrated land use and low carbon transportation, and maximise opportunities through development location, form, layout and design to secure climate resilience and reduce carbon emissions.</p> <p>GSST 54 Climate Change and Local Renewable Energy Sources Support and facilitate the implementation of European, National and Regional objectives for climate adaptation and mitigation taking into account other provisions of the Plan (including those relating to land use planning, energy, sustainable mobility, flood risk management and drainage) and having regard to the Climate mitigation and adaptation measures.</p>	<p>CC 1 Climate Change Support and facilitate the implementation of European, National and Regional objectives for climate adaptation and mitigation taking into account other provisions of the Plan (including those relating to land use planning, energy, sustainable mobility, flood risk management and drainage) and having regard to the Climate mitigation and adaptation measures.</p> <p>CC 2 Transition to a low carbon, climate-resilient society It is a policy objective of the Planning Authority to support the transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050, by way of reducing greenhouse gases, increasing renewable energy, and improving energy efficiency.</p> <p>CC 3 County Galway Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 To implement the County Galway Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 as appropriate.</p> <p>CC 4 Local Authority Climate Action Plan Support the preparation of a Climate Action Plan for County Galway.</p> <p>CC 5 Climate Adaptation and Mitigation To promote, support and direct effective climate action policies and objectives that seek to improve climate outcomes across County Galway through the encouragement and integration of appropriate mitigation and adaptation considerations and measures into all development and decision-making processes.</p> <p>CC 6 Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy (LARES) To support the implementation of the Renewable Energy Strategy contained in Appendix 1 of the Galway County Development Plan to facilitate the transition to a low carbon county.</p> <p>CC 7 Climate Action Fund Support the delivery of sustainable development projects under the European Green Deal and utilise the Climate Action Fund/ Just Transition Fund established under the National Development Plan to encourage public and private climate mitigation and adaptation projects in line with criteria set out by the Fund at that time.</p> <p>CC 8 Climate Action and Development Location To implement, through the plan and future local areas plans, policies that support and encourage sustainable compact growth and settlement patterns, integrate land use and transportation, and maximise opportunities through development location, form, layout and design to secure climate resilience and reduce carbon dioxide and greenhouse emissions.</p> <p>CC 9 Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation Galway County Council shall incorporate climate change adaptation into land use planning, building layouts, energy, transport, natural resource management, forestry, agriculture and marine waters.</p> <p>CC 10 Green Infrastructure Galway County Council shall promote the benefit of open spaces and implement the integration of green infrastructure/networks (e.g., interconnected network of green spaces (including aquatic ecosystems) and other physical features on land) into new development and regeneration proposals in order to mitigate and adapt to climate change.</p>
Material Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to provide adequate and appropriate waste water treatment (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). Failure to adequately treat surface water run-off that is discharged to water bodies (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). Failure to comply with drinking water regulations and serve new development 	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Population and Human Health, Cultural Heritage, Soil, Water, Air, various Land Use and Phasing provisions.</p> <p>GSST 2 Service - Led Development Development under the plan shall be preceded by sufficient capacity in the public wastewater infrastructure and potable water infrastructure. Potential developers shall make a Pre-Connection Enquiry to Uisce Éireann in order to establish the feasibility of a connection to the public network.</p> <p>GSST 5 Opportunity Sites To encourage and support the appropriate and sustainable development or redevelopment of lands identified as development opportunity sites within the Land Use Zoning Map. See Section 3.0 in respect of individual sites.</p> <p>GSST 23 Agriculture To promote the development of agriculture and agriculture-related uses in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development. There will be a general presumption against residential development on Agricultural zoned lands, located within the plan boundary except for single house developments for family members on farm family-owned lands.</p>	<p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Population and Human Health, Cultural Heritage, Soil, Water, Air, various Land Use and Phasing provisions.</p> <p>RH 11 Waste Water Treatment provision Provide for sustainable rural housing in the county in accordance with the EPA Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment Systems for Single Houses (2009).</p> <p>AD4 Agriculture Waste To ensure agricultural waste is managed and disposed of in a safe, efficient and sustainable manner having regard to the environment and in full compliance with the European Communities Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters Regulations (2014) and relevant best practice guidelines.</p> <p>WS 1 Enhancement of Water Supply Infrastructure Liaise with Irish Water, to maximise the potential of existing capacity and to facilitate the timely delivery of new water services infrastructure, to facilitate existing and future growth.</p> <p>WS 2 Protection of Water Supplies Collaborate with Irish Water and the Group Water Federation Scheme to protect, conserve and enhance all existing and potential water resources in the County to ensure compliance with the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014 (as amended) and compliance of water supplies with the parameters identified in these Regulations.</p> <p>WS 3 River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021 Support the implementation of the relevant recommendations and measures as outlined in the relevant River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021, and associated Programme of Measures, or any such plan that may supersede same during the lifetime of this plan.</p> <p>WS 4 Requirement to Liaise with Irish Water – Water Supply Ensure that new developments are adequately serviced with a suitable quantity and quality of drinking water supply and</p>

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	<p>with adequate drinking water (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases in waste levels. Potential impacts upon public assets and infrastructure. Interactions between agricultural waste and soil, water, biodiversity and human health – including as a result of emissions of ammonia from agricultural activities (e.g. manure handling, storage and spreading) and the production of secondary inorganic particulate matter. 	<p>GSST 24 Public Utilities Facilitate the provision and maintenance of essential public utility infrastructure, together with the necessary ancillary facilities and uses, as appropriate. Development proposals in the vicinity of public utilities infrastructure will be assessed on a case-by-case basis in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.</p> <p>GSST 31 Water Supply and Water Conservation Ensure that new developments are adequately serviced with a suitable quantity and quality of drinking water supply, promote water conservation to reduce the overall level of water loss in the public supply and require that new domestic developments provide for water supply metering in accordance with their connection agreement with Uisce Éireann.</p> <p>GSST 35 Green Infrastructure Galway County Council shall promote the benefit of open spaces and implement the integration of green infrastructure/networks (e.g., interconnected network of green spaces (including aquatic ecosystems) and other physical features on land) into new development and regeneration proposals in order to mitigate and adapt to climate change.</p> <p>GSST 44 Local Transport Plan Support the implementation of the Local Transport Plan as set out in the accompanying LTP document, in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.</p> <p>GSST 45 Transportation Infrastructure Facilitate the provision and maintenance of essential transportation infrastructure. This shall include the reservation of lands to facilitate public roads, footpaths, cycle ways, bus stops and landscaping together with any necessary associated works, as appropriate.</p> <p>GSST 68 Waste Prevention, Reduction and Recycling Promote the prevention, reduction and recycling of waste in new developments, new development proposals shall be required to submit proposals demonstrating how this is to be achieved and shall seek to ensure on-site provision for waste storage and segregation (bio-waste/dry recyclables/residual waste) pending collection at all new domestic and non-domestic premises.</p> <p>GSST 69 Broadband & Telecommunications To facilitate the sustainable delivery of a high capacity and high-quality ICT infrastructure within the plan area, including telephony and broadband services, to the requirements of the relevant service providers and in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.</p> <p>GSST 70 Open Access Fibre Ducting Facilitate and promote the installation of underground shared telecommunications physical infrastructure, where practicable, in line with the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications documents including 'Recommendations for Open Access Fibre Ducting and Interior Cabling for New Residential Buildings 'Making Homes Fibre Ready', 2011, Support and facilitate delivery of the National Broadband Plan and the National Digital Strategy for Ireland 2013, 'Doing more with Digital – Phase 1 Digital Engagement' and Galway County Digital Strategy 2020 - 2023(including any updated/superseding documents).</p> <p>GSST 71 Electricity Supply Support the provision of an adequate supply of electricity and gas to developments in the Plan Area, to the requirements of the relevant service provider.</p>	<p>require that all new developments intending to connect to a public water supply liaise with Irish Water with regard to the water (and wastewater) infrastructure required.</p> <p>WS 5 Private Water Supply Support the provision of a private water supply in instances where there is no public water supply or where the existing supply does not have sufficient capacity to serve the proposed development. This will only be considered 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.</p> <p>WS 6 Water Framework Directive Support the preparation of Drinking Water Safety Plans and Source Protection Plans to protect sources of public water supply, in accordance with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.</p> <p>WS 7 Water Quality Require that new development proposals would ensure that there would not be an unacceptable impact on water quality and quantity including surface water, ground water, designated source protection areas, river corridors and associated wetlands.</p> <p>WS 8 Proliferation of Septic Tanks Encourage the use of high standard treatment plants to minimise the risk of groundwater pollution.</p> <p>CWS 1 Water Conservation with all Developments To ensure all developments incorporate water conservation measures such as rainwater harvesting to minimise wastage of water supply.</p> <p>CWS 2 Water Mains Rehabilitation To assist Irish Water in their commitment to water conservation and support efforts to tackle leakage through find and fix (active leakage control) and water mains rehabilitation.</p> <p>CWS 3 Promotion of Water Conservation To support Irish Water in promoting public awareness and involvement in water conservation measures by households, business and industry.</p> <p>WW 1 Enhancement of Wastewater Supply Infrastructure Work in conjunction with Irish Water to maximise the potential of existing capacity and to facilitate the delivery of new wastewater services infrastructure, to facilitate future growth in the county.</p> <p>WW 2 Delivery of Wastewater Infrastructure "Liaise and co-operate with Irish Water in the implementation and delivery of the Water Services Strategic Plan (2015) and the Irish Water Investment Plan 2020-2024 and other relevant investment works programmes of Irish Water in the delivery of infrastructure within the county.</p> <p>WW 3 The Greater Galway Area Strategic Drainage Study To seek to accelerate and support the delivery of the Greater Galway Area Strategic Drainage Study and the associated solutions as identified in the RSES as an essential infrastructure requirement in conjunction with the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, Irish Water and Galway City Council.</p> <p>WW 4 Requirement to Liaise with Irish Water – Wastewater Ensure that new developments will only be permitted which are adequately serviced with sufficient capacity for appropriate collection, treatment and disposal (in compliance with the Water Framework Directive and River Basin Management Plan) to the public sewer unless provided for otherwise by the plan. Developers shall liaise with Irish Water with regard to the wastewater (and water) infrastructure to ensure sufficient capacity is available prior to the submission of a planning application. "</p> <p>WW 5 Serviced Sites Support the servicing of small towns and villages including initiatives to provide an alternative to one-off housing in the countryside, in accordance with the National Planning Framework.</p> <p>WW 6 Private Wastewater Treatment Plants Ensure that private wastewater treatment plants, where permitted, are operated in compliance with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Code of Practice for Domestic Waste Water Treatment System 2021 (Population Equivalent ≤10).</p> <p>WW 7 Sustainable Drainage Systems To require the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems to minimise and limit the extent of hard surfacing and paving and require the use of SuDS measures be incorporated in all new development (including extensions to existing developments). All development proposals shall be accompanied by a comprehensive SuDS assessment including run-off quantity, run off quality and impacts on habitat and water quality.</p> <p>WW 8 Storm Water Infrastructure To support the improvement of storm water infrastructure and to increase the use of sustainable drainage and reduce the risk of flooding in urban environments.</p>

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		<p>GSST 72 Renewable Energy Promote and facilitate the development of renewable sources of energy and associated infrastructure within the LAP area and encourage the integration of micro-renewable energy sources into the design and construction of new developments as appropriate.</p>	<p>WW 9 Integrated Wetland Wastewater Treatment Systems Galway County Council will encourage the use of integrated wetland wastewater treatment systems for both one off and multi-unit housing developments that accord with the prevailing regulations and standards including the relevant EPA Code of Practice.</p> <p>WW10 Surface Water Drainage To require all new developments to provide a separate foul and surface water drainage system and to incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems where appropriate in new development and the public realm.</p> <p>WW11 Protection of Irish Water Collection Systems To prohibit the discharge of additional surface water to combined (foul and surface water) sewers in order to maximise the capacity of existing collection systems for foul water.</p> <p>WM 1 Connacht and Ulster Waste Management Plan 2015-2021 Support the implementation of the Connacht and Ulster Waste Management Plan 2015-2021 or any updated version of this document within the lifetime of the plan.</p> <p>WM 2 Requirements for Waste Management Support and promote the circular economy principles, prioritising prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery, and to sustainably manage residual waste. New developments will be expected to take account of the provisions of the Waste Management Plan for the Region and observe those elements of it that relate to waste prevention and minimisation, waste recycling facilities, and the capacity for source segregation.</p> <p>WM 3 Waste Recovery and Disposal Facilities Support and facilitate the provision of adequate waste recovery and disposal facilities for the County.</p> <p>WM 4 Waste Legalisation To require that all waste disposal shall be undertaken in compliance with the requirements of the Environmental Protection Agency and relevant Waste Management Legislation.</p>
Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential effects on protected and unknown archaeology and protected architecture arising from construction and operation activities. 	<p>GSST 21 Tourism Galway County Council shall encourage and foster appropriate tourism opportunities that capitalise on Gort's tourist potential and better promote itself as a traditional Irish market town, with strong links to its natural, cultural and architectural heritage. Any proposals shall be required to comply with environmental considerations and the relevant DM Standards.</p> <p>GSST 32 High Quality and Contextually Sensitive Design Ensure that new developments are responsive to their site context and in keeping with the character, heritage, amenities, environment and landscape of the area. New development proposals will be required to complement the existing character of the area in terms of scale, height, massing, building line, urban grain and definition and through high quality design proposals for buildings/structures/shop fronts, the use of high quality, appropriate materials and the provision of appropriate signage, lighting, landscaping proposals and other such details.</p> <p>GSST 39 Architectural Heritage Ensure the protection and conservation of the architectural heritage in the plan area, in particular by implementing the relevant legislative provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) in relation to architectural heritage and policy guidance contained within the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines 2004/2011 and the published DAHG & NDA advice series titled Access: Improving the Accessibility of Historic Buildings and Places 2011 (or any superseding document). Policy Objective AH 2 – Protected Structures (Refer to the Current Galway County Development Plan 2022 - 2028). Ensure the protection and sympathetic enhancement of structures included 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.</p> <p>GSST 40 Architectural Conservation Areas Protect, conserve and enhance the essential character of the Gort</p>	<p>AH 1 Architectural Heritage Ensure the protection of the architectural heritage of County Galway, which is a unique and special resource, having regard to the policy guidance contained in the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines 2011 (and any updated/superseding document).</p> <p>AH 2 Protected Structures (Refer to Appendix 6) (a) Ensure the protection and sympathetic enhancement of structures including their curtilage and attendant grounds 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. (b) Review the Record of Protected Structures in order to provide a comprehensive schedule for the protection of structures of special importance in the County during the lifetime of the plan. (c) Ensure that development proposals are appropriate in terms of architectural treatment, character, scale and form to the existing protected structure and not detrimental to the special character and integrity of the protected structure and its setting. (d) Ensure high quality architectural design of all new developments relating to or which may impact on structures (and their settings) included in the Record of Protected Structures. (e) Promote and ensure best conservation practice through the use of specialist conservation professionals and craft persons. (f) Prohibit development proposals, either in whole or in part, for the demolition of protected structures, save in exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>AH 3 Protection of Structure on the NIAH Give regard to and consideration of all structures which are included in the NIAH for County Galway, which are not currently included in the Record of Protected Structures, in development management functions.</p> <p>AH 4 Architectural Conservation Areas (Refer to Appendix 7) Protect, conserve and enhance the special character of the Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA) included in this plan through the appropriate management and control of the design, location and layout of new development, modifications, 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. Works within the ACA shall ensure the conservation of traditional features and building elements that contribute to the character of the area. The special character of an area includes its traditional building stock and material finishes, spaces, streetscape, shop fronts, landscape and setting. New proposals shall have appropriate regard to scale, plot, form, mass, design, materials, colours and function.</p> <p>This will be achieved by; (a) Protecting all buildings, structures, groups of structures, sites, landscapes and all features which contribute to the special character of the ACA from demolition and non-sympathetic alterations. (b) Promote appropriate and sensitive reuse and rehabilitation of buildings and sites within the ACA. (c) Ensure new development within or adjacent to an ACA respects the established character of the area and contributes positively in terms of design, scale, setting and material finishes to the ACA. (d) Promote high quality architectural design within ACAs. (e) Seek the repair and reuse of traditional shopfronts and where</p>

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		<p>Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) through the appropriate management and control of the design, location and layout of new development, respecting surviving historic plots and street patterns, alterations or extensions to existing structures, and/or modifications to the character or setting of the Architectural Conservation Areas. The identification of areas of special interest within the plan boundary may be considered during the lifetime of the plan.</p> <p>GSST 41 Development/Works relating to Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Area</p> <p>Ensure that any development, modifications, alterations, or extensions materially affecting the character of a Protected Structure, or a structure adjoining a Protected Structure or 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 the ACA. This will include the following:</p> <p>Works materially affecting the character of a Protected Structure or the exterior of a building/structure within an ACA will require planning permission.</p> <p>Any works/development 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.</p> <p>Prohibit development proposals, either in whole or in part, for the demolition of Protected Structures or structures within an Architectural Conservation Area, which contributes to the special character of the area, save in exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>GSST 42 Zones of Archaeological Notification</p> <p>Ensure that all planning applications for development (including proposed services and infrastructural schemes such as electricity, sewerage, telecommunications and water schemes) within or in close proximity (30m) to the Zones of Archaeological Notification established for Gort Town as defined in Map 2 or at or in relation to other recorded archaeological sites and monuments (i.e. within the areas indicated on the SMR Database/Historic Environment Viewer – www.archaeology.ie) or in proximity to any National Monuments, including the historic town walls (both upstanding and sub-surface remains), shall take account of the archaeological heritage of the area and the need for archaeological assessments and possible mitigation measures.</p> <p>GSST 43 Archaeology and Infrastructure Schemes</p> <p>It is a policy objective of the planning authority to have regard to archaeological heritage when considering proposed service schemes (including electricity, sewerage, telecommunications, and water supply) and proposed roadwork (both realignments and new roads) located in close proximity to Recorded Monuments and Places and their known archaeological monuments.</p>	<p>appropriate, encourage new shopfronts of a high quality architectural design. (f) Ensure that all new signage, lighting, advertising and utilities to buildings within ACA are designed, constructed, and located in such a manner that they do not detract from the character of the ACA. (g) Protect and enhance the quality of open spaces within ACAs and ensure the protection and where necessary reuse of street furniture and use of appropriate materials during the course of public infrastructure schemes within ACAs. (h) Prohibit development proposals, either in whole or in part for the demolition of a structure within an Architectural Conservation Area that contributes to the special character of the area. (i) Protect structures in ACAs from non-sympathetic alterations and encourage appropriate in-fill developments. (j) Works materially affecting the character of a protected structure or the exterior of a building/ structure within an ACA will require planning permission; (k) 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. (l) 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.</p> <p>AH 5 Maintenance and Re-use of existing Building Stock</p> <p>Promote the maintenance and appropriate re-use of the existing stock of buildings with architectural merit as a more sustainable option to their demolition and redevelopment.</p> <p>AH 6 Vernacular Architecture</p> <p>Recognise the importance of the contribution of vernacular architecture to the character of a place and ensure the protection, retention and appropriate revitalisation and reuse of the vernacular built heritage including structures that contribute to landscape and townscape character and resist the demolition of these structures.</p> <p>AH 7 Local Place Names</p> <p>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.</p> <p>AH 8 Energy Efficiency and Traditionally Built Structures</p> <p>Ensure that measures to upgrade the energy efficiency of protected structures and traditionally built historic structures are sensitive to traditional construction methods, employ best practice and use appropriate materials and methods that will not have a detrimental impact on the material, functioning or character of the building.</p> <p>AH 9 Local Landscape and Place Assessment</p> <p>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.</p> <p>AH 10 Designed Landscapes</p> <p>Protect the surviving historic designed landscapes in the County and promote the conservation of their essential character, both built and natural. Consider protection of the designed landscape by inclusion in an Architectural Conservation Area. Development proposals in designed landscape shall be accompanied by an appraisal of the contributing elements and an impact assessment.</p> <p>AH 11 Custodianship</p> <p>Promote an inter-disciplinary approach demonstrating best practice with regard to the custodianship of protected structures, recorded monuments and elements of built heritage.</p> <p>AH 12 Placemaking for Towns and villages</p> <p>Promote the value of placemaking in cooperation with communities in their towns, villages and local areas.</p> <p>AH 13 Traditional Building Skills</p> <p>Support and promote traditional building skills, training and awareness of the use of appropriate materials and skills within the Local Authority, community groups, owners and occupiers of traditionally built structures.</p> <p>AH 14 Design and Landscaping in New Buildings</p> <p>Encourage new buildings that foster an innovative approach to design and acknowledges the diversity of suitable design solutions in appropriate locations while promoting the added economic, amenity and environmental value of good design.</p> <p>ARC 1 Legislative Context</p> <p>Support and promote the preservation, conservation and appropriate management and enhancement of the County's archaeological sites and monuments, together with the settings of these monuments, having regard to the legislative, statutory and policy provisions relevant to the conservation of the archaeological heritage.</p> <p>ARC 2 Archaeological Sites</p> <p>Seek to encourage and promote awareness of and access to archaeological heritage of the County for all, through the provision of information to landowners and the community generally, in co-operation with statutory and other partners.</p>

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			<p>ARC 3 Archaeological Landscapes To facilitate where possible the identification of important archaeological landscapes in the County</p> <p>ARC 4 Protection of Archaeological Sites 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 will take account of the archaeological heritage of the area and the need for archaeological mitigation.</p> <p>ARC 6 Burial Grounds Protect the burial grounds, identified in the Record of Monuments and Places, in co-operation with the National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Encourage the local community to manage burial grounds in accordance with best conservation and heritage principles.</p> <p>ARC 7 Battlefield Sites Protect the Battle of Aughrim site and other battlefield sites and their settings.</p> <p>ARC 8 Underwater Archaeological Sites To protect and preserve the archaeological value of underwater archaeological sites and associated features. In assessing proposals for development, the Council will take account of the potential underwater archaeology of rivers, lakes, intertidal and subtidal locations.</p> <p>ARC 9 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.</p> <p>ARC 10 Zones of Archaeological Potential To protect the Zones of Archaeological Potential located within both urban and rural areas and around archaeological monuments generally as identified in the Record of Monuments and Places. Any development within the ZAPs will need to take cognisance of the potential for subsurface archaeology and if archaeology is demonstrated to be present appropriate mitigation (such as preservation in situ/buffer zones) will be required.</p> <p>ARC 11 Industrial and Post Medieval Archaeology Protect and preserve the archaeological value of industrial and post medieval archaeology such as mills, limekilns, bridges, piers, harbours, penal chapels and dwellings. Proposals for refurbishment, works to or redevelopment/conversion of these sites should be subject to careful assessment.</p> <p>ARC 12 Archaeology and Infrastructure Schemes Have regard to archaeological concerns when considering proposed service schemes (including electricity, sewerage, telecommunications, water supply) and proposed roadwork's (both realignments and new roads) located in close proximity to Recorded Monuments and Places and their known archaeological monuments.</p> <p>CUH 1 Cultural heritage Protect and promote the cultural heritage assets and the intangible cultural heritage assets of County Galway as important social and economic assets.</p> <p>CUH 2 Special Places of Historic Interest To protect and promote where possible special places of historical interest.</p> <p>CUH 3 Placenames/Naming of New Developments Promote and preserve local place names, local heritage and the Irish language by ensuring the use of local place names or geographical or cultural names which reflect the history and landscape of their settings in the naming of new residential and other developments. All names will be in the Irish language only. The naming and numbering schemes including associated signage must be submitted to the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of a new development.</p> <p>CUH 4 The Gaeltacht and Linguistic Heritage (a) To protect the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht and to promote Irish as a community language. To promote and facilitate the sustainable development of An Ghaeltacht and Island communities in County Galway. (b) To support organisations involved in the continued promotion and preservation of the Irish language and culture. To work in a positive and encouraging way to create and maintain a bilingual environment in the County, and to ensure the availability of opportunities for the use of spoken and written Irish.</p> <p>CUH 5 Library and Archives (a) To facilitate the development and implementation of Galway Library Development Programme 2016-2021 or subsequent programme and support the development and promotion of the library network in the county. (b) Galway County Council shall support the provision of a purpose built repository, meeting international archival standards, to house, and ensure the preservation, of this important heritage resource.</p>

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Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occurrence of adverse visual impacts and conflicts with the appropriate protection of designations relating to the landscape. 	<p>Also refer to measures under Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna and Cultural Heritage</p> <p>GSST 32 High Quality and Contextually Sensitive Design Ensure that new developments are responsive to their site context and in keeping with the character, heritage, amenities, environment and landscape of the area. New development proposals will be required to complement the existing character of the area in terms of scale, height, massing, building line, urban grain and definition and through high quality design proposals for buildings/structures/shop fronts, the use of high quality, appropriate materials and the provision of appropriate signage, lighting, landscaping proposals and other such details.</p> <p>GSST 37 Views and Prospects Preserve the protected views and scenic routes as detailed in Maps 8.3 and 8.4 in the GCDP 2022-2028 from development that in the view of the Planning Authority would negatively impact on said protected views and scenic routes. This shall be balanced against the need to develop key infrastructure to meet the strategic aims of the plan.</p> <p>GSST 38 Design Statements Significant proposals will be required to submit Design Statements which will be determined by scale and impact the latter of which will vary depending on the development location and the pertinent sensitivities. The design statement must demonstrate the suitability of the proposed design solution to the site context in accordance with the relevant urban design criteria. They should include a detailed explanation with illustrations where necessary the design principles and design concept. This should refer to the development layout, landscape, scale and mix, details of materials should also be included. The statement should show how the development will contribute to the process of placemaking. Particular reference should also include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A site analysis; A concept plan or masterplan as deemed appropriate; A statement demonstrating the 12 urban design criteria set out in the Sustainable Residential Guidelines for Planning Authorities; Quality Audit addressing street design as outlined in the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets; Reference to the contribution of the development of the quality of public realm surrounding the development; Demonstrate compliance with the Policy Objectives set out in this LAP and the GCDP. <p>A degree of flexibility will apply to the requirements of Design Statements and other DM standards. Gort has its own set of circumstances which require flexible tailored design solutions where a proposal accords with specific planning standards and requirements.</p> <p>GSST 57 Biodiversity & Ecological Networks Support the protection of biodiversity and ecological connectivity within the Plan Area including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, rivers, streams, natural springs, peatlands, wetlands, stonewalls, and other landscape features, where these form part of the ecological network. Seek to retain and/or incorporate these natural features into developments, to avoid ecological fragmentation and maintain ecological corridors.</p>	<p>Also refer to measures under Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna and Cultural Heritage.</p> <p>Policy Objectives Landscape Conservation and Management</p> <p>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.</p> <p>LCM 2 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.</p> <p>LCM 3 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.</p> <p>LCM 4 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.</p> <p>PVSR 1 – Protected Views and Scenic Routes Preserve the protected views and scenic routes as detailed in Maps 8.3 and 8.4 from development that in the view of the Planning Authority would negatively impact on said protected views and scenic routes. This shall be balanced against the need to develop key infrastructure to meet the strategic aims of the plan.</p> <p>TWHS 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 and engage with other national and international initiatives which promote the special built, natural and cultural heritage of places in the County. Collaborate with landowners, local communities and other relevant stakeholders to achieve World Heritage Site status for the sites identified in County Galway.</p>

2.10 Instance whereby Environmental Considerations were not fully integrated into the Plan

Against the advice of the Executive, the Members decided to adopt certain Proposed Material Amendments as part of the Plan. Material Amendments that did not fully integrate environmental considerations into the Plan, together with the advice to Members provided in the SEA Environmental Report that accompanied the Proposed Material Amendments on public display, are detailed on Table 2.2 below.

Table 2.2 Material Amendments that did not fully integrate environmental considerations into the Plan and associated SEA commentary

Amendment No's.	Commentary from SEA Environmental Report that accompanied the Proposed Material Amendments on public display
MA36	<p>Proposed Material Alteration MA36 is to zone lands from outside the plan boundary to residential phase 2.</p> <p>As has already been identified by the Executive's response to this submission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Draft Local Area Plan is guided by National, Regional and Local Policy, the Planning Authority note that promoting sustainable compact growth of urban settlements a key priority throughout the tiered hierarchy of plans and this is supported by objective GSST 4 Compact Growth in the Draft Gort LAP. At this time, the Planning Authority consider that extending the boundary of the plan to include the site referenced in the submission, would be contrary to National Policy Objective NPO 3, Regional Policy Objective RPO 3.7.2 and Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 Policy Objective CS2 Compact Growth. The Draft Gort LAP 2025-2031 was prepared in accordance with the Core Strategy of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028. As part of the review of the Local Area Plan, the quantum of Residential Phase 2 land was examined, and has been zoned accordingly, having regard to several of factors including promoting sequential development, connections to infrastructure and access to existing and planned services. Having regard to the location of the subject lands, the Planning Authority consider that zoning the lands Residential Phase 2 is not justified at this time. <p>As has already been identified in the SEA Environmental Report that was placed on public display alongside the Draft Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental considerations have been integrated into the Draft Plan's zoning through an interdisciplinary approach. Zoning has been applied in a way that primarily seeks to achieve sustainable and compact growth, taking into account the various requirements set out in the higher-level NPF, Western and Northern RSES and Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028. The detailed Plan preparation process undertaken by the Planning Department combined with specialist input from the SFRA process facilitated zoning that helps to avoid inappropriate development being permitted in areas of high flood risk. Also taken into account were environmental sensitivities relating to ecology, cultural heritage, landscape and water. <p>This Proposed Alteration would not provide the most evidence-based framework for development and has the potential to undermine sustainable development and proper planning - with potential for associated unnecessary adverse environmental effects on various environmental components, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adverse effects on ecology, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats and species (residual effects would occur); Loss of an extent of soil function arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces (residual effects would occur); Occurrence of visual impacts (residual effects would occur); Increased loadings on water bodies; Conflict with efforts to maximise sustainable compact growth, sustainable mobility and a transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society (residual effects would occur); and Adverse impacts upon carbon emission reduction targets in line with local, national and European environmental objectives (residual effects would occur).

Amendment No's.	Commentary from SEA Environmental Report that accompanied the Proposed Material Amendments on public display
MA37	<p>Proposed Material Alteration MA37 is to zone lands from Business and Enterprise to Residential Phase 2.</p> <p>As has already been identified by the Executive's response to this submission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having regard to the strategic function of Gort as a Self-Sustaining Town, the location of the subject lands, which adjoins 'Industrial' zoned lands to the south, it is considered appropriate that the lands should be retained as Business and Enterprise. • Furthermore, concerns were raised by the Executive regarding the reduction of Business and Enterprise lands in a town that was designated a Self-Sustaining Town. <p>As has already been identified in the SEA Environmental Report that was placed on public display alongside the Draft Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental considerations have been integrated into the Draft Plan's zoning through an interdisciplinary approach. • Zoning has been applied in a way that primarily seeks to achieve sustainable and compact growth, taking into account the various requirements set out in the higher-level NPF, Western and Northern RSES and Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028. • The detailed Plan preparation process undertaken by the Planning Department combined with specialist input from the SFRA process facilitated zoning that helps to avoid inappropriate development being permitted in areas of high flood risk. Also taken into account were environmental sensitivities relating to ecology, cultural heritage, landscape and water. <p>This Proposed Alteration would not provide the most evidence-based framework for development and has the potential to undermine sustainable development and proper planning. The Alteration could potentially push demand for Business and Enterprise development to areas that are more environmentally sensitive, less well-connected to the town and less well-served, resulting in unnecessary adverse environmental effects on various environmental components, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adverse effects on ecology, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats and species (residual effects would occur); • Loss of an extent of soil function arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces (residual effects would occur); • Occurrence of visual impacts (residual effects would occur); • Increased loadings on water bodies; • Conflict with efforts to maximise sustainable compact growth, sustainable mobility and a transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society (residual effects would occur); and • Adverse impacts upon carbon emission reduction targets in line with local, national and European environmental objectives (residual effects would occur).
MA38	<p>Proposed Material Alteration MA38 is to zone lands from outside the plan boundary to residential phase 2.</p> <p>As has already been identified by the Executive's response to this submission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031 was prepared in accordance with the Core Strategy of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028. As part of the review of the Local Area Plan, the quantum of Residential Phase 2 land was examined, and has been zoned accordingly, having regard to several of factors including promoting sequential, compact growth, connections to infrastructure and access to existing and planned services. <p>As has already been identified in the SEA Environmental Report that was placed on public display alongside the Draft Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental considerations have been integrated into the Draft Plan's zoning through an interdisciplinary approach. • Zoning has been applied in a way that primarily seeks to achieve sustainable and compact growth, taking into account the various requirements set out in the higher-level NPF, Western and Northern RSES and Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028. • The detailed Plan preparation process undertaken by the Planning Department combined with specialist input from the SFRA process facilitated zoning that helps to avoid inappropriate development being permitted in areas of high flood risk. Also taken into account were environmental sensitivities relating to ecology, cultural heritage, landscape and water. <p>This Proposed Alteration would not provide the most evidence-based framework for development and has the potential to undermine sustainable development and proper planning - with potential for associated unnecessary adverse environmental effects on various environmental components, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adverse effects on ecology, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats and species (residual effects would occur); • Loss of an extent of soil function arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces (residual effects would occur); • Occurrence of visual impacts (residual effects would occur); • Increased loadings on water bodies; • Conflict with efforts to maximise sustainable compact growth, sustainable mobility and a transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society (residual effects would occur); and • Adverse impacts upon carbon emission reduction targets in line with local, national and European environmental objectives (residual effects would occur).

Section 3 Environmental Report and Submissions/ Observations

3.1 Introduction

This section details how both the Environmental Report and submissions and observations made to Galway County Council on the Environmental Report and SEA process have been taken into account during the preparation of the Plan and the SEA.

3.2 SEA Scoping Notices and Submissions

As part of the SEA scoping process for preparation of the Plan, environmental authorities³ were notified that a submission or observation in relation to the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the Environmental Report could be made to the Council.

Detailed submissions were received from the following:

- Environmental Protection Agency;
- Geological Survey of Ireland division of the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (now Department of Climate, Energy and Environment); and
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Housing.

The issues raised in this submission and how these issues have been taken into account during preparation of the Plan and the SEA are provided on Table 3.1 below. Taking into account the submission from the Environmental Protection Agency environmental considerations were integrated into the Plan, including through the selection of Plan provisions identified on Table 2.1.

³ The following authorities were notified: the Environmental Protection Agency; Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (now Department of Climate, Energy and Environment); Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine; Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; Galway City Council; Mayo County Council; Roscommon County Council; Offaly County Council; Tipperary County Council; and Clare County Council.

Table 3.1 Taking into account SEA Scoping Submissions

No.	Submission text	Response from SEA Scoping Report
1	Submission from Environmental Protection Agency	
A	We acknowledge your notice, dated 3rd February 2023, in relation to the SEA Scoping for the Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031 (the 'Plan').	Noted.
B	The EPA is one of the statutory environmental authorities under the SEA Regulations. In our role as an SEA environmental authority, we focus on promoting the full and transparent integration of the findings of the Environmental Assessment into the Plan and advocating that the key environmental challenges for Ireland are addressed as relevant and appropriate to the Plan. Our functions as an SEA environmental authority do not include approving or enforcing SEAs or plans.	Noted.
C	As a priority, we focus our efforts on reviewing and commenting on key sector plans. For land use plans at county and local level, we provide a 'self-service approach' via the guidance document 'SEA of Local Authority Land Use Plans – EPA Recommendations and Resources'. This document is updated regularly and sets out our key recommendations for integrating environmental considerations into Local Authority land use Plans. We recommend that you take this guidance document into account in preparing the Plan and SEA.	The 'SEA of Local Authority Land Use Plans – EPA Recommendations and Resources' document has been considered in the preparation of the SEA Scoping Report and will be kept on file for reference throughout the SEA process.
D	<p>In preparing the Plan, Galway County Council should also ensure that the Plan aligns with key relevant higher-level plans and programmes and is consistent with the relevant objectives and policy commitments of the National Planning Framework and the Northern and Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.</p> <p>The EPA may provide additional comments upon receipt of the SEA Environmental Report and Draft Plan at the next stage of the SEA process.</p>	The SEA will seek to ensure that the Plan aligns with key relevant higher-level plans and programmes and is consistent with the relevant objectives and policy commitments of the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region.
E	<p>Available Guidance & Resources</p> <p>Our website contains various SEA resources and guidance, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SEA process guidance and checklists - Inventory of spatial datasets relevant to SEA - topic specific SEA guidance (including Good practice note on Cumulative Effects Assessment (EPA, 2020), Guidance on SEA Statements and Monitoring (EPA, 2020), Integrating climatic factors into SEA (EPA, 2019), Developing and Assessing Alternatives in SEA (EPA, 2015), and Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment (EPA, 2012)) <p>You can access these guidance notes and other resources at: https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring--assessment/assessment/strategic-environmental-assessment/sea-topic-and-sector-specific-guidance/</p>	These resources and guidance have been considered in the preparation of the SEA Scoping Report and will be accessed, as relevant, for reference throughout the SEA process.
F	<p>Strategic Environmental Assessment: Guidelines for Planning Authorities</p> <p>The Strategic Environmental Assessment: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DHLGH, 2022) provide advice on carrying out SEA in the land-use planning sector for those plans listed in S.I. No.436 of 2004, as amended. They replace previous guidance for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities published in 2004. The plans in S.I. No.436 of 2004, as amended, comprise regional, county and local plans, including Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies, County or City Development Plans, variations of Development Plans, Local Area Plans and Planning Schemes for Strategic Development Zones.</p>	These Guidelines have been considered in the preparation of the SEA Scoping Report and will be accessed, as relevant, for reference throughout the SEA process.
G	<p>Environmental Sensitivity Mapping (ESM) Webtool</p> <p>The ESM Webtool is a decision support tool to assist SEA and planning processes in Ireland. The tool brings together over 100 datasets and allows users to explore environmental considerations within a particular area and create plan-specific environmental sensitivity maps. These maps can help planners anticipate potential land-use conflicts and help identify suitable development locations, while also protecting the environment. The ESM Webtool is available at www.enviromap.ie.</p>	The ESM Webtool has been considered in the preparation of the SEA Scoping Report and will be considered throughout the SEA process, where relevant.
H	<p>EPA SEA GIS Search and Reporting Webtool</p> <p>Our SEA GIS Search and Reporting Webtool is publicly available through EPA Maps at https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/SEA. It allows public authorities to produce an indicative report on key aspects of the environment in a specific geographic area. It is intended to assist public authorities in SEA screening and scoping exercises.</p>	Available online EPA resources, including mapping resources, have been considered in the preparation of the SEA Scoping Report and will be considered throughout the SEA and AA processes.
I	<p>EPA WFD Application</p> <p>Our WFD Application provides a single point of access to water quality and catchment data from the national WFD monitoring programme. The Application is available via www.catchments.ie.</p>	
J	<p>EPA AA GeoTool</p> <p>Our AA GeoTool application has been developed in partnership with the NPWS. It allows users to select a location, specify a search area and gather available information for</p>	

No.	Submission text	Response from SEA Scoping Report
	each European Site within the area. It is also available through EPA https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/AAGeoTool .	
K	State of the Environment Report – Ireland’s Environment 2020 In preparing the Plan and SEA, the recommendations, key issues and challenges described within our State of the Environment Report Ireland’s Environment – An Assessment 2020 (EPA, 2020) should be considered, as relevant and appropriate to the Plan.	The recommendations, key issues and challenges described within the current version of Ireland’s Environment will be considered in the preparation of the Plan and SEA.
L	Transition to a low carbon climate resilient economy and society You should ensure that the Plan aligns with national commitments on climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as relevant sectoral, regional and local adaptation plans.	The SEA will seek to ensure that the Plan aligns with national commitments on climate change and adaptation, as well as relevant sectoral, regional and local adaptation plans.
M	Environmental Authorities Under the SEA Regulations, you should consult with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Protection Agency; • Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage; • Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications; and • Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine. • any adjoining planning authority whose area is contiguous to the area of a planning authority which prepared a draft plan, proposed variation or local area plan. 	Notice has been given to relevant environmental authorities as part of the SEA scoping process.
N	If you have any queries or need further information in relation to this submission, please contact me directly. I would be grateful if you could send an email confirming receipt of this submission to: sea@epa.ie .	Noted.
2	Department of Environment, Climate and Communications - Geological Survey of Ireland	
A	Geological Survey Ireland is the national earth science agency and is a division of the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications. We provide independent geological information and advice and gather various data for that purpose. Please see our website for data availability. We recommend using these various data sets, when conducting the EIAR, SEA, planning and scoping processes. Use of our data or maps should be attributed correctly to ‘Geological Survey Ireland’. With reference to your email received on the 07 February 2023, concerning the SEA Scoping for the Preparation of the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2023-2029, Geological Survey Ireland would encourage use of and reference to our datasets. This data can add to the content and robustness of the SEA process. With this in mind please find attached a list of our publicly available datasets that may be useful to the environmental assessment and planning process. We recommend that you review this list and refer to any datasets you consider relevant to your assessment. The remainder of this letter and following sections provide more detail on some of these datasets.	Noted. See also responses below.
B	Geoheritage A national inventory of geoheritage sites known as County Geological Sites (CGSs) is managed by the Geoheritage Programme of Geological Survey Ireland. CGSs, as adopted under the National Heritage Plan, include sites that are of national importance which have been selected as the very best examples for NHA (Natural Heritage Areas) designation. NHA designation will be completed in partnership with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). CGSs are now routinely included in County Development Plans and in the GIS of planning departments, to ensure the recognition and appropriate protection of geological heritage within the planning system. CGSs can be viewed online under the Geological Heritage tab on the online Map Viewer. The audit for Co. Galway was completed in 2019. The full report details can be found here. Our records show that there are no CGSs within the boundary of the Local Area Plan.	This information will be taken into account in the preparation of the SEA Environmental Report, and throughout the SEA process as relevant, including the description of the baseline environment.
C	Geotourism Over the past number of years geology has become a large part of Irish tourism. Ireland currently has three UNESCO Global Geoparks, and a number of other geotourism projects. We would encourage Galway County Council to continue this trend of geotourism, and to use the geological audit information making it easily available to the general public. Geological Survey Ireland supports Ireland’s three UNESCO Global Geoparks (Copper Coast, Burren and Cliffs of Moher, Cuilcagh Lakelands), and one aspiring geopark on the Co Galway/Co Mayo border (Joyce Country and Western Lakes). These Geoparks have bolstered tourism in various parts of Ireland and helped to increase its levels in areas that were previously not as popular with tourists.	This information will be taken into account in the preparation of the SEA Environmental Report, and throughout the SEA process as relevant, including the description of the baseline environment.

No.	Submission text	Response from SEA Scoping Report
D	<p>Dimension Stone/Stone Built Ireland</p> <p>Stone Built Ireland is a 2 year research collaboration agreement between Geological Survey Ireland, Trinity College Dublin & the office of Public Works. The project aims to document building and decorative stone in Ireland to inform government agencies, building owners and conservationists of the sources for suitable replacement stone in restoration work and to develop a greater awareness among the general public.</p> <p>In addition to promoting citizen science and awareness of local materials, the inventory will aid the public in complying with part 4 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, which requires owners to conserve protected structures. It will also assist local authorities in issuing Section 57 Declarations, which outline 'the type of works which it considers would or would not materially affect the character of the structure or any element of the structure'.</p> <p>This project builds on work already completed funded by the Irish Research Council (March 2019 - September 2020) that carried out primary research on the topic and developed a simple database and web-based platform as well as hosting various heritage displays at venues (www.stonebuiltireland.com).</p>	<p>This information will be taken into account in the preparation of the SEA Environmental Report, and throughout the SEA process as relevant, including the description of the baseline environment.</p>
E	<p>Groundwater</p> <p>Geological Survey Ireland's Groundwater and Geothermal Unit, provides advice, data and maps relating to groundwater distribution, quality and use, which is especially relevant for safe and secure drinking water supplies and healthy ecosystems.</p> <p>Proposed developments need to consider any potential impact on specific groundwater abstractions and on groundwater resources in general. We recommend using the groundwater maps on our Map viewer which should include: wells; drinking water source protection areas; the national map suite - aquifer, groundwater vulnerability, groundwater recharge and subsoil permeability maps. For areas underlain by limestone, please refer to the karst specific data layers (karst features, tracer test database; turlough water levels (gwlevel.ie). Background information is also provided in the Groundwater Body Descriptions. Please read all disclaimers carefully when using Geological Survey Ireland data.</p> <p>The Groundwater Data Viewer indicates two aquifers classed as a 'Regionally Important Aquifer - Karstified (conduit)' and a 'Locally Important Aquifer - Bedrock which is Moderately Productive only in Local Zones' underlie the proposed LAP. The Karst Viewer indicates several karst features on the margins of the LAP boundary including springs, swallow holes and enclosed depressions.</p> <p>The Groundwater Vulnerability map indicates the range of groundwater vulnerabilities within the area covered is variable. We would therefore recommend use of the Groundwater Viewer to identify areas of High to Extreme Vulnerability and 'Rock at or near surface' in your assessments, as any groundwater-surface water interactions that might occur would be greatest in these areas.</p> <p>Our records show that there is a groundwater drinking water abstraction: Coole Group Water Scheme with zones of contribution within the LAP boundary. Key to groundwater protection in general, and protection of specific drinking water supplies, is preventing ingress of runoff to the aquifer. Design of drainage will need to be cognisant of the group water scheme and the interactions between surface water and groundwater as well as run-off. Appropriate design should be undertaken by qualified and competent persons to include mitigation measures as necessary, such as SUDs or other drainage mitigation measures.</p> <p>Any excavation/cuttings required for realignment should ensure that groundwater flow within the zones of contribution to the groundwater abstraction points is not disrupted, resulting in diminished yields. Note that there could be other groundwater abstractions in the locality for which Geological Survey Ireland has not undertaken studies, and a robust assessment should be undertaken by qualified and competent persons including a survey of all current wells and water abstractions within the vicinity.</p> <p>Given the nearby drinking water source (Group Water Scheme), the effects of any potential contamination as a result of developments within the LAP boundary would need to be assessed.</p> <p>Geological Survey Ireland's GWFlood project (2016-2019), initiated a new groundwater flood project in collaboration with Trinity College Dublin and Institute of Technology Carlow. As part of this project, the Gort Lowlands Groundwater Flood Modelling Report was published in 2021 and details the results of research into the South Galway karst network.</p> <p>GWClimate is a groundwater monitoring and modelling project that aims to investigate the impact of climate change on groundwater in Ireland. This is a follow on from a previous project (GWFlood) and the data may be useful in relation to Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and management plans. Maps and data are available on the Map viewer.</p> <p>Geological Survey Ireland has completed Groundwater Protection Schemes (GWPSs) in partnership with Local Authorities, and there is now national coverage of GWPS mapping. A Groundwater Protection Scheme provides guidelines for the planning and licensing authorities in carrying out their functions, and a framework to assist in decision-making on the location, nature and control of developments and activities in order to protect groundwater.</p>	<p>This information will be taken into account in the preparation of the SEA Environmental Report, and throughout the SEA process as relevant, including the description of the baseline environment.</p> <p>The SEA will be informed by suitably qualified persons, including relating to flood risk management, hydrology and hydrogeology, and will include strong mitigation and monitoring measures to ensure compliance with the SEA Directive, transposing Regulations and other environmental requirements.</p>

No.	Submission text	Response from SEA Scoping Report
	The Groundwater Protection Response overview and link to the main reports is here: https://www.gsi.ie/en-ie/programmes-and-projects/groundwater/projects/protecting-drinking-water/what-is-drinking-water-protection/county-groundwater-protection-schemes/Pages/default.aspx	
F	<p>Geological Mapping</p> <p>Geological Survey Ireland maintains online datasets of bedrock and subsoils geological mapping that are reliable and accessible. We would encourage you to use these data which can be found here, in your future assessments.</p> <p>Please note we have recently launched QGIS compatible bedrock (100K) and Quaternary geology map data, with instructional manuals and videos. This makes our data more accessible to general public and external stakeholders. QGIS compatible data can be found in our downloadable bedrock 100k .zip file on the Data & Maps section of our website.</p>	This information will be taken into account in the preparation of the SEA Environmental Report, and throughout the SEA process as relevant, including the description of the baseline environment.
G	<p>Geohazards</p> <p>Geohazards can cause widespread damage to landscapes, wildlife, human property and human life. In Ireland, landslides, flooding and coastal erosion are the most prevalent of these hazards. We recommend that geohazards be taken into consideration, especially when developing areas where these risks are prevalent, and we encourage the use of our data when doing so.</p> <p>Geological Survey Ireland has information available on landslides in Ireland via the National Landslide Database and Landslide Susceptibility Map both of which are available for viewing on our dedicated Map Viewer. Associated guidance documentation relating to the National Landslide Susceptibility Map is also available.</p> <p>Geological Survey Ireland also engaged in a national project on Groundwater Flooding. The data from this project may be useful in relation to Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and management plans, and is described in more detail under 'Groundwater' above.</p>	This information will be taken into account in the preparation of the SEA Environmental Report, and throughout the SEA process as relevant, including the description of the baseline environment.
H	<p>Geothermal Energy</p> <p>Geothermal energy harnesses the heat beneath the surface of the Earth for heating applications and electricity generation, and has proven to be secure, environmentally sustainable and cost effective over long time periods. Geothermal applications can range in depth from a few metres below the surface to several kilometres. Ireland has widespread shallow geothermal resources for small and medium-scale heating applications, which can be explored online through Geological Survey Ireland's Geothermal Suitability maps for both domestic and commercial use. We recommend use of our Geothermal Suitability maps to determine the most suitable type of ground source heat collector for use with heat pump technologies. Ireland also has recognised potential for deep geothermal resources.</p> <p>The Roadmap for a Policy and Regulatory Framework for Geothermal Energy was launched at the Geoscience 2020 Conference in November 2020. The Assessment of Geothermal Resources for District heating in Ireland and the Roadmap for a Policy and Regulatory framework for Geothermal Energy in Ireland documents have been developed to support the Government's commitments under the Climate Action Plan 2019 and the Programme for Government.</p> <p>For further information please see our Geoenergy pages on our website or contact the Groundwater and Geothermal Unit of the Geological Survey Ireland directly.</p>	This information will be taken into account in the preparation of the SEA Environmental Report, and throughout the SEA process as relevant, including the description of the baseline environment.
I	<p>Natural Resources (Minerals/Aggregates)</p> <p>Geological Survey Ireland is of the view that the sustainable development of our natural resources should be an integral part of all development plans from a national to regional to local level to ensure that the materials required for our society are available when required. Geological Survey Ireland highlights the consideration of mineral resources and potential resources as a material asset which should be explicitly recognised within the environmental assessment process.</p> <p>Geological Survey Ireland provides data, maps, interpretations and advice on matters related to minerals, their use and their development in our Minerals section of the website. The Active Quarries, Mineral Localities and the Aggregate Potential maps are available on our Map Viewer.</p> <p>We would recommend use of the Aggregate Potential Mapping viewer to identify areas of High to Very High source aggregate potential within the area. In keeping with a sustainable approach we would recommend use of our data and mapping viewers to identify and ensure that natural resources used in any proposed developments within the LAP are sustainably sourced from properly recognised and licensed facilities, and that consideration of future resource sterilization is considered.</p>	This information will be taken into account in the preparation of the SEA Environmental Report, and throughout the SEA process as relevant, including the baseline description.
J	<p>Geochemistry of soils, surface waters and sediments</p> <p>Geological Survey Ireland provides baseline geochemistry data for Ireland as part of the Tellus programme. Baseline geochemistry data can be used to assess the chemical status of soil and water at a regional scale and to support the assessment of existing or potential impacts of human activity on environmental chemical quality. Tellus is a national-scale mapping programme which provides multi-element data for shallow soil, stream sediment and stream water in Ireland. At present, mapping consists of the border, western and midland regions. Data is available at https://www.gsi.ie/en-ie/data-and-maps/Pages/Geochemistry.aspx.</p>	This information will be taken into account in the preparation of the SEA Environmental Report, and throughout the SEA process as relevant, including the description of the baseline environment.

No.	Submission text	Response from SEA Scoping Report
3	Submission from Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	
A	<p>Architectural Heritage</p> <p>Architectural Heritage Policy Context:</p> <p>Ireland has a high quality and ambitious policy framework that aims to achieve a circular economy for increased environmental, economic and social sustainability and resilience. These principles are integrated within current national and international policies, including the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the EU architectural policy, Project Ireland 2040, Climate Action Plan, Housing for All (of which Town Centres First is an objective), National Policy on Architecture, Heritage Ireland 2030, Our Rural Future and A Living Tradition: A Strategy for Enhancing the Understanding, Minding and Handing on of Our Built Vernacular Heritage.</p> <p>Architectural heritage is one of the key assets in meeting the varying aims and delivery outcomes of current national policies. It is therefore considered, that in order to achieve optimum results, architectural heritage must be given equal weight and be fully integrated with other local area plan objectives, including climate action, regeneration, housing delivery, infrastructure, etc. As a means of achieving this it is imperative to understand the evolution of our historic towns and wider environment and how their progression, changes and transformations have cumulatively created the existing physical, social, economic and cultural environment. An understanding of place will allow for a more balanced, responsive and informed decision-making process in planning and developing our historic built environments.</p> <p>Architectural Heritage and Plan Alignment:</p> <p>Architectural Heritage statutory designations such as protected structures, architectural conservation areas and areas of special planning control should form part of the relevant City and/or County Development Plans and be supported by specific development management policies and objectives. In the interest of coherence, it is recommended that area based plans (such as Local Area Plans, Municipal District Local Area Plans or similar) should specifically include the relevant architectural heritage statutory designations and development management policies and objectives or have a clear cross-referencing system to where this information can be found in the City and/or County Development Plan. All plans should also reference any guidance documents or assessments that the relevant authority may have produced in respect of architectural heritage.</p> <p>From a practical perspective all plans should be fully accessible in various formats including digitally. Consideration should be given to the use of mapping in open data format to allow for the ease of adoption into other mapping systems for the purpose of collating numerous data layers and /or information sets.</p> <p>Policy and Objective Cohesion:</p> <p>It is vital to ensure that policies and objectives relating to the architectural heritage align with and support overlapping land use policies and objectives. This is of particular importance in regeneration areas and/or individual regeneration sites. Conflicting or unclear policies and objectives introduce varying levels of uncertainty which may disrupt the successful delivery of necessary and well-intended projects. It is therefore recommended that a robust assessment is undertaken to ensure cohesion within overlapping policies and objectives relating to architectural heritage and specified land uses.</p> <p>It is equally important to ensure that local policies also align with and take into account the most up to date policy documents. In particular, the Town Centre First Policy will be a key policy in creating town centres that function 'as viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live work and visit, while also functioning as the service, social, cultural and recreational hub for the local community'.</p> <p>A multi-disciplinary team is necessary to ensure a co-ordinated and comprehensive approach to the compilation of cohesive policy, implementation of policy aims and the delivery of successful projects in complex urban environments. It is therefore recommended that each Local Authority draws upon a cohort of disciplines, including architects, architectural conservation officers, urban designers, engineers, planners, ecologists, archaeologist and similar when addressing current national environmental, economic and societal challenges in our built environment.</p> <p>Character Assessments:</p> <p>Where 'Character Assessments', have been carried out for historic areas, architectural conservation areas and/or historic landscapes, these should be included in all relevant plans and/or a clear cross-referencing system to where this information is located should be provided. Where Character Assessments are not in place, it is recommended that such assessments are undertaken and completed by suitably qualified person/s, for inclusion in all forthcoming plans.</p> <p>Character Assessments are an effective tool in assessing the historic environment, understanding its unique and authentic character and the significance and value of the same. This in turn supports the creation of informed policies and objectives and the insightful management of our architectural heritage.</p> <p>Character Assessments are a multi-functional and collaborative tool as they help to inform and direct frameworks, policies and strategies for the delivery of other essential services</p>	<p>Noted. Architectural and archaeological heritage come under the scope of the assessment, as detailed throughout the SEA Scoping Report. This Department's submission will inform the assessment as relevant and appropriate, taking into account considering the various provisions contained within the Galway County Development Plan for the protection/management of architectural and archaeological heritage (with which the LAP and development within the Plan area must comply).</p> <p>The SEA will be informed by suitably qualified persons, including relating to cultural heritage, and will include strong mitigation and monitoring measures to ensure compliance with the SEA Directive, transposing Regulations and other environmental requirements.</p>

No.	Submission text	Response from SEA Scoping Report
	<p>such as public realm schemes, strategic infrastructure, measures to address dereliction and vacancy, urban and rural regeneration and integrated land use solutions.</p> <p>Definitions and Terminology:</p> <p>It is recommended that relevant plans, including area based plans, provide definitions of architectural heritage and architectural heritage related statutory designations, such as protected structures, architectural conservation areas, areas of special planning control, vernacular buildings and historic demesnes. These definitions can be found in both the Planning and Development Act as well as in 'Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities' and 'A Living Tradition; A Strategy to Enhance the Understanding, Minding and Handing on of Our Built Vernacular Heritage'. The interchangeable use of terms and phrases such as architectural heritage, built heritage, cultural heritage and built historic environment can cause confusion for the end user. It is recommended that a consistent set of terms and phrases are adopted, explained and applied throughout the relevant plans/s.</p> <p>Appropriate Personnel:</p> <p>It is strongly recommended that suitably qualified persons should be involved in the preparation of sections/elements of plans relating to the architectural heritage. Architectural Conservation Officers will be ideally placed to provide the necessary technical advice, policy analysis and development and operate in a collaborative manner to the benefit of the organisation.</p> <p>Where a local authority does not have in-house expertise, they may need to seek the appointment of consultants as a short term solution or consider the longer term need to increase architectural heritage capacity within the organisation.</p> <p>Reference:</p> <p>"Streetscape of County Cork", Cork County Council publication funded under the National Policy on Architecture contains guidance on the following areas;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streetscape elements and architecture • Streetscape study • The value of streetscapes • A way forward • New design in historic setting • Reclaiming the streets • Introduction, appendices, sources of information, photographs, drawings etc. <p>European architectural policy development documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Communication from the European Commission on the New European Bauhaus" • "Council Conclusions on culture, high-quality architecture and built environment as key elements of the New European Bauhaus initiative" • "Towards a shared culture of architecture – investing in a high quality living environment for everyone" 	
B	<p>Archaeology</p> <p>The Department welcomes the opportunity to make a submission on the aforementioned referral. The following observations are made by the Department in its role as statutory authority with responsibility for the continued protection, conservation and enhancement of the archaeological heritage.</p> <p>The Department acknowledges and welcomes the inclusion in the Draft SEA Scoping Report of specific reference to the protection of Cultural Heritage, including the archaeological and architectural heritage of Gort and environs. The inclusion of specific reference to underwater archaeological heritage is noted. It is noted that the draft SEA Scoping Report does not include a map indicating the boundary of the proposed LAP.</p> <p>The town of Gort and its environs contain several recorded archaeological sites and monuments associated with the history and development of the area. These monuments are afforded statutory protection in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994. There are established zones of notification associated with these monuments within which any proposed ground disturbance/sub-surface works or works to structures and buildings, which may – based on their occurrence on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey maps – contain historic fabric, must be notified in advance to the Department under Section 12 (3) of the Act. These areas should be illustrated in the SEA report.</p> <p>The SEA process for the Gort LAP 2025-2031 should take cognisance of national policy as set out in the publication 'Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage' (Government of Ireland 1999). Any development proposal that may be considered to have potential for impacts (both positive and negative) on recorded or previously unknown archaeological heritage within the SEA Screening/LAP area should be subject to project specific Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) as per Development Management (DM) Standard 61 of the Galway County Development Plan 2012-2028 and Section 3.6 of 'Framework and Principles' as previously referenced. Where upstanding archaeological sites/monuments may be impacted, AIA should also include an assessment of potential for visual impacts, to include the setting and amenity of such areas. Where in-stream works are proposed within the waterways in the town, an Underwater Archaeological Impact Assessment may be required.</p> <p>The Department would be happy to provide future advice and observations regarding</p>	<p>Noted. Architectural and archaeological heritage come under the scope of the assessment, as detailed throughout this report. This Department's submission will inform the assessment as relevant and appropriate, taking into account considering the various provisions contained within the Galway County Development Plan for the protection/management of architectural and archaeological heritage (with which the LAP and development within the Plan area must comply).</p> <p>A Plan boundary is not provided as SEA scoping is undertaken at the earliest stage of Plan-preparation, in order to allow for the integration of environmental considerations into the Plan.</p>

No.	Submission text	Response from SEA Scoping Report
	protection, conservation and enhancement of the archaeological heritage of Gort during the progression of the SEA process and the development of the Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031.	
C	<p>Nature Conservation</p> <p>The following observations are made by the Department in its role as a statutory authority with overarching responsibility for nature conservation and the nature directives (i.e. the Birds and Habitats Directives). The observations are not exhaustive but are intended to assist the planning authority in meeting its obligations in relation to nature conservation, European sites, biodiversity and environmental protection in the process of reviewing and preparing the Local Area Plan. The Department's below recommendations are in relation to key ecological issues in the plan area, and for Appropriate Assessment and SEA screening.</p> <p>Key ecological issues</p> <p>The Gort area supports habitats and species of importance for biodiversity and nature conservation. These elements form ecological networks locally and interconnecting with other parts of the county. The plan area contains or may contain the following:</p> <p>The Cannahowna/Gort River which flows northwards through the plan area and enters the Coole-Garryland Complex candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) (Site Code 000252) and Coole-Garryland Special Protection Area (SPA) (Site Code 004107) downstream. These European sites are of international importance for nature conservation and form part of Ireland's contribution to the Natura 2000 network within the EU. See also below in relation to appropriate assessment,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certain species of flora and fauna, and their key habitats (i.e. breeding sites and resting places), which are strictly protected under national wildlife legislation wherever they occur, whether inside or outside the above sites, • 'Protected species and natural habitats' as defined in the European Liability Directive (2004/35/EC) and European Communities (Environmental Liability) Regulations, 2008, including: • Birds Directive – Annex I species and other regularly occurring migratory species, and their habitats (wherever they occur), • Habitats Directive – Annex I habitats, Annex II species and their habitats, and Annex IV species and their breeding sites and resting places (wherever they occur), • Stepping stones and ecological corridors including habitat areas and species locations covered by Article 101 of the Habitats Directive. <p>The above should be taken into account in preparing the new plan, and in undertaking its associated environmental assessments. Objectives to conserve and protect the above should be included in the new plan. For example, Swifts are known around the Lydacan castle, over 5km away. Consideration should be given to the installation of Swift boxes within the town, ideally on the courthouse or a similar building. The chance of uptake will be increased with a bird caller lure.</p> <p>Appropriate Assessment</p> <p>The new plan will require Appropriate Assessment screening in line with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. Screening will suffice only if it can be concluded, based on objective criteria and the necessary scientific evidence, that the plan, alone and in combination with other plans and projects, poses no risks of having significant effects on Natura 2000 sites in view of their conservation objectives. In the event that there are risks of significant effects, a Natura Impact Report (NIR) will be required.</p> <p>The Appropriate Assessment should focus on the likely impacts on Natura 2000 sites in view of their conservation objectives. Natura 2000 sites include SACs and SPAs (including candidate and proposed sites). Information about these sites, including their locations, site synopses, Natura 2000 standard data forms and qualifying or conservation interests, is available from www.npws.ie. Generic conservation objectives are also available. A screening distance of 15km outside the plan area is recommended in the above guidance. SACs have been selected for the conservation of a range of Habitats Directive Annex I habitats and Annex II species. These are the qualifying interests for the site from which the conservation objectives are derived. Conservation interests of potential concern in relation to the plan include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coole-Garryland Complex SAC • Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition-type vegetation [3150] • Turloughs [3180] • Rivers with muddy banks with <i>Chenopodium rubri</i> p.p. and <i>Bidention</i> p.p. vegetation [3270] • Kiltartan Cave (Coole) SAC (Site Code 000286) and Lough Cutra SAC (Site Code 000299) • Lesser Horseshoe Bat. <p>SPAs have been selected for the conservation of a range of Birds Directive Annex I species and regularly-occurring migratory species, and their habitats, particularly wetlands. The overarching conservation objective for each SPA is to ensure that target bird populations (i.e. the special conservation interests) and their habitats are maintained at, or restored to favourable conservation condition. This includes, as an integral part, the</p>	<p>Noted. Biodiversity and flora and fauna, together with their sustaining resources, come under the scope of the assessment, as detailed throughout the SEA Scoping Report. This Department's submission will inform the assessment as relevant and appropriate, taking into account considering the various provisions contained within the Galway County Development Plan for the protection/management of biodiversity and flora and fauna and with their sustaining resources (with which the LAP and development within the Plan area must comply).</p> <p>The SEA will be informed by suitably qualified persons, including relating to ecology, and will include strong mitigation and monitoring measures to ensure compliance with the SEA Directive, transposing Regulations and other environmental requirements.</p> <p>The information provided in the submission will be taken into account in the preparation of the SEA Environmental Report and AA Natura Impact Report, and throughout the SEA and AA processes as relevant, including the description of the baseline environment.</p> <p>A Plan boundary is not provided as SEA scoping is undertaken at the earliest stage of Plan-preparation, in order to allow for the integration of environmental considerations into the Plan.</p> <p>"SEA screening" referred to in the submission is not relevant for this Plan or associated SEA.</p> <p>Regarding land use zoning, the SEA is of a Local Area Plan that will provide for high-level, strategic land use zoning objectives at potential future development sites within the Plan area. Each zoning objective allows for a range of possible uses and, as such, the Plan allows for a range of scales, heights, densities</p>

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	<p>need to avoid deterioration of habitats and significant disturbance such that site integrity is maintained. The long term population trend for each relevant species should be stable or increasing.</p> <p>The Appropriate Assessment should demonstrate that it has considered the likely effects of all aspects of the plan on European sites, including its policies, objectives and land use zonings. In this way, plan elements that pose risks can be highlighted for modification, mitigation or further assessment. In combination effects of other plans and projects also require assessment. Some issues of potential concern in the existing plan area are surface water issues, groundwater issues and hydrogeology, flood risk management, and cumulative habitat loss and fragmentation in the case of bats. Plan level mitigation may include, among other things, setting out provisions to demonstrate that lower level plans or projects will be subject to appropriate assessment where necessary. However, if policies and objectives are made conditional on adequate evaluations and assessments being undertaken at lower plan level or at project level, it is advised that, as a minimum, these situations should be subject to preliminary examination and should be noted clearly in the plan. The proposals should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a statement of the issue being addressed without favouring a specified solution (if a specified solution is put forward, appropriate assessment will be required of that solution); • State that issues may arise under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive that will require assessment and that alternative solutions may need to be considered to avoid significant effects; • Stress that in deciding on a solution, it will be necessary to comply fully with Article 6(3) (and, if warranted, Article 6(4), including compensatory measures) of the Habitats Directive. <p>It is advised that the Appropriate Assessment (screening or otherwise) is presented as a completed report for the proposed plan, and not as a draft. Any amendments or alterations can then be addressed by way of addenda to the main report. The NIR or screening report should conclude with a clear statement on whether or not significant effects are likely as a result of the plan on its own, and in combination with other plans and projects. In order to reach such a conclusion, all recommendations of the Appropriate Assessment, including amendments and mitigation measures, must be reflected in the content of the plan itself. Public authorities and agents/consultants acting on their behalf are advised to have regard to the following Guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government. 2010. Appropriate Assessment of plans and projects in Ireland: Guidance for planning authorities. Available on www.npws.ie • European Commission (2018) Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC • European Commission, 2001. Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6 (3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC • OPR Practice Note PN01. Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management, March 2021. • It is also advisable to take account of any European or National jurisprudence that supersedes any guidance within these documents which is available at http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/caselaw/index_en.htm <p>SEA Environmental Report</p> <p>The Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna section of the SEA should be undertaken by or in conjunction with a suitably qualified ecologist, and in conjunction with the Appropriate Assessment to ensure full integration of biodiversity issues and concerns, particularly in relation to nature conservation sites, rare and protected species, habitats that are rare or of high ecological value, and Article 10 of the Habitats Directive. The Environmental Report is required to contain information on the environmental characteristics of the areas likely to be affected significantly by the plan. For biodiversity, flora and fauna, the scope of the SEA should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All sites with nature conservation designations • Available information on habitats, including results of habitat surveys • Available information on rare and protected species and their habitats (including National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) datasets on rare and protected species) • All watercourses, surface water bodies and associated wetlands, including floodplains and flood risk areas • Other sites of high biodiversity value or ecological importance, • Local biodiversity areas • Ecological networks and corridors, and stepping stones <p>Please refer to the EPA's website for a complete and up-to-date list of relevant SEA guidance http://www.epa.ie/monitoringassessment/assessment/sea/resources/.</p> <p>In general, no areas should be identified or targeted for development (e.g. through land use zoning or other strategies) without basic information on the ecological sensitivities of the lands in question, including a habitat map, i.e. the precautionary principle should apply and no areas should be committed to development in the absence of basic ecological information so as to avoid potential conflicts. The Environmental Report is</p>	<p>configurations/layouts and designs. There is an infinite range of land use types and associated developments and designs that could occur within the Plan area, subject to complying with relevant mitigation measures for the management and protection of biodiversity and flora and fauna as relevant.</p> <p>As per the Ministerial Guidelines on SEA (DHLGH, 2022), "...Where data deficiencies or gaps exist, this should be acknowledged in the report. Secondly, the Environmental Report can only be as detailed as the plan it is assessing: it is not possible to carry out a detailed assessment of non-specific plan policies, nor would it be appropriate to scope for a very high-level assessment of detailed policies, objectives or zoning proposals for example." As per the SEA Directive, the SEA will be appropriately scaled, informed by available baseline data, and will consider the requirement of the SEA Directive to avoid duplication of assessment.</p> <p>The referenced Directives, legislation, frameworks, plans and strategies will be considered in the SEA Environmental Report.</p>

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	<p>required to contain environmental protection objectives. For biodiversity, flora and fauna, these should integrate with the objectives and obligations of other directives such as the Habitats and Birds Directives, the Water Framework Directive, the Wildlife Acts, 1976-2000. Government policy on nature conservation is clearly set out in the National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) 2017-2021, which has the clear objective to "mainstream biodiversity into decision making", for all public authorities and to move towards no net loss of biodiversity. It also requires Local Authorities to develop policies and objectives for the protection and restoration of biodiversity. It is crucial that consideration is given to coherent protection and enhancement of biodiversity at a regional as well as local level. National policies that recognise the importance of incorporating biodiversity protection and nature conservation into land use plans at an early stage are namely; The National Planning Framework (NPF) 2018, Northern and Western Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-32, National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021, All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025 and the National Peatlands Strategy 2015. As a signatory to the United Nations (UN) Convention on Biological Diversity Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, Ireland's policies are reflected in a vision where "biodiversity and ecosystems in Ireland are conserved and restored, delivering benefits essential for all sectors of society and that Ireland contributes to efforts to halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystems in the EU and globally." All of these policies, and strategies contain explicit commitments to sustainable development, no net loss of biodiversity and a low carbon society.</p>	

3.3 Submissions on the Environmental Report for the Draft Plan

Various submissions were made on the Draft Plan, Proposed Material Amendments and/or associated environmental assessment documents, including the SEA Environmental Report and AA/SFRA documents, while these documents were on public display.

Updates made to the Plan's environmental assessment documents on foot of submissions include:

- To add Agricultural land use zonings to the Justification Test table in the SFRA Report.
- To amend part 3 of the Justification Test to list the potentially applicable flood risk management related provisions, including structural and non-structural measures.
- To amend the narrative for the failed Justification Tests in the SFRA Report.
- Include reference to Shaping Our Electricity Future 1.1 in the SEA Environmental Report.

Environmental-related provisions adopted as part of the Plan that took into account submissions included:

- GSST 60 B Gort Lowlands Flood Relief Scheme
The Council will have full regard to the ongoing design planning and implementation of the Gort Lowlands Flood Relief Scheme, and the maintenance requirements of the Gort River (Bridge Street) drainage scheme to ensure zoning or development proposals do not impede or prevent the progression or maintenance of the schemes. Following the completion of the Gort Lowlands Flood Relief Scheme, the Council will consider the integration of a register of key flood risk infrastructure into the Plan/future land use plans for the town.

For further information on how submissions were considered, refer to the Chief Executive's Report on submissions received on the Draft Plan and associated documents and the Chief Executive's Report on submissions received on the Proposed Material Amendments and associated documentation – both available at <https://www.Galway.ie/>

All parts of the Plan-preparation process were informed by the SEA, AA and SFRA processes - this includes the preparation of the Draft Plan, Proposed Material Amendments and Further Modifications. The mitigation integrated into the final, adopted Plan includes that identified at Table 2.1 of this report.

3.4 SEA documents including SEA Environmental Report

The Draft Plan and accompanying documents (including SEA Environmental Report and AA and SFRA documents) were placed on public display, having integrated various recommendations arising from the SEA, AA and SFRA processes. Responses to submissions made during the public display of the Draft Plan and associated SEA, AA and SFRA documents were integrated into a Chief Executive's Report and considered by Galway County Council.

A number of material amendments were proposed after public display of the Draft Plan. The Proposed Material Amendments were subject to Screening for SEA and Screening for AA. Three Proposed Material Amendments were subject to SEA. Responses to submissions made during the public display of the Proposed Material Amendments and associated SEA, AA and SFRA documents were integrated into a Chief Executive's Report and considered by Galway County Council. Further modifications were considered by the SEA, AA and SFRA processes.

On adoption of the Plan, the Environmental Report that had been placed on public display alongside the Draft Plan was updated to become a final Environmental Report that is consistent with the adopted Plan, taking into account all changes that were made to the original Draft Plan that was placed on public display.

Section 4 Summary of Alternatives considered

4.1 Introduction

The SEA Directive requires that reasonable alternatives (taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme) are identified, described and evaluated for their likely significant effects on the environment.

Alternatives for the Plan are identified and assessed under a number of types as summarised below.

4.2 Limitations in Available Alternatives

The Plan is required to be prepared by the existing, already in force, Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), which specifies various types of objectives that must be provided for by the Plan.

The alternatives available for the Plan are significantly limited by the provisions of higher-level planning objectives, including those of the National Planning Framework (NPF), the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Western and Northern Region and the County Plan. These documents set out various requirements for the content of the Plan including on topics such as land use zoning and the sustainable development of settlements.

4.3 Alternatives Description and Assessment Summary

4.3.1 Type 1: Alternatives Already Considered

The preparation of the County Development Plan and associated SEA process already considered various different types of alternatives, including those relating to population allocations, which were integrated into that Plan and which set requirements for lower tier planning in the County.

4.3.2 Type 2: Land Use Zoning Alternatives

Galway County Council in preparing the Plan developed the following alternatives for land use zoning in Gort (there are various alternative components under each heading):

Type 2 (i): "More Consolidated, More Compact"

- Gort to reach population allocation, resulting in balanced orderly development and implementation of the core strategy as contained in Chapter 2 of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028.
- This alternative involves preparing the Plan using a Serviced/Serviceable Land and Infrastructure Assessment approach. Methodologies for this approach are set out in higher level documents, including the National Planning Framework and the 2013 Local Area Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities.
- The infrastructure required to be in place to achieve the growth targets is already in place or planned.
- Residential Development to take place on Residential Phase 1 and Residential Infill lands over the lifetime of the Plan, with 30% expected within the existing built-up footprint.
- Community development facilities to be developed in tandem with economic and residential growth.
- Town Centre developments would be developed in a planned and coordinated manner focused within the town centre.
- Industry would occur in the periphery close to existing infrastructure.
- Opportunity sites identified with clear design and proposed uses identified.

- Open Space/Recreation and Amenity Lands would be preserved.

The more compact, serviced/serviceable land and infrastructure assessment approach under this alternative would allow for water supply, waste water, compact growth, public transport and co-ordinated development considerations to be integrated into the Plan to the highest degree.

The infrastructure required to be in place to achieve the growth targets is already in place or planned under this alternative.

The development of the Town Centre would be more compact and sustainable under this scenario and would support the longer-term viability of the settlement. 30% of Residential units would be expected within the existing built-up footprint.

Opportunity sites identified with clear design and proposed uses identified – making successful applications for the sustainable, compact development of the town more likely.

The approach under Alternative Type 2 (i): “More Compact Development” would benefit the protection of various environmental components. Although potentially adverse effects associated with land use development would exist, they would be mitigated to a significant degree.

Type 2 (ii): “Less Consolidated, Less Compact”

- Gort to reach population allocation, resulting in balanced orderly development and implementation of the core strategy as contained in the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2024.
- This alternative involves preparing the Plan while not using the Serviced Land and Infrastructure Assessment approach.
- Additional infrastructure would be required to accommodate sporadic development, more than would be required for Alternative 1 ‘More Consolidated Development’ and some development may have to be serviced by private waste water treatment systems, which would have to be properly maintained.
- Residential Development to take place on Residential Phase 1, Residential Infill, Residential Phase 2 and certain peripheral, outer fringe lands (beyond the existing LAP boundary) over the lifetime of the Plan, with 30% less likely to be achieved within the existing built-up footprint (in comparison with Type 2 (i)).
- Industry would occur at locations including those close to residential development.
- Creation of commercial/social centres throughout the Plan area and associated dispersal of Town Centre, commercial development and local services.
- Town centre development would be sporadic and uncoordinated around the Town centre zonings.
- Opportunity sites are identified but no clear guidance on the design parameters or uses identified.

By not following a more compact, serviced/serviceable land and infrastructure assessment approach, this alternative would not allow for water supply, waste water, compact growth, public transport and co-ordinated development considerations to be integrated into the Plan to the highest degree.

Additional infrastructure would be required to accommodate sporadic development, more than would be required for Alternative 1 ‘More Compact Development’ and some development may have to be serviced by private waste water treatment systems which would have to be properly maintained.

The development of the Town Centre would be less compact and less sustainable under this scenario and would not optimally support the longer-term viability of the settlement. 30% of Residential units would be less likely to be achieved within the existing built-up footprint (in comparison with Type 2 (i)).

Opportunity sites are identified but no clear guidance on the design parameters or uses identified – making successful applications for the sustainable, compact development of the town less likely.

An opportunity to mitigate potentially adverse effects arising from land use development to a significant degree would have been missed by the approach under Alternative Type 2 (ii): “Less Compact Development”.

Selected Alternative: Type 2 (i): “More Consolidated, More Compact”

4.3.3 Type 3: Transport Alternatives

A Local Transport Plan would assist in placing sustainable transport considerations to the forefront of land use planning decisions in the formulation of the Plan. It would examine existing and proposed transport infrastructure for all modes of transport, including walking and cycling, and would provide some insight into existing transport patterns and constraints, facilitating the integration of land use and transport provisions.

- **Local Transport Plan Alternative Type 3i:** Inform the Plan with a Local Transport Plan, which focuses on delivering travel solutions that support moving people from the private car to more sustainable modes.
- **Local Transport Plan Alternative Type 3ii:** Do not inform the Plan with a Local Transport Plan, which focuses on delivering travel solutions that support moving people from the private car to more sustainable modes, relying solely on existing provisions, including those of the County Development Plans.

Informing the Plan with a Local Transport Plan, which focuses on delivering travel solutions that support moving people from the private car to more sustainable modes, (**Transport Alternative Type 3i**) would provide a more coordinated and more orderly provision of transport infrastructure and services, with delivery of projects, and associated benefit with respect to sustainable mobility and compact development, more likely. This approach would be more likely to improve the potential for meeting important objectives relating to emissions and energy use. Potentially adverse impacts on environmental components including ecology and water would need to be adequately mitigated at project level.

Transport Alternative 3i would:

- Support greater alignment between and integration of land use planning and transport planning.
- Ensure the assessment of transport demand and its associated impact informs the scale of development proposals, including location, density, required transport infrastructure etc.
- Facilitate a greater shift towards a more sustainable, healthy, and low carbon-built environment.
- Prioritise of active travel measures and considerations in the formulation of development proposals, including the consideration of suitable land for development.
- Promote and encourage a modal shift from the private car to walking and cycling, particularly for short to medium distance trips.
- Prioritise walking, cycling and public transport accessibility.
- Result in improvements in the built environment for the safety and security of those walking and cycling.
- Potentially reduce traffic congestion at peak traffic times, improving road network reliability.

Alternative 3i would be more likely to result in more connected and accessible built environments, with associated positive benefits for the health and wellbeing of local communities. Alternative 3i would contribute to the transition of the Plan area to a more low-carbon, climate resilient and healthy urban environment, with reduced car dependency and an increase in sustainable travel such as walking and cycling.

Not informing the Plan with a Local Transport Plan, which focuses on delivering travel solutions that support moving people from the private car to more sustainable modes, (**Transport Alternative Type 3ii**) would provide a less coordinated and less orderly provision of transport infrastructure and services, with delivery of projects, and associated benefit with respect to sustainable mobility and

compact development, less likely. This approach would be less likely to improve the potential for meeting important objectives relating to emissions and energy use. Potentially adverse impacts arising from more coherently planned transport developments on environmental components, including ecology and water, could be mitigated at both Plan and project level.

Transport Alternative 3ii would:

- Increase the potential for land use planning and developments aspects of the Plan to be considered in isolation of transport planning considerations.
- Mean that the assessment of existing traffic, transport, and movement conditions within the Plan area would not be taken into account in the formulation of policies and objectives.
- Undermine ability to plan for efficient movement of people and services within the Plan area.
- Limit the ability and scope to plan for required transport interventions in the Plan area.
- Not inform site specific transport assessment for development proposals with a Local Transport Plan.
- Reduce support for modal shift from private car travel to active travel, including walking and cycling.

There would be greater potential for the existing pattern of car dependency to continue and increase under Alternative 3ii. Alternative 3ii would undermine policies and objectives supporting climate action and the transition to a more low-carbon urban environment. There would be potential for negative impacts on the health and wellbeing of local communities due to absence of measures for targeted active travel infrastructure.

Selected Alternative: Alternative Type 3i

4.4 Reasons for Choosing the Selected Alternative in light of Other Reasonable Alternatives Considered

Selected alternatives for the Plan from each of the types of alternatives that emerged from the planning/SEA process are indicated above.

Alternatives were selected for the Plan having regard to both:

1. The environmental effects which are identified by the SEA and are summarised above; and
2. Planning - including social and economic - effects that also were considered.

Section 5 Monitoring Measures

5.1 Introduction

The SEA Directive requires that the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes are monitored. This section details the measures which will be used in order to monitor the likely significant effects of implementing the Plan.

Monitoring can both demonstrate the positive effects facilitated by the Plan and can enable, at an early stage, the identification of unforeseen adverse effects and the undertaking of appropriate remedial action.

The occurrence of significant adverse environmental effects not predicted and mitigated by this assessment, which are directly attributable to the implementation of the Plan, would necessitate consideration of these effects in the context of the Plan and potential remediation action(s) and/or review of part(s) of the Plan.

5.2 Indicators and Targets

Monitoring is based around indicators which allow quantitative measures of trends and progress over time relating to the Strategic Environmental Objectives that were used in the evaluation. Each indicator to be monitored is accompanied by the target(s) which were identified with regard to the relevant strategic actions. Given the position of the Local Area Plan in the land use planning hierarchy beneath the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028, the measures identified in that County Development Plan SEA have been used as they are or having been slightly modified – in most instances. This consistency across the hierarchy of land use plans will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of future monitoring.

Table 5.1 shows the indicators and targets which have been selected for monitoring the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan, if unmitigated.

Monitoring is an ongoing process and the programme allows for flexibility and the further refinement of indicators and targets. The Monitoring Programme may be updated to

deal with specific environmental issues – including unforeseen effects – as they arise.

5.3 Sources

The Plan forms part of the wider land use planning framework comprising a hierarchy of policies, plans, programmes, etc. This wider framework, including the National Planning Framework, the Northern and Western RSES and the Galway County Development Plan is subject to its own SEA (and associated monitoring) requirements. Individual projects will be subject to their own monitoring requirements as relevant.

In implementing the Monitoring Programme, the Council will take into account this hierarchy of planning and environmental monitoring.

Sources for indicators may include existing monitoring databases (including those maintained by planning authorities and national/regional government departments and agencies) and the output of lower-tier environmental assessment and decision making (including a review of project approvals granted and associated documents and the output of any EIA monitoring programmes).

Internal monitoring of the environmental effects of grants of permission in the Council would provide monitoring of certain indicators on a *grant of permission*⁴ basis. Where significant adverse effects as a result of the development to be permitted are identified, such effects could be identified, recorded and used to inform monitoring evaluation.

⁴ The likely significant effects of development proposals on environmental sensitivities are further determined during the development management process. Documenting any identified effects as a result of a development to be permitted can help to fulfill monitoring requirements.

5.4 Reporting

A stand-alone Monitoring Report on the significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan will be prepared in advance of the beginning of the review of the Plan. Monitoring frequencies of indicators tend to change although where they are consistent frequencies are identified. This report should address the indicators set out on Table 5.1.

The methodology for monitoring set out below will be undertaken by the Council. Where monitoring beyond existing sources is to be undertaken, it is recommended that industry standard methods are used where they exist and where appropriate.

Reporting may be undertaken in conjunction with the monitoring reporting on other plans, such as the County Development Plan and other Local Area Plans.

The Council is responsible for the ongoing review of indicators and targets, collating existing relevant monitored data, the preparation of monitoring evaluation report(s), the publication of these reports and, if necessary, the carrying out of remedial action.

Table 5.1 Indicators, Targets, Sources and Remedial Action

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action ⁵
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	BFF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Condition of European sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all local level land use plans to include ecosystem services and green/blue infrastructure provisions and to have regard to the required targets in relation to the conservation of European sites, other nature conservation sites, ecological networks, and protected species Confirmation of compliance with Plan provisions relating to the protection of European Sites and sustaining resources Implement and review, as relevant, the Galway County Heritage and Biodiversity Plan 2024-2030 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DHLGH report of the implementation of the measures contained in the Habitats Directive - as required by Article 17 of the Directive (every 6 years)⁶ DHLGH National Birds Directive Monitoring Report for the under Article 12 (every 6 years)⁷ Internal review of local land use plans Internal review of development management / grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where condition of European sites is found to be deteriorating this will be investigated with the Regional Assembly and the DHLGH to establish if the pressures are related to Plan actions / activities. A tailored response will be developed in consultation with these stakeholders in such a circumstance.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of spatial plans that have included ecosystem services content, mapping and policy to protect ecosystem services when their relevant plans are either revised or drafted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all local level land use plans to include ecosystem services and green/blue infrastructure provisions and to have regard to the required targets in relation to the conservation of European sites, other nature conservation sites, ecological networks, and protected species Implement and review, as relevant, the Galway County Heritage and Biodiversity Plan 2024-2030 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of local land use plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEAs and AAs as relevant for new Council policies, plans, programmes etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screen for and undertake SEA and AA as relevant for new Council policies, plans, programmes etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of new Council policies, plans, programmes etc. under the County Development Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status of water bodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included under Water below 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included under Water below 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included under Water below
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance of planning permissions with Plan measures providing for the protection of Biodiversity and flora and fauna – see County Development Plan Chapter 10 “Natural Heritage, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For planning permission to be only granted when applications demonstrate that they comply with all Plan measures providing for the protection of biodiversity and flora and fauna – see County Development Plan Chapter 10 “Natural Heritage, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of development management / grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems
Population and Human Health	PHH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Plan measures relating to the promotion of economic growth as provided for by County Development Plan Chapter 9 “Economic, Enterprise and Retail” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to the promotion of economic growth as provided for by County Development Plan Chapter 9 “Economic, Enterprise and Retail” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of progress on implementing Plan objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems Consultations with DCEE

⁵ Where remedial action is required, consultations with government agencies (e.g. DCEE, DT, EPA, HSE, NPWS, Regional Assembly, Uisce Éireann) may be undertaken in order to confirm causes of any identified changes in the environment and in order to develop appropriate responses.

⁶ Including confirmation with development management that the following impacts have been considered and including use of monitoring data, where available: biodiversity/habitat loss; nitrogen deposition impacts on European sites; recreational disturbance resulting from implementation of tourism and recreation policies and objectives particularly in riparian areas; biodiversity enhancement; and disturbance /visitor pressure impacts of recreation, amenity and tourism development.

⁷ Including confirmation with development management that the following impacts have been considered and including use of monitoring data, where available: biodiversity/habitat loss; nitrogen deposition impacts on European sites; recreational disturbance resulting from implementation of tourism and recreation policies and objectives particularly in riparian areas; biodiversity enhancement; and disturbance /visitor pressure impacts of recreation, amenity and tourism development.

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Environmental Component	SEO Code	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action ⁵
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors resulting from development permitted under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of implementing the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of published information from the Health Service Executive and EPA Internal consultations with the Council's Environment Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultations with the Health Service Executive and EPA
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to active travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO data Internal review of progress on implementing Plan objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, the Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, the DHLGH, DCEE and NTA to develop a tailored response.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of spatial plans that include specific green infrastructure mapping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all local level land use plans to include specific green infrastructure mapping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of local land use plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems
Soil (and Land)	S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of population growth occurring on infill and brownfield lands compared to greenfield (also relevant to Material Assets) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain built surface cover nationally to below the EU average of 4% as per the NPF In accordance with National Policy Objectives 3c of the National Planning Framework, a minimum of 30% of the housing growth targeted in any settlement is to be delivered within the existing built-up footprint of the settlement To map brownfield and infill land parcels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPA Geoportal Compilation of greenfield and brownfield development for the DHLGH Internal review of development management / grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where the proportion of growth on infill and brownfield sites is not keeping pace with the targets set in the NPF and the RSES, the Council will liaise with the Regional Assembly to establish reasons and coordinate actions to address constraints to doing so.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instances where contaminated material generated from brownfield and infill must be disposed of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dispose of contaminated material in compliance with EPA guidance and waste management requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of development management / grants of permission where contaminated material must be disposed of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultations with the EPA and Development Management
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental assessments and AAs as relevant for applications for brownfield and infill development prior to planning permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screen for and undertake environmental assessments and AA as relevant for applications for brownfield and infill development prior to planning permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of development management / grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems
Water	W	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status of water bodies as reported by the EPA Water Monitoring Programme for the WFD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to exemptions provided for by Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive, not to cause deterioration in the status of any surface water or affect the ability of any surface water to achieve 'good status' Implementation of the objectives of the River Basin Management Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPA Monitoring Programme for WFD compliance⁸ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where water bodies are failing to meet at least good status this will be investigated with the DHLGH Water Section, the EPA Catchment Unit, the Regional Assembly and, as relevant, Uisce Éireann to establish if the pressures are related to Plan actions / activities. A tailored response will be developed in consultation with these stakeholders in such a circumstance. Where planning applications are rejected due to insufficient capacity in the WWTP or failure of the WWTP to meet Emission Limit Values, the Council will consider whether it is necessary to coordinate a response with the Regional Assembly, EPA and Uisce Éireann to achieve the necessary capacity

⁸ Including monitoring of water quality and nitrogen deposition due to bioenergy and agricultural projects where available

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Environmental Component	SEO Code	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action ⁵
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of incompatible developments permitted within flood risk areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimise developments granted permission on lands which pose - or are likely to pose in the future - a significant flood risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of development management / grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where planning applications are being permitted on flood zones, the Council will ensure that such grants are in compliance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines and include appropriate flood risk mitigation and management measures.
Material Assets	MA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programmed delivery of Uisce Éireann infrastructure for all key growth towns in line with Uisce Éireann Investment Plan and prioritisation programme to ensure sustainable growth can be accommodated Number of new developments granted permission which can be adequately and appropriately served with waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new developments granted permission to be connected to and adequately and appropriately served by waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan Where septic tanks are proposed, for planning permission to be only granted when applications demonstrate that the outfall from the septic tank will not – in combination with other septic tanks – contribute towards any surface or ground water body not meeting the objective of good status under the Water Framework Directive Facilitate, as appropriate, Uisce Éireann in developing water and wastewater infrastructure See also targets relating to greenfield and brownfield development of land under Soil and broadband under Population and Human Health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of development management / grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where planning applications are rejected due to insufficient capacity in the WWTP or failure of the WWTP to meet Emission Limit Values, the Council will consider whether it is necessary to coordinate a response with the Regional Assembly, EPA and Uisce Éireann to achieve the necessary capacity.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to active travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO data Internal review of progress on implementing Plan objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, the Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, the DHLGH, DCEE and NTA to develop a tailored response.
Air	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels NO₂ (Nitrogen Dioxide), PM10 (particulate matter with diameter of 10 microns or less) and O₃ (Ozone) as part of Ambient Air Quality Monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease in proportion of journeys made by car compared to previous levels Improvement in Air Quality trends, particularly in relation to transport related emissions Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to sustainable mobility and travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO data EPA Air Quality Monitoring Internal review of progress on implementing Plan objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, DHLGH, DCEE and NTA to develop a tailored response. See also entry under Population and human health above
Climatic Factors	C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Plan measures relating to climate reduction targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For review of progress on implementing Plan objectives to demonstrate successful implementation of measures relating to climate reduction targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of development management / grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute towards transition to a competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmation of progress in implementing of Galway County Council's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 and Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where targets are not achieved, the Council will liaise with the Regional Assembly and the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office to establish reasons and develop solutions.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share of renewable energy in transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute towards the National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030 sectoral target for transport (RES-T) of 14%, by 2030 (this 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPA Greenhouse Gas Emissions 	

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Environmental Component	SEO Code	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action ⁵
			may be increased following a provisional European agreement on 30 March 2023 for a binding overall RES target of at least 42.5% by 2030)	reporting • Internal review of implementation of Plan provisions relating to renewable energy in transport, including facilitating the development of electricity charging and transmission infrastructure	
		• Greenhouse gas emissions	• Contribute towards the target of aggregate reduction in carbon dioxide (CO ₂) emissions of at least 51% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2030 (helping to set Ireland on a path to reach net-zero emissions by 2050)		
		• Energy consumption, the uptake of renewable options and solid fuels for residential heating	• To promote reduced energy consumption and support the uptake of renewable options and a move away from solid fuels for residential heating		
		• Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels	• Decrease in the proportion of journeys made by residents of the settlement using private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels • Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to sustainable mobility and travel	• CSO data • Internal review of progress on implementing Plan objectives	• Where trends toward carbon reduction are not recorded, the Council will liaise with the Regional Assembly and the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office to establish reasons and develop solutions.
		• Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures	• Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures • Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to active travel	• CSO data • Internal review of progress on implementing Plan objectives	• Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, the Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, the DHLGH, DCEE and NTA to develop a tailored response.
Cultural Heritage	CH	• Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, and the context these entries within the surrounding landscape where relevant, protected from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan	• Protect entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, and the context of these entries within the surrounding landscape where relevant, from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan	• Internal review of development management / grants of permission	• Where monitoring reveals visitor or development pressure is causing negative effects on designated archaeological or architectural heritage, the Council will work with Regional Assembly, Fáilte Ireland and the National Monuments Service and other stakeholders, as relevant, to address pressures through additional mitigation.
		• Percentage of entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission under the Plan	• Protect entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission under the Plan	• Internal review of development management / grants of permission	
Landscape	L	• Number of developments permitted that result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, especially with regard to landscape and amenity designations included in Land Use Plans, resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan	• No developments permitted which result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, especially with regard to landscape and amenity designations included in Land Use Plans, resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan	• Internal review of development management / grants of permission	• Where monitoring reveals developments permitted which result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, the Council will re-examine Plan provisions and the effectiveness of their implementation