

*Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe*

**Galway County Council**



**Strategic Environmental Assessment  
Statement of Athenry Local Area Plan  
2012 – 2018**

**July 2012**

**MINOGUE & ASSOCIATES**

**ENVIRONMENTAL & HERITAGE CONSULTANTS**

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# **1 Strategic Environmental Assessment Statement**

## **1.1 Introduction**

This is the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Statement of the Athenry Local Area Plan (LAP) 2012 -2018, adopted by Galway County Council on 25th June 2012. This statement forms the final part of the requirements for the SEA of the Athenry LAP.

SEA is a key process that promotes sustainable development and highlights significant environmental issues within the planning regime. The purpose of SEA is to formally and systematically evaluate the likely significant effects of implementing a plan or programme, in this instance the new Athenry LAP.

EU Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment were transposed into Irish law under:

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

This SEA Statement is a requirement of S.I. No. 436 of 2004 (as amended). These Regulations detail the information to be included in a SEA Statement. These requirements are discussed in the following section.

### **1.1.1 Purpose of SEA Statement**

The main purpose of the SEA Statement is to provide information on the decision-making process and to document how environmental considerations, the views of statutory consultees and other submissions received during consultation and the recommendations of the Environmental Report have been taken into account in the adopted Athenry LAP and the arrangements put in place for monitoring.

The SEA Statement is available to the public, along with the Environmental Report and the adopted LAP. The SEA Statement includes the following information:

- Summary of how environmental considerations have been integrated into the LAP;(Section Two)
- Summary of how submissions received during consultation have been taken into account in the LAP (Section Two);
- Reasons for choosing the recommended strategy, in the light of other reasonable alternatives considered (Section Three);
- Measures that are to be undertaken to monitor the significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan (Section Four).

### **1.1.2 Implications of SEA for the Athenry LAP Process.**

As a result of the above legislation, the Athenry LAP 2012 to 2018 was required to undergo SEA. The findings of SEA were presented in the Environmental Report which was submitted to the Elected Members alongside the Draft LAP. The purpose of the report was to provide a clear understanding of the likely environmental consequences of decisions regarding the future development of Athenry over the lifetime of the plan.

Amendments were made to the Draft LAP at each stage of the process and these were evaluated for their environmental consequences. In turn this evaluation was presented to the Elected Members in the form of an Addendum Report. These addendum reports assessed whether the proposed material amendments would require full SEA or Habitats Directive Assessment, these were assessed against the Environmental Protection Objectives (EPOs). For both material amendment processes, it was determined that full SEA was not required.

On adoption of the Draft LAP, these Addenda were used to update the original Environmental Report into a final Environmental Report (ER) which accompanies the adopted Plan. In the Final ER, additional text is included in bold and italic font with a footnote to highlight who or what agency provided the submission. The SEA Screening Reports prepared for each Material Amendment is also provided as an Annex to the Final ER

At each stage of the process the Elected Members were required by the legislation to take into account the Environmental Report -including the Addenda - before the adoption of the LAP.

## 2 How Environmental Considerations have been integrated into the Athenry LAP.

### 2.1 Introduction

The strategic environmental assessment process took place in tandem with the preparation of the Athenry LAP. The SEA and Habitats Directive consultants were appointed in September 2012 and commenced the SEA scoping process immediately. This iterative process ensured that the SEA and the preparation of the LAP were integrated. The following section outlines the different consultation stages during the preparation of the LAP, and highlights the key environmental issues that rose during this process. Further detailed information on submissions received, issues raised and how they were addressed in the SEA and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) as appropriate are provided in Chapter Two Section 2.3 Tables 2a to 2b of the SEA ER. Annex C of the ER also provides the SEA Screening reports for the Material Amendments.

The following section summarises key environmental issues raised through the consultation process carried out as part of the LAP preparation process. These are shown through a series of tables that highlight the key environmental issue and are accompanied by a description/comment of where or how this was addressed in the final plan.

#### 2.1.1 Pre-Draft Consultation with External Stakeholders

A Background Issues Paper was prepared in May 2011 with the aim to promote discussion and consultation on issues affecting the sustainable development of Athenry. A notice was published on 30<sup>th</sup> May providing information on the preparation of the LAP and requesting submissions until 1<sup>st</sup> July. Eleven submissions were received including those from statutory agencies and local residents. Key environmental issues raised through this consultation are presented in Table 2a below:

**Table 2a: Pre-draft Consultation – Key Environmental Issues Raised**

Environmental Issue Raised	Addressed in Final Athenry Local Area Plan	SEA Objectives
Support of vernacular features when renovating houses.	Built Heritage and Cultural Heritage Objectives including: Objective HC6 Vernacular Architecture.	CH 1, CH 2, CH 3.
Support for range of guidelines relating to transport and sustainable transport.	Sustainable Transport Objectives including Objective TI2 Sustainable Transportation. In addition a number of other cross referencing objectives and policies such as Policy DS1 Development Strategy, Policy RD1 Residential Development and Policy TI1 Sustainable Transport, Walking and Cycling.	Pop 1, AQ 1, AQ 2 and Mat 7.
Provision of wastewater infrastructure for Athenry.	Water Supply, Wastewater and Surface Water Policies and Objectives, including Policy UI1 Water Supply, Wastewater and Surface Water Infrastructure, Objective UI2 Wastewater Disposal, Objective UI5 Maintenance and Improvement of Water Services Infrastructure.	Mat 4.

Environmental issues arising from urban generating rural housing	Housing outside the LAP boundary is principally addressed through the County Galway Development Plan 2009 -2015. However LAP addresses phased development and requirements of core strategy through a range of policies and objectives including: Objective DS6 Residential Development Phasing, LU13 Residential Densities.	Pop 1, Pop 2, Mat 7, Soil 1.
Various requests regarding retention of current zoning or new zoning.	All landuse zonings in the draft plan were assessed through the SEA and HDA process and informed by the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).	All zonings in the Final Plan and zoning requests submitted through the statutory consultation period were assessed against all EPOs.
Requirements of Core Strategy, current over zoning, need for service led development and legal requirements under legislation.	A number of objectives, policies and the new Environmental Management Zoning aim to address these issues.  Policies and Objectives can be found principally in Objective DS2 Consistency with the Core Strategy, Objective DS5 Service Led Development amongst others. Regarding legislative requirements key objectives/policies include Objective DS3 Natura 2000 Network and Habitats Directive Assessment, Objective DS7 Flood Risk Management and Assessment, Objective LU11 Flood Risk Areas and Land Use Zones.  In addition, a number of lands have been rezoned from residential to residential Phase 2 or other land use zonings in light of the Core Strategy Requirements and the SFRA.	Pop 1, Pop 2 Water EPOs and Material Assets EPOs in particular.
Requirements of Habitats Directive Assessment.	Principally addressed through DS3 Natura 2000 Network and Habitats Directive Assessment, Objective NH5 Biodiversity and Ecological Networks and Objective NH7 Environmental Management Buffer.	Bio 1, Bio 2, Bio 3, Bio 4, Bio 5 and Bio 6.
Educational requirements.	Addressed through land use zonings primarily Community Facilities and Objective LU7 Community Facilities.	Pop 1.

## 2.2 SEA Scoping and Consultation

Following the screening process, a scoping exercise was undertaken by Minogue and Associates. This established the scope and extent of the Environmental Report and facilitated consultation with the designated statutory consultees. One submission was received on the scope of the SEA; this was received from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), a statutory consultee. Again the following table shows the key environmental

issues for Athenry highlighted by the EPA and is accompanied by a summary of where and how in the plan these issues are addressed.

**Table 2b: SEA Scoping – Key Environmental Issues Raised.**

Environmental Issue Raised	Addressed in Final Athenry Local Area Plan	Relevant Environmental Protection Objective
Flood Risk	<p>The SFRA was not available during the initial plan preparation, however it became available prior to the second display period and a number of rezonings took place in light of the SFRA data. The approach was to zone undeveloped lands identified as Flood Risk A or B as Open Space/Recreation and Amenity.</p> <p>In addition to the rezonings, a range of other policies, objectives and development management guidelines were included in the Final Plan. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective LU11 Flood Risk Areas and Land Use Zones</li> <li>• Policy UI4 and Objective UI11 Flood Risk Management and Assessment, and</li> <li>• Objective UI12 Flood Zones and Appropriate Land Uses</li> </ul> <p>DM Guideline UI1 Flood Zones and Appropriate Land Uses is another additional development management guideline in the LAP.</p>	Material Assets EPO namely Mat 1 and Population and Human Health EPO Pop 2.
Wastewater Treatment Capacity/Adequacy	<p>Water Supply, Wastewater and Surface Water Policies and Objectives, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy UI1 Water Supply, Wastewater and Surface Water Infrastructure</li> <li>• Objective UI2 Wastewater Disposal</li> <li>• Objective UI5 Maintenance and Improvement of Water Services Infrastructure.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, a defined buffer zone of 100m around the Wastewater Treatment Plant was a refinement from the previous LAP 2005 -2011.</p>	Water EPOS namely Wat 1, Wat 2, Wat 3 and Material Asset EPOS including Mat 2, Mat 4
Groundwater Vulnerability	<p>Water Quality Objectives and specifically Objective UI6 Western River Basin District Management Plan and Protection of Waters support all measures within the management plan including groundwater.</p> <p>Objective UI7 Groundwater and Aquifer makes specific reference to protecting the Regionally Important Aquifer.</p>	Wat 3 and Mat 4
Bad/Poor Status Surface Water Quality	As outlined above, in addition, Objective UI6 Western River Basin District Management Plan and Protection of Waters states that	Wat 1 and Wat 2

	<p>'Galway County Council is statutorily obliged to prevent any further deterioration in the quality status of the waters in Athenry (Clarín River and the Clare River Drainage Area) and to ensure good quality status by 2021.'</p> <p>Associated with this issue is a range of supporting and relating policies and objectives addressing wastewater capacity and infrastructure, a 10m buffer for the River Clarín and Flood Risk Management policies and Objectives.</p>	
Protection of areas of significant landscape character	<p>Policy UD1 Urban Design and Place-making references landscape context in an urban setting.</p> <p>Objective UD4 Green Network and Landscape refers to landscape features such as hedgerows and rivers.</p>	Land 1, Land 2 and Land 3
Protection of biodiversity	<p>Addressed through a range of policies and objectives, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy NH1 Natural Heritage, Landscape and Environment</li> <li>• Objective NH1 Natura 2000 Network and Habitats Directive Assessment and supporting objectives.</li> </ul>	Bio 1, Bio 2, Bio 3, Bio 4, Bio 5, Bio 6, Wat 1, Wat 2.
Adherence to legislative requirements	<p>Section 1.4.1 Plan Informants outlines the statutory context to the LAP.</p> <p>In addition, a range of Objectives reference key legislative requirements such as the Water Framework Directive, Habitats Directive Assessment, EIA Directive, Groundwater Directive, SEA Directive etc.</p>	All EPOs

### 2.2.1 Public Submissions on the Draft LAP, SEA ER and NIR

The draft LAP, SEA ER and Natura Impact Screening Report were put on public display in December 2011. A total of 28 submissions were received during the statutory consultation period. The 28 submissions include submissions from statutory bodies, service providers, the general public and other stakeholders. A Manager's Report was prepared which summarised the issues raised in each of the written submissions received, together with the Manager's opinion on the issues raised and recommendations in relation to the proposed local area plan, whilst taking account of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, the statutory obligations of any local authority in the area, and any relevant policies or objectives for the time being of the Government or of any Minister of the Government. Environmental considerations were integrated into the Manager's Opinions through the SEA and HDA processes.

Table 2c below summarise the key environmental issues raised in this submissions and again, shows where in the plan and how amendments were made to further enhance environmental protection in the Final Plan.



Architectural heritage.	Amendment made to Objective HC4 Development /Works relating to Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Area.	CH1, CH 2 and Land 2.
Archaeological heritage.	Amendments to Objective HC9 Monuments and Places.	CH 1, CH 2 and Land 2.
Nature Conservation including recommended changes to policies/objectives, comments on NIR, and Business and Technology zonings and in combination effect.	All amendments made to Objective DS3 Natura 2000 Network and Habitats Directive Assessment and Objective NH1 Natura 2000 Network and Habitats Directive Assessment as per submission of DAHG. Exception was that the word 'significant' was not omitted as Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive contains the phrase "...likely to have a significant effect thereon..." The word "significant" in Objective DS 3 is intended to reflect the meaning of this word as used in Article 6(3). Furthermore, Section 2.1 of the NIR defines the term "significant" to mean not trivial or inconsequential but an effect that is potentially relevant to the site's conservation objectives. This definition follows English Nature's Habitat Regulations Guidance Note No. 3, 1999.  Amendments made to Objective NH4 Impact Assessment and LU8 Open Spaces/Recreation and Amenity on foot of this submission.  SEA ER also updated.	Bio 1, Bio 2 and Wat 1 in particular.  Bio 4, Bio 5, Bio 6, Pop 1, Pop 2 in particular.
Alien and Invasive Species	A new Objective NH9 Control of Invasive and Alien Invasive Species was included in the Final LAP.	Bio 4 in particular.
NTS : It is recommended that explanatory text from S.4.2 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna under paragraph 3 of the SEA Report is included within S. 3.9.1 Natural Heritage and Biodiversity of the Plan under Ecological Networks.	NTS updated in line with recommendation.	This makes the discussion on Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna more accessible and assists in explaining the importance of ecological networks in the NTS.
Recommend Change to Objective TI 23	SEA considers amendments to Policy NH1 Natural Heritage, Landscape and Environment and NH4 Impact Assessment will provide sufficient protection for Objective TI 23 Bridges over the Railway Lines.	Bio 1, Bio 2, Mat 7.
Water Quality	NIR recommended the following amendment to Objective UI4 Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems as follows: <b>Surface water runoff from development sites will be limited to pre-development levels and</b>	Bio 5, Bio 6, Wat 1, Wat 2, Wat 3 and Mat 1.

	<p><b>planning applications for new developments will be required to provide details of surface water drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems proposals.</b></p> <p>This was included in the Final LAP.</p>	
<p>Flood Risk Assessment and additional text</p>	<p>Additional text provided and amendments to Objectives UI 11 Flood Risk Management and Assessment, UI 12 Flood Zones and Appropriate Land uses and UI 13 Water Bodies and Watercourses.</p> <p>New Objectives DS 7 Flood Risk Management and Assessment and LU 11 Flood Risk Areas and Land Use Zones were also inserted on foot of a submission from the statutory authorities.</p> <p>In addition, the following mitigation measure was inserted for Objective UI11 as follows. These mitigation measures were inserted on foot of the NIR assessment.</p> <p><b>UI11 Flood Risk Management and Assessment:</b></p> <p><b>4. Where certain measures proposed to mitigate or manage the risk of flooding associated with new developments are likely to result in significant effects to the environment or Natura 2000 Sites downstream, such measures will undergo appropriate environmental and Habitats Directive assessments.</b></p>	<p>A range of EPOS but the following in particular: Pop 2, Bio 5, Bio 6, Wat 1 and Mat 1.</p>
<p>Detailed submission on SEA ER. Comments on NTS, Monitoring, Mitigation and reporting.</p> <p>In addition, recommend Visual Impact Assessment.</p> <p>Addressing infrastructural deficit and water quality.</p>	<p>See SEA Screening for detailed response but included in Final SEA ER.</p> <p>Noted and NTS and Monitoring and Mitigation comments addressed in SEA ER and NTS.</p> <p>New Objective NH10 Visual Impact Assessment Require Visual Impact Assessment for developments with potential to impact on areas of significant landscape character and should include urban and natural features and historic buildings as appropriate.</p> <p>In the adopted Plan, reference to Esker Riada is now within NH5 Biodiversity and Ecological Networks. NH10 Visual Impact Assessment refers to natural features. SEA Screening did not recommend the removal of reference to Esker Riada (see Screening Report of 2.5.2012).</p> <p>Water Supply, Wastewater and Surface Water Policies and Objectives, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy UI1 Water Supply, Wastewater and Surface Water Infrastructure</li> </ul>	<p>Land 1 and Land 3 in particular.</p> <p>Bio 5, Bio 6, Wat 1, Wat 2, and Wat 3 and Mat 4 in particular.</p>

Potential Impacts on European Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objective UI2 Wastewater Disposal</li> <li>Objective UI5 Maintenance and Improvement of Water Services Infrastructure.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, a defined buffer zone of 100m around the Wastewater Treatment Plant was a refinement from the previous LAP 2005 -2011.</p> <p>Principally addressed through Objectives DS3 and NH1 Natura 2000 Network and Habitats Directive Assessment and a range of interrelated and supporting policies and objectives.</p>	Bio 1, Bio 2, Bio 3, Bio 4, Bio 5 and Bio 6.
Consultation with environmental statutory authorities.	<p>A new Objective NH11 was included in the Final LAP as follows:</p> <p>Objective NH11 Consultation with Environmental Authorities. Ensure that all development proposals are screened to determine whether they are likely to have a significant direct, indirect or cumulative effect on the integrity or conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 site and, where significant effects are likely or uncertain, there will be a requirement for consultation with the relevant environmental authorities as part of any Habitats Directive Assessment that may be required.</p>	Bio 1 to 6 and Wat 1 to 3, Soil 3.
<p>Increase area zoned open space.</p> <p>Amendment to zoning plan to facilitate Tidy Towns initiative (Community/Amenity zoning)</p> <p>Sli na Slainte walking route highlighted in plan.</p> <p>Environmental Management Buffer zone increased to 30m in all areas and facilitate access to all Management Buffer Zones.</p> <p>River to be promoted in town.</p> <p>Traffic Management.</p>	<p>The SFRA influenced the zoning for Open Space in addition to providing sufficient open space zoning associated with residential areas.</p> <p>Tidy Towns Initiative not an appropriate land use zoning.</p> <p>A number of Objectives and Policies recognise and promote the River and Walkways such as Objective NH5 Biodiversity and Ecological Networks, Objective NH6 Water Resources, Objective NH7 Environmental Management Buffer, Objective TI 25 Walkways. Not feasible to increase buffer to 30m for Environmental Management.</p> <p>Objective NH 6 Water Resources, Objective NH7 Environmental Management Buffer and Objective TI 25 Walkways all reference and promote water quality and access around River Clarin.</p> <p>A suite of policies and objectives are included in the Final LAP to address traffic management namely, Objective SI 2 Universal Access, Policy TI 2 Roads,</p>	<p>Pop 1, Pop 2 and Mat 1.</p> <p>Not applicable.</p> <p>Bio 1, Bio 5, Bio 6, Wat 1, Pop 1 and Land 1.</p> <p>Wat 4, Wat 5, Land 1, Pop 1.</p> <p>Pop 1 and Mat 8 in particular.</p>

	Streets and Parking and TI 13 Transport Network Improvements.	
During the meeting of Galway County Council on, a number of material amendments not in accordance with the Manager's Report and Recommendations were proposed by elected members on the draft Athenry LAP. The SEA recommended a number of mitigation measures as follows for a number of these material amendments:		
Material Amendment 1 (to Industrial) Material Amendment 8 (to Industrial) Material Amendment 13 (to Industrial) Material Amendment 15B (to Industrial) Material Amendment 28 (to Industrial).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Habitat survey to be undertaken in advance of any planning application;</b></li> <li>2. <b>Application of Objective TI 14 – Road Safety Audits, Traffic Impact Assessment</b></li> <li>3. <b>Application of Objective UI11 Flood Risk Management and Assessment will apply.</b></li> </ol> <p><b>Potential cumulative and in combination impacts on material assets, principally transport, and impacts on biodiversity will be assessed in relation to development applications for areas zoned industrial on the periphery of the plan area over the lifetime of the plan 2012 to 2018.</b></p> <p>To capture these potential environmental issues arising from extending the LAP boundary and zoning for Industrial, the Final LAP included the following mitigation measure within LU 4 Industrial:</p> <p>Proposals on Industrial lands will be subject to requirements in the Plan in relation to avoiding unacceptable transport, environmental and water quality impacts and where necessary shall be required to submit a Traffic Impact Assessment and/or a Transport Assessment.</p>	The mitigation measures as proposed and incorporated (though worded differently) aim to address potential in combination/cumulative impacts particularly on water quality, habitats and transport in light of the material amendments
MA 28 and MA15B	These were zoned as Industrial and included within the LAP Boundary against the recommendations of the Manager's Report at the Galway County Council Meeting of 25 <sup>th</sup> June 2012. The SEA recommended mitigation measures as shown in the preceding row for these material amendments. The Amendment to LU 4 Industrial as detailed above aims to address these environmental issues.	

### 3 Reasons for choosing the recommended LAP in the light of other reasonable alternatives considered

#### 3.1 Introduction

This section describes the alternatives considered in the development of the LAP. The consideration of alternatives and the evaluation of their likely environmental impacts is a key function of the SEA process. Each alternative was assessed against the Environmental Protection Objectives. In addition to the broad alternative scenarios, objectives, policies and zonings were also subject to refinement as the SEA and HDA processes identified potential significant impacts, these areas in turn were avoided or mitigation measures advanced. The following presents an outline of the alternatives considered during the SEA process.

**Table 3a: Outline of Alternatives Considered**

Development Option	Comment on environmental implication of Development Option
<p><b>Development Option 1 – Continuation of the Existing Plan 2005- 2011:</b> This option would see a continuation of the expansion of Athenry as per the previous Plan (2005-2011) with continued pressure in a number of areas, particularly in relation to undeveloped residential lands at peripheral/un-serviced locations.</p>	<p>This development option does not consider recent changes in national legislation/guidelines and EU Directives. In particular this option would conflict with the West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 and with the County Development Plan 2009-2015. Given the current level of undeveloped residential zoning available (123.76 Ha), this option would not comply with the County Core Strategy residential land allocation of 32.36Ha for Athenry and would result in the Plan being inconsistent with both the Regional Planning Guidelines and with the County Development Plan.</p> <p>In particular, this scenario could result in a number of interrelated or cumulative environmental impacts including groundwater pollution arising from poorly serviced lands and inadequate wastewater treatment.</p>
<p><b>Development Option 2 – Consolidation of Existing Urban Structure:</b> This option would seek to retain the existing town centre/ urban fabric and restrict all future residential development not contained within proposed Residential (Phase 1) zoning areas. The objective would be to permit development only at locations closest to the existing town centre and rail station.</p>	<p>No new zonings would be proposed and existing uses may not be consistent with the existing zoning objectives, in particular industrial use on lands identified as a potential location for an integrated transportation hub. In addition this approach would see increased pressure for development within the medieval historic town core with a potential consequential loss of views and historic fabric.</p> <p>This option would be unlikely to facilitate infrastructure improvements within town centre development such as water improvements infrastructure. In addition, this option may essentially freeze the town centre and work against promoting a vibrant intensive urban centre with supporting services.</p>
<p><b>Development Option 3 – Sequential Development:</b> This option would promote</p>	<p>Under this scenario all lands may not come forward for development in a sequential manner, while other serviced and non-sequential lands may but under this option may not</p>

<p>development from the town centre outwards in order to ensure that higher order facilities and higher density development are located on the most central lands. The town centre focus remains.</p>	<p>be considered during the lifetime of the Plan. Problems of land assembly pose a threat to town centre retail development. Frequently sites are held in multiple ownerships and which may delay/hinder development proposals. In addition significant development potential within new zoning objectives particularly the new Business/ Technology Park located on the western periphery of the Plan boundary (as amended) would be restricted and dependant on town centre expansion and service provision. The viability and sustainability of the town may not be promoted or afforded adequate protection in this Scenario. In turn revenue and projects to help maintain and enhance the town centre may be lost and development proposed is likely to be piecemeal.</p>
<p><b>Development Option 4 – Managed Phased Development:</b> This option would seek the consolidation and expansion of the town centre via changes to existing zoning objectives specifically regarding changes of Town Centre zoning to Town Centre/Commercial (C1) and Commercial/Mixed Use (C2) zoning objectives. These changes provide for a managed/phased approach for town centre development while retaining/enhancing the existing medieval fabric of the historic core of Athenry and providing flexibility for future proposals.</p> <p><b>Undeveloped Residential Lands</b> are also to be phased for development: <b>Residential Phase 1</b> – phased for residential development within the lifetime of the Plan (32.17 Ha); <b>Residential Phase 2</b> – generally, not developable during the lifetime of this Plan (91.59 Ha approximately).</p>	<p>This development option would promote a managed and co-ordinated approach on a case by case basis to town centre &amp; residential type developments from the centre outwards, based on infrastructure /service provision but in a more flexible manner than Option 3. This scenario would also encourage managed and co-ordinated development within other proposed zoning objectives particularly Business &amp; Technology (BT) zoning to the west.</p> <p>The phased approach is critical in order to help address water quality concerns for Athenry and environs and strategically manage the protection of existing environmental resources whilst facilitating a vibrant town centre that also takes advantage of Athenry’s strategic road and rail position. This approach is evaluated to be the most sustainable for the long term development of Athenry.</p>

## **4 Frequency of Monitoring and Reporting**

### **4.1 Introduction**

It is proposed, in accordance with the Directive, to base monitoring on a series of indicators which measure changes in the environment, especially changes which are critical in terms of environmental quality, for example water quality. Monitoring will focus on the aspects of the environment that are likely to be significantly impacted upon by the implementation of the Athenry LAP. The targets and indicators are derived from the Environmental Protection Objectives (SEO) discussed in Chapter Five of the SEA ER. The target underpins the objective whilst the indicators are used to track the progress of the objective and targets in terms of monitoring of impacts.

The monitoring programme will consist of an assessment of the relevant indicators and targets against the data relating to each environmental component. Similarly, monitoring will be carried out frequently to ensure that any changes to the environment can be identified.

#### **4.1.1 Frequency of Monitoring and Reporting**

It is proposed that the SEA monitoring reporting should go parallel with the reviewing of the draft LAP. However, in some cases as data becomes available, the Planning Authority may prepare an additional SEA Monitoring Report. In particular, should new data or the following occur, additional monitoring will be required:

- Significant unauthorised development (either large scale or cumulative small scale)
- Illegal waste activity
- Water pollution incidents (not resulting from oil spills).

In turn this list below is subject to review to reflect new data. Should the monitoring regime identify significant impacts (such as impacts on designated sites) early on in the LAP implementation, this should trigger a review of the Draft LAP and monitoring regime. In addition, the identification of positive impacts from monitoring should also be reported as this will assist in determining successful environmental policies.

It is recommended that data arising from planning applications, particularly in terms of environmental constraints mapping and Environmental Impact Statements be integrated into the GIS and monitoring system. This will assist in assessing cumulative impacts also, in particular ecology and water quality.

Finally, it is recommended that the monitoring report be made available to the public upon its completion. It is recommended that this data be shared with neighbouring local authorities to assist in monitoring cross county effects should they arise.

**Table 4a: Monitoring Table**

Topic and SEA Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data sources	Responsible Body
<b>Biodiversity</b>				
Bio 1: Protect, conserve and avoid loss of the diversity and range of habitats, species and wildlife corridors.	Habitat Loss.	No net habitat loss .	NPWS/ Galway County Council(GCC)	NPWS/GCC
Bio 2: Protect designated sites including Natura 2000 (SACs and SPAs) under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. Conserve and protect, or maintain and restore Natura 2000 sites and the Natura 2000 network.	Habitat loss.	Total area of designated sites (Natura 2000 and pNHA's) Total area of Conservation Areas.	NPWS/GCC	NPWS/GCC
Bio 4: Promote the protection of habitats (terrestrial and aquatic) from invasive species.	Spread of invasive species.	Survey and monitor extent and distribution of invasive species.	NPWS/GCC	NPWS/GCC
Bio 5: Protect the inland aquatic environment.	Biotic Quality Rating (Q Values) and Risk assessment.	Improve Q value status for River Clarin and associated tributaries. Aim to achieve Q4 value in line with Water Framework requirements by 2021. No reductions in Q values in relevant watercourses.	EPA/NPWS/ GCC	EPA/NPWS/GC C

<b>Water</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Targets</b>	<b>Data Sources</b>	<b>Responsible Body</b>
Wat 1: Protect and enhance the status of aquatic ecosystems and with regard to their water needs, terrestrial ecosystems and wetlands directly depending on the aquatic ecosystem (quality, level, flow) .	Biotic Quality Rating (Q Values) and Risk assessment	Improve Q value status for River Clarin and associated tributaries. Aim to achieve Q4 value in line with Water Framework requirements by 2021. No reductions in Q values in relevant watercourses.	EPA/ GCC/ WRBD	WRBD/EPA/GCC
Wat 2: Maintain or improve the quality of surface water (including estuarine) to status objectives as set out in the Water Framework Directive, WRBM and POMS.	Biotic Quality Rating (Q Values) and Risk assessment.	No severe pollution incident Upgrade of WWTP.	EPA/ GCC/WRBD	EPA/GCC/WRBD
Wat 3: Prevent pollution and contamination of groundwater by adhering to aquifer protection plans.	Risk Assessment	No change or improvement in groundwater quality associated with development.	EPA / WRBD	GCC/WRBD
<b>Geology and Soil</b>				
Soil 1: Encourage the use of derelict, disused and infill sites rather than Greenfield sites where appropriate.	Number of developments granted for brownfield sites (or area)	Infill developments on brownfield sites over lifetime of the plan.	GCC	GCC
Soil 2: Protect, improve and maintain the quality of soils.	Specific soil management plans large developments as part of construction management plans.	No recorded soil contamination incidents  No invasive species due to poor soil management or topsoil	EPA and GCC	GCC



	employment opportunities and the development of the Athenry in line with Core Strategy Reduce social exclusion.  Increase participation and accessibility of education to all levels of society.	participation rates  Crime rates		
Pop 2: To protect human health from risks or nuisances arising from exposure to incompatible land uses/developments.	Number of complaints relating to noise, odour, water quality and visual issues.	Promote compatible land use where possible.	GCC/ HSA	GCC/HSA
<b>Cultural heritage</b>				
CH 1: Protect and enhance the cultural heritage including the built environment and settings; archaeological (recorded and recorded monuments), architectural (protected structures, architectural conservation areas, vernacular buildings, materials and urban fabric) and manmade landscape features (e.g.: field walls, footpaths, gate piers etc.).	Percentage of Protected Structures 'at risk' Number of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) Number of archaeological sites investigated.	Ensure that the cultural heritage of the town is maintained and protected from damage and deterioration.	GCC/DAHG	GCC/DAHG
CH2: Conserve historic fabric of urban and rural settlements particularly the town walled network.	Percentage of Protected Structures 'at risk'.	Ensure that the cultural heritage of the town is maintained and protected from damage and deterioration.	GCC/Irish Walled Town Network (ITWN)	GCC/ITWN
CH3 To ensure the restoration and reuse	Number of buildings restored	To ensure a positive	GCC	GCC

of existing uninhabited and derelict structures where possible, as opposed to demolition and new build.	over lifetime of the plan.	increase in such development over lifetime of LAP.		
<b>Landscape</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Targets</b>	<b>Data Sources</b>	<b>Responsible Authority</b>
Land 1: Protect designated landscapes and scenic views, routes and landscape features of local value.	Developments impacting on scenic views and routes.	Promote, enhance landscape character through policy implementation.	GCC	GCC
Land 2: Conserve and protect cultural landscapes including archaeological and architectural landscapes.	Number of developments requiring landscape impact assessment.	Maintain cultural landscapes associated with Athenry.	GCC	GCC
Land 3: Minimise visual impacts through appropriate design, assessment and siting.	Number of developments requiring a visual impact assessment.	Minimal negative visual impacts from new developments.	GCC	GCC
<b>Air Quality and Climate</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Targets</b>	<b>Data sources</b>	<b>Responsible Body</b>
AQ1 Seek to avoid air pollution and maintain/improve ambient air quality.	Maintenance of air quality standards and values.	No decline in overall air quality.	GCC/EPA	GCC/EPA
AQ 2: Minimise emissions of greenhouse gases through energy efficiency and promotion of renewable energy.	Average energy consumption of new residential housing stock Tonnes of CO2 /capita/year.	Decrease Greenhouse gas emissions in line with 2020 commitments.	EPA, GCC, SEAI	GCC/EPA/SEAI
<b>Topic and SEA Objective Material Assets</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Targets</b>	<b>Data sources</b>	<b>Responsible Body</b>
Mat 1: Reduce risk of flooding through avoidance of development in flood plains or in areas at risk of flooding and	Number of planning permissions compliant with the Floods Directive and OPW /	Compliance with the Floods Directive and with OPW / DoEHLG 'Flood Risk	GCC/OPW	GCC

manage the risk of flooding.	DoEHLG's 'Flood Risk Management in the Planning Process' standards Number of planning permissions incorporating flood risk assessment and conditions requiring appropriate flood resilient measures for new developments Number of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and flood defence features required in new planning applications.	Management in the Planning Process' standards Flood Risk Assessment be carried out for all new Developments within flood risk zones Identify Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (and features which are identified as having a flood defence function) in all new developments.		
Mat 2: Ensure that drinking water supplies are free from contamination.	% compliance in potable water quality monitoring % compliance in wastewater discharges from municipal treatment.	100% compliance with water quality monitoring.	GCC /EPA	GCC
Mat 3 Improve efficiency in distribution of potable water to population.	% wastage of potable water through poor infrastructure.	% of potable water lost due to leaks.	GCC	GCC
Mat 4 Ensure that all zoned lands are sufficiently serviced in advance to ensure appropriate treatment of wastewater prior to discharge.	% compliance in wastewater discharges from municipal treatment.	Improved % compliance.	GCC	GCC
Mat 5 Implement the waste pyramid and encourage reuse/recycling of material wherever	% of waste recycled Tonne of waste per capita per year Tonnes of	% recycling from regional waste strategy.	GCC	GCC

possible.	(methane producing) organic waste diverted from landfill Landfill gas capture rates.			
Mat 6 Reduce waste of energy, promote use of renewable energy sources and support energy conservation initiatives.	Average energy consumption of new residential housing stock Tonnes of CO2 /capita/year.	Decrease Greenhouse gas emissions in line with 2020 commitments.	EPA, GCC, SEAI	GCC
Mat 7 Maximise sustainable modes of transport and provide for ease of movement for all road users and to promote development patterns that protect and enhance road safety.	% change in modal split.	Extension and improvement of the cycling and walking network.	GCC	GCC

#### 4.1.1 Conclusion

The Athenry LAP sets out an overall strategy, policies and objectives for the period 2012 to 2018 which seeks to provide for the long term planning and overall benefit of the town. This SEA Statement summarises how environmental considerations have been addressed in the LAP preparation process. Consultation was undertaken at predraft stage, SEA Scoping Stage and through submissions on the draft LAP and material amendments. Policies, objectives and land use zonings were assessed in terms of the impacts on the environment and mitigation measures proposed through rewording of the policies/objectives or rezoning where necessary. The mitigation measures proposed for the policies/objectives through the SEA and HDA process have been incorporated into the Final LAP.

The SEA and HDA has been undertaken in line with the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 to 2011 (as amended) and the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011. **Subject to the full and proper implementation of the mitigation measures and adherence to policies, objectives and landuse zonings contained in the Athenry LAP 2012 to 2018, including appropriate site level investigations, it is considered that significant adverse impacts on the environment will be avoided.**