

Ballinasloe Draft Local Area Plan 2015-**2021**

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Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

Forward Planning
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1. Introduction

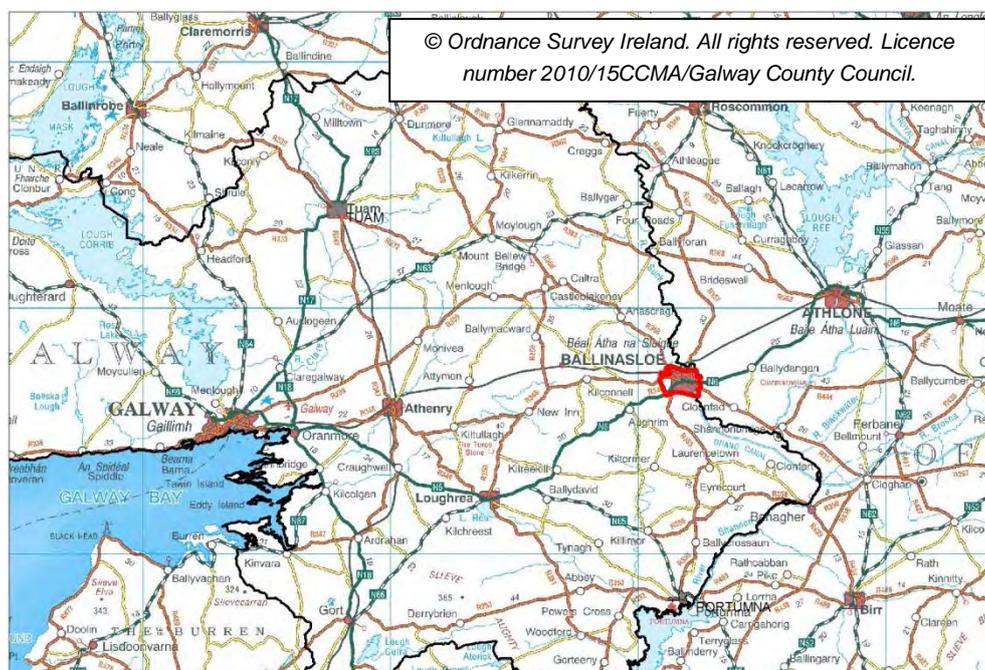
1.1 Preamble

The Ballinasloe Local Area Plan is a land use plan and overall strategy for the development of Ballinasloe over the period 2015-2021. The plan shall have effect from the date of adoption by the elected members of Galway County Council and shall cease to have effect at the expiration of 6 years from that date, unless the plan period is extended by resolution in accordance with *Section 12 (d) to (f)* of the *Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010*. The successful implementation of the Plan will have a positive impact on Ballinasloe, ensuring that it develops in a sustainable manner and complements the implementation of the current *Galway County Development Plan*.

1.2 Profile of Ballinasloe

Ballinasloe occupies a strategic location adjacent to the M6 National Primary route linking Dublin and Galway and is one of the principle 'Gateways to the West'. In addition the town has daily public transport services (both rail and bus) to Galway, Athlone and Dublin. Ballinasloe is also located on the eastern aspect of one of the County's Strategic Development Corridors which are marked for co-ordinated and appropriate development (*refer to the Core Strategy Map of the current Galway County Development Plan*). The recently constructed public marina and associated developments along the River Suck, now make it possible for cruisers to venture from the Shannon and berth in Ballinasloe. The town also benefits from key energy and telecommunications infrastructure which are considered key for the location of industrial/technological companies. Ballinasloe is connected to the Bord Gáis gas pipeline network, to ENet and BT fibre network which run through the town centre and main roadways and which service the commercial, business and enterprise base of the town.

Ballinasloe has an important sub-regional role regarding retail provision, employment and community facilities in particular education and healthcare. An important part of the town's social events calendar is the annual October Horse Fair which contributes significantly to the local economy. Distinct natural amenities, particularly the River Suck also have important economic benefits for the town.



Location of Ballinasloe Plan Area

Ballinasloe owes its origins to its location as a crossing point on the River Suck, a tributary of the Shannon, on the borders of Counties Galway and Roscommon and derives its name from the ford on the River Suck, Béal Átha na Sluaighe. The River Suck played a main role in the development of the town, with the first significant development in the form of a Norman castle constructed on its western

banks, the remains of which still survive just off Bridge Street. Development before the eighteenth century was generally confined to the eastern bank of the river.

Ballinasloe's built environment has the appearance of a planned, well laid out town. The present day town centre results from the intervention of the local landlords, namely the Trench family. Under their direction, firstly Main Street and then Brackernagh on the outskirts of the town were developed in the 1790s. The Trench family also laid down Garbally Estate, the Fair Green and many of the town's substantial buildings, including the Parochial Hall and the Town Hall. In the early 19th Century, Society and Dunlo Streets were laid out in the new town centre, expanding it westward from the river towards the area now known as Townparks. The expansion of the Grand Canal to the town in 1828 assisted the expansion of the corn trade and effectively opened up Ballinasloe as a market town to the wider hinterland and the rest of the country. Accessibility was further enhanced by the arrival of the railway in 1851. The October Fair was established during this prosperous time and still remains one of the most important social and economic events in the life of the town.

The existing land uses in the town highlight some important elements to the town structure. Large areas of the town are currently in public institutional use, which have an impact on and influence the town's form and development. Notably in this regard are the significant parcels of land in the ownership of the Health Service Executive, such as the former St. Brigid's Hospital to the east of the River Suck and Portiuncla Hospital to the south west of the town centre.

The town has a tight commercial core, the main primary streets are concentrated along Dunlo Street, Market Square, Society Street and Main Street, secondary streets include Bridge Street, Jubilee Street, Marina Point, Riverside Court and Riverview, and third tier streets include Dunlo Hill, Church Hill, Davitt's Place, Society Court, Emmet Place, Hopson Lane & Bolger's Lane. The commercial developments around the town are small scale local neighbourhood type shops, consisting mainly of comparison goods and the town centre is adequately served in terms of medical/recreational services, restaurants/cafes/takeaways, hairdressers/barbers, pubs and discount stores. The area identified as town centre does not extend to encompass the large and expansive new retail complex that is occupied by Tesco and Aldi at Dunlo. There is also a supermarket at Brackernagh located approximately a kilometre outside of the retail core and serves more as a neighbourhood centre for the wider Brackernagh area while also complementing Portiuncula Hospital, which is located across the road from it.

The town provides higher order important services such as Portiuncula Hospital, one of the largest general and maternity hospitals within the country. The town is well serviced with educational facilities and spare capacity exists in both primary and second level schools. Proximity to Athlone and Galway City for third level facilities is also a major advantage.

Significant tourist attractions include the Ballinasloe Horse Fair which is one of Europe's oldest and largest Horse Fairs and takes place annually in October on the Fair Green, Ballinasloe Golf Course, GAA pitch, running tracks and sports grounds. Marine tourism continues to be a growing sector and on-going works to make the River Suck navigable have resulted in the linking of Ballinasloe to the Shannon/Erne Waterway. A 25 berth public marina has been completed by Duchas at Slí na hAbhainn and a private marina at Portnick has berthing facilities for 35 pleasure craft with permanent and winter moorings. Ballinasloe has also traditionally proved popular with anglers, particularly those interested in coarse angling along the River Suck. Shooting holidays also attract many repeat tourists.

Ballinasloe hosts a range of industrial/enterprise ventures that are operated by both national and international companies. The industrial developments are located on the outskirts of the town, to the south, and southeast. The main enterprise areas are located in the IDA Business and Technology Park and the Ballinasloe Enterprise and Technology Centre which are situated to the northeast of the town centre along the R357.

The residential growth experienced within Ballinasloe in recent years has further strengthened the economic base of the town. The majority of residential development is located outside the town core on the arterial routes out of the town. Housing estates or developments are generally small to medium in size. These are not confined to any particular area of the town, though Creagh and Glentaun/Kilgarve areas display a significant concentration of residential development east of the River Suck. There are also considerable backland areas to the rear of the main streets and which offer

considerable potential for future development including access but this must take place in a planned and integrated manner so as to maintain the town's character.

Areas of ecological and environmental sensitivity have remained undeveloped, specifically areas along by the River Suck which flows in a southerly direction through the town and its environs. The River Suck Callows is designated as a Special Protection Area (River Suck Callows SPA Site Code: 004097) and forms part of the pan European Network of designated sites. The River Suck is also designated as a Natural Heritage Area (River Suck Callows NHA Site Code: 000222) as well as part of Garbally Demesne which is a proposed Natural Heritage Area (Ballinasloe Esker pNHA Site Code: 001779).

In terms of population trends, according to the most recent 2011 CSO figures, the total population of Ballinasloe (urban and environs) was recorded as 6,577 persons (6449 urban and 128 environs), a total change in population of 419 persons or a 6.8% increase on the 2006 population level. It is recognised that the growth targets as set out in the Regional Planning Guidelines and the Core Strategy of the current *County Development Plan* are ambitious in the current economic climate.

The *Local Area Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2013)* requires every Local Area Plan to contain a statement that clearly places the area in question within the settlement structure as established by the relevant development plan. In this regard, Ballinasloe has been identified as the 'County Town', in the Core Strategy of the current Galway County Development Plan and the town is described as playing an important role in particular for East Galway and in the delivery of Local Government services. The *County Development Plan* commits to the continuation and enhancement of the delivery of these services within the town into the future.

A key component of the Ballinasloe Local Area Plan is to ensure that it aligns with the Core Strategy/Settlement Strategy in the current *Galway County Development Plan*. The 2011 variation of the *Ballinasloe Development Plan (2009-2015)* had assigned 35.53Ha (which included 50% over-zoning) of undeveloped Residential Phase 1 zoned land. There is no requirement to include any additional land in order to align this new Plan with the current *County Development Plan's* Core Strategy zoning requirement (35.81Ha). In achieving this allocation, a variety of options with regard to the existing zoning can be examined through the plan process including phasing development, re-zoning, and de-zoning. It is important that future development for anticipated growth is plan led so that Ballinasloe can enhance its vibrancy and grow in a sustainable manner.

1.3 Local Area Plan

1.3.1 Background to the Local Area Plan

This Local Area Plan (LAP) has been prepared by Galway County Council (GCC) to provide a statutory framework for the future growth, development and improvement of Ballinasloe that is consistent with the policies and objectives contained in the current *Galway County Development Plan* (GCDP) including its *Core Strategy/Settlement Strategy* and which addresses the needs and requirements of the local community, service providers and other stakeholders. The purpose of the Local Area Plan is to guide future development within the town of Ballinasloe, in a sustainable and equitable manner and to inform members of the public, the local community, stakeholders and developers regarding policies and objectives for the development of the town, including provisions in relation to land use management, community facilities and amenities, transport and infrastructure, urban design, heritage and the environment.

This plan shall have effect from the date of adoption by the Members of Galway County Council and shall cease to have effect at the expiration of 6 years from that date, unless the timeframe is extended by resolution in accordance with *Section 12 (d) to (f) of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010*. The plan area for Ballinasloe is comprised of the town and its immediate environs and is considered to provide an appropriate development envelope for the anticipated growth of Ballinasloe for the plan period.

1.3.2 Statutory Process

A Local Area Plan is prepared under the provisions of *Sections 18, 19 & 20 of the Planning & Development Act 2000* as amended. A Local Area Plan is statutorily required to be consistent with the objectives of the current *Galway County Development Plan* and consists of a written statement and plans which may include objectives for the zoning of land in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The legislation also requires the provision of detail on community facilities, amenities and detail on standards for the design of developments and structures.

Environmental assessments have also been undertaken to assess the potential impacts of the Local Area Plan on the environment, including an Environmental Report (SEA/ER) and a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (AA/NIR). The Environmental Report (ER) has been prepared in accordance with the EU Directive on SEA (2001/42/EC), the national *Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations* (SI No. 436 of 2004), (SI No. 200 of 2011), the 2004 Strategic Environmental Assessment Guidelines *Implementation of the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC): Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment* issued by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) and regard has also been given to *Circular PSSP 6/2011 'Further Transposition of the EU Directive 2001/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*. An Environmental Report (ER) is required as part of the plan making process to assess the likely significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the Local Area Plan, before a decision is made to adopt it.

A Habitats Directive Assessment (also referred to as an 'Appropriate Assessment' or 'AA') has been prepared in accordance with Article 6(3) of the *EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)*, *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011*, the *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland-Guidance for Planning Authorities 2010* issued by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the *Planning and Development Act 2000*, (as amended). An Appropriate Assessment is an assessment of the implications of the plan or project, alone and/or in combination with other plans and projects, on the integrity of a Natura 2000 Site, in view of its conservation objectives.

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared for County Galway, which broadly considers the flood risk issues relevant to the plan area. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared in accordance with the *EU Floods Directive (2007/60/EC)*, the national *European Communities (Assessment and Management of Flood Risks) Regulations 2010 (SI No. 122 of 2010)*, the *Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009* issued by the DoEHLG as updated by the Departmental *Circular PL 2/2014* and identifies broad flood risk areas within Ballinasloe LAP area. A Stage 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has also been undertaken for the plan area which has identified flood zones and areas deemed to be at risk of flooding. The relevant flood risk data, recommendations and mitigation measures from the Stage 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) have been incorporated into the Local Area Plan, as appropriate.

1.4 Plan Structure

This Local Area Plan has been structured into 4 main sections with separate supporting documents:

Section 1	Introduction 1.1 Preamble 1.2 Profile of Ballinasloe 1.3 Local Area Plan 1.4 Plan Structure 1.5 Plan Informants and Considerations
Section 2	Strategic Vision and Development Strategy 2.1 Strategic Vision 2.2 Development Strategy
Section 3	Development Policies, Objectives and Guidelines 3.1 Land Use Management 3.2 Residential Development

	3.3 Social and Community Development 3.4 Economic Development 3.5 Transportation Infrastructure 3.6 Utility Infrastructure, Telecommunications and Energy Infrastructure 3.7 Climate Change & Flooding 3.8 Urban Design and Landscape 3.9 Built Heritage and Cultural Heritage 3.10 Natural Heritage and Biodiversity
Section 4	Local Area Plan Maps Map 1A & 1B – Land Use Zoning Map 2A & 2B – Specific Objectives Map 3A & 3B – Flood Risk Management

Supporting documents include a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (AA/NIR), an Environmental Report (SEA/ER) and a Stage 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for the LAP area, which are available as separate documents to the Ballinasloe Local Area Plan.

1.5 Plan Informants and Considerations

1.5.1 Plan Informants

The preparation of the Ballinasloe Local Area Plan has been informed by a wide range of inputs, including the following:

Public Consultation	Issues raised by the local community and other stakeholders through the publication of a background Issues Leaflet and Issues Paper, draft public consultation and written submissions.
Legislative Context	All relevant Irish and European planning and environmental legislation, in particular the <i>Planning and Development Act 2000</i> (as amended), the <i>Planning and Development Regulations 2001</i> (as amended); <i>National Monuments Act 1930-2004</i> and <i>Wildlife Acts 1976-2000</i> ; the national <i>Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Bill 2015</i> (including the Bill's enactment), EU Directives including the <i>Birds Directive (2009/147/EEC)</i> , <i>Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)</i> , <i>Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)</i> , <i>SEA Directive (2001/42/EC)</i> , <i>Floods Directive (2007/60/EC)</i> , <i>EU Directive 2014/52/EU</i> which amends <i>Directive 2011/92/EU on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Public and Private Projects on the Environment (EIA)</i> and all associated regulations, <i>Regulation (EU) No. 1143/2014 on the Prevention and Management of the Introduction and Spread of Invasive Alien Species</i> .
Strategic Planning Context	National and regional policy documents and guidelines, in particular: <i>Our Sustainable Future – A Framework for Sustainable Development for Ireland (2012)</i> ; the <i>National Development Plan 2007-2013</i> as superseded by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform document entitled <i>Infrastructure and Capital Investment 2012-2016</i> , the <i>National Spatial Strategy 2002-2022</i> , the <i>Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010-2022</i> , the <i>National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012</i> and follow on document <i>National Climate Change Adaptation Framework Building Resilience to Climate Change 2012</i> , the <i>Retail Planning Guidelines 2012</i> , <i>Smarter Travel - A Sustainable Transport Future 2009-2020</i> , and a range of guidelines including <i>Local Area Plan Guidelines (2013)</i> , <i>SEA Guidelines 2004</i> , <i>Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines 2009</i> , <i>Spatial Planning and National Roads-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012)</i> , the <i>Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets 2013</i> , <i>The Planning System and Flood Risk</i>

	<p><i>Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009 & Departmental Circular PL2/2014, Implementation of SEA Directive: Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment Guidelines 2004, and the Appropriate</i></p> <p><i>Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland-Guidance for Planning Authorities, 2010. The DAHG document titled, 'Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage' 1999.</i></p>
Statutory Planning Context	<p>Statutory plans, in particular: the current <i>Ballinasloe Development Plan 2009-2015</i> and the need for compliance and consistency with the current <i>Galway County Development Plan</i> and the <i>Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010-2022</i></p>
Local Planning Context	<p>Local plans, strategies and studies, including: the <i>Biodiversity Action Plan for County Galway 2008-2013</i>; the <i>Galway County Heritage Plan 2010-2016</i>; <i>Galway Transportation and Planning Study 2002</i>; <i>Developing Sustainable Tourism in Galway: A Framework for Action 2003-2012</i>; <i>Water-Based Tourism – A Strategic Vision for Galway 2002</i>; and <i>Working Together: Shaping Our Future: Galway County Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development 2002-2012</i>.</p>
Environmental Assessment	<p>Assessment of potential environmental impacts of the Local Area Plan, including an <i>Environmental Report (SEA/ER)</i>, <i>Appropriate Assessment (AA/NIR)</i>, the <i>Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for County Galway</i> and including a <i>Stage 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment</i> for the Ballinasloe LAP.</p>

1.5.2 Plan Issues, Considerations & Challenges

The proper planning and sustainable development of Ballinasloe encompasses a broad range of issues, considerations and challenges, many of which have been highlighted through the plan's consultation process. The plan seeks to balance the wide ranging, and sometimes competing, needs of the local community, businesses, landowners and the environment along with promoting the role of Ballinasloe as a 'County Town' within County Galway, as established in the current *Galway County Development Plan*.

The following are a number of the plan's key issues, considerations and challenges:

- **Common Vision** – A common strategic vision needs to be developed that provides a positive framework for future growth, consolidation and enhancement of Ballinasloe in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.
- **Adherence to the Core Strategy** – The Core Strategy in the current *Galway County Development Plan* has identified a target population growth of up to 1,540 additional persons, corresponding to 477 additional housing units, up to the year 2021, the timeframe for the validity of the current *County Development Plan*. This target population results in a requirement for 35.81ha of zoned land for residential purposes (based on 50% over-zoning). A key factor in the preparation of the plan has been the determination of the best locations for residential land uses within the town to accommodate this future growth and to ensure residential development takes place in an orderly and sequential manner in accordance with the Core Strategy.
- **Population Growth** – Ballinasloe has experienced a 6.8% increase in population growth over the last two Census periods (2006 & 2011: total change in population of 419 persons or a 6.8% increase on the 2006 population level). Ensuring appropriate, sustainable settlement patterns, including the provision of the necessary planning framework to accommodate educational, community, leisure and recreational facilities to satisfactorily match the level of population growth, is a key issue in planning for the future.

- **Strategic Location and Role** – Ballinasloe’s strategic location within the County, on the eastern approach to the Galway Gateway with its air and sea transportation routes, its location at the junction of major road transport routes (including the M6, M18 and the N18), the Dublin – Galway rail corridor, energy and telecommunications infrastructure and with the benefit of a high level of self-sufficiency and historic built heritage, provides a basis for the future growth of the area and harnessing the strategic role of the town into the future.
- **Economic Activity** – Ensuring the enhancement of Ballinasloe’s role as one of the primary centres for industry, technology and business/commerce in the east of the County through maximising any opportunities presented by the town’s location within one of the Strategic Development Corridor’s identified in the Galway County Development Plan. This also includes the promotion and maintenance of small and medium scale businesses to protect the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre and local neighbourhoods while ensuring that Ballinasloe remains an attractive place to work, live, visit and do business.
- **Infrastructure and Transportation** – Working towards ensuring that infrastructure is developed (particularly the Townparks Relief Road and the completion of the Link Road from Beechlawn Road to the Town Centre at Harbour Road and another link road from Beechlawn to Pollboy) on an ongoing basis to service future developments so as to accommodate planned population growth, whilst ensuring compliance with statutory obligations such as those to achieve good water quality status under the EU *Water Framework Directive* and associated national legislation. Addressing deficiencies in the existing pedestrian and cycling network, promoting walking/cycling and broader *Smarter Travel* initiatives along with reducing car dependency are also key considerations in the Local Area Plan process.
- **Heritage and Environment** – Promoting and facilitating appropriate growth of the town, while protecting the built, cultural and natural heritage of Ballinasloe in accordance with applicable legislation and policy. This also includes consideration of the environmental designations that are within the plan area including the various natural and heritage features and also those within a 15km radius of the LAP boundary. The *Environmental Report (SEA/ER) and Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (AA/NIR)* will examine the likely impact of implementing the plan on the Natura 2000 network and other environmental receptors, while it is imperative to ensure compliance with the *National Monument Legislation 1930-2004*.
- **Flood Risk** – Flood risk issues are an important consideration in the preparation of the Local Area Plan, particularly in zoning lands for appropriate uses in flood risk areas, and the Local Area Plan is guided by the *Stage 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment* for the Ballinasloe LAP area which was carried out as part of the plan making process and aligns with the guidance contained within the document *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2009), as updated and the *DECLG Circular PL 2/2014*.

2. Strategic Vision and Development Strategy

2.1 Strategic Vision

The Local Area Plan is underpinned by a strategic vision intended to guide the future growth and development of Ballinasloe in a sustainable manner, achieving the overall objectives set out for the town in the current *Galway County Development Plan* and in a way that reflects the existing character and amenity of the area, the surrounding landscape, heritage, environment and improves the quality of life of residents and the local community.

Strategic Vision

‘To promote Ballinasloe as a sustainable, self-sufficient, vibrant, socially inclusive and innovative *‘County Town’*, which maintains its unique attractive character, capitalises on its strengths – in particular public transport, while offering a pleasant and qualitative environment for a growing population, for living, working, doing business, shopping, recreation and tourism, balanced against the need to safeguard and enhance the environmental sensitivities of the area for present and future generations’. This will be delivered through a managed development strategy on appropriately zoned and serviced lands, in a manner that is balanced and sustainable for Ballinasloe and the immediate environs that it serves.

The strategic vision is informed by guiding principles enabling the overall vision to be achieved, these include the following:

- Realising the town’s potential as a *‘County Town’* as set out in the current *Galway County Development Plan* and attracting and planning for the population target established in the Core Strategy up to 2021 and beyond.
- Acknowledging that the medium term growth of Ballinasloe should focus on new sustainable communities and adopt a consolidation approach to the zoning of residential lands with sequential development around established consolidated areas.
- Reflecting the needs and aspirations of local communities, businesses and other interested and affected groups, as expressed through the public consultation process.
- Promoting sustainable land use and transport by capitalising on the opportunity presented by the delivery of the M6 Motorway, the railway service so that sustainable travel, including walking and cycling, and integrated land use and transportation become central to the development of new neighbourhoods and the future development of Ballinasloe.
- Maintaining a strong and vibrant town centre that sustains the ability to attract new businesses and meets the retailing and service needs of Ballinasloe and its surrounding hinterland, in addition to offering a pleasant and attractive environment for shopping, business, recreation and living.
- Facilitating the provision of a range of facilities, amenities and supporting services to serve the needs of the town, including educational, recreational, religious, social, community and civic requirements for children, youths, adults and older persons to serve a growing community.
- Fostering economic development and employment creation by optimising the potential of the town’s strategic location and enhancing Ballinasloe as a place of employment through the provision of a positive and flexible framework for the creation of new employment opportunities.
- Seeking the delivery of the necessary infrastructure to facilitate the future growth and sustainable development of the town.

- Promoting strong community spirit, social inclusion, civic pride and local identity for the town within the broader rural area surrounding Ballinasloe.
- Protecting the natural assets, environment, built heritage and public realm of the town, including its local character and riparian amenity, for the benefit of future generations.

2.2 Development Strategy

2.2.1 Core Strategy Context

A Core Strategy is required under the *Planning and Development Act 2000* (as amended) to ensure that the development objectives of Development Plans/Local Area Plans are consistent, as far as practicable, with national and regional development objectives set out in the *National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020* and with the *Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010-2022* as adopted on the 19th October 2010. The Regional Planning Guidelines prescribe that an additional 12,640 persons will be living in the County (not including Galway City) by 2022.

The Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy in the current *Galway County Development Plan* sets out population allocations for County Galway and the various tiers in the settlement hierarchy up to 2021, having regard to the population growth targets set out in the Regional Planning Guidelines. Ballinasloe is on Tier 3 of the Settlement Strategy hierarchy and its role as a 'County Town' is to perform an important role as a commercial/industrial centre for the eastern area of the County. Ballinasloe also provides higher order important services such as Portiuncla Hospital which serves a regional population. The current *County Development Plan* commits to continue and enhance the delivery of Local Government services in Beál Átha na Sluaighe. The town has important transport connections both road and rail and provides ease of access to the other major regional centres including Dublin, Athlone and Galway. Ballinasloe is also described in the current *County Development Plan* as an important town with great potential that can facilitate growth and should be targeted in this regard. In this context, it is important that future development is plan led so that Ballinasloe can balance its unique character and community vibrancy with the challenges of future growth in a sustainable and planned manner to meet the needs of the existing and future community without compromising the surrounding environment.

A key component of the *Ballinasloe Local Area Plan 2015 - 2021* is to ensure that it aligns with the Core Strategy/Settlement Strategy as set out in the current *Galway County Development Plan*. The Core Strategy indicates that Ballinasloe has been assigned a population growth target of 1,540 additional persons, corresponding to 477 additional housing units by 2021. The housing land requirement is 35.81Ha (with 50% over provision) in order to accommodate residential development over the plan period. This current plan must therefore consider the most appropriate residential options such as phasing, rezoning or de-zoning in order not to exceed the maximum requirements of the 35.81Ha from the Core Strategy and to ensure that suitable lands are brought forward for development during the plan period

Development Options

In order to achieve the strategic vision for Ballinasloe, it is important to examine a number of different Development Strategy Options to ascertain which option can deliver most effectively on the vision for the town. Due to the physical constraints of the M6 Motorway, the railway line and the River Suck and associated floodplain, there are limited development options available for the future expansion of Ballinasloe.

A number of potential development options are outlined hereunder. These options have been developed having regard to a number of considerations including the Core Strategy, the Settlement Hierarchy, the role of the town as envisaged in the current *Galway County Development Plan*, population and growth trends, the potential of Ballinasloe, the existing development pattern and character of the town, the existing amenities and environmental sensitivities and the lands and services available for future development.

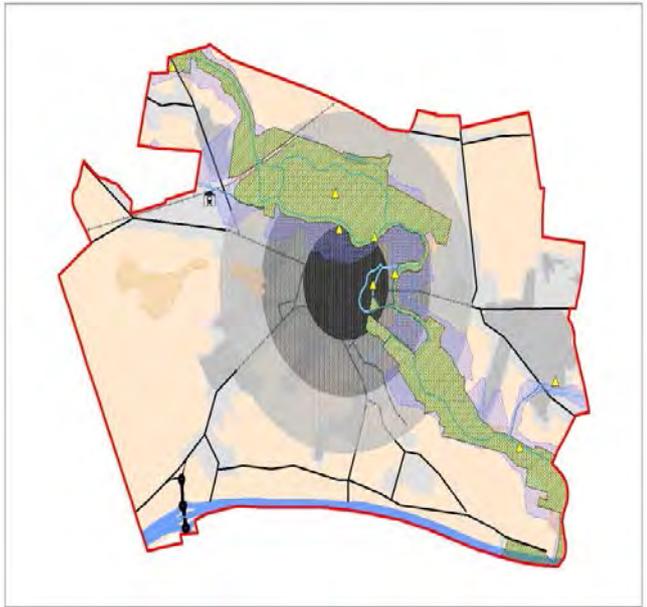
The following development options shall include a refined plan boundary. The existing plan boundary encompassed large areas far removed from the consolidated areas of the town including undeveloped areas to the north east of the water treatment plant at Derrymullen, as well as a large amount of land to the south of the M6 Motorway which also had not developed in the preceding years. It is proposed to include the route of the M6 Motorway (including a 90m buffer) as the southern aspect of the new plan boundary.

These options are described and illustrated in the maps below, which are indicative and for presentation purposes only. The option maps use a number of common features to aid clarity, including the plan boundary (red outline), existing main roads/railway line (black lines), flood risk areas (blue hatch), designated site (green hatch), existing town centre (dark grey) and built fabric (light grey), new development/growth areas (pink/purple) and residual plan areas (orange).

Development Strategy Options

Development Option 1 – Haphazard Development with a Refined Plan Boundary

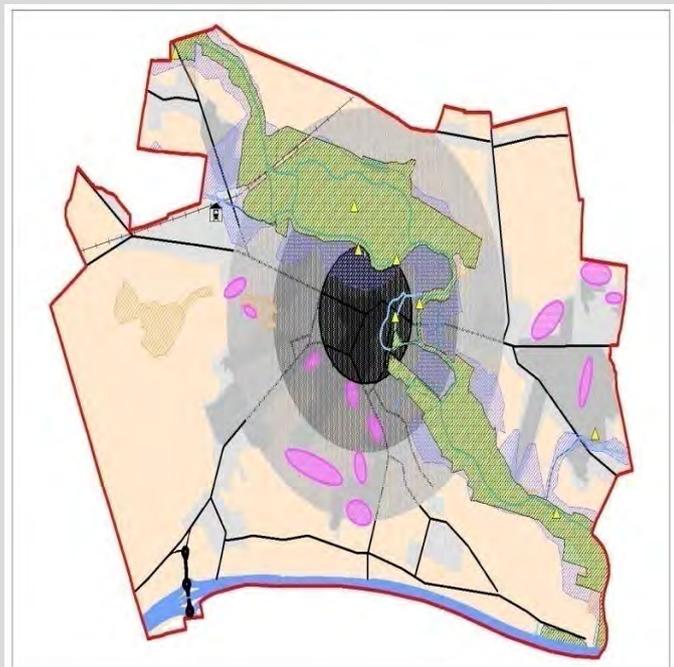
Option 1: Informed by environmental sensitivities (SPA/NHA) this scenario would continue to facilitate development which complies with existing plan zonings and land use matrix. Residential development under this scenario may potentially lead to 'leapfrogging' over serviced and zoned sites to more remote areas where existing essential services/facilities including transportation may require upgrading. This scenario may also potentially facilitate pockets of development at peripheral locations within the LAP area including a proliferation of ribbon development.



Development Option 2 –

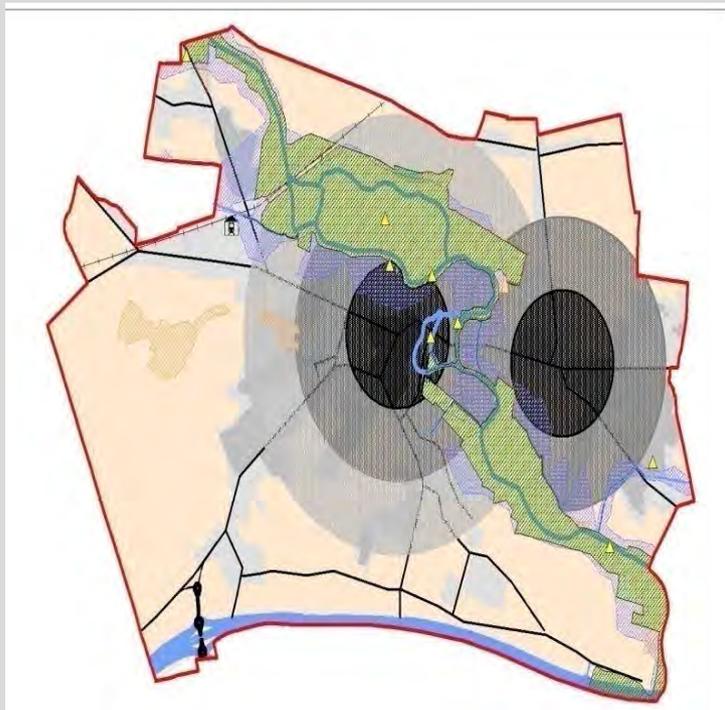
Consolidation of Existing Development with Sequential Development around Consolidated Areas with a Refined Plan Boundary

Option 2: Informed by environmental sensitivities this option provides for the consolidation of existing development, sequential development around the established urban core and controlled expansion mainly at Dunlo to the south of the Town Centre and limited sequential expansion around existing developed areas at Kilgarve/Glentaun. This option has also examined the residential provision to meet the requirements of the Core Strategy. Town Centre consolidation is achievable through promoting appropriate densities at appropriate locations, while also supporting the redevelopment of existing brownfield, derelict, backland sites and existing laneways within the urban core and adjacent areas. Development within the remainder of Ballinasloe is encouraged in a sequential manner in order to maximise return on investment in services and to ensure the availability of optimal residential lands to accommodate anticipated growth defined by the Core Strategy requirements. This option will also avoid environmental impacts in relation to Designated Sites and flood risk areas. Refinement and amendments to the previous Plan's zonings would be required to support this development option scenario.



Development Option 3 – Bi-Nodal Development with a Refined Plan Boundary

Option 3: Informed by environmental sensitivities this scenario provides for the intensification and extension of new development both within the Town Centre and the development of a second neighbourhood centre on the eastern bank of the River Suck. Development under this option would result in an increase in ribbon development on the main eastern inward routes specifically to the north and south of the R446 and R357 and associated impacts in terms of poor environmental quality, increased traffic and congestion along these approach roads, increasing peripheral car based development and militate against easy walking distance to the town centre. This option may also lead to the unsustainable management of some development in relation to flood risk areas as well as sensitive environmental areas especially areas adjacent to the River Suck and associated flood zones, the continuance of urban sprawl and the improper management of development pressures at main transportation interchanges.



2.2.2 Preferred Development Option

Following an assessment of the Development Options presented above, **Option 2 - Consolidation of Existing Development with Sequential Development around Consolidated Areas with a Refined Plan Boundary** is considered the Preferred Development Option for Ballinasloe at this time. This option supports the consolidation of existing developed areas, the town centre, promotes infill and sequential development of the town, encourages street-oriented development along the existing urban street network (including the new proposed link road at Dunlo and the proposed Townspark Relief Road) and restricts future growth within designated sites and flood zones.

Development Option 2 also encourages the development of vacant and under-utilised sites in the town and ensures that those lands close to the town are the primary focus for development, thereby placing future residents within reasonable walking and cycling distance from the town centre services and thus reducing or minimising the demand for car generated trips by providing a more sustainable and integrated transport and land-use structure. The Preferred Development Option supports the vitality and viability of the town centre, provides for the optimal protection of the future economic, social and cultural development and alleviates pressure for out-of-town facilities, such as shops and community facilities, other than in existing developed neighbourhood areas at Dunlo and Kilgarve/Glentaun.

2.2.3 Land Use Management and Zoning

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

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

The rationalising of the plan boundary, the phasing of residential development and the rezoning of certain lands for environmental reasons is considered the most appropriate approach at this time. Residential lands have generally been phased in a sequential manner and Phase 1 Residential lands have been identified for short to medium term growth in suitable locations that are serviced and accessible and which avoid significant environmental sensitivities. These lands include infill sites, sequential extensions to the existing residential fabric in the plan area primarily at Dunlo to the south of the town centre and to a lesser degree around existing development at Kilgarve/Glentaun to the east. The phasing as applied also allows for some flexibility, as detailed in the policies and objectives of the plan, while adhering to the Core Strategy.

In general, greenfield/undeveloped lands not included within designated sites and located within identified flood risk areas (in particular Indicative Flood Zone A and B under the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for County Galway) have generally been rezoned as Open Space, Recreation and Amenity (OS) in accordance with the *Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009* and the Departmental *Circular PL2/2014*, in order to avoid inappropriate development in high to moderate flood risk areas and to address the potential impacts of climate change. Undeveloped lands that are located within designated environmental sites and within flood Zone A and Flood Zone B have been zoned for Environmental Management (EM). The plan also includes policies and objectives to ensure that the sensitivities of the various environmental and flood risk areas are adequately considered, protected and managed, as appropriate, in the development management process.

Large scale employment uses remain focussed in the southern and northern areas of the plan on Industrial, Business/Enterprise and Business/Technology zonings. The town centre remains the primary target for the location of new retail development, with the land use zoning matrix providing further guidance on appropriate uses.

Having regard to the findings of the *Environmental Report (SEA/ER)*, *Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (AA/NIR)* and *Stage 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment*, overall this is considered to be the most appropriate development option for land use management and zoning approach at this time. This should secure the orderly and sequential development of Ballinasloe in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

2.2.4 Overall Statement of Compliance:

The Ballinasloe Local Area Plan (LAP) sets out an overall development strategy, planning policies and objectives for the period 2015 to 2021, which seeks to provide for the medium term planning and overall benefit of Ballinasloe as a 'County Town/Key Town' identified in the Settlement Strategy and Core Strategy of the current *Galway County Development Plan*. The LAP for Ballinasloe continues to support the important administrative, service and industrial roles and functions as outlined in the *National Spatial Strategy*, the *Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010-2022* and the current *Galway County Development Plan*. This **Hierarchy of Plans** is outlined in **Figure 1** below.

Population targets and the Core Strategy residential land area allocations for Ballinasloe have been aligned in accordance with these overarching plans. The plan's policies, objectives and development management guidelines and standards have been informed by best practices, national planning guidance and the current *Galway County Development Plan*, where appropriate.

The *Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*, *Appropriate Assessment (AA)* and *Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)* have also informed the preparation of the Ballinasloe LAP through an ongoing iterative process through to the final adoption of the plan.



Figure 1: Hierarchy of Plans

2.2.5 Development Strategy Policy and Objectives

Development Strategy Policy

Policy DS1 – Development Strategy

It is the overarching policy of Galway County Council to support and facilitate the sustainable development of the plan area in line with the preferred development strategy option, **Option 2 – Consolidation of Existing Development with Sequential Development around Consolidated Areas with a Refined Plan Boundary** which allows Ballinasloe to develop in a manner, that maintains and enhances the quality of life of local communities, promotes opportunities for economic development, social integration and sustainable transport options, protects the cultural, built and natural heritage and environment and complies with relevant statutory requirements.

Development Strategy Objectives

Objective DS 1 – Orderly and Sequential Development

Support the orderly and sequential development of the plan area, focusing on the consolidation and continued vitality and viability of the town centre and the protection and enhancement of the existing landscape setting, character, heritage and unique identity of the town.

Objective DS 2 – Consistency with Core Strategy

Ensure that developments permitted within the plan area are consistent with the zoned land allocations in the Core Strategy and associated provisions in the current *Galway County Development Plan*.

Objective DS 3 – Natura 2000 Network and Habitats Directive Assessment

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

1. The plan or project will not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary effects on the integrity of any European site (either individually or in combination with other plans or

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

Objective DS 4 – Development Management Standards and Guidelines

Ensure that the general development management standards and guidelines set out in the current *Galway County Development Plan*, or any subsequent variation or review shall apply as appropriate in the plan area. In addition, any specific development management guidelines set out in Section 3 of this Local Area Plan shall also be applied, as appropriate, to development proposals in the plan area.

Objective DS 5 – Service Led Development

Development shall only be permitted where there is satisfactory water and wastewater provision to service same, either existing or to be provided in tandem with the development.

Objective DS 6 – Residential Development Phasing (Refer to Maps 1A/1B)

Direct residential development into appropriately zoned and serviced areas in accordance with the phased development framework set out in Section 3.1 and 3.2 and as shown on ***Maps 1A/1B – Land Use Zoning***.

Objective DS 7 – Flood Risk Management and Assessment (Refer to Maps 3A/3B)

Ensure that proposals for new developments located within identified or potential flood risk areas, or which may exacerbate the risk of flooding elsewhere, are assessed in accordance with the provisions of the *Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009* (or as updated) & *Departmental Circular PL 2/2014* and the relevant policies and objectives of this plan.

Objective DS 8 – Climate Change & Adaptation

Galway County Council shall support the implementation of the *National Climate Change Strategy* and follow on document *National Climate Change Adaptation Framework Building Resilience to Climate Change 2012* (or any updated/superseding document) and the national *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Bill 2015* (including any superseding enactment of this Bill).

3. Development Policies, Objectives and Guidelines

3.1 Land Use Management

3.1.1 Context

The Core Strategy in the current *Galway County Development Plan* sets the context and parameters for the development of Ballinasloe as a 'County Town' in the County. Based on population projections derived from the population targets set out in the West Regional Authority, the amount of zoned residential land required to facilitate this target is set at 35.81Ha for Ballinasloe up to 2021. Lands have also been zoned in the Local Area Plan for other land uses based on the designation of Ballinasloe in the Core Strategy, existing land use patterns, projected needs derived from medium and long term population targets and the optimum utilisation of existing and planned infrastructure. The land use zones provided for in the plan include Town Centre/Commercial (C1), Commercial/Mixed Use (C2), Industrial (I), Business and Enterprise (BE), Business and Technology (BT), Community Facilities (CF), Open Space/Recreation and Amenity (OS), Environmental Management (EM), Agriculture (A), Public Utilities (PU) and Transport Infrastructure (TI).

3.1.2 Land Use Management Policy and Objectives

Land Use Management Policy

Policy LU 1 – Land Use Management (Refer to Maps 1A/1B)

It is the policy of Galway County Council to provide a land use zoning framework for the plan area to direct the type, density and location of development in a manner that contributes to the consolidation of the town centre, that allows for the orderly and sequential development of the town, that protects and enhances the existing landscape setting, character and unique identity of the town and that complies with the statutory requirements in the *Planning and Development Act 2000* (as amended). The land use zoning framework is supported by a residential phasing framework to ensure compliance with the Core Strategy and to promote the orderly and sequential development of the town.

Land Use Zoning Objectives

Objective LU 1 – Town Centre/Commercial (C1) (Refer to Maps 1A/1B)

Promote the sustainable development of the town centre as an intensive, high quality, well-landscaped, human-scaled and accessible environment with an appropriate mix of uses, including residential, commercial, service, tourism, enterprise, public and community uses as appropriate, that provide a range of retail, services, facilities and amenities to the local community and visitors to the town. The town centre and associated main streets will remain the primary focus for retail and service activity in Ballinasloe.

Objective LU 2 – Commercial/Mixed Use (C2) (Refer to Maps 1A/1B)

Promote the sustainable development of commercial and complementary mixed uses, on suitable lands that can provide focal points for the provision of services to surrounding neighbourhoods/areas and opportunities for commercial enterprises, retail developments and employment creation and which do not undermine the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Objective LU 3 – Residential (R) (Refer to Maps 1A/1B and Objective RD1)

Promote a phased, sequential approach on Residential zoned lands, with a strong emphasis on consolidating existing patterns of development, encouraging infill opportunities and promoting sustainable transport options.

It is an objective to:

1. Promote the development of appropriate and serviced lands to provide for high quality, well laid out and well landscaped sustainable residential communities with an appropriate mix of housing types and densities, together with complementary land uses such as community facilities, local services and sustainable transport options, to serve the residential population

of the area and the surrounding environment.

2. Protect existing residential amenities and facilitate compatible and appropriately designed new infill development, in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

A Phasing Scheme shall apply to residential uses on Residential (R) zoned lands, as set out under Objective RD1 in Section 3.2.2.

Objective LU 4 – Industrial (I) (Refer to Maps 1A/1B)

Promote the sustainable development of industrial and industrial-related uses, including manufacturing, processing of materials, warehousing and distribution, on suitable lands with adequate services and facilities and a high level of access to the major road network and public transport facilities. Adequate edge treatments and/or screening will be required to ensure high quality interfaces with public spaces and any adjoining residential areas or other sensitive land uses, as appropriate.

Objective LU 5 – Business & Technology (BT) (Refer to Maps 1A/1B)

Promote the sustainable development of high value business and technology uses to reinforce Ballinasloe's potential as a growth centre for medium - large, innovative, companies in sectors including, science and technology based industry in life sciences, bio-pharma, IT, internationally traded services and Research and Development. This zoning shall also provide for office park developments, storage facilities and logistics that are ancillary to the primary uses outlined above. Appropriate training facilities, such as Third Level Outreach facilities, may also be considered. The development of inappropriate or non-complementary uses, and which would be more appropriately located on lands zoned as Industrial, Business & Enterprise and Town Centre/Commercial, Commercial/Mixed Use will not normally be permitted within this zoning.

Objective LU 6 – Business & Enterprise (BE) (Refer to Maps 1A/1B)

Promote the sustainable development of business and enterprise uses, light industry/warehousing and the facilitation of enterprise park/office park type uses, incubation/start-up units and Small, Medium Enterprises (SME's), on suitable lands with adequate services and facilities and with a high level of access to the major road/rail networks and to public transport facilities.

Objective LU 7 – Community Facilities (CF) (Refer to Maps 1A/1B)

Promote the sustainable development of community facilities on suitable lands with a high level of access to the local community, including educational, community, civic, public, institutional, recreational, cultural and other complementary uses as appropriate.

Objective LU 8 – Environmental Management (EM) (Refer to Maps 1A/1B)

Protect lands and sites with high biodiversity value and/or environmental sensitivity and promote their sustainable management and use. This will include the protection of the integrity of European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 Network, in particular Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation, in accordance with the conservation management objectives of these sites and the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).

This zoning objective applies to the River Suck Callows Special Protection Area (SPA Site Code: 004097) and to the River Suck Callows Natural Heritage Area (NHA: Site Code 000222).

Objective LU 9 – Open Spaces/Recreation & Amenity (OS) (Refer to Maps 2A/2B)

Promote the sustainable development of open spaces and recreational activities, in accordance with best practice and on suitable lands with adequate access to the local community and retain existing open space and recreational facilities, unless it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of Galway County Council that these uses are no longer required by the community.

Ensure that any flood risk areas within the OS zone are appropriately managed to avoid, reduce and/or mitigate, as appropriate, the risk and potential impact of flooding.

Objective LU 10 – Agriculture (A) (Refer to Maps 1A/1B)

Protect the rural character of the area from inappropriate development and provide for agricultural and appropriate non-urban uses.

Objective LU 11 – Public Utilities (PU) (Refer to Maps 1A/1B)

Facilitate the provision and maintenance of essential public utility infrastructure, together with necessary ancillary facilities and uses, as appropriate.

Objective LU 12 – Transport Infrastructure (TI) (Refer to Maps 1A/1B)

Facilitate the provision and maintenance of essential transportation infrastructure. This shall include the reservation of lands to facilitate possible rail infrastructure improvements, public roads, footpaths, cycle ways, bus stops and landscaping, together with any necessary associated works, as appropriate.

Objective LU 13 – Constrained Land Use Zone (CL) (Refer to Maps 1A/1B)

To facilitate the appropriate management and sustainable regeneration and use of flood risk areas.

This zoning limits new development, while recognising that existing development uses within these zones may require small scale development, as outlined below, over the life of the Local Area Plan, which would contribute towards the compact and sustainable urban development of Ballinasloe town.

The underlying zoning or the existing permitted uses are deemed to be acceptable in principle for minor developments to existing buildings (such as small extensions to houses, most changes of use of existing buildings), which are unlikely to raise significant flooding issues, provided they do not obstruct important flow paths, introduce a significant additional number of people into flood risk areas or entail the storage of hazardous substances.

Development proposals within this zone shall be accompanied by a detailed Flood Risk Assessment, carried out in accordance with *The Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines & Circular PL 2/2014* (or as updated), which shall assess the risks of flooding associated with the proposed development.

Proposals shall only be considered where it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that they would not have adverse impacts or impede access to a watercourse, floodplain or flood protection and management facilities, or increase the risk of flooding to other locations. The nature and design of structural and non-structural flood risk management measures required for development in such areas will also be required to be demonstrated, so as to ensure that flood hazard and risk will not be increased. Measures proposed shall follow best practice in the management of health and safety for users and residents of the development.

Specifications for developments in flood vulnerable areas set out in this plan shall be complied with as appropriate. **(Please also refer to Objective FL3 & DM Guideline FL2)**

Objective LU 14 – Land Use Zonings and Flood Risk (Refer to Maps 1A/1B and Maps 3A/3B)

Ensure that any proposed development that may be compatible with the land use zoning objectives/matrix but which includes a use that is not appropriate to the Flood Zone (as indicated on **Maps 3A/3B – Flood Risk Management**) and/or that may be vulnerable to flooding is subject to flood risk assessment, in accordance with *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009* and *Departmental Circular PI 2/2014* (or as updated within the lifetime of this plan) and the relevant policies and objectives of this plan.

Objective LU 15 – Land Use Zoning Matrix (Refer to DM Guideline LU2)

Direct different land uses into the appropriate land use zone(s) in accordance with the land use zoning objectives and the land use zoning matrix set out under **DM Guideline LU 2**. Ensure that proposed land uses are compatible with existing land uses and in keeping with the character of the area.

Land Use Density Objectives

Objective LU 16 – Development Densities (Refer to DM Guideline LU1)

Ensure that the density of new development is appropriate to the land use zone and site context, is in keeping with the development pattern of the area, and does not unduly impact on the amenities of the area and that it results in a positive relationship between existing developments and any adjoining public spaces. The development of higher density development shall be promoted in appropriate locations, such as suitable sites within the town centre and adjacent to public transport facilities, where such development is compatible with the built & natural heritage, urban design objectives, infrastructure capacity and environmental considerations. The density of developments

will generally be in accordance with the guidance set out under **DM Guideline LU 1**, although the Planning Authority may consider higher density developments where this is deemed appropriate to secure the urban design or other objectives of the plan.

Objective LU 17 – Residential Densities (Refer to DM Guideline LU1)

Promote a range of residential densities within the plan area appropriate to the prevailing development pattern, supporting infrastructure, urban character and heritage resources in accordance with the guidance in the *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines 2009* (or any updated/superseding document within the lifetime of this Local Area Plan). Higher residential densities should be encouraged at locations where it is appropriate to the existing context and density of the plan area, for example around the town centre and within convenient walking distance of public transport facilities, and where it will not unduly impact on built or natural heritage or impact adversely on the integrity of European Sites that form part of the Natura 2000 Network. The density of residential developments will generally be in accordance with the guidance set out under **DM Guideline LU 1**, although the Planning Authority may consider higher residential densities where this is considered appropriate to the context and necessary to secure the urban design or other objectives of the plan. Development will only be permitted where adequate infrastructural capacity and/or services can be made available.

3.1.3 Development Management Guidelines

Development Densities

DM Guideline LU 1 – Development Densities

The development of higher densities will need to be appropriate to the context and will be assessed based on the merits of the proposal and subject to good design, compliance with both qualitative and quantitative standards, location, capacity of the site and infrastructure to absorb development, existing character of the area, established densities on adjoining sites, protection of residential amenities, proximity to public transport, etc. The Planning Authority may use its discretion in varying these density standards.

The development density guidance in the tables below indicate the range of densities generally considered appropriate in the various land use zones and in different residential locations within the Plan Area.

Land Use Zone	Plot Area Ratio	Maximum Site Coverage	Minimum Public Open Space
Zone C1	1.00 to 1.25 PAR	80%	Site Specific
Zone C2	0.40 to 1.00 PAR	70%	Site Specific
Zone R	0.10 to 0.50 PAR	50%	15%
Zone I	0.40 to 1.00 PAR	60%	15%
Zone BT	0.40 to 1.00 PAR	60%	15%
Zone BE	0.40 to 1.00 PAR	60%	15%
Zone CF	Site Specific	Site Specific	15%
Zone EM	N/A	N/A	N/A
Zone OS	Site Specific	Site Specific	Site Specific
Zone A	Site Specific	Site Specific	Site Specific
Zone PU	Site Specific	Site Specific	Site Specific
Zone TI	N/A	N/A	N/A

Notes:

- Plot Area Ratio** – Plot area ratio (PAR) refers to the gross floor area of buildings on a site divided by the gross site area, where the gross floor area is expressed as a fraction of the gross site area.
- Site Coverage** – Site coverage refers to the percentage of gross floor area of the building/s footprint on the site. Increased site coverage may be considered on sites where underground or part-basement parking is

provided, subject to high standards of design, adequate natural lighting and the protection of the amenity of adjacent developments.

3. **Public Open Space** – Public open space (POS) generally refers to usable, well-located green areas but in certain cases may also include paved areas that can be used for recreation, that are well-landscaped and that form an integral part of the development. POS would generally only be required in non-residential and multiple unit residential developments.

Residential Density	Dwelling Units/Ha	Dwelling Units/Acre	Possible Appropriate Locations
Medium to High	35-50	14-20	Town Centre or immediately adjacent to public transport hubs
Low to Medium	15-35	6-14	Neighbourhood Centres (typically within 400m walking distance of centre point), inner urban suburbs
Low	5-15	2-6	Urban periphery, outlying lands, areas with capacity/environmental constraints

Land Use Zoning Matrix

DM Guideline LU 2 – Land Use Zoning Matrix (Refer to Maps 1A/1B – Land Use Zoning & to Maps 3A/3B – Flood Risk Management)

The land use zoning matrix indicates the types of land uses that are Permitted in Principle (P), Open for Consideration (O) and Not Normally Permitted (N), for the land use zones designated in **Section 3.1.3** above. Whilst the matrix does not provide an exhaustive list of potential uses, the uses listed in the matrix should be considered by applicants to provide a clear indication of the overall acceptability of a particular land use within a specific zoning category. Where a use is proposed that is not listed in the matrix, development proposals will be assessed on their individual merits in accordance with the general guidance provided by the matrix and having regard to the nature of existing and proposed uses, to the general policies and zoning objective/s for the area in the Local Area Plan and to the principles of proper planning and sustainable development. Where there is no perceived conflict between existing and proposed uses, favourable consideration will be given to the proposed development, subject to all other normal requirements and to the principles of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Land Uses	Zoning											
	C1	C2	R	I	BT	BE	CF	EM**	OS**	A	PU	TI
Commercial and Industrial Uses												
Amusement	O	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
ATM	P	P	O	O	O*	O	O	N	N	N	N	N
Bank/Building Society	P	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Bar/Restaurant	P	O	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
B&B (Bed & Breakfast) ¹	O	O	O ¹	N	N	N	N	N	N	O ¹	N	N
Betting Office	O	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Boarding Kennel	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	O	N	N
Café ²	P	P	O	O	O*	O ²	O	N	N	N	N	N
Caravan Park – Holiday	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Cash & Carry	N	O	N	N	N	O	N	N	N	N	N	N
Casual Trading/Market	O	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Cinema	P	O	N	N	N	N	O	N	N	N	N	N
Conference Centre	P	P	N	N	O	O	O	N	N	N	N	N
Data-Centres/Web-Hosting Centres	P	P	N	O	P	P	N	N	N	N	O	N
Drive-through Restaurant	O	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Enterprise Centre	O	O	N	O	O	P	N	N	N	N	O	N
Extractive Industry	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	O	N	N
Garden Centre	O	P	N	N	N	O	N	N	O**	N	N	N
GP & Medical related Services	P	P	O	N	N	N	O	N	N	N	N	N
Guesthouse ¹	P	O	O ¹	N	N	N	N	N	N	O ¹	N	N
Hair Dressing	P	P	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N

Land Uses	Zoning											
Salon/Personal/Grooming												
Home-based Economic Activity ¹	O	O	O ¹	N	N	N	N	N	N	O ¹	N	N
Hostel	P	O	O	N	N	N	O	N	N	N	N	N
Hotel	P	O	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Household Fuel Depot	N	P	N	O	N	O	N	N	N	N	N	N
Industrial – Light Use	N	O	N	P	N	O	N	N	N	N	N	N
Logistic, Storage & Distribution Units	N	O	N	P	O	O	N	N	N	N	N	N
Media Recording & general Media associated uses	O	O	O	O	O	O	N	N	N	N	N	N
Motor Sales Showroom	O	O	N	N	N	O	N	N	N	N	N	N
Night-club	O	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Office (<100m ²)	P	O	O	N	N	N	O	N	N	O	O	N
Office (100m ² to 1000m ²)	O	P	N	N	P	O	N	N	N	N	O	N
Office Park (>1000m ²)	N	O	N	O	P	P	N	N	N	N	O	N
Petrol Station	O	O	N	O	N	O	N	N	N	N	N	N
Professional /Other Services	P	P	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Restaurant ²	P	P	O	O	N	O ²	N	N	N	N	N	N
Science & Technology based Business	O	O	N	P	P	P	N	N	N	N	N	N
Scrap Yard	N	N	N	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Service Garage	N	O	N	N	N	O	N	N	N	N	N	N
Shop – Comparison	P	P	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Shop – Convenience	P	O	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Shops – Large Scale Convenience/ Comparison Centre	P	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Small Scale Manufacturing	N	O	N	P	N	O	N	N	N	N	N	N
Storage Depot	N	N	N	P	O	O	N	N	N	N	N	N
Take-away	O	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Transport Depot	N	O	N	O	N	P	N	N	N	N	O	N
Veterinary Surgery	O	O	O	O	N	N	N	N	N	O	N	N
Warehousing (incl. wholesale)	N	N	N	P	N	O	N	N	N	N	N	N
Warehousing (retail/non-food <700m ²) ³	O	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Warehousing (retail/non-food/bulky household goods 700m ² – 5,000m ²) ³	N	O	N	N	N	O	N	N	N	N	N	N
Residential Uses	C1	C2	R	I	BT	BE	CF	EM	OS	A	PU	TI
Apartments ¹	P	O	O ¹	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Halting Site	N	N	O	N	N	N	O	N	N	O	N	N
Residential (excluding Apartments) ¹	O	O	P ¹	N	N	N	N	N	N	O ¹	N	N
Retirement Home	O	O	P	N	N	N	O	N	N	N	N	N
Public, Community and Institutional Uses	C1	C2	R	I	BT	BE	CF	EM	OS	A	PU	TI
Buildings for the health, safety & welfare of the Public	P	P	O	N	N	O	P	N	O**	N	O	N
Cemetery	N	N	N	N	N	N	P	N	O**	P	N	N
Childcare Facilities (Crèche/Nursery)	P	P	O	O	O*	P	P	N	N	N	O	N
Club House & associated Facilities	O	O	O	N	N	N	P	N	O**	O	N	N
Community Facility	P	O	O	N	N	O	P	N	O**	O	O	N
Crematorium	N	O	O	O	N	O	O	N	N	O	N	N
Cultural/Recreational Building	P	N	O	N	N	O	O	N	O**	N	O	N
Education – Primary/Secondary	O	O	O	O	N	O	P	N	O**	O	O	N
Education – Other Education/Training	P	O	O	O	O	O	P	N	N	O	O	N
Funeral Home	O	P	O	N	N	O	O	N	N	N	N	N
Leisure	P	O	O	N	N	O	P	N	O**	O	N	N
Library	P	P	O	N	N	N	P	N	N	N	N	N
Place of Public Worship	O	O	O	N	N	O	O	N	N	N	N	N
Open Space, Recreation and Amenity Uses	C1	O	R	I	BT	BE	CF	EM	OS	A	PU	TI
Golf Course	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	O**	O	N	N

Land Uses	Zoning											
Recreational/Cultural Activities	O	N	O	O	N	O	O	N	O**	O	O	N
Agricultural Uses	C1	O	R	I	BT	BE	CF	EM	OS	A	PU	TI
Abattoir	N	N	N	O	N	N	N	N	N	O	N	N
Agricultural Building	N	N	O	N	N	O	N	N	N	P	N	N
Mart/Co-op	N	N	N	P	N	N	N	N	N	P	N	N
General/Services and Infrastructure Uses	C1	C2	R	I	BT	BE	CF	EM	OS	A	PU	TI
Advertisements – Freestanding	O	O	N	O	O	O	O	N	N	N	O	O
Car Park (excluding Multi-storey)	P	P	O	P	O*	O	O	N	N	N	O	O
Car Park – Multi-storey	P	P	N	O	O*	O	N	N	N	N	N	N
Park & Ride Facility	O	O	O	P	O*	P	P	N	O**	O	O	O
Recycling/Bring Bank Facilities	N	O	N	O	N	O	N	N	N	O	O	N
Utilities & Public Service Installations	O	N	O	O	O	O	O	O**	O**	O	P	O
Wind/Renewable Energy	O	O	O	O	O*	O	O	N	O**	O	O	N

General Notes on Land Use Zoning Matrix:

- Residential Phasing** ⁽¹⁾ – These uses will be considered subject to Policy RD1 and Objective RD1 or RD10, as appropriate.
- Cafe** ⁽²⁾ – This use will be considered where it is ancillary to an overall compatible development and serves the needs of the local area.
- Warehousing** ⁽³⁾ – The development or subdivision of stores into less than 700m² shall not normally be permitted in edge-of centre and out-of-centre locations, in accordance with the Guidelines for Planning Authorities Retail Planning 2012 (or any updated/superseding document).
- Data Centre** – May be defined as a facility, which has information technology equipment installed and operated, as well as storing and distributing electronic data.
- Zone R: Residential** –
 - **Phase 1** is phased for residential development within the lifetime of this Plan (total undeveloped area: 36 Ha); and
 - **Phase 2** is generally not developable during the lifetime of this Plan, subject to the provisions and exceptions set out under Section 3.2.2.
- Areas** – All areas noted in the above matrix are gross floor areas.
- * These developments will only be considered as ancillary to an overall compatible development.
- **EM; **OS See also **Map 3 – Flood Risk Management, Objective LU 14 & Objective FL2**. Notwithstanding the Environmental Management, Open Space/Recreation & Amenity zonings, proposed uses in these zones must demonstrate compliance with **The Planning System & Flood Risk Guidelines** (2009) (or as updated) in particular Chapter 3. A Justification Test may be required as set out in said guidelines.
- No specific land uses are attributed to the **Constrained Land Use zone** as this zone reflects existing development located within Flood Zone A/B. For guidance on uses/development appropriate in this zone, please refer to **Objectives LU 13, Objective FL3, DM Guideline FL 2 & Sections 3.7.3 to 3.7.6** of this plan, **Map 1A/1B & Map 3 & The Planning System & Flood Risk Guidelines including Departmental Circular PL2/2014. (SRFA process)**

Notes on Land Use Classes in Land Use Zoning Matrix:

The land use classes referred to in the land use zoning matrix have been defined as follows:

- Permitted in Principle (P)** – A use that is classified as *Permitted in Principle* is one that the local authority accepts in theory in the relevant zone, subject to compliance with the relevant policies, objectives, standards and requirements set out in the Plan and the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.
- Open for Consideration (O)** – A use that is classified as *Open for Consideration* is one that the local authority may permit where it is satisfied that the suggested form of development will be compatible with the policies and objectives for the zone, will not conflict with permitted uses and conforms to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, including the policies and objectives set out in the plan.
- Not Normally Permitted (N)** – A use that is classified as *Not Normally Permitted* is one that, except in exceptional circumstances, will not be permitted by the local authority. This may be

due to its perceived effect on existing and permitted uses, its incompatibility with the policies, objectives, standards and requirements contained in this plan or the fact that it may be inconsistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Notes on Land Use Zones in Land Use Zoning Matrix:

The land use zones referred to in the land use zoning matrix are comprised of the following:

1. **Zone C1** – Town Centre/Commercial
2. **Zone C2** - Commercial/Mixed Use
3. **Zone R** – Residential
4. **Zone I** – Industrial
5. **Zone BT** - Business & Technology
6. **Zone BE** – Business & Enterprise
7. **Zone CF** – Community Facilities
8. **Zone EM** - Environmental Management
9. **Zone OS** – Open Space/Recreation & Amenity
10. **Zone A** – Agriculture
11. **Zone PU** – Public Utilities
12. **Zone TI** – Transport Infrastructure

Table 1: Capacity of Zoned Lands within the Ballinasloe Draft Local Area Plan

Plan Land Use Zonings	Total Area Zoned (Ha)	Developed Land (Ha)	Constrained Land Use (50.72 Ha)	Undeveloped Land (Ha)
Town Centre/Commercial (C1)	21.74	18.16	7.28	3.58
Commercial/Mixed Use (C2)	36.04	26.99	8	9.05
Residential (R)				
Existing Developed	169.48	169.48	24	0
R Phase 1	36	0	0	36
R Phase 2	73.54	0.6	0.5	72.94
Industrial (I)	29.12	9.57	0	19.55
Business & Technology (BT)	22.4	7.7	0	14.7
Business & Enterprise (BE)	22.41	9.01	0	13.4
Community Facilities (CF)	64.37	36.27	1.59	28.1
Environmental Management (EM)	147	0.5	0	146.5
Open Space/Recreation & Amenity (OS)	205	5	0.07	200
Agriculture (A)	348.1	2	0	346.1
Public Utilities (PU)	2.79	2.09	2.79	0.7
Transport Infrastructure (TI)	94.9		5.77	
	Not incl. in Total Area Zoned (1177.99.14)			
Total Zoned Areas	1177.99	287.37		890.62
Total Plan Area	1307			

Note: Above areas derived from Maps 1A/1B – Land Use Zoning in GIS and are approximate.

1. Transport Infrastructure (TI) provides for the provision/maintenance of all roads and rail transportation infrastructure and appears as white land on the Land Use Zoning Maps 1A/1B (areas not estimated).

2. * Assuming all Residential Phase 2 lands are undeveloped.
3. Constrained Land Use (CL) zoning objective affects developed land located within a flood risk area. It is displayed within this Table under a separate column in order to avoid over estimations within the zoning objectives that it applies to. The underlying zoning or the existing permitted uses are deemed to be acceptable in principle for minor developments. **(Refer to the Land Use Zoning Maps 1A/1B)**

3.2 Residential Development

3.2.1 Context

Galway County Council's primary aim in relation to residential development is to deliver high quality, sustainable living environments which are attractive, safe and vibrant and meet the needs of the residents and the community. The principles of quality and sustainability must be foremost in all future residential development in the plan area, including private, social, voluntary, special needs housing proposals and to provide accommodation for the needs of the Traveller Community in accordance with Galway County Council's *Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018* for County Galway (or any updated/superseding document).

The Local Area Plan provides guidance in relation to the location, types and design of new residential development, together with a phasing framework for residentially zoned lands, which ensures compliance with the Core Strategy/Settlement Strategy in the current *Galway County Development Plan*, and in accordance with the guidance contained in the DEHLG *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas 2009* and the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

Residential lands have been included in a phasing scheme. Phase 2 lands are not generally developable within the lifetime of the plan and Phase 1 lands are promoted for immediate development. The Phase 1 lands have been identified having regard to good planning principles such as the sequential approach (the identification of undeveloped lands closest to the town centre and existing established areas), potential pedestrian/cycle connectivity to the town centre, the avoidance of flood risk and environmentally sensitive areas. Planning histories, unfinished estates and extant permissions were also considered but were not the sole factor in identifying the Phase 1 lands in this plan, as there are a number of uncertainties with such permissions, and also because many were granted planning permission in a different economic climate and are not necessarily the optimum lands to develop as this point in time, taking account of the Core Strategy and flood risk considerations.

3.2.2 Residential Development Policies and Objectives

Residential Development Policy

Policy RD 1 – Residential Development

It is the policy of Galway County Council to support the creation of sustainable communities and high quality residential areas at appropriate locations with a range of housing options and adequate support services, facilities and amenities, having regard to the guidance contained in the following policy documents or any updated/amended versions:

- *Galway County Housing Strategy 2015 - 2021*
- *Sustainable Residential Developments in Urban Areas: Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2009* and the accompanying guidance document *Urban Design Manual: A Best Practice Guide – A Companion Document to the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, 2009* (or any updated/superseding document)
- *Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2011*
- *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) 2013*
- *Galway Clustered Housing Guidelines*, where appropriate, in the assessment of any proposals for new multiple unit housing developments within the Ballinasloe Local Area Plan

area.

- *Galway County Council's Traveller Accommodation Programme.*
- *Smarter Travel A Sustainable Transport Future - A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020* including the *National Cycle Policy Framework 2009-2022* and any other related national documents.
- *EU Water Framework Directive and the Planning System and Flood Risk Management, Guidelines to Planning Authorities 2009.*

Policy RD 2 – Phased Development on Residential Zoned Lands (Refer to Maps 1A/1B)

It is the policy of Galway County Council to encourage orderly, sequential and phased residential development in accordance with the Preferred Development Strategy and the land use management and zoning provisions set out in this Local Area Plan. This shall include a positive presumption in favour of the sequential development of suitably serviced R - Residential (Phase 1) lands in order to align the Local Area Plan with the Core Strategy/Settlement Strategy in the current *Galway County Development Plan*, subject to compliance with the policies and objectives in this Local Area Plan and the principles of proper planning and sustainable development. There will be a general presumption against residential development on lands zoned R - Residential (Phase 2) within the lifetime of the Local Area Plan, subject to the exceptions provided for under Residential Development Objective RD1.

Residential Development Objectives

Objective RD 1 – Phased Residential Development (Refer to Maps 1A/1B)

Support the development of lands designated as R - Residential (Phase 1) within the lifetime of the Local Area Plan, subject to normal planning, environmental, access and servicing requirements. Reserve the lands designated as R - Residential (Phase 2) for the longer term growth needs of the town. R - Residential (Phase 2) are generally not developable within the lifetime of this plan, with the exception of the following developments, which may be considered by the Planning Authority within the lifetime of this Local Area Plan and subject to a suitable case being made for the proposal:

- a) Single house developments for family members on family owned lands.
- b) Non-residential developments that are appropriate to the site context, any existing residential amenity and the existing pattern of development in the area.
- c) Where it is apparent that R-Residential (Phase 1) lands cannot or will not be developed within the plan period, residential development may be considered in a phased manner on some Residential (Phase 2) lands. Development on Residential-Phase 2 lands will normally only be considered where 50% of the lands in Residential-Phase 1 are committed to development.

The above exceptions will be subject to compliance with the Core Strategy in the current *Galway County Development Plan*, the policies and objectives in this Local Area Plan, the principles of proper planning and sustainable development and to meeting normal planning, environmental, access and servicing requirements. Developments will only be permitted where a substantiated case has been made to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority and the development will not prejudice the future use of the lands for the longer term growth needs of Ballinasloe.

Objective RD 2 – Sequential Development (Refer to Maps 1A/1B)

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 in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns & Villages) Guidelines 2009* (or as updated). This shall include a positive presumption in favour of the sequential development of suitably serviced R-Residential (Phase 1) lands emanating outwards from the town core and/or sequential extensions to the existing residential fabric of suitably serviced R- Residential (Phase 1) lands within the LAP boundary, subject to the principles of proper planning and sustainable development and the current *County Development Plan*. This objective shall not refer to single house build.

Objective RD 3 – Quality Housing Environments

Encourage the development of sustainable residential communities through the promotion of innovative, high quality building design and appropriate layouts, that prioritise walking, cycling and public transport options and provide for a high level of permeability, accessibility and connectivity to the existing built environment, services and facilities. In this regard, future residential development

proposals will be in accordance with the principles set out in the DEHLG document '*Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas 2009*' and its companion document '*Urban Design Manual: A Best Practice Guide for Planning Authorities 2009*' and the '*Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets 2013*' (or as updated)

Objective RD 4 – Housing Options

Require that a suitable variety and mix of dwelling types and sizes are provided in developments to meet different needs, having regard to demographics and social changes, social inclusion, life time changes, smaller household sizes, lower formation age, immigration, etc. including the provision of units for older persons, for people with disabilities and other special need households.

Objective RD 5 – Open Space in Residential Areas

Ensure the provision of adequate areas of high quality, safe and overlooked open space within residential developments and support the provision of play and recreational areas in all new large residential developments.

Objective RD 6 – Social and Specialist Housing

Require that a minimum of 12% of all new eligible residential sites are set aside for the development of new social and specialist housing units, unless addressed through suitable alternative arrangements by agreement with the Planning Authority, in accordance with the current *County Galway Housing Strategy* and Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and any subsequent amendments to the Part V provision to reflect Government policy.

Objective RD 7 – Traveller Accommodation

Support the provision of adequate accommodation facilities for the Traveller Community in accordance with the *Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018 for County Galway* (or any updated/superseding document).

Objective RD 8 – Apartment Development

Facilitate the development of apartments at appropriate locations, such as in the town centre, and have regard to the *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (or as updated), the *Sustainable Residential Developments in Urban Areas: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009)* and *Urban Design Manual: A Best Practice Guide – A Companion Document to the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009)* in the assessment of this type of development.

Objective RD 9 – Connectivity Between Phased Residential Lands

Development proposals for the R-Residential (Phase 1) lands should provide for both vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access, as appropriate to adjoining R-Residential (Phase 2) lands. Provision should also be made in development proposals for green space linkages between both the R-Residential (Phase 1) lands and the R-Residential (Phase 2) lands in these areas, as appropriate.

Objective RD 10 – Compatible Development

Facilitate the development of appropriate, compatible uses within residential areas, subject to ensuring that adequate amounts of Residential (R) zoned lands are retained and can be developed for residential uses to meet the growth needs of the town within the plan period. Non-compatible uses include those uses that may generate large amounts of traffic, emissions, pollution, noise, odour, etc., or uses that can impact negatively on residential amenity.

Objective RD 11 – Other Residential Development

There shall be a general presumption in favour of the development of nursing homes and retirement facilities and community/day care centres on residential zoned lands or adjacent to the established town centre or as suitable re-use for protected structures or other buildings (e.g. institutional or educational buildings) that would have a limited re-development potential given their size and architectural character, subject to normal planning, access and servicing requirements.

Objective RD 12 – Agricultural Zoned Lands

There will be a general presumption against residential development on Agricultural (A) zoned lands, located within the plan boundary with the exception of single house developments for family members on family owned lands, which may be considered subject to compliance with Policy RD1, as appropriate, normal planning, access and servicing requirements and the principles of proper planning and sustainable development. Developments will only be permitted where a substantiated

case has been made to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority and the development will not prejudice the future use of the lands for the longer term growth needs of the town. An enurement condition shall apply for a period of 7 years, after the date that the house is first occupied by the person or persons to whom the enurement clause applies.

3.3 Social and Community Development

3.3.1 Context

Social Inclusion

Social inclusion refers to a series of positive actions to achieve equality of access to services and goods, to assist all individuals to participate in their community and society, to encourage the contribution of all persons to social and cultural life and to be aware of and to challenge all forms of discrimination. Social inclusion also seeks the creation of an inclusive and fair society, combating inequality, social exclusion and poverty. It is generally accepted that fair and equitable access to infrastructural services is a key factor in providing for sustainable and balanced communities.

The quality of life in a community depends not only on the provision of housing, employment and infrastructure support but also on access to social, community and cultural facilities which are fundamental to social cohesion and personal enhancement. The social infrastructure of Ballinasloe consists of a diverse range of social clubs, sports clubs and community facilities that cater for both young and old. Social groups range from bridge clubs, a town and country club, a pony club, a youth club, a musical society and a Lions Club to mention but a few.

Community Facilities and Amenities

Ballinasloe is well served with community facilities and amenities, including primary and secondary schools, Portiuncla Hospital, St. Brigid's psychiatric admissions centre, the South Eastern Health Board Health Clinic at Brackernagh, HSE community nursing home, the Social Services Centre, a number of medical centres/surgeries, nursing/retirement homes, training centres, childcare facilities, a community centre, churches, public swimming pool, Garda station, fire and rescue service, post offices, public library, town hall, a number of community playgrounds, sporting facilities including GAA, soccer and rugby pitches, an astro turf running track, an 18 hole golf course, tennis court and club, and open spaces and amenity walkways. Ballinasloe Community Games is also very active within the town. Further development is proposed for the Dunlo recreational grounds including the development of new dressing rooms.

An expanding population generates increased demand for the provision of services, school places, community facilities and amenities. It is desirable that these essential facilities are provided in tandem with new development and as new communities emerge. In this regard Galway County Council's role is to ensure adequate provision of appropriately zoned areas to meet future demands for community facilities and to provide a framework for the development of such uses through the policies and objectives contained within this Local Area Plan. In relation to educational facilities, the Local Area Plan has identified a number of potential sites that are considered broadly suitable for a new school development and these indicative locations are identified on **Map 2A/2B – Specific Objectives**.

3.3.2 Social and Community Development Policies and Objectives

Social and Community Development Policies

Policy CF 1 – Social Inclusion and Universal Access

It is the policy of Galway County Council to support the principles of social inclusion and universal access and to ensure that all individuals have access to goods, services, facilities and buildings in order to assist them to participate in and contribute to social and cultural life within Ballinasloe.

Policy CF 2 – Community Facilities and Amenities

It is the policy of Galway County Council to support the provision of an adequate level and equitable distribution of community facilities and amenities in the plan area that:

- Meets the needs of the local community as they arise and resources permit.
- Are located in appropriate, accessible locations to serve the residential population in the plan area.
- Are clustered or linked together wherever facilities and amenities are complementary and it is practicable to do so, to allow for shared and multi-purpose use of facilities.

Social and Community Development Objectives

Objective CF 1 – Social Inclusion

Support, as appropriate, the implementation of the provisions of the *Galway County Council Social Inclusion Action Plan 2010* and *Social Inclusion Work Programme 2011*, the *County Galway Local Authorities Disability Action Plan 2007-2015*, the *Galway Age Friendly Strategy 2014-2019*, *Galway County Integration and Diversity Strategy 2013-2017*, *Galway Traveller Interagency Strategy, Celebrating Diversity Plan for the Development of LGBT Services & Supports in Galway City & County 2012-2015*, the *National Positive Ageing Strategy* and any subsequent updates to these documents.

Objective CF 2 – Universal Access

Ensure that housing developments, community facilities, public spaces, public roads, public footpaths and transport services give due consideration to the needs of disabled or mobility impaired people and the requirements of the *Disability Act 2005*, the Council's *Disability Action Plan 2007-2015* (and any updates to this document), the *Traffic Management Guidelines 2003*, the *Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG) and National Disability Authority (NDA) advice notes titled Access: Improving the Accessibility to Historic Buildings and Places 2011* (and any subsequent reviews/updates to these documents).

Objective CF 3 – Housing for Older Persons & People with Special Needs

Facilitate, as appropriate, development for housing for older persons, people with disabilities and people with special needs.

Objective CF 4 – Lands for Community Facilities and Amenities

Ensure that there are adequate zoned and serviced lands to cater for the establishment, improvement or expansion of educational, community, recreation and amenity facilities within the plan area, and allow for existing community facilities to expand on adjacent lands zoned for such uses.

Objective CF 5 – Educational Facilities (Refer to Maps 1A/1B and to Maps 2A/2B)

Support the provision of adequate educational facilities for the local community, including primary, post primary, third level outreach programmes, research and development facilities and other training facilities to meet the needs of the widest range of residents within Ballinasloe and its environs.

- Galway County Council is positively disposed towards the provision of new school facilities in appropriate location/s and has identified a number of areas considered to be generally suitable for new school provision and/or expansion. The indicative locations of areas considered to be suitable are shown on **Maps 2A/2B – Specific Objectives** and include lands to the west of Scoil Uí Chearthearnaigh at Garbally Demesne and lands located to the north and south of Sarsfield Road at Chroi Naoifa N.S.

Other sites may also be considered where these are considered suitable in terms of location, access, servicing and the Council shall continue to work with the Department of Education and Skills and the Office of Public Works to identify and protect suitable sites for new educational facilities.

Objective CF 6 – Health Services

Seek to facilitate the continued improvement and expansion of health and medical care facilities, including mental health services within Ballinasloe in a planned and co-ordinated way, by accommodating projects that assist in providing such medical care facilities, together with their necessary support services and developments, as well as their infrastructural requirements.

Objective CF 7 – Childcare Facilities

Facilitate and promote the development of childcare facilities in suitable locations in accordance with national policy, including the DEHLG *Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001* (or any updated/superseding version of this document).

Objective CF 8 – Older Person Services

Consider favourably projects that deliver services for the older person or that integrate services for older persons, where appropriate.

Objective CF 9 – Burial Grounds

Galway County Council shall acquire lands where the extension of public burial grounds in the ownership or charge of the Council which is necessary or likely to be necessary during the plan period. Archaeologically or architecturally significant burial grounds will not be considered for extension if such an extension would constitute a proven risk to the archaeological or architectural heritage.

Objective CF 10 – Open Spaces (Refer to Maps 2A/2B)

Protect existing open spaces from inappropriate development and facilitate the development of open spaces, including local parks (e.g. Bethany Park), civic spaces and amenity areas, at suitable locations within the plan area.

Objective CF 11 – Sports, Play and Recreation Facilities

Support the provision of new sports, play and recreational facilities to service the needs of the local community, require the provision of play/recreation facilities in new large residential developments and facilitate the development of same in other appropriate locations in the town, including supporting public/community initiatives to provide such facilities.

Objective CF 12 – Community, Recreation and Amenity Facilities (Refer to Maps 1A/1B)

Retain existing community, recreation and amenity facilities and lands zoned for such uses, and prevent their change of use or redevelopment, unless it can be clearly demonstrated to the satisfaction of the planning authority that the facility/land is no longer required and that the new use or development contributes to the overall community, recreation and amenity needs of Ballinasloe.

Objective CF 13 – Amenity Network

Support the establishment of an accessible and sustainable network of greenway linkages and amenities that provide safe and attractive circulation routes for pedestrians and cyclists and for the enjoyment and recreational use of the entire community.

Galway County Council will also seek to promote the functioning of greenway networks as wildlife corridors and habitats to enhance the biodiversity and the natural environment.

Objective CF 14 – Linear Park (Indicative Route) (Refer to Maps 2A/2B)

- a) Support the sustainable development of a Linear Park including recreational facilities and activities that will benefit the local community and visitors to the area and enhance the tourism infrastructure in an environmentally sustainable manner.
- b) Ensure that in particular that all such developments shall not adversely affect habitats and species protected by Article 10 of the Habitats Directive and any other sites that maybe considered as stepping stones in support of Natura 2000 sites.

Objective CF 15 – Cycle and Pedestrian Networks

- a) Encourage and support the development of a series of cycle and pedestrian routes in the Ballinasloe area and in accordance with the Galway to Dublin Cycle Route and the Townspark Relief Road where feasible and in a sensitive manner, incorporating the streams, rivers, woods, and canal. Indirect impacts on built heritage, natural heritage and designated conservation areas arising from such recreational activities should be duly considered and addressed as part of any proposal.
- b) Ensure that in particular that all such developments shall not adversely affect habitats and species protected by Article 10 of the Habitats Directive and any other sites that maybe considered as stepping stones in support of Natura 2000 sites.

Objective CF 16 – Enhancement Scheme for the Fair Green (Refer to Maps 2A/2B)

Carry out an appropriate enhancement scheme for the Fair Green in order to improve its amenity value through landscaping and maximise its usage as resources permit.

3.4 Economic Development

3.4.1 Context

Ballinasloe is identified as a 'County Town' in the current *Galway County Development Plan* and has the potential to become increasingly self-sufficient through the creation of new medium - large scale employment opportunities and continuing to accommodate small scale and start up businesses including the retail sector. The Local Area Plan recognises and supports the role and potential of Ballinasloe and provides a land use framework, including policies and objectives to promote the development of a range of retail, commercial, industrial, business and technology, business and enterprise and tourism activities and to encourage and sustain a diversity of employment opportunities within the plan area. The plan identifies ample zoned land in order to facilitate and cater for a variety of uses under these zoning objectives.

Retail and Services

The town centre remains the primary retail area in Ballinasloe. The impact of the M6 Galway to Dublin Motorway, in removing traffic from the town area will continue to shape how the town centre and retail/commercial activity develops. The development of any future retail and non-retail services in the town and local neighbourhood centres need to be carefully planned, designed and managed in order to protect and enhance the town's unique character while promoting the economic vitality and viability of the town centre, in accordance with the *Retail Planning Guidelines* including the sequential approach for retail development.

Ballinasloe Retail Survey

Galway County Council has recently undertaken a retail vacancy and diversity of use survey in Ballinasloe which surveyed the ground floor/street level of buildings within the core town centre area. The results of this survey detailed that of the 230 non-residential units studied, comparison type retailing is the dominant use within the town centre core. The survey also noted that this is supported by retail services and leisure services. This is in accordance with the *Retail Planning Guidelines 2012* which indicates (Section 4) that town centres are the most suitable locations for higher order fashion and comparison goods and that this should be supported in maintaining and expanding the retail offer and also in reducing the need to travel. In relation to vacancy, the numbers of vacant units in the core town centre were totalled against the total number of uses evident across all categories in order to attain the overall vacancy figure of 21% for the study area. The overall level of vacancy of the Main Streets¹ was estimated at 19% or 31 vacant units of the total 163 units surveyed. The overall level of vacancy on Secondary Streets² was 19% or 8 vacant units of the total 43 surveyed. The overall retail floor space within the core town centre was also surveyed and the floor estimates obtained are outlined in the following Table 2:

Table 2: Overall Retail Floor Space Estimate

Retail Type	Floor Space	Floor Space as a Percentage (%)
Convenience	2,205m ²	5%
Comparison	7,373m ²	23%
Vacant	2,963m ²	21%
Total Area (for above three categories only & excluding other services and obsolete/derelict sites)	12,540 m ²	49% (out of a total of 100%)

Source: Retail Survey Work, Galway County Council

¹ Main Streets consist of: Main Street, Society Street, Dunlo Street & St. Michael's Square

² Secondary Streets consist of: Riverside Court, Marina Point, Bridge Street, Jubilee Street & Riverview

In relation to diversity of use in Ballinasloe, the survey detailed abundance of hairdressing and barber services, recreational services, pubs, financial, legal & property services in the retail core of the town. It is also adequately served in terms of medical services, restaurants/takeaways and discount stores. Notwithstanding this, there is a distinct lack of choice for example in respect to menswear fashion and a limited number of cafes to choose from given the size of Ballinasloe. The survey also took account of derelict/obsolete sites and identified the presence of five derelict/obsolete sites within the retail core which were deemed to detract to a material degree from the amenity, character or appearance of the area.

Finally, the survey also examined a number of opportunity sites within and adjoining the core town centre and developments competing with the retail core area. In relation to opportunity sites, one of these refers to an opportunity site on Dunlo Street and comprises of small plots under multiple ownerships. Problems and resulting delays associated with site acquisition and assembly would render development at this location as problematic but achievable. The Planning Authority should continue to encourage the rejuvenation of this area including street enhancement in order to increase the convenience and comparison offer be it on a small scale. Other opportunity sites identified within the survey area are located at Riverside Court and north of Society Street. There are problems of access with both of these sites and there would also be a need to satisfy the requirements of the Flood Risk Guidelines by way of submitting a Flood Risk Assessment and possibly a screening report for Appropriate Assessment because of their proximity to the River Suck and designated areas. Two other opportunity sites outside the survey area were also noted, one being the former Tesco Site and the other at the eastern portion of the Shearwater Hotel site. Both of these sites have the potential to enhance the retail offer within Ballinasloe.

The survey also detailed zones of significance that have the potential to compete with the retail/village core area. Two such areas were identified one of which is located to the southwest of the retail core survey area and the other is located to the south at Dunlo. The former is a well established SuperValu supermarket at Brackernagh which serves more as a neighbourhood centre for the wider Brackernagh area and that it also complements Portiuncula Hospital, which is located across the road from it.

The latter site is a retail complex that has recently emerged on the edge of the town centre at Dunlo and is only partially complete and is currently occupied by a large scale supermarket, another smaller adjacent supermarket and a petrol filling station. The Planning Authority considered the re-zoning of these subject lands to Commercial/Mixed Use (C2) as a more appropriate zoning in order to enhance compliance with *the Retail Planning Guidelines*. It is also imperative that the plan continues to support the vitality and viability of the town centre in extending the provision and offer of higher order goods, in order to maintain and expand its retail offer in a sustainable manner, in line with the national policy on *Retail Planning – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2012).

Business & Technology, Business & Enterprise Development and Industry

Ballinasloe is located within one of the County's Strategic Development Corridors. The town has been recognised as an attractive place to work, live and do business, with benefits such as the M6 Motorway, rail, ICT and gas infrastructure as well as its strategic location which provides for the creation of sustainable enterprise. The current *Galway County Development Plan* notes the town's potential as the main economic driver for the east of County Galway.

The IDA continues to manage a Business Technology Park on the northern aspect of the town within lands zoned proposed as **Business and Technology (BT)** and includes enterprises such as Creagh Medical and Aptar Ballinasloe. The Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre - an initiative of the Ballinasloe Area Community Development Ltd. is also located within this zoning and caters for a number of SME's. The Local Area Plan proposes to increase the amount of land within this zoning objective at this location.

New **Business and Enterprise (BE)** zoned lands are also proposed for former Industrial land at Pollboy, Brackernagh and at Deerpark in order to cater for a variety of business and enterprise uses and to provide attractive approaches into Ballinasloe.

The main bulk of **Industrial (I)** lands are located to the south east of the town centre and east of the L4602 within the Pollboy Industrial Estate. A number of long established small to medium size companies are presently operating within this industrial estate. The plan has identified ample lands zoned for Industrial (I) to facilitate and cater for a variety of industrial uses.

Tourism

Tourism is an important element of Ballinasloe's local economy and is a sector that has the potential for further growth. The cultural, built and natural heritage of the town and significant local tourist amenities such as the annual Ballinasloe Fair and Arts Festival, and the nearby tourist amenities such as the Battle of Aughrim Visitor Centre, Clonmacnoise monastic settlement, Clontuskert Abbey, Clonfert Cathedral, Birr Castle and gardens, Kilconnell Abbey, the Suck Valley Way, Rivers Suck/Shannon are important tourist attractions and opportunities for further tourism development (including water based tourism), which in turn can help to ensure the appropriate management and protection of Ballinasloe's local heritage and amenities. The Ballinasloe musical society, coral singers and the local Comhaltas all play a significant role towards cultural and traditional events within the town over the year. Galway County Council is dedicated to developing the tourism resource in the east of the County. Heritage tourism products such as town trails and ecclesiastical heritage trails of East Galway continue to be developed. A smart phone app has been developed by the Western Regional Authority for the Hymany Way from Portumna to Ballinasloe and beyond.

The establishment of river navigation via the River Suck to Ballinasloe by Waterways Ireland has allowed Ballinasloe to be included in a Shannon itinerary. Berthing facilities have been provided by Waterways Ireland along with a facilities block. Potential exists to create a flagship water-based tourism product at strategic locations along the Shannon Navigation System including Ballinasloe and Portumna in order to make County Galway a more attractive inland water tourism destination.

Waterways Ireland in conjunction with a number of Local Authorities including Galway County Council have formulated and are implementing '*The Mid Shannon and Lough Ree Product Development Study*' which involves waterways and waterside tourism potential along a number of rivers including the River Shannon. In relation to Ballinasloe the study identifies opportunities for the development of a continuation of the Suck Valley Way along the river navigation and northwards to Shannonbridge.

Tourism Linkages

At national level Ballinasloe Town Council was formally twinned in 1990 with the Moyle District Council in County Antrim. The twinning has been extremely successful, and is regarded as a pioneer of north/south linkages. The town has also close links with Killorglin County Kerry, home of the 'Puck Fair', again based on the concept of 'Fair Towns'. At international level, Ballinasloe is linked with Chalonnes Sur Loire, France and in 1991 and both towns were formally twinned by The World Federation of Twinned Towns. Chalonnes holds its wine festival in February each year. Ballinasloe is generally represented there as is Chalonnes, in Ballinasloe for the October Fair. Galway County Council shall continue its work with Ballinasloe Town Twinning Committee in nurturing these linkages. In addition potential exists to expand the tourist offer of the 'Fair Towns' concept and to create a tourism trail that is set within both a national and international context. It shall be an objective of this plan to work with both the Ballinasloe Twinning Committee and other tourism agencies to enhance and broaden these linkages throughout the plan period.

3.4.2 Economic Development Policy and Objectives

Economic Development Policy

Policy ED 1 – Economic Development

It is the policy of Galway County Council to support sustainable economic development and employment creation in Ballinasloe through the identification of appropriately located and adequately serviced lands for business and technology, business and enterprise, industrial, retail, commercial and tourism developments, the promotion of investment in transportation and other support infrastructure and the creation of a high quality environment to encourage economic investment. The promotion of economic development and employment creation will be appropriately guided to ensure the protection of residential amenities, built and natural heritage, landscape/urban streetscape character and the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Support the aims, objectives and recommendations, where appropriate in the context of Ballinasloe, of the following:

- *Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010-2022;*
- Economic Development Strategy for County Galway, which is under preparation.

Economic Development Objectives

Objective ED 1 – Employment and Economic Development

Support the Economic Development Strategy of the *West Regional Authority Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022* (or as updated) and the economic development and tourism policies and objectives as set out in the current *Galway County Development Plan* and any Economic Strategy prepared by Galway County Council.

Objective ED 2 – Business/Enterprise and Industrial Development

Facilitate and encourage the establishment of business & technology, business & enterprise and industrial developments that are considered compatible with surrounding uses on suitably zoned and serviced sites. Where such uses are developed adjacent to residential areas or community facilities, buffer zones shall be provided as well as adequate screening, in the form of planting and landscaping, as appropriate. The Business and Enterprise (BE) and Industrial (I) zonings will be the primary focus for such uses, subject to the guidance provided in **DM Guideline LU2 – Land Use Zoning Matrix**.

Objective ED 3 – Quality Working Environments (Refer to Maps 1A/1B)

Encourage the provision of high quality designs (including variations in design and scale), layout, boundary treatment and arrival views of development within Industrial (I) and Business & Technology (BT), Business & Enterprise (BE) zonings in order to contribute positively to the character and visual amenity of Ballinasloe.

Objective ED 4 – Retail Development

Support the development of appropriate types, scales and patterns of retail development in suitable locations within the town and with high quality designs that:

- Comply with the *Guidelines for Planning Authorities Retail Planning 2012* (and any updated/superseding document), including the need for a sequential approach to retail development, the policies and objectives of any future Retail Strategy for Galway that may be adopted within the lifetime of this Local Area Plan and the guidance as set out in the *Retail Design Manual – A Good Practice Guide Companion Document to the Guidelines for Planning Authorities Retail Planning (2012)*.
- Support the vitality and viability of the existing town centre and associated main streets and ensure that new development does not undermine their vitality and viability;
- Protect investment in strategic roads and infrastructure and that are easily accessible, particularly in terms of public transport;
- Contribute to the creation of a high quality retail environment;

The Town Centre (C1) zoning will remain the primary focus for the location of new retail development and the Commercial/Mixed Use (C2) lands shall continue to support established retail uses.

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 *Retail Planning Guidelines 2012* (and any updated/superseding document) and will require Retail Impact Assessments, including details of the sequential approach, and, where considered necessary, Transport Impact Assessments and/or Design Statements, for retail developments in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines, the Retail Design Manual and DM Guideline ED1 and ED2.

Objective ED 5 – Local Shops and Services

Facilitate the development of small shops and services at peripheral locations within the town only where it be demonstrated that they are of a scale to serve only localised demand and will not impact negatively on the vitality and viability of the existing town centre.

Objective ED 6 – Retailing Associated with Petrol Stations

Consider development proposals for shop facilities accompanying petrol stations on their individual merits, having regard to the *Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012* and subject to traffic impacts.

Objective ED 7 – Tourism Development

Encourage and facilitate the sustainable development of the tourism potential of Ballinasloe and its environs in a manner that respects, builds on, protects and enhances the cultural, built and natural heritage of the town and the local amenities within the plan area including natural heritage and biodiversity.

Key projects and initiatives that will be supported in this plan shall include:

- a) Facilitate the sustainable development of East Galway as a cultural and tourist destination while simultaneously safeguarding its integrity. Promote active collaboration between all stakeholders both in County Galway and adjoining counties and region.
- b) Collaborate with the Ballinasloe Town Twinning Committee and other tourism agencies in the enhancement and increased economic value of Ballinasloe's town twinning linkages and to create a broader tourist offer within the concept of the 'Fair Towns'.
- c) Ensure that in particular that all such developments shall meet the requirements of the Habitats Directive and shall not adversely affect habitats and species protected by Article 10 of the Directive and any other sites that maybe considered as stepping stones in support of Natura 2000 sites.

Objective ED 8 – Water-Based Tourism (Refer to Maps 2A/2B)

The Council will support, subject to meeting the requirements of relevant Irish Planning and European environmental legislation including the Habitats Directive, the development of the necessary infrastructure and amenities to support water-based tourism within the plan area.

The Council shall:

- a) Collaborate with Waterways Ireland, Fáilte Ireland, other Local Authorities and other relevant agencies in the implementation of '*The Mid Shannon and Lough Ree Product Development Study*' which involves waterways and waterside tourism potential and to enhance water-based tourism product along the Shannon Navigation System including Ballinasloe in order to make the town a more attractive inland water tourism destination.
- b) Continue to promote and enhance the public marina at Slí na hAbhainn as a sustainable marina resource including ancillary facilities and services as appropriate.
- c) Ensure that in particular that all such developments shall meet the requirements of the Habitats Directive and shall not adversely affect habitats and species protected by Article 10 of the Directive and any other sites that maybe considered as stepping stones in support of Natura 2000 sites.

Objective ED 9 – Non Conforming Uses

Where existing uses do not conform to the land use zoning objectives or matrix of this plan, the Planning Authority shall facilitate/support their relocation, as appropriate, to more sustainable and appropriately zoned lands.

Objective ED 10 – Proliferation of Individual Uses

Protect and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre by ensuring that it remains the primary retail, commercial and mixed use centre in the town and prohibit a proliferation of any individual use that, in the opinion of the Planning Authority, does not contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Objective ED 11 – Regularised Outdoor Market/Farmer's Market

Collaborate with the Ballinasloe Chamber of Commerce and traders in the town to identify and develop a suitable location for a regularised outdoor market/farmer's market.

Objective ED 12 – Town Centre Viability, Vitality and Vacancy

Ensure a balance of development in the town centre of Ballinasloe so as to revitalise Dunlo Street, Market Square, Society Street and Main Street, and to reduce vacancies and avoid an unbalanced retail pull from these core shopping streets/side streets and the town centre.

Objective ED 13 – Brownfield Development & Vacancy

Encourage the redevelopment of existing brownfield sites within the plan area in order to maximise the sustainable regeneration of underutilized/vacant lands and/or buildings for potential commercial, retail and residential developments.

3.4.3 Development Management Guidelines

Retail Impact Assessments and Design Statements

DM Guideline ED 1 – Retail Impact Assessments

Retail Impact Assessments will be required with planning applications for large retail developments (such as shopping centres or large food/grocery chain stores), mixed use developments with a large retail component, developments that may have a significant effect on the vitality and viability of the village centre or as otherwise considered appropriate by the Planning Authority. Retail Impact Assessments will be in accordance with the *Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2012), including details of the sequential test.

DM Guideline ED 2 – Design Statements

Design Statements may be required with planning applications for major retail proposals, retail proposals that are located within a sensitive area such as an ACA, and/or for developments within the designed landscape of Garbally Demesne or as otherwise considered appropriate by the Planning Authority. Design Statements should address the issues raised in Section 5.3 of *Guidelines for Planning Authorities Retail Planning 2012* (and any updated/superseding document), including an appraisal of the character of the area adjoining the site and proposals for high quality design that integrates successfully with the context. Design Statements should also take account of the design and layout guidance set out in the *Retail Design Manual-A Good Practice Guide Companion Document to the Guidelines for Planning Authorities*.

3.5 Transportation Infrastructure

3.5.1 Context

Smarter Travel

The *Ballinasloe Local Area Plan 2015-2021* recognises and supports the importance of sustainable transport, including the effective integration of land use and transport and encouraging a modal shift from private transport to public transport, walking and cycling. The plan has had due regard to applicable national legislation and policy, including *Smarter Travel: A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020*, *Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2012), the *Traffic Management Guidelines* (2003) and the *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets* (2013). The new manual aims to end the practice of designing streets as traffic corridors, and instead focuses on the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.

Public Transport – Bus and Rail

Ballinasloe town is currently served by daily bus (private and public) and rail service. The main public service providers are Bus Éireann and C.I.E/Iarnród Éireann. These services present the opportunity to commute to work in places such as Galway, Athenry, Loughrea and Athlone. At present, the main bus stop within Ballinasloe is located at Slí na hAbhainn near the public marina. The plan also promotes the continuation of the development of the Rural Transport Initiative for the Ballinasloe area. The plan also continues to promote the dualing of the railway line from Galway - Athenry - Ballinasloe as resources permit in accordance with the priority transportation schemes as outlined within the current *Galway County Development Plan*.

Transportation Hub Development

It is an objective of the current *Galway County Development Plan* to investigate the potential for the development of integrated transportation hubs within a number of towns including Ballinasloe. The emphasis shall be on the provision of bus facilities adjacent to rail stations. The Ballinasloe LAP supports this proposal and it includes it as a specific objective. A proposed location has been identified adjacent to the Ballinasloe Railway Station and former ATM Cross site. The site contains existing limited parking facilities and a footbridge linking the site to the railway station. Existing access is from the Sarsfield Road in an area where the 50kph speed limit applies. The provision of this potential facility/service may induce a modal shift from the private motor vehicle to public transport and/or walking.

Walking & Cycling

The walking network in Ballinasloe comprises of existing footpaths adjoining public roads. There is currently no dedicated walkway/cycling network within Ballinasloe and cycling is limited to using existing roads and walkways. Ballinasloe is located on the long distance National Cycle Route from Dublin to Galway City as well as being listed as a town on the Active Travel Town Strategies which includes provision for walking and cycling routes. In addition to this, the Council proposes to incorporate a 4m cycle lane and footpath as part of the Townspark Relief Road.

Given the relatively compact urban form of Ballinasloe, there is great potential for a modal shift from the private car towards walking and cycling as a mode of transport, particularly if improved linkages between the town centre, car parks, residential areas and schools are realised and new developments focus on connectivity, legibility and permeability. The Council also supports proposals to create a town cycle network and to promote Ballinasloe as a mini hub for recreational cycling in County Galway as resources permit. It is imperative that all new development proposals link with the existing pedestrian network of the town so that connectivity is realised and utilised and therefore this aim is reflected in the policies and objectives of the plan.

Roads, Streets, Traffic Management and Parking

Ballinasloe is located adjacent to the M6 national motorway route and at the convergence of a number of regional and local roads. The amended boundary of this Local Area Plan has included the M6 Motorway including a 90m setback on each side of the route edge of the motorway in areas where a speed limit greater than 50kph applies. Any plans for works on regional roads (R446, R357 & R348) going forward with this plan shall be carried out under the Council's road reconstruction programme and as part of the Ballinasloe Town Enhancement Scheme.

The **Ballinasloe Enhancement Scheme** (which includes Contracts 1 & 2) relate mainly to Society Street, Dunlo Street and Main Street and proposed works in relation to these streets in relation to transportation, will involve the complete construction of new pavements/footpaths and roadways, undergrounding of ESB cabling, road surfacing and realignment of existing roads. The Scheme will also provide public street lighting, parking provision, controlled and uncontrolled pedestrian crossings and street furniture (seats, bins, bollards and railings) along the 3 listed streets as appropriate. Other works proposed include a road re-surfacing, road/footpath construction along the R446 at Brackernagh, full width road construction on Ballinasloe Bridge West and at St. Michael's Square. Other works proposed relate to upgrades to water services provision and are referenced within Section 3.6: Utility Infrastructure, Energy Infrastructure, Renewable Energy and Telecommunications of this plan.

The **Traffic Management Plan** for Ballinasloe deals with issues of traffic/parking management and including the provision of pedestrian crossings and disabled parking areas throughout the town. A pay and display system is presently operating in the town centre.

3.5.2 Transportation Infrastructure Policy and Objectives

Transportation Infrastructure Policy

Policy TI 1 – Sustainable Transport, Walking and Cycling

It is the policy of Galway County Council to promote the use of public transport, walking and cycling as safe, convenient and environmentally sustainable alternatives to private transport and to implement the key goals, policy guidance and relevant actions set out in the Department of Transport's policy documents *Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future – A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020* and the *National Cycle Policy Framework 2009-2020*, any forthcoming guidance in relation to street design and cycling facilities including the *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets 2013* (and any updated/superseding documents) and any Smart Travel Plan(s) that may be adopted by Galway County Council.

Transportation Infrastructure Objectives

Objective TI 1 – Land Use Integration and Transport

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

- Promoting the consolidation of development;
- Encouraging intensification and mixed use development along public transport corridors and at public transport hubs and nodes identified within the plan area;
- Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport within, and providing access to, new development proposals, as appropriate;
- Ensuring that land use and zoning are fully integrated with the provision and development of a comprehensive, sustainable, efficient, high quality transportation network that accommodates the movement needs of residents, businesses and visitors.

Objective TI 2 – 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, car clubs, public bike schemes, park and ride/park and stride facilities, improved pedestrian and cycling facilities, as appropriate.

Objective TI 3 – Public Transport & Integrated Transportation Location (Refer to Maps 2A/2B)

Promote Ballinasloe as an integrated transportation location, which supports the provision of improved and enhanced public transport services and facilities, including rail, bus services, the Rural Transport Initiative services, park and ride/park and stride facilities and all associated ancillary requirements in consultation with the relevant transport providers and with the NRA.

- a) In consultation with the relevant agencies, investigate the potential of developing a Public Transport Node/Hub in the vicinity of Ballinasloe railway station, or other suitable location/s, to provide a facility for transferring between one transport service or mode and another.
- b) Seek to enhance access along the Sarsfield Road to the Railway Station, upgrade connectivity with existing parking facilities to the northeast of the railway station/Sarsfield Road to the proposed location for the public transportation hub/node including any ancillary park and ride facilities, as appropriate.

Objective TI 4 – Walking

Facilitate the improvement of the pedestrian environment and network so that it is safe and accessible to all, through the provision of the necessary infrastructure such as footpaths, lighting, pedestrian crossings, traffic calmed streets etc. New developments shall promote and prioritise walking, shall be permeable, adequately linked and connected to neighbouring areas, the town centre and train station, recreational, educational and employment destinations and shall adhere to the principles contained within the national policy document *Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future – A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020* (and any updated/superseding document). and the *Design Manual for Urban Roads & Streets (2013)*, (as updated) or with any associated guidance documents

The following pedestrian routes are proposed:

- a) Develop pedestrian links from Main Street and Society Street to associated backlands;
- b) Explore the possibility of providing a pedestrian link from the Lidl site through to St Michael's Square.

Objective TI 5 – Cycling/Pedestrian Network in Plan Area (Refer to Specific Objectives Maps 2A/2B)

Facilitate the improvement of the cycling environment/network so that it is safe and accessible, through the provision of the necessary infrastructure, such as surface treatment, junction treatment, cycle track(s), cycle lane(s), lighting, road crossings etc. New development shall promote and prioritise 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 *National Cycle Policy Framework*, and the *Design Manual for Urban Roads & Streets (2013)* documents or updated/amended guidance documents.

Provide a **cycling/pedestrian network** to include the following routes:

- a) Along the proposed Townspark Relief Road with possible integration with the Galway to Dublin Cycle Route: Athlone to Ballinasloe preferred route options (draft) located within the LAP area (including any updated/superseding route);
- b) From Ard Mhuire Housing Estate to Sarsfield Road;

- c) From Beechlawn to the Townspark Relief Road, serving new residential developments in this area.

Objective TI 6 – Bicycle Parking

Seek to provide adequate levels of bicycle parking throughout the plan area, in accordance with the standards as set out in the current *Galway County Development Plan*, or as varied/updated, and ensure that new private developments provide safe, secure and sheltered bicycle parking facilities.

Objective TI 7 – Walking and Cycling Strategies

Support the principles as set out within the *Galway County Walking and Cycling Strategy 2013*, (including any updated/superseding document), the *National Cycle Galway to Dublin Cycle Route* including the Athlone to Ballinasloe preferred route options that are located within the plan area, the Galway County Council's *Active Travel Towns Strategy Report* as appropriate to the LAP area.

Objective TI 8 – Pedestrian Crossings

Facilitate the provision of pedestrian crossings as indicated within the Ballinasloe Town Enhancement Scheme, within the Council's *Active Travel Towns Strategy Report* and on land adjacent to schools, residential areas and at other appropriate locations within Ballinasloe, as required over the lifetime of this plan.

Objective TI 9 – Mobility Management Plans

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

Objective TI 10 – Charging Points for Electric Vehicles

Facilitate the provision and the delivery of recharging points for electric powered vehicles within public car parks and at other appropriate locations in Ballinasloe for domestic, transition and end of journey type travel

Objective TI 11 – Bus Facilities and Services (Refer to Maps 2A/2B)

Support the improvement of bus facilities and services within Ballinasloe. Facilitate the upgrading of bus stops, the provision of bus shelters and Real Time Information at the existing bus stop at the public marina and at any other bus stops that may be provided in the future.

Objective TI 12 – Rail Facilities/Services & Dualing of Rail Tracks

Support the improvement of rail facilities and services serving Ballinasloe including any future expansion of the railway station for passengers and freight as required. Support also the proposal for the dualing of the rail line from Galway-Athenry-Ballinasloe.

Objective TI 13 – Amenity/Walking/Cycling Network

Support the progressive improvement of the amenity/walking/cycling network, to include existing and enhanced public footpaths along the main streets, providing linkages to existing and future schools, cycling routes where possible and amenity corridors linking town centre, residential, community facility, public amenity, commercial and transport nodes.

Roads, Streets and Parking Policies

Policy TI 2 – Roads, Streets and Parking

It is the policy of Galway County Council in conjunction with all relevant statutory agencies and infrastructure providers to provide road and street networks that are safe and convenient, that have adequate capacity to accommodate motorised traffic and non-motorised movements, that have a high environmental quality with appropriate adjacent development and built form, particularly in the case of urban streets and streetscapes, and that adequate parking facilities are provided to serve the needs of the town. In this regard, the principles, approaches, and standards set out in relevant national policy, including the *Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines*, the *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines* and the accompanying *Urban Design Manual*, the *Traffic Management Guidelines (2012)*, the *Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (2007)*, the *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2013)* and any forthcoming guidelines in relation to street design and cycling facilities shall be applied to new developments, as appropriate.

Policy TI 3 – County Development Plan Policies, Objectives & Development Management

Standards Including Access onto National and Class II Controlled Roads

New developments including developments proposed onto and in proximity to National and Class II Controlled Roads shall be assessed, as appropriate, in relation to details including the provision of a safe means of access/egress, provision of sightlines, car and bicycle parking, loading bay provision, building setbacks from routes/roads etc., in accordance with the policies, objectives and Development Management Standards set out in the current *County Development Plan* (or any varied or updated version).

Roads, Streets and Parking Objectives

Objective TI 14 – National Road Network

- a) Protect the national road network and safeguard the efficiency, safety, capacity and strategic investment in the M6 motorway route having regard to the *Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2012).
- b) Galway County Council will not normally permit the creation of any additional access points from new development or the generation of increased traffic/intensification from existing accesses onto national primary routes where speed limits greater than 60kmh apply.
- c) Transitional zones – (where national roads on the approaches to or exiting urban areas are subject to a speed limit of 60kmh before a lower 50kmh is encountered) a limited level of direct access to facilitate orderly urban development may be provided. Any such proposal must be subject to a road safety audit carried out in accordance with the NRA's requirement and a proliferation of such entrances, which would lead to a diminution in the role of such zones, shall be avoided.
- d) There shall be a general presumption against large scale retail proposals located adjacent or close to existing, new or planned national roads and interchanges. Proposals for large scale developments will be required, where appropriate, to submit Traffic and Transport Assessments to assess the impact of the proposed development and associated traffic movements on the efficiency, safety and capacity of the national road network.

Objective TI 15 – Urban Street Network

Support the treatment of the route network within the built areas of the town as urban streets that prioritise the needs of pedestrians, that facilitate cyclists wherever possible and that support public and private transport movements, stopping and parking, as appropriate. In this regard, the principles, approaches, and standards set out in the *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets 2013* (or as updated) shall be applied to new development as appropriate. New developments will be required to facilitate the extension of the urban street network to provide improved connectivity and permeability, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists, where appropriate.

Objective TI 16 – 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 network, in accordance with the requirements contained within the NRA's *Traffic & Transport Assessment Guidelines*, having regard to Road Safety Audits in the NRA document DMRB *HD19/12 Road Safety Audit* (including any updated/superseding document).

Objective TI 17 – Transport Network Improvements

Facilitate improvements to the existing transportation network and the implementation of traffic management measures, subject to normal planning and environmental considerations.

- a) Implement the transport network improvement provisions as set out within the Ballinasloe Town Enhancement Scheme (including any updated/superseding scheme) as resources permit over the plan period;
- b) Explore the possibility of one way systems/pedestrianisation in the town centre including the possibility of different road surfaces and traffic calming methods in order to slow traffic and create a safe environment for pedestrians;
- c) Continue to implement the provisions of the current Traffic Management Plan for Ballinasloe (and any updated/superseding documents);
- d) Improve and maintain existing public footpaths within the town as resources permit;

Objective TI 18 – Preservation of Routes, Road Upgrades & 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.

Objective TI 19 – Noise

Require all new proposed development, which is considered to be noise sensitive within 300m of existing, new or planned national roads, or roadways with traffic volumes greater than 8,220AADT, to include a noise assessment and mitigation measures if necessary with their planning application documentation. The cost of mitigation measures shall be borne by the developer. Mitigation measures in order to protect the noise environment of existing residential development will be facilitated or enforced as necessary.

Objective TI 20 – Schools

Promote and facilitate greater ease of traffic movement and safe routes to schools in partnership with local schools and ensure that schools have safe drop off/collection facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles and adequate and appropriately located staff parking.

Objective TI 21 – Parking Facilities (Refer to Specific Objective Maps 2A/2B & CDP DM Standard 22 - Parking Standards)

- a) Ensure that existing parking facilities in the town centre and at other existing locations are managed appropriately.
- b) Provide additional long stay public parking facilities in suitable locations within the plan area to serve the needs of the town in accordance with applicable standards and guidelines at the following locations:
 - At the proposed public transportation hub/node (site to the south of the railway station);
 - In the vicinity of Creagh National School ;
- c) Provide disabled car parking facilities at appropriate locations throughout the town and ensure that all new developments have adequate car parking, disabled parking and cycling facilities.

Objective TI 22 – Traffic Safety and Access

Ensure that all new developments are properly located in terms of traffic safety and adequately address issues of traffic safety and access.

- a) Provide adequate facilities for people with special mobility needs to create a safe and accessible environment by providing parking facilities on ground floor level, tactile crossing points, audio facilities on traffic lights and ramped kerbs.
- b) Encourage new developments to use existing access junctions that enter onto major traffic routes rather than allowing a proliferation of new individual vehicular access points.
- c) Require developers to bear the cost of improvements to junctions, road widening and the provision of footpaths in association with public lighting requirements where these will facilitate or benefit the proposed development.

Require, where possible, the provision of adequate off-street parking and adequate loading/unloading facilities as part of each development to ensure that parked vehicles do not cause a traffic hazard, obstruct vehicle or pedestrian movement or create a negative visual impact. Underground car parking will be considered in the Town Centre/Commercial (C1) and within the Commercial/Mixed Use (C2) zoning objectives where it would not conflict with residential amenity, geological, natural heritage, archaeological sensitivities or traffic safety.

Objective TI 23 – M6 Galway to Dublin Motorway (Refer to Specific Objective Maps 2A/2B)

Protect the section of the M6 Galway to Dublin Motorway which is located within the area covered by the Ballinasloe LAP from future inappropriate development.

In this regard the following shall apply:

- A building setback of 90m minimum shall be required on each side of the route edge for the M6 Galway to Dublin route in areas where a speed limit greater than 50kph applies.
- Prevent new accesses onto the M6 route that have not been accommodated in the motorway design in the interest of traffic safety.

Objective TI 24 – Townspark Relief Road (Indicative Access Points) (Refer to Specific Objective Maps 2A/2B)

Reserve access points to provide for the Townspark Relief Road to the rear of Main Street and Society Street. The provision of this road shall be in compliance with the *EU Habitats Directive*, the *EIA Directive* and *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management- Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2009).

Objective TI 25 – Link Roads (Indicative) (Refer to Specific Objective Maps 2A/2B)

1. Complete the provision of a link road from Beechlawn Road to Town Centre at Harbour Road and another link road from Brackernagh to Pollboy using sections already granted and by determining the final alignment of the remaining sections;
2. Provide a link road in order to provide clarity on the access arrangements to these lands and to provide a division between Industrial and Residential/other zonings. The road objective will only provide for access to the interchange with the agreement of the NRA, if the access is onto the National Road Network.

Objective TI 26 – Reservation of Access Points (Indicative) (Refer to Specific Objectives Maps 2A/2B)

Reserve access points for future development and the development of backlands including those indicated on the **Specific Objectives Map 2A/2B** and any other access points 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.

Objective TI 27 – Signage on or Visible from National Roads

Avoid the proliferation of non-road traffic signage on and adjacent to national roads outside of the 50-60kph speed limit area, in the interest of traffic safety and visual amenity, in accordance with the *Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2012). The NRA document *Policy & Provision of Tourist and Leisure Signage on National Roads March* (2011) (including any updated/superseding document) shall also be considered in the assessment of relevant developments.

Objective TI 28 – Road Junction Improvements

Continue to carry out road junction improvements at the following locations:

- a) River Street and Main Street (adjacent to the Bank of Ireland);
- b) Harris Road and R446/Dunlo Street;
- c) Dunlo Street and R446/Dunlo Hill;
- d) Complete Works on Relief Road and proposed Link Road at Dunlo.

The provision of the above listed road junction improvements shall be in compliance with the EU Habitats Directive and *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management-Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2009) (as updated).

Objective TI 29 – Service/Rest Areas

Support the National Roads Authority in the provision of services and rest area facilities that may be proposed by the NRA and have regard to the provisions of Section 2.8 of the DoECLG *Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines* and the *NRA Service Policy (August 2014)* with regard to any other proposals for roadside service facilities or off-line service facilities along National Roads and junctions that may be promoted by private developers within the Ballinasloe Plan area.

Objective TI 30 – Helipad Facilities

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

3.6 Utilities Infrastructure, Energy Infrastructure, Renewable Energy & Telecommunications

3.6.1 Context

The sustainable growth of Ballinasloe is dependent on the satisfactory provision of service infrastructure, including utilities, energy, and communication networks. This infrastructure requires the need to plan for all of these elements so as to ensure that there is adequate availability to support future development, in a manner that is environmentally appropriate, cost effective, efficient and protects public health.

Water Framework Directive

In accordance with the requirement of the *Water Framework Directive*, there is a *Water Framework Directive Register of Protected Areas* which consists of an inventory of protected area sites representing area categories to include waters used for the abstraction of drinking water, areas designated to protect economically significant aquatic species, recreational waters, nutrient sensitive areas, and areas designated for the protection of habitat and species.

The *European Communities (Drinking Water) (No.2) Regulations 2007 (S.I. No.278 of 2007)* transpose outstanding aspects of the *EU Drinking Water Directive* into Irish law by underpinning comprehensive supervision and maintenance regimes for both sanitary authority and group water scheme supplies and by providing for increased penalties for non-compliance. Achieving and improving appropriate water quality standards for the town are of significant importance to Galway County Council.

Irish Water is now responsible for the operation of public water and wastewater services and provision of these services across Ireland. For decades, Local Authorities have provided water and wastewater services within the resources available to them. In order to maintain continuity of service, Irish Water has entered into Service Level Agreements (SLA) with Galway County Council for the operation of Irish Water's assets for the next twelve years. Irish Water's *Capital Investment Plan 2014-2016* outlines the indicative investment priorities in water services infrastructure over the coming years. The Capital Investment Plan consists of a targeted programme consisting of individual projects and a range of sub-programmes, which will deliver improvements in drinking water quality, leakage, wastewater compliance, business efficiencies and customer service. Irish Water has also commenced work on a 25 Year Water Services Strategic Plan which will set out its long term strategy and objectives. The *Capital Investment Plan* will be adjusted as required to meet the objectives and priorities of the Water Service Strategic Plan as adopted following assessment.

3.6.2 Utilities Infrastructure

Water Supply

The primary source of Ballinasloe's public water supply is the Derrymullen Water Treatment Plant which sources water from the River Suck upstream of the town. There are three reservoirs serving Ballinasloe Town and the surrounding areas. These are located at Garbally, Redmount Hill, and Sheepwalk. The current capacity of the town's water supply at Derrymullen is 4,500m³/day and the current demand is 3,300m³/day. Ongoing water conservation works have increased the potential capacity of the plant and in addition works under the Ballinasloe Town Enhancement Scheme under Contracts 1 & 2 will provide for public water-main replacement along a number of streets. Recent analysis taken in August 2014 indicates that the water samples continue to comply with the Drinking Water Regulations S.I. 122 of 2014 (Source: GCC Water Services Section).

The *Ballinasloe Regional Water Supply Scheme (RWSS)* is listed under the *Irish Water Capital Investment Plan 2014-2016* proposed for County Galway and will provide a link from Ballinasloe to Ahascragh, supplying Ahascragh with Ballinasloe water. Currently this scheme is under review and will require Irish Water approval before it can proceed.

Wastewater Disposal

Ballinasloe is serviced by a public wastewater collection network with both primary and secondary treatment (with phosphorus removal). The wastewater works collects and treats domestic and commercial effluent and surface water from a combined sewerage system. The wastewater treatment

plant at Pollboy has a current design capacity of 13,500 population equivalent (P.E.), the current loading to the plant is 12,100 P.E., leaving a spare capacity of 1,400 P.E. The existing plant is considered sufficient to cater for wastewater loads up to 2020. The waste assimilative capacity at the estimated 2020 population equivalent is 13,309 P.E. The proposed additional upgrade of the wastewater treatment plant to 1,800 P.E. is not included on Irish Water's *Capital Investment Programme 2014-2016* and such works will not commence prior to 2018. The requirement and provision for any further upgrades will be reviewed and considered by Irish Water when planning any subsequent Capital Investment Programme.

An Appropriate Assessment Screening for the Ballinasloe Agglomeration was undertaken by Irish Water in relation to the Waste Water Certificate of Authorisation: D0032-01 process and it was determined that the discharge from the wastewater treatment plant or in-combination with other sources (diffuse agricultural runoff) will not have a significant impact on the River Suck Callows SPA or downstream receiving Natura 2000 Sites³. The private sewerage works⁴ located in the Portnick area will be connected to the foul sewer network and treatment system. Any new development within the grounds of the former St. Brigid's hospital will be required to link up with GCC network. Some developments at the outer areas of the town remain connected to individual septic tanks or proprietary wastewater treatment systems.

Surface Water Drainage

There is no dedicated surface water sewer network serving Ballinasloe. Under the Ballinasloe Town Enhancement Scheme some separation will take place from the combined surface and foul sewerage system along a number of streets, of which the timing is dependent on the approval process from Irish Water. In order to ensure that surface water is disposed of in a controlled and sustainable manner, future developments will be required to address surface water disposal through on-site systems, (depending on site characteristics) and not into the public sewer. Alternatively discharge to adjacent surface water (where available), or discharge to an existing surface water sewer if available and which does not subsequently connect to the public sewer may be undertaken.

Developments within the plan area will be required to comply with the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) as contained within the EPA document entitled *Guidance on Authorisation of Discharges to Groundwater 2011 (or any updated/superseding document)*.

3.6.3 Water Supply, Wastewater & Surface Water Policies and Objectives

Water Supply, Wastewater, Surface Water Policies

Policy UI 1 – Water Supply, Wastewater and Surface Water Infrastructure

Support Irish Water in the provision and maintenance of adequate wastewater disposal, water supply and surface water drainage infrastructure, in accordance with EU Directives, to service the development of Ballinasloe. This will include satisfactory capacity for public wastewater and storm-water sewers as appropriate, a satisfactory quantity and quality of water supply and the promotion of Sustainable Drainage System approaches and techniques within the plan area.

Policy UI 2 – Irish Water's Capital Investment Plan & Water Services Strategic Plan

Support Irish Water in the implementation of their *Capital Investment Plan 2014-2016* (and as updated/superseded) and their Water Services Strategic Plan, once in place.

Water Supply, Wastewater, Surface Water Infrastructure Objectives

Objective UI 1 – Irish Water & Water and Wastewater Projects

Support Irish Water in identifying, prioritising and progressing the implementation of water and wastewater projects in the Ballinasloe plan area, as appropriate.

³ (Source: Irish Water AA Screening for the Ballinasloe Waste Water Certificate of Authorisation: D0032-01; submitted to EPA 14/08/2014 and GCC Water Services Section).

⁴ (primary treatment GCC Discharge Licence W 005/78)

Objective UI 2 – Water Supply and Water Conservation

- a) 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 when making a connection to the public water supply;
- b) Collaborate with Irish Water in the upgrading of the existing water treatment plant capacity at Derrymullen as deemed necessary.

Objective UI 3 – Wastewater Disposal

New developments shall only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that they can be serviced and that there is adequate capacity in the wastewater disposal infrastructure in accordance with applicable prevailing regulations and standards, including the *Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations 2001 and 2004* and urban wastewater treatment disposal standards, in order to protect the River Suck Callows Special Protection Area (004097 River Suck Callows SPA), other nearby European sites and their respective qualifying interests.

Objective UI 4 – Connections to the Public Sewer & Public Water Mains

Where public wastewater services are available, new development proposals shall be required to connect to same.

Objective UI 5 – Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

Maintain and enhance, as appropriate, the existing surface water drainage system throughout the plan area and ensure that new developments are adequately serviced with surface water drainage infrastructure and promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems in new developments. Surface water runoff from development sites will be limited to pre-development levels and planning applications for new developments will be required to provide details of surface water drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems proposals

Objective UI 6 – Wastewater Treatment Plant Buffer (Refer to Specific Objectives Maps 2A/2B)

Provide and protect a 50m buffer around the public wastewater treatment plant (Public Utilities Zoning Objective) site, including a 50m buffer around the treatment plant serving the former St Brigid's Hospital.

Objective UI 7 – River Suck and Drainage Catchment

Require new development proposals within the catchment of the River Suck or that potentially drain towards this river to include full details of proposals to address the high probability of flooding associated with the river and its catchment and the need to provide adequate surface water drainage, including the incorporation of Sustainable Drainage Systems.

Objective UI 8 – Integrated Constructed Wetlands and Natural Drainage (Refer to Specific Objectives Maps 2A/2B)

Galway County Council shall support the uses of Integrated Constructed Wetlands (ICW) as a low cost and environmentally sustainable alternative having regard to the '*Integrated Constructed Wetlands – Guidance Document for Farmyard Soiled Water and Domestic Wastewater Applications*' as appropriate.

- Protect wetlands and the natural drainage course of the Deerpark River.

Any proposed constructed wetland development having potential biological or hydrological connectivity with Natura 2000 sites will be subject to AA Screening and Stage 2 AA if required under the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

3.6.4 Development Management Guideline

Surface Water Network Development Management Guideline

DM Guideline UI 1 – Surface Water Network

Require all relevant applications to provide for separate surface and foul water sewers to assist and optimise the use of the existing collection system and the wastewater sewage system.

3.6.5 Water Quality

The *E.U. Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC* adopted in 2000 requires member states to ensure that all their waters (including surface and groundwater) achieve at least 'good status' by 2015 and to ensure that the current status does not deteriorate in any waters. In accordance with the requirement of the *Water Framework Directive*, there is a *Water Framework Directive Register of Protected Areas* which consists of an inventory of protected area sites representing area categories to include waters used for the abstraction of drinking water, areas designated to protect economically significant aquatic species, recreational waters, nutrient sensitive areas and areas designated for the protection of habitats and species. The *Shannon International River Basin Management Plan* recognises the need to integrate water protection measures with land use planning at regional and local level, as responsibility for taking measures within the plan lies with all public bodies whose activities impact on water quality or who regulate such activities.

Ballinasloe is located within the Suck Water Management Unit of the *Shannon International River Basin Management Plan*. The implementation of the *Shannon International River Basin Management Plan* will bring incremental improvement leading to the majority of waters reaching at least 'good status' at the latest by 2027. This current plan will be reviewed and a revised plan will issue covering the period 2016-2021.

The Water Framework Directive Report data which is based upon final RBMP 2009-2015 provides details regarding the quality status of the following river waterbodies within the plan area:

- The River Suck water-body had an overall status of 'poor'. The river water-body was 'at risk' (1a) of not achieving good ecological or good chemical status/potential at least by 2015. The overall WFD objective is to restore this waterbody to good status by 2021.
- The Deerpark River water-body had an overall status of 'good'. The river water-body was 'not at risk' (2b). The overall WFD objective is to protect this water-body.
- The Bunowen River water-body had an overall status of 'poor'. The river water-body was at risk (1a) of not achieving good ecological or good chemical status/potential at least by 2015. The overall WFD objective is to restore this waterbody to good status by 2021.
- The Suck Cuilleen water-body had an overall status of 'moderate'. The river water-body was at risk (1a) of not achieving good ecological or good chemical status/potential at least by 2015. The overall WFD objective is to restore this waterbody to good status by 2015.
- Suck Kellysgrove river water-body was at risk (1a) of not achieving good ecological or good chemical status/potential at least by 2015. The overall WFD objective is to restore this waterbody to good status by 2015. (refer to www.wfd.ie)

Groundwater is stored in the void spaces in underground layers of rock, or aquifers. According to the Water Framework Directive - report data based upon final River Basin Management Plan 2009-2015 states that the Suck South (IE_SH_G_225) ground water-body is at risk (1a) of not achieving good status by 2015. The overall WFD objective is to restore this ground water-body to good status by 2021.

The plan area is predominantly underlain with differentiated limestone with dark limestone and shale identified around the townland of Moher and towards the southern aspect of Pollboy townland. Ballinasloe is located above two aquifer types - regionally important and locally important aquifers. The Groundwater Protection Scheme identifies the majority of the plan area as having a groundwater vulnerability rating of high and medium with pockets of extreme and bedrock at surface in areas in the following townlands of Pollboy, Dunlo, Garbally Demesne, Creagh and Deerpark. Therefore it is essential that this resource is sufficiently protected in line with *the Groundwater Directive & the Water Framework Directive*.

3.6.6 Water Quality Policy and Objectives

Water Quality Policy

Policy WQ1 – Water Quality

It is the policy of Galway County Council to seek the protection and improvement in water quality in

all waters, in conjunction with other agencies and stakeholders in accordance with the *EU Water Framework Directive (2006/60/EC)*, *EU Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC)* and other relevant EU Directives, including associated national legislation and policy guidance, (including any superseding versions of same), and to support the implementation of the *Shannon International River Basin Management Plan* (as updated), including its Programme of Measures and the actions and measures that form part of the *Suck Water Management Unit Action Plan* and consider the above when assessing new development proposals.

Water Quality Objectives

Objective WQ 1 – EU Policies and Directives

Support the protection, conservation and enhancement of all existing and potential water resources in the LAP area, in accordance with the *EU Water Framework Directive*, the *European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (S.I. No 272 of 2009)* and implement the *European Communities (Drinking Water) Regulations (No 2) 2007* and ensure that water supplies comply with the parameters in these regulations.

Objective WQ 2 – Shannon International River Basin Management Plan and Protection of Waters

Support the implementation of the relevant recommendations and measures as outlined in the *Shannon International River Basin Management Plan 2009-2015* (or any other such 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.

Objective WQ 3 – Protection of Ground Waters & Aquifers

Support the protection of groundwater resources and dependent wildlife/habitats in accordance with the *Groundwater Directive 2006/118/EC* and the *European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations, 2010 (S.I. No. 9 of 2010)* as amended by the *European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) (Amendment) Regulations 2012* or any other updates. In addition, protect the regionally important aquifer that underlays the plan area from risk of environmental pollution and have regard to any groundwater protection schemes and groundwater source protection zones where data has been made available by the Geological Survey of Ireland.

3.6.7 Development Management Guidelines

Water Quality Development Management Guideline

DM Guideline WQ 1 – Water Bodies and Watercourses

Require all relevant applications, which are located in close proximity to water bodies or watercourses to submit measures to reduce and prevent pollution to the water body/watercourse, both during construction and after completion of the scheme.

3.6.8 Waste Management

The *Connaught Waste Management Plan* provides policy guidance on waste management in County Galway. Best practice in terms of waste management recommends that as much waste as possible is dealt with through reduction, reuse and recycling, with as little as possible remaining to be disposed of. The Council promotes environmental awareness measures, initiatives and campaigns in the local communities through involvement with various groups and organisations and through the implementation of the Green Schools programme - an international programme designed to encourage and acknowledge whole school action for the environment

3.6.9 Waste Management Policies and Objectives

Waste Management Policy

Policy WM 1 – Waste Management Plan

Support the implementation of the *Replacement Connacht Waste Management Plan 2008-2011*, *Galway County Council's Litter Management Plan 2007-2010*, the *National Waste Prevention Programme*, the EPA's *National Hazardous Waste Management Plan 2014-2020* and any superseding versions of these plans over the lifetime of this Local Area Plan.

Policy WM 2 – Waste Management

It is the policy of the Council to support waste reduction and sustainable waste management through prevention, reduction and recycling and by facilitating the provision of adequate waste infrastructure, such as bring banks, at locations that will not adversely affect residential amenity or environmental quality

Waste Management Objectives

Objective WM 1 – 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.

Objective WM 2 – Bring Bank Facility

Facilitate the installation of bring bank(s) at suitable locations within the plan area, which do not adversely affect residential amenity or environmental quality.

3.6.10 Energy Infrastructure, Renewable Energy & Telecommunications

Energy Infrastructure, Renewable Energy & Telecommunications

Developments require adequate power, energy and telecommunications services, including electricity, gas supply, telephone services and broadband, which are provided in Ballinasloe by various service providers. The Plan aims to seek a balance between the need to maintain and develop energy & telecommunications infrastructure while having regard to amenities, protected areas and sensitive landscapes. Galway County Council will continue to implement the Council's *Energy Action Plan* regarding energy efficiency and conservation in existing and future residential, commercial and industrial buildings within Ballinasloe.

Electricity and the National Transmission Grid

Grid25 is EirGrid's strategy for the development of the national transmission grid over the next decades and this strategy identifies a clear need for upgrading the grid in the short-medium, and longer-terms, by means of a combination of enhancement of existing transmission infrastructure as well as the provision of new infrastructure. The subsequent *Grid25 Implementation Plan (IP)* is a practical strategic overview of how the early stages of Grid25 are intended to be implemented. Ballinasloe town is currently served by an 110kV electricity network. Stations and 110kV transmission lines at Shannonbridge and Somerset (located approximately 7km to the south of Ballinasloe) are notated in Figure 5-2 of EirGrid's *Transmission Development Plan 2013-2023*.

Gas Network

The Bord Gáis Network owns and operates the gas transmission pipeline within the Country and applies a 400m 'Zone of Interest' corridor along the gas pipeline. Ballinasloe has an existing natural gas supply serving the town, which was provided under Bord Gáis's *Gas 2025 Network Development Programme*.

Renewable Energy Resources

Renewable energy is increasingly seen as a means to address climate change challenges, reduce carbon dioxide emissions and increase national energy security. Ireland's need to support renewable energy stems from its EU commitments, namely the *EU Directive 2009/29/EC on the Promotion of*

Renewable Energy Sources, which establishes a binding target of 20% of overall EU energy consumption coming from renewable resources by 2020, as well as a binding 10% minimum target for energy from renewable resources to account for 16% of total energy consumption by 2020. In line with these commitments, Ireland's target for electricity from renewable energy sources (RES -E) is 40% by 2020. Low carbon technologies present an economic opportunity within the County and green technology development is emerging as a major field of innovation and growth.

Galway County Council recognises the importance of developing renewable energy resources in the interest of delivering on the *National Climate Change Adaptation Framework*. *The Planning and Development Regulations 2007* and *2008* provide some exemptions from planning permission for solar panel, heat pumps, wind turbines and wood pellet burners subject to certain conditions and limitations. However, the restrictions on exempted development as set out in *Article 9 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001* (as amended) also still apply. Where an individual wishes to install any class of micro-renewable technology that does not fall within the exemptions, they are required to apply for planning permission.

Broadband

The *National Broadband Plan for Ireland 2012 -Delivering a Connected Society* recognises that widespread investment in high speed digital and internet services can realise benefits in relation to foreign direct investment. The Ballinasloe Metropolitan Area Broadband Network (MANS) is fully constructed and is routed around mainly around the town centre, it also services the IDA site and HSE facilities along the R357, industrial lands at Pollboy, educational facilities and along the R446 servicing Garbally College, Portiuncla Hospital and the Dunlo area. The network is managed on concession by E-Net Ltd. on behalf of the Government. MANS have been constructed in County Galway towns which are considered key for industrial companies. The provision of broadband via new technology such as the 3G system is also welcomed. It is also Government policy that State entities shall avail of all opportunities to facilitate the development of infrastructure to the telecommunications market.

3.6.11 Energy Infrastructure, Renewable Energy & Telecommunications Policies and Objectives

Energy Infrastructure, Renewable Energy & Telecommunications Policy

Policy ET 1 – Energy, Renewable Energy & Telecommunications

It is the policy of Galway County Council to support the provision of adequate energy and telecommunications infrastructure to service developments, including gas, electricity, broadband and telephony services. In particular, the Council supports the increased development and use of renewable energy and the aims of sustainable energy use and conservation in building design and construction.

Energy Infrastructure, Renewable Energy & Telecommunications Objectives

Objective ET 1 – Electricity and Gas Supply

Facilitate the provision of an adequate supply of electricity and gas to developments in the plan area, to the requirements of the relevant service provider and in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

Objective ET 2 – Renewable Energy

Promote and facilitate the development of renewable sources of energy within the plan area and encourage the integration of micro-renewable energy sources into the design and construction of new developments, as appropriate.

Objective ET 3 – Energy Efficiency Technology in Buildings

The Planning Authority will have regard to the DoEHLG Guidelines on *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas: Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2009* and the accompanying guidance document *Urban Design Manual* in the assessment of any proposals for residential development, including *inter alia* those in respect of energy efficiency, passive solar design and renewable energy sources. The Council shall:

- a) Facilitate and support innovative housing design, energy efficient technologies and layout solutions that address concerns of environmental sustainability with regard to matters such as energy efficiency and the use of materials;
- b) Facilitate and support the integration of micro renewable energy sources into the design and construction of single and multiple housing developments throughout the plan area;
- c) The Council shall facilitate and support the use of district heating/cooling and combined heat and power in new single and multiple housing developments, within schools, commercial and public buildings as appropriate within the plan area;

Objective ET 4 – Telecommunications & Broadband

Continue to facilitate the provision of adequate telecommunication 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.

Objective ET 5 – Open Access Fibre Ducting

Facilitate and support the installation of connections for high speed technologies, where practicable, in accordance with the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources documents including '*Recommendations for Open Access Fibre Ducting and Interior Cabling for New Residential Buildings 'Making Homes Fibre Ready', 2011*, the *National Broadband Plan for Ireland 2012, Delivering a Connected Society*' and the *National Digital Strategy for Ireland 2013, 'Doing more with Digital – Phase 1 Digital Engagement'* (including any updated/superseding documents).

3.6.12 Development Management Guidelines

Energy Statements

DM Guideline ET 1 – Energy Statements

All proposals for new non-residential developments with a floor area of 1,000m² or more and residential developments comprised of 10 or more units may be required to submit an Energy Statement outlining the methods proposed to minimise energy use in the development, such as building orientation and passive solar design, materials and insulation, renewable/alternative energy sources, etc.

DM Guideline ET 2 – Energy Efficient Street Lighting

Galway County Council shall require the provision of energy efficient street lighting in all private developments.

3.7 Climate Change and Flooding

3.7.1 Context

Climate Change

Climate change refers to changes in climatic conditions whether through natural variations or as a result of anthropogenic influences. The impacts of climate change present very serious global risks and threaten the basic components of life, including health, access to water, food production and the use of land. Climate change also poses threats in terms of likelihood and severity of flooding and impacts on water resources, biodiversity, natural habitats and species distribution.

The evolution of climate change policy in Ireland is an iterative process, based on the adoption by Government of a series of national plans and targets over the period to 2050:

The *National Strategy on Climate Change 2007-2012* set out the cross-sectoral measures necessary to achieve Ireland's Kyoto Protocol commitments. Under the first Kyoto Protocol, Ireland committed to restrict greenhouse gas emissions growth to an increase of 13% over the 1990 baseline levels within the 2008-2012 period. During the second Kyoto Protocol commitment period, parties, including Ireland, committed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 18 percent below 1990 levels in the eight-year period from 2013 to 2020. The *National Climate Change Adaptation Framework* launched in 2012 provides a strategic policy focus to ensure adaptation measures are taken across different sectors and levels of government to reduce Ireland's vulnerability to the negative impacts of climate change. This was bolstered by the *Climate Change Bill 2013*, whose aim is to ensure that the State's net carbon account for the year 2050 is at least 80% lower than the 1990 baseline.

In January 2015, the Government published the *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Bill 2015* which seeks to achieve 'a transition to a competitive, low-carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050'. This 'national transition objective' will be attained through a national mitigation plan and through a national adaptation framework.

At a local level, Galway County Council must contribute to the stabilisation and reduction of national greenhouse gas emissions and including climate change adaptation through the promotion of renewable energy sources and energy conservation in policies and objectives regarding the environment, housing and infrastructure. The policies and objectives within the *Ballinasloe Local Area Plan* contribute to the national commitment to limit the impact of climate change and reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. This includes support for measures aimed at reducing travel demand by integrating land use and transportation, facilitating an increased modal share of sustainable travel modes, encouraging passive solar design and energy efficient buildings, promoting greater use of renewable energy and energy conservation, re-use of existing building stock, promoting waste reduction and addressing increased flooding risks due to climate change.

Air Quality and Radon Gas

The EU *Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFE) Directive (2008/50/EC)* was transposed into Irish legislation by the *Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (SI No. 180 of 2011)*. The air quality within the Ballinasloe area is generally good. The plan contains a number of policies and objectives that focus on air quality, including ensuring adherence to relevant air quality standards and promoting planting and landscaping, enhanced public transport and energy efficiency buildings.

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive and carcinogenic gas that originates from the decay of uranium in rocks and soils. Radon has no smell, colour or taste and can only be detected using special detectors. The Radon Protection Institute of Ireland (RPII) has identified between 1% - 5% of homes in a 10km grid square within Ballinasloe town area is estimated to be above the reference level. The RPII highlights the dangers of exposure to radon, including increased risk of lung cancer. The RPII website provides details with regard to assessing homes for the risk of radon (www.rpii.ie)

3.7.2 Climate Change, Air Quality and Radon Policies and Objectives

Climate Change, Air Quality and Radon Policy

Policy CC 1– Climate Change Policy

It is the policy of Galway County Council to have regard to EU and national legislation and strategies on climate change in its decision making process in order to contribute to a reduction and avoidance of human induced climate change, in accordance with national targets under the *Kyoto Protocol*, the *EU Roadmap* and including any amendments to same.

Climate Change Air Quality and Radon Objectives

Objective CC 1 – Climate Change & the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework

Galway County Council shall support the implementation of the *National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012*, the *National Climate Change Adaptation Framework 2012* and the actions contained therein and the *Climate Action and Low-Carbon Development Bill 2015* (including any superseding

enactment of this Bill).

Objective CC 2 – Climate Change & Green Infrastructure

Galway County Council shall promote the integration of green infrastructure/networks (e.g. interconnected networks of green spaces including aquatic ecosystems) and other physical features on land) into new development proposals in order to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Objective CC 3 – Air Quality

Promote the preservation of best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development throughout the plan area by seeking to protect and maintain the regulatory standards contained with the EPA's *Air Quality in Ireland 2012 Key Indicators of Ambient Air Quality* (or any superseding document) and ensure that all air emissions associated with new developments are within Environmental Quality Standards as set out in statutory regulations, namely *SI 180/2011 Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011*.

Objective CCF 4 – Air Purification

The Council shall encourage landscaping and deciduous tree planting in an environmentally sensitive manner within the plan area as a means of air purification, the filtering of suspended particles and the improvement of Ballinasloe's micro-climate.

Objective CC 5 – Radon

Galway County Council shall have regard to and implement as appropriate the specific guidance on radon prevention measures for new homes as contained within the Building Regulations.

3.7.3 Flood Risk Management and Assessment

The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and the Office of Public Works (OPW) published national flood risk management guidelines in 2009 entitled *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009* and subsequently the DECLG issued *Circular PL 2/2014* which provides clarification of advice contained within the guidelines. The guidelines require Planning Authorities to ensure that, where relevant, flood risk is a key consideration in preparing development plans, local area plans and the assessment of planning applications. The aim of the guidelines is to avoid flood risk where possible, substitute less vulnerable uses when avoidance is not possible and mitigate and manage the risk where avoidance and substitution are not possible.

The guidelines provide guidance on identifying areas where the probability of flood risk is high (Flood Zone A), moderate (Flood Zone B) and low (Flood Zone C) and identifies the types of land use that are appropriate within each Flood Zone. The guidelines also highlight the need to assess the potential impacts of climate change as part of a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for a plan. The guidelines suggest that where mathematical models are not available, climate change flood extents can be assessed by using the Flood Zone B outline as a surrogate for Flood Zone A with allowance for the possible impacts of climate change. Planning applications will also be required to demonstrate that climate change has been taken into consideration in any flood risk assessment submitted with an application.

The OPW have produced flood maps as part of the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment that identify areas at risk of flooding, including fluvial, coastal, pluvial and groundwater flooding, for the entire country. Ballinasloe has also been identified as an area of further flood risk assessment by the OPW. Galway County Council has also carried out a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for County Galway, as well as a Stage 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the Ballinasloe Local Area Plan (LAP) area. More accurate mapping will be produced for areas of potentially significant risk under an OPW programme of the Shannon Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Studies (CFRAMS).

An extreme flood event in November 2009 saw many properties being flooded and major road closures in Ballinasloe. Since then, engineering works to mitigate future flooding have been carried out by the Council within the town including the construction of a flood defence system at Derrymullen, works along the Deerpark River as well as engineering works to the Ballinasloe Bridge (East), which is

the main bridge crossing for the River Suck. The mitigating works that were undertaken have ensured that flooding has not occurred to the same extent. The Council are also seeking funding from the Suck Drainage District funds and the OPW to carry out further works in the Deerpark area following a localised flood event which affected some houses in November 2014.

The indicative extent of the flood defence wall at Derrymullen is shown in Figure 3 and Figure 5 of the Stage 2 SFRA (which accompanies this plan as a separate supporting document) and is also highlighted as a 'Defended Area' and within the flood zones of the Flood Risk Management Maps 3A/3B of the plan (Refer to the indicative red hatched area within Maps 3A/3B).

The land use zoning objective titled 'Constrained Land Use Zoning (Refer to **Objective LU 13 – Constrained Land Use Zone**), policies, objectives and development management standards as outlined within this section of the plan will also apply to the 'Defended Area', as appropriate.

The Ballinasloe Local Area Plan takes due consideration of the national *Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009* and associated *Circular PL 2/2014* and the recommendations emanating from the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for County Galway and to the Stage 2 SFRA for the plan area. The plan identifies flood zones in accordance with the Guidelines (shown on **Maps 3A/3B – Flood Risk Management**), designates land use zones (see **Maps 1A/1B – Land Use Zoning**) considered appropriate to each Flood Zone and includes policies and objectives dealing with flood risk assessment and management (see also **Maps 2A/2B – Specific Objectives**). The Flood Zones identified are:

Flood Zone	Probability of Flooding	Flood Risk Areas Included
Flood Zone A	High	> 1:100 for river flooding (Includes SFRA flood risk areas)
Flood Zone B	Moderate	1:100 to 1:1000 for river flooding
Flood Zone C	Low	< 1:1000 for river flooding

The Local Area Plan also promotes the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in developments, which can contribute to surface water retention and help reduce and prevent flooding

3.7.4 Zoning and Flood Risk

The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment that has been undertaken on the plan area, informed by inter alia by previous flood reports, site walkovers, local knowledge and flood risk indicator mapping, indicates flood risk in parts of the town. Please refer to the associated Stage 2 *Strategic Flood Risk Assessment* for the Ballinasloe Local Area Plan, which accompanies this plan as a support document.

Undeveloped lands located in Flood Zones A/B and are also located within a Natura 2000 Site have been zoned as Environmental Management (EM). Undeveloped lands that are located in Flood Zones A/B and not located within a designated site are zoned as Open Space, Recreation & Amenity (OS). Notwithstanding this, any proposed development on this zoning must also comply with *The Planning System & Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009* in terms of the uses being appropriate to the flood zone.

The **Constrained Land Use zone (CL)** shall also apply to other developed areas that are located within a flood risk area. The underlying zonings or the existing permitted uses are deemed to be acceptable in principal for minor developments to existing buildings (such as such as small extensions to houses, most changes of use of existing buildings), which are unlikely to raise significant flooding issues within these areas, subject to meeting specific requirements. Refer to Maps 1A/1B Land Use Zoning Objective which outlines these areas within the LAP area.

3.7.5 Flood Risk Management Policies and Objectives

Flood Risk Management Policies

Policy FL 1 – Flood Risk Management Guidelines

It is the policy of Galway County Council to support, in co-operation with the OPW, the implementation of the *EU Flood Risk Directive (2007/60/EC)*, the *Flood Risk Regulations (SI No. 122 of 2010)* and the DoEHLG/OPW publication *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009)* and Departmental Circular PL 2/2014 (or any updated/superseding legislation or policy guidance). Galway County Council will also take account of the OPW Catchment Flood Risk Management Plans (CFRAMs) as appropriate, the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA), the *Stage 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for County Galway* and the *Stage 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment* carried out for the LAP area including any recommendations and outputs arising from same that relate to or impact on the plan area.

Policy FL 2 – Principles of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines

The Council shall implement the key principles of flood risk management set out in the Flood Risk Management Guidelines as follows:

- 1) Avoid development that will be at risk of flooding or that will increase the flooding risk elsewhere, where possible;
- 2) Substitute less vulnerable uses, where avoidance is not possible; and
- 3) Justify, mitigate and manage the risk, where avoidance and substitution are not possible.

Development should only be permitted in areas at risk of flooding when there are no alternative, reasonable sites available in areas at lower risk that also meet the objectives of proper planning and sustainable development.

Flood Risk Management Objectives

Objective FL 1 – Flood Risk Management and Assessment (Refer to Maps 3A/3B)

Ensure the implementation of the DoEHLG/OPW publication *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009* (including its accompanying Technical Appendices) and including the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government's *Circular PL 2/2014* (or any updated/superseding document) in relation to flood risk management within the plan area. This will include the following:

1. Avoid, reduce and/or mitigate, as appropriate in accordance with *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009* (and as updated), the risk of flooding within the flood risk areas indicated on **Maps 3A/3B – Flood Risk Management** including fluvial, pluvial and groundwater flooding, and any other flood risk areas that may be identified during the period of the plan or in relation to a planning application.
2. Development proposals in areas where there is an identified or potential risk of flooding or that could give rise to a risk of flooding elsewhere 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 for Planning Authorities 2009*, (or any superseding document) & Circular PL2/2014 (as updated/superseded). 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.
3. Development that would be subject to an inappropriate risk of flooding or that would cause or exacerbate such a risk at other locations shall not normally be permitted.
4. Galway County Council shall work with other bodies and organisations, as appropriate, to help protect critical infrastructure, including water and wastewater, within the County, from risk of flooding.

Objective FL 2 – Flood Zones and Appropriate Land Uses (Refer to Maps 3A/3B)

1. 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 **DM Guidance FL 1 - Flood Zones and Appropriate**

Land Uses. 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 and Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment in accordance with the criteria set out under with *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009 & Circular PL2/2014* (as updated/superseded).

2. Ensure that development proposals in areas identified in the plan within Flood Zone C that may be subject to potential flood risk from other sources (e.g. areas of indicative pluvial/groundwater flooding and identified alluvium soil areas) are required to be accompanied by a Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment in accordance with the criteria set out under *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009) & Circular PL2/2014* (as updated/superseded).

For development proposals in all other areas of Flood Zone C, the developer should satisfy him or herself that the level of flood risk is appropriate to the development being proposed. Where, in the opinion of the Planning Authority, the development proposal is of such a scale that flood risk must be considered (e.g. creation of significant areas of new hard standing which could significantly increase run-off), the Planning Authority may request that a site-specific flood risk assessment be carried out in accordance with the criteria set out under *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009 & Circular PL2/2014* (as updated/superseded).

Objective FL 3 – Structural and Non-Structural Risk Management Measures in Flood Vulnerable Zones

Ensure that applications to existing developments in flood vulnerable zones shall provide details of structural and non-structural flood 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.

(Refer to DM Guideline FL 2)

Objective FL 4 – Management of Flood Risk in Relation to Natura 2000 Sites

In circumstances 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, such measures will undergo environmental assessment and Habitats Directive Assessment, as appropriate.

Objective FL 5 – Installation of Water Level Recorders

Ensure that sufficient water level recorders are installed on the River Suck so that the flows can be estimated and so that future hydraulic models of the River Suck can be adequately calibrated for future use. Ensure that these recorders are connected to the online County wide SCADA system.

Objective FL 6 – New and Emerging Data

Future amendments to the plan shall consider, as appropriate any new and/or emerging data, including, when available, any relevant information contained in the Flood Risk Management Plans and as recommended in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the plan area.

Objective FL 7 – Protection of Water Bodies and Watercourses

Protect water bodies and watercourses within the plan area from inappropriate development, including rivers, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains. This will include a general 10 metre protection buffer from rivers as measured from the near river bank (this distance may be increased and decreased on a site by site basis, as appropriate). In addition, promote the sustainable management and uses of water bodies and avoid culverting or realignment of these features.

- Ensure that flows through the town in the stream near St. Michael's Church are not impeded at the downstream end. In particular it is important that the culverts under the present town centre by-pass are not blocked.

Objective FL 8 – Pluvial, Groundwater Flood Risk & Alluvium Soil Areas

Planning applications on lands identified within pluvial and/or groundwater flood risk and/or alluvium soil areas shall be accompanied by a Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment that corresponds with that outlined under Chapter 5 'Flooding and Development Management' of *The Planning System and the Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009)* (or any updates to same). Such

assessments shall be prepared by suitably qualified experts with hydrological experience and shall quantify the risks and the effects of any necessary mitigation, together with the measures needed or proposed to manage residual risks.

Objective FL 9 – Storm Water Retention Facilities & Integrated Constructed Wetlands (ICW) (Refer to Maps 2A/2B)

Galway County Council shall support the use of Integrated Constructed Wetlands (ICW) as a low cost and environmentally sustainable alternative having regard to the *Integrated Constructed Wetlands - Guidance Document for Farmyard Soiled Water and Domestic Wastewater Applications* as appropriate.

- Provide storm water retention facilities and develop as linear integrated constructed wetlands (ICW) to treat farm discharges, etc and to enhance river quality at strategic locations along the River Suck and Deerpark River and as per location on the **Specific Objectives Map 2A/2B** and other locations subject to the requirements of the Habitats Directive, where appropriate.

Objective FL 10 – Improvement &/or Restoration of Natural Flood Risk Management Functions

Prevent alteration to natural drainage systems and subject to compliance with the *Habitats and Birds Directives*, Galway County Council will contribute towards the improvement and/or restoration of the natural flood risk management functions of flood plains.

Objective FL 11 – Flood Risk Assessment for Planning Applications & CFRAMS

Ensure that site specific Flood Risk Assessments (FRA) accompanies all planning applications in Flood Zones A and B, including those areas indicated on Maps 3A/3B even for developments appropriate to the particular Flood Zone. The detail of the site specific FRAs will depend on the level of risk and scale of development. A detailed site specific FRA should quantify the risks and effects of selected mitigation and the management of residual risks. Galway County Council shall have regard to the findings of the Shannon CFRAM Study in the assessment of planning applications

Objective FL 12 – Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and Flood Risk Assessments (FRA) and Climate Change

Ensure that Strategic Flood Risk Assessments and site specific Flood Risk Assessments consider and provide information on the implications of climate change with regard to flood risk in relevant locations. The 2009 OPW *Draft Guidance on Assessment of Potential Future Scenarios for Flood Risk Management* (or any superseding document) shall be consulted with to this effect.

Objective FL 13 – Environmental Impact Assessment/Statement (EIA/EIS) & Flood Risk Assessment (FRA)

Flood risk may constitute a significant environmental effect of a development proposal that in certain circumstances may trigger a sub-threshold EIS, therefore Galway County Council shall ensure that Flood Risk Assessment would form an integral part of any EIA undertaken for projects within the Plan area.

3.7.6 Development Management Guidelines

Flood Risk Management Guidelines

DM Guideline FL 1 – Flood Zones and Appropriate Land Uses

The table below indicates the types of land uses that are appropriate in each of the Flood Zones identified within the plan area, in accordance with *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009* (and as updated). Where developments/land uses are proposed that are considered inappropriate to the Flood Zone, then a Development Management Justification Test and Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment will be required in accordance with *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009* (and as updated) & *Departmental Circular PL2/2014*.

Land Uses	Flood Zone A	Flood Zone B	Flood Zone C
HVD – Highly Vulnerable	Inappropriate (if proposed then Justification	Inappropriate (if proposed then Justification Test &	Appropriate (screen for flood

Development	Test & detailed FRA required)	detailed FRA required)	risk)
LVD – Less Vulnerable Development	Inappropriate (if proposed then Justification Test & detailed FRA required)	Inappropriate due to climate change (if proposed then Justification Test & detailed FRA required)	Appropriate (screen for flood risk)
WCD – Water-Compatible Development	Appropriate (detailed FRA may be required)	Appropriate (detailed FRA may be required)	Appropriate (screen for flood risk)

Notes (refer to *Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009* for additional detail):

1. HVD – Houses, schools, hospitals, residential institutions, emergency services, essential infrastructure, etc.
2. LVD – Economic uses (retail, leisure, warehousing, commercial, industrial, non-residential institutions, etc.), land and buildings used for agriculture or forestry, local transport infrastructure, etc.
3. WCD – Docks, marinas, wharves, water-based recreation and tourism (excluding sleeping accommodation), amenity open space, sports and recreation, flood control infrastructure, etc.

Please refer to separate supporting document *Draft Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the Ballinasloe Local Area Plan 2015-2021*

DM Guideline FL 2 – Structural and Non-Structural Risk Management Measures in Flood Vulnerable Zones

Applications in areas zoned as Constrained Land Use shall provide details of proposed structural and non-structural flood risk management measures to be implemented as part of the development. These details shall include, but not be limited to the following as appropriate:

Floor Levels

For extensions or modifications to an existing property which is covered by the Building Regulations, the threshold levels into a property shall be above the minimum floor level as established by the Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment for the development, carried out in accordance with *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009* (and as updated). Where threshold levels cannot achieve the minimum floor level for streetscape, conservation or other reasons, alternative flood defences or flood resilience measures shall be proposed.

The design of the development may specify a mixture of uses vertically in buildings – with water compatible or less vulnerable uses located at ground floor level, along with other measures for dealing with residual flood risk.

Account must be taken of providing access to the building in compliance with the Building Regulations governing access to buildings.

Internal Layout

Internal layout of the building shall be designed and specified to minimise the impact of potential flooding on the building [for example, living accommodation, essential services, storage space for provisions and equipment shall be designed to be located above the predicted flood level]. In addition, designs and specifications shall ensure that, wherever reasonably practicable, the siting of living accommodation (particularly sleeping areas) shall be above flood level.

With the exception of single storey extensions to existing properties, new single storey accommodation shall not be deemed appropriate where ground floor levels are below the minimum floor level recommended in the site specific flood risk assessment. In all cases, specifications for safe access, refuge and evacuation shall be incorporated into the design of the development.

Flood-Resistant Construction

Where feasible, developments in flood vulnerable zones shall specify the use of flood-resilient construction aimed at preventing water from entering buildings - to mitigate the damage floodwaters cause to buildings.

When constructing new properties, permanent flood resistance measures (e.g. use of low permeability materials) are always preferable to temporary measures, such as flood resistance products (e.g. door flood guards) as they do not require intervention by the property occupants. The quality standards for certified flood protection products include:

- PAS 1188-1 (for building apertures)
- PAS 1188-2 (for temporary or demountable types)
- PAS 1188-3 (for building flood skirt systems)

Flood-Resilient Construction

Developments in flood vulnerable zones that are at risk of occasional inundation shall incorporate design and specification for flood-resistant construction which accepts that floodwater will enter buildings and provides for this in the design and specification of internal building services and finishes. These measures limit damage caused by floodwater and allow relatively quick recovery. This can be achieved by specifying wall and floor materials such as ceramic tiling that can be cleaned and dried relatively easily, provided that the substrate materials (e.g. blockwork) are also resilient. Electrics, appliances and kitchen fittings shall also be specified to be raised above flood level, and non-return valves shall be incorporated into drainage pipes.

Emergency Response Planning

In addition to considering physical design issues for developments in flood vulnerable zones, the developer shall specify that the planning of new development also takes account of the need for effective emergency response planning for flood events in areas of new development.

Applications for developments in flood vulnerable zones shall provide confirmation (and details) that the following measures will be put in place and maintained:

- Provision and dissemination of flood warnings to the development occupiers, evacuation plans and ensuring public awareness of flood risks to people where they live and work;
- Coordination of responses and discussion with relevant emergency services i.e. Local Authorities, Fire & Rescue, Civil Defence and An Garda Síochána through the SFRA; and
- Awareness of risks and evacuation procedures.

Emergency Access and Egress During Flood Events

Applications for developments in in flood vulnerable zones shall include the following:

- Identification of emergency access/egress route(s) from the development to be used during flood events. Such routes would normally be expected to allow access/egress from the development to an area in Flood Zone C. Emergency access/egress routes should be defined such that it is not required to traverse an area with ground levels below the predicted 1 in 100 year flood level.
- The development shall have signage in place at appropriate locations outlining the emergency escape route(s).
- The application shall confirm that information on emergency access/egress routes will be included in the safety file for the construction project.

Further Information

Further and more detailed guidance and advice can be found at <http://www.flooding.ie> and in the Building Regulations.

DM Guideline FL 3 – Minimum Finished Floor Levels (FFL's)

The Planning Authority shall

- Require that site specific flood risk assessments be carried out to establish minimum ground floor levels(s) for new developments in areas of potential flood risk in accordance with *The Planning System and Flood Risk Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009)* & *Circular PL2/2014* (as updated/superseded). The appropriate level to meet this standard should be determined using the best available information at the time.
- Ensure that all manholes will be raised to a minimum level of 38.2 OD in the lower floodplain

(below the Dublin Road Bridge) and 39.2 OD in the middle flood plain (above the Dublin Road Bridge). Sewers will be sealed to ensure that flood water doesn't gain access and overload the public waste water treatment plant at Pollboy.

- c) All details to be agreed in writing with the area engineer and submitted as part of a planning application.

3.8 Urban Design and Landscape

3.8.1 Context

Urban Design and Place-making

Urban design refers to the theory and practice of creating urban places and involves buildings but focuses particularly on the spaces between buildings, including the streets, frontages, civic spaces and overall place-making, such as building types and arrangements, urban block types and patterns, mix of uses and activities, etc. Successful urban design is essential in the creation of attractive and sustainable living and working environments and the establishment of a unique identity and sense of place for the town.

Landscape, Townscape and Visual Amenity

The *European Landscape Convention* that was signed and ratified by Ireland came into force in March 2004. The Convention introduced a European wide concept centring on the quality of landscape protection, management and planning and extends to natural, urban, peri-urban and rural areas encompassing land, inland water, coastal and marine areas. The *EU Landscape Convention* defines landscape as “.....area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”, which is also the landscape definition framework included in the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and within the *Draft National Landscape Strategy 2014*.

The *Landscape and Landscape Character Assessment for County Galway* which forms part of the current *Galway County Development Plan* indicates the landscape character rating, value rating and sensitivity rating. The landscape sensitivity within County Galway ranges from Class 1 to Class 5, with Class 1 being low sensitivity, Class 2 – moderate sensitivity, Class 3 – high sensitivity, Class 4 - special sensitivity and Class 5 – unique sensitivity. The Ballinasloe LAP area is located within or in proximity to three landscape character areas, the East Central Galway area, the Shannon and Suck River Valley and the Northeast Galway (Ballinasloe to Ballymoe) character areas. The landscape value attributed to Ballinasloe ranges from a low value in the western area of the town, medium and high for the eastern area near the River Suck. The landscape sensitivity designation for Ballinasloe ranges from Class 1 to Class 3 to the east of the town along the River Suck.

The townscape and streetscapes of Ballinasloe including the church spires are an important part of the built heritage and visual amenity of the town. The protection and enhancement of the townscape, streetscapes and historic street pattern would all need to be considered with respect to the future conservation of the character and development of the town.

3.8.2 Urban Design and Landscape Policy and Objectives

Urban Design and Landscape Policy

Policy UD 1 – Urban Design and Landscape

It is the policy of Galway County Council to promote the use of sustainable urban design principles and approaches that will help to create high quality built and natural environments appropriate to the context and landscape setting of the Ballinasloe plan area, having regard to the guidance contained in the *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines 2009* and the accompanying *Urban Design Manual 2009* & the *Design Manual for Urban Roads & Streets 2013* and to the *Draft National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2014-2024* (including any superseding guidance documents). This will focus on the development of a high quality, well landscaped and appropriately scaled built environment with a strong civic and commercial core, responsive building frontages, appropriate building forms, heights, designs and materials and high quality civic, community,

recreational and amenity facilities. The creation of a high quality natural environment will also be supported through the protection of the landscape sensitivities, views and prospects in the plan area and the promotion of the development of a green network and high quality landscaping.

Urban Design and Landscape Objectives

Objective UD 1 – High Quality, Context Sensitive Design

Ensure that new developments are responsive to their site context and in keeping with the character, amenity, heritage, environment and landscape of the area. New development proposals will be required to complement the existing character of the town centre/area in terms of scale, height, massing, building line, 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.

Objective UD 2 – Public Spaces and Streets

Promote the development of high quality public spaces consisting of streets, squares, parks and amenities connected by a network of pedestrian and cycling routes. Public spaces should have a high standard of design and street furniture that will create a coherent character for the area. This would include appropriately designed and located park benches, bus shelters, cycle storage facilities, refuse bins, signage, street sculpture, etc. but should avoid the over-proliferation of different elements and/or cluttering of public spaces.

Objective UD 3 – Spatial Definition and Animation

Ensure that new developments are designed to provide spatial definition and animation to public spaces and streets through the use of appropriate building lines and built forms, responsive building frontages and passive surveillance and high quality streetscapes and/or landscaping edges to enclose and address public spaces. Perimeter block typologies provide a useful approach in generating good spatial definition, adequate enclosure and a high quality public realm and the creation of focal points, such as landmark buildings and gateways, help to improve spatial definition and legibility and will be encouraged in appropriate locations.

Objective UD 4 – Green Network and Landscaping

Support the sustainable development of a network of amenities, open spaces and natural areas that support biodiversity, that incorporate existing landscape features such as local rivers, streams, trees, stone walls and hedgerows, that provide pedestrian and cycling linkages and active and passive recreation opportunities, that help to structure and provide relief from the built environment and that can provide areas for surface water attenuation and flood risk management. Any proposed development having potential biological or hydrological connectivity with Natura 2000 Sites will be subject to AA Screening and Stage 2 AA if required under the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

Objective UD 5 – Street-Oriented Development and Responsive Frontages

Promote street-oriented development along the urban street network within the built areas of the town and along the approach routes to the town. This will include improved facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport as appropriate and the promotion of high quality building or landscaping edges to these routes. Buildings and spaces should be designed to provide a human scale along street frontages with the use of appropriate building heights and responsive ground floor treatments. Intensive, fine-grained developments will generally be encouraged to provide a diversity of building forms and public spaces.

Objective UD 6 – Design Statements

Require design statements with all large scale or sensitively located development proposals, such as in close proximity to an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA), protected structure, natural heritage designation, significant public amenity, elevated position or visually vulnerable area, and in the case of any other development proposals where this is considered necessary by the planning authority. Design statements should include a site appraisal examining the location, context, landscape/townscape setting, accessibility, features and characteristics of the development site, which should be used to inform the selection of appropriate development forms and design responses and the incorporation and provision of any important landscape features in the layout and design of the development. Design statements should be succinct documents that include both text and supporting graphics demonstrating how the site context and characteristics and design

principles, policies and objectives have been addressed in the design and layout of the development proposal.

Objective UD 7 – Landscape Character, Values, Sensitivity and Views/Prospects (Refer to Maps 2A/2B)

Protect the landscape character, values, sensitivities, focal points and views in the Plan area, including those identified in the current *Galway County Development Plan* and included in the *Landscape and Landscape Character Assessment for County Galway* and as shown on **Map 2A/2B – Specific Objectives**.

This will include, *inter alia*, the following:

- a) Ensure that new developments are responsive
 - To the high and special sensitivity of the River Suck and surrounds,
 - To the open character of St. Michael's Square (including its focus St. Michael's Church),
 - The Fair Green and the Le Poer Trench Memorial,
 - The narrow streets rising to St. John's Church of Ireland a major landmark of the town, with its converging narrow lanes entered through carriage arches and to any other visually vulnerable areas or locally important townscape contexts.
 - Vistas as indicated within Garbally Demesne,
 - Vistas from the public marina;
 - Vistas at the junction of Creagh Church and graveyard.
- b) Require Visual Impact Assessment for developments with potential to impact on areas of significant landscape character, value or sensitivity, including both urban and natural features, such as the River Suck, significant townscapes and historic buildings, as appropriate.
- c) Prohibit development that will block or interfere with a significant focal point or view. Where it is considered that a development may impact on focal points or views, have regard to the significance of any such impact and any appropriate mitigation measures that should be incorporated.

3.9 Built Heritage & Cultural Heritage

3.9.1 Context

The built and cultural heritage within Ballinasloe contributes to the character and local distinctiveness of the area. The built heritage includes both architectural and archaeological heritage and Ballinasloe has a number of significant elements of both that form part of the history and character of the town.

Architectural Heritage

Ballinasloe is a historic town with a rich architectural heritage and a number of key features, including ecclesiastical and religious buildings and structures, historic core, street pattern, plot arrangement and historic streetscapes, mainly within the town centre. Ballinasloe contains a generous number of buildings of regional and national significance, which together with the characteristic buildings of the town, its distinctive form, shaped by its history, and its setting close to the River Suck give it its special character. Galway County Council is committed to the protection and enhancement of this heritage through the measures contained in planning legislation, through the implementation of appropriate conservation led policies as well as sensitive land use objectives, urban design principles and development management standards, which will significantly enhance the architectural setting within Ballinasloe.

The Record of Protected Structures

The current *Galway County Development Plan* incorporates the Record of Protected Structures, which protects structures which are considered to be of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social, technical interest or value. A statutory framework for protecting, managing and enhancing historic towns is set out in the Planning and Development Act 2000, (as amended). The inclusion of a structure on the RPS does not preclude appropriate use or development. Ballinasloe has a wealth of protected structures, including landmark buildings, those that contribute to the urban streetscape and those in rural settings. Planning permission must be obtained

before significant works which would materially alter the character of a protected structure can be carried out. Refer to the **Record of Protected Structures** which forms part of the current *Galway County Development Plan*.

Architectural Conservation Area

An Architectural Conservation Area is a place, area, group of structures or townscape, which is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social, or technical interest. The Architectural Conservation Area can also include areas which contribute to the appreciation of a protected structure and may or may not include protected structures. Planning permission must be obtained before significant works, which might alter the character of a structure or/ the Architectural Conservation Area, can be carried out to the exterior. Ballinasloe has two existing designated ACA's (town centre and former St Brigid's Hospital). The designation of the historic town centre core as an ACA and the associated management of both individual buildings and the public realm in the area continue to significantly enhance the quality of the built environment within Ballinasloe.

Statement of Significance for the Architectural Conservation Areas (Refer to Maps 1A/1B – Land Use Zoning and to Maps 2A/2B – Specific Objectives)

Ballinasloe has two designated Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) within the plan area.

According to the *Architectural Inventory for Ballinasloe 2004*,

- Ballinasloe town centre's ACA principal significance lies in the combination of its planned formal street pattern, plot sizes, architectural coherence and distinctive landmark buildings;
- St Brigid's Hospital (former) special significance derives from the classical architectural quality of the main building, built on an X- plan. The tripartite entrance gateway with original cast and wrought ironwork is a significant landmark to the eastern approach to the town of Ballinasloe. This complex is of national value because of its special architecture quality as exemplified by its composition, plan and degree of craftsmanship in construction.

Designed Landscapes – Garbally Demesne (Refer to Maps 2A/2B – Specific Objectives)

Historic designed landscapes are gardens, parks or estates that were deliberately laid out to create a particular effect. The designed landscapes of Galway consist primarily of demesnes associated with large country houses and are often the setting for a Protected Structure. Garbally demesne is an example of a designed landscape within the Ballinasloe LAP area. Garbally demesne's principal significance is the historical and designed landscape which reflects the social and political milieu of the late 18th century. Its architectural significance lies in the impressive built features retained throughout the demesne, while the planned landscape provides a setting for the principal house and associated buildings. The character of the demesne contributes strongly to the development of the landscape adjoining the west of the town of Ballinasloe, and is a notable feature of the town. The area is outlined in **Maps 2A/2B - Specific Objectives**.

Archaeological Heritage

Ballinasloe also has a rich archaeological heritage providing evidence of early settlement in the area. The *National Monuments Acts 1930-2004* provides for the protection of archaeological heritage, including the establishment of a Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), which is a national inventory of archaeological sites and monuments, under Section 12 of the *National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994*. Some archaeological sites and monuments may also be of significant architectural heritage value and be afforded dual protection as a Recorded/National Monument under the National Monuments Acts and as a Protected Structure under the Planning and Development Acts.

The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) comprises of a set of Constraint Maps on which the known archaeological sites are marked. This is accompanied by a manual which contains a description of each of the protected archaeological sites (available on www.archaeology.ie). All sites marked on the RMP Constraints Maps are protected under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994. Monuments uncovered after the publication of the RMP can be found on the Archaeological Survey of Ireland, SMR database which is available on www.archaeology.ie. In addition to this, there are a number of monuments that are afforded protection, as they are either in the ownership or guardianship of the State, or are subject of a preservation or temporary preservation order or is registered in the register of Historic Monuments (RHM).

Any National Monument in the ownership or guardianship of the Minister or the Local Authority or which are the subject of a preservation or temporary preservation order will require the written consent of the Minister for any works at or in proximity to the monument. A listing of National Monuments in the Minister's ownership or guardianship as well as monuments that are the subject of a preservation order is available at www.archaeology.ie. Further information on archaeology and how it interacts with the planning system can be found in the publication titled 'Archaeology and the Planning Process' which is available on www.archaeology.ie.

The Minister for Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht (DAHG) is responsible for the protection of our archaeological heritage, including the licensing of archaeological excavations under the *National Monuments Acts 1930-2004*. When the owner or occupier of a property, or any other person proposes to carry out, or to cause, or to permit the carrying out of any work at or in relation to a Recorded Monument or Place they are required to give notice in writing to the Minister 2 months before commencing that work.

Refer to the following:

- Maps 2A/2B of this plan in relation to Zones of Archaeological Potential (ZAP);
- Archaeological Constraints Map for County Galway;
- Website of the National Monuments Service www.archaeology.ie in relation to Recorded Monuments and Places on the RMP.

Burial Grounds often contain the standing remains or sites of earlier structures and they also can contain a great diversity of natural heritage. Burial grounds, which are included in the Records of Monuments and Places, are afforded protection under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994.

Cultural Heritage

The cultural heritage of the town is a general term that includes cultural services, such as public buildings (e.g. public libraries and museums) and also encompasses a range of characteristics that help define an area and its population, including local customs, traditions, language and literature. It is important to acknowledge the unique cultural identity that a town like Ballinasloe displays and ensure that new development supports and complements same.

3.9.2 Built and Cultural Heritage Policies and Objectives

Built and Cultural Heritage Policies

Policy BAC 1 – Built Heritage

It is the policy of Galway County Council to support the conservation of architectural and archaeological heritage, including Protected Structures, Architectural Conservation Area and Recorded Monuments and Places and other important features of architectural or archaeological heritage within the plan area. Galway County Council will ensure the implementation of the legislative, statutory and policy provisions relevant to the conservation of built heritage, including the following (and any updated/superseding documents):

- Legislative provisions in the *Planning and Development Act 2000* (as amended) and *National Monuments Act 1930* (as amended).
- Statutory provisions in the current *Galway County Development Plan*, including the Record of Protected Structures.
- Policy guidance in the *Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015*, the *Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines 2004/2011*, the *Archaeology and Development: Guidelines for Good Practice for Developers* (and any updated/superseding documents).

Policy BAC 2 – Cultural Heritage

It is the policy of Galway County Council to acknowledge and promote awareness of the origins, historical development and cultural heritage of the town, to support high quality developments that relate to local heritage and to ensure that new development respects and is responsive to same.

Built and Cultural Heritage Objectives

Objective BAC 1 – 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).

Objective BAC 2 – Protected Structures (Refer to the Current Galway County Development Plan)

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.

Objective BAC 3 – Architectural Conservation Areas (Refer to Maps 1A/1B and to Maps 2A/2B)

Protect, conserve and enhance the essential character of the Ballinasloe Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) 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.

Objective BAC 4 – Development/Works Relating to Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA's)

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 the ACA. This will include the following:

- a) Works materially affecting the character of a Protected Structure or the exterior of a building/structure within an ACA will require planning permission.
- b) Any works/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.
- c) Works/development within the ACA shall ensure the conservation of traditional features and building elements that contribute to the character of the area.
- d) New proposals shall have appropriate regard to scale, plot, form, mass, design, materials, and colours and function.

Objective BAC 5 – Demolition

Prohibit development proposals, either in whole or in part, for the demolition of protected structures or structures within the Architectural Conservation Area, save in exceptional circumstances.

Objective BAC 6 – Architectural Conservation Area Management Plan

Prepare and publish an Architectural Conservation Area Management Plan(s) for Ballinasloe over the lifetime of this plan, to preserve, protect and enhance the character of the ACA's, including the public realm and implement any recommendations arising from same.

Objective BAC 7 – Vernacular Architecture and Structures of Local Interest

Recognise the importance of the contribution of vernacular architecture to the character of Ballinasloe and ensure the protection, retention and appropriate revitalisation and use of vernacular heritage, including structures of local interest that contribute to the local distinctiveness, built heritage and/or streetscape character of Ballinasloe, and resist the demolition of these vernacular structures.

Objective BAC 8 – Energy Efficiency and Traditionally Built Structures

Ensure that measures to upgrade the energy efficiency of protected structures and traditionally built historic structures are sensitive to traditional construction methods and use appropriate materials and do not have detrimental impact on the material, aesthetic or visual character or function of the

building.

Objective BAC 9 – Local Landscape and Place Assessment

Support proposals from local communities including the Tidy Town Committee, Heritage Groups, Chamber of Commerce and residents groups in undertaking studies and analysis of the character of Ballinasloe and in promoting its regeneration for their own use and enjoyment and that of visitors to the area.

Objective BAC 10 – Garbally Demesne (Refer to Maps 2A/2B)

- a) Protect, conserve and enhance the character of the area of the historic demesne of Garbally as outlined in the **Specific Objectives Maps 2A/2B**, through the appropriate management and control of the design, layout and location of new development within or in proximity to same;
- b) Development proposals shall only be considered where they demonstrate high quality and sympathetic design, propose the use of high quality materials and do not negatively impact on the established character of the designed landscape;
- c) Development proposals within Garbally Demesne shall also provide an impact assessment carried out by appropriately qualified personnel on the historic structures and natural features within the Demesne, their setting and character which shall demonstrate that any development proposals have taken account of same and do not negatively impact on the designed landscape.

Objective BAC 11 – Archaeological Heritage

Ensure the protection and sympathetic enhancement of archaeological heritage in the plan area, in particular by implementing the relevant provisions of the *Planning and Development Act 2000* (as amended), the *National Monuments Act 1930* (as amended) and with the national policy on protection of archaeological heritage as set out within the DAHG document titled *Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage 1999* (including any updated/superseding document that may be published within the lifetime of this plan).

1. All areas of archaeological heritage should be addressed where relevant including:
 - a) Immovable cultural heritage (e.g. monuments and ancient field boundaries);
 - b) Underwater cultural heritage such as river fording points, fish weirs, fish traps and other underwater ruins such as submerged jetties, that may await discovery in the River Suck and in other water bodies within the plan area;
 - c) Moveable cultural heritage (e.g. loose carved stones, sculptures, architectural fragments etc.);
2. All proposed development within proximity to archaeological monuments should be subject to appropriate consultation at the earliest possible stage, with the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG);
3. All impacts which may impinge on the archaeological heritage should be appropriately assessed by a suitably qualified archaeologist;
4. Ensure that any development in the immediate vicinity of a National Monument and a Recorded Monument is sensitively designed and sited and does not detract from the Recorded Monument or its visual amenity.

Objective BAC 12 – Protection of Monuments and Places

Ensure the protection and sympathetic enhancement of the monuments and places included and proposed for inclusion in the Record of Monuments and Places, as well as any monument that may be designated as a National Monument, together with the integrity of their character and setting, by implementing the relevant provisions of the *Planning and Development Act 2000* (as amended), the *National Monuments Act 1930* (as amended), the national policy on protection of archaeological heritage as set out within the DAHG document titled *Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage 1999* (including any updated/superseding document that may be published within the lifetime of this plan) and the *Archaeology and Development: Guidelines for Good Practice for Developers*. This will include the protection of Monuments on the lists provided by the National Monument Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, which has statutory responsibility in this area.

Objective BAC 13 – Underwater Archaeological Sites

Protect and preserve the underwater archaeological sites in rivers and water bodies within the LAP

area including underwater cultural heritage that may await discovery in the River Suck and within other water bodies within the plan area.

Under the National Monuments Act, it is obligatory to report all discoveries of archaeological objectives and wrecks over 100 years old within 4 days of discovery refer to www.archaeology.ie.

Objective BAC 14 – Archaeological Assessment & Zones of Archaeological Potential (ZAPs) (Refer to Maps 2A/2B)

- a) Ensure that all planning applications for development within close proximity of Recorded Monuments and Places and any monuments that may be designated as National Monuments, and within Zones of Archaeological Potential (ZAP) are referred to the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG) and take account of the archaeological heritage of the area, any advice received from the DAHG and the need for archaeological assessments (by suitable qualified archaeologists) and, where appropriate, mitigation measures.
- b) An Archaeological Assessment for such developments within the plan area that include or are proposed to be located at or close to a Recorded Monument, those that are extensive in terms of area (0.5h hectares or more) or length (1 kilometre or more), those that may impact on the underwater environment (riverine) and developments that require an Environmental Impact Statement/ Environmental Assessment.

National Monuments include:

- National Monuments in the ownership of the state or Local Authority;
 - Archaeological and architectural monuments/sites in the Record of Monuments and Places;
 - Monuments in the Register of Historic Monuments;
 - Underwater archaeological heritage;
 - Previously unknown and unrecorded archaeological sites (including subsurface elements with no visible surface remains and potential sites under water in rivers, and can include fish traps, anchorages, bridges, fording points);
 - Potential sites located in the vicinity of large complexes of sites or monuments;
 - Present or former wetlands, unenclosed land, and rivers.
- c) Flood relief works and other development in or adjacent to the rivers and streams in the Ballinasloe plan area have the potential to negatively impact on known, potential submerged or buried archaeology and therefore there will be a need for an appropriate level of archaeological assessment of any proposed works in these areas.
 - d) All impacts must be assessed, to include ground disturbance, impacts on the setting of the monuments and visual impacts. These should include direct, indirect, temporary and cumulative impacts.
 - e) Mitigating impacts, identified through consultation, should be taken into account within the development at the earliest possible stages. Various approaches should be considered, such as avoidance, design modification and relocation where appropriate.

Objective BAC 15 – 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 Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG). Encourage the local community to manage burial grounds in accordance with best conservation and heritage principles.

Objective BAC 16 – Cultural Heritage: Local Place Names

Protect local place names as an important part of the cultural heritage and unique character of the plan area, and support the use of appropriate names for new developments that reflect the character/heritage of the area and that contribute to the local distinctiveness of the village. New developments will be required to consult with **Coiste Logainmneacha Chontae na Gaillimhe**, Galway County Council 'Placename Committee' to identify an appropriate name for new developments that reflect the local character and heritage of the area.

3.10 Natural Heritage & Biodiversity

3.10.1 Context

Natural heritage includes the variety of life we see around us every day and also includes the landscape and its geological foundation. The variety of life is often referred to as biological diversity or biodiversity. Biodiversity is a word used to describe the natural world that includes people, animals, plants, microbes as well as the places they live which are called habitats. Natural heritage includes a wide range of natural features and processes that make an essential contribution to the environmental quality, ecological biodiversity, landscape character, visual amenity, recreational activities, public health and investment potential of the town.

European Directives, Natura 2000 and Environmental Assessments

At European level, the *Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)* and the *Birds Directive (2009/147/EC)* mandate the identification and protection of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), which together create a network of protected wildlife areas, known as the Natura 2000 network, across the European Union. The designation of these sites forms part of a range of measures aimed at conserving important or threatened habitats and species. *The Water Framework Directive Register of Protected Areas* as required under the Directive also contains an inventory of protected area sites representing area categories to include areas designated for the protection of habitat and species.

There is a legal requirement that all land use plans comply with the Birds and Habitats Directives, in particular through the preparation of a Screening for Appropriate Assessment or a full Appropriate Assessment as appropriate. The *Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC)* also requires that all land-use plans legally comply with the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, including the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening or a Strategic Environmental Assessment Report, as appropriate. Further details regarding the Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment and the Environmental Report (SEA/ER) are available separately as supporting documents to this plan. The River Suck Callows Special Protection Area (SPA: Site Code 004097) is located within the Ballinasloe LAP area and forms part of Ireland's contribution to the Natura 2000 network within the EU.

Natural Heritage Areas and Associated Legislation

The national designation for wildlife and nature conservation is the Natural Heritage Area (NHA), and established Natura Heritage Areas are protected under the *Wildlife Acts 1976-2000*. The Natural Heritage Areas (NHA's) cover nationally important semi-natural and natural habitats, landforms or geo-morphological features, wild plant and animal species or a diversity of these natural attributes. These areas are considered important for the habitats present or hold species of plants and animals whose habitat need protection under national legislation. NHAs and proposed NHAs may also be regarded as stepping stones or ecological corridors in the context of *Article 10 of the EU Habitats Directive*. The Suck River Callows Natural Heritage Area (NHA: Site Code 000222; S.I 575 of 2005) is located within the plan area. This site is of national importance for nature conservation established under the *Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000*, and is legally protected under the *Wildlife Acts, 1976-2000*. Ballinasloe Esker proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA; site code 001779), is an undesignated site that is not covered by other nature conservation designations. It is known to be of importance for biodiversity but has not yet been fully evaluated. This site is located within Garbally demesne. The Ballinasloe Local Area Plan includes policies and objectives to protect designated sites, in accordance with applicable EU and national legislation and policy, including the *EU Liability Directive (2004/35/EC)* and *European Communities (Environmental Liability) Regulations 2008*.

Biodiversity and Nature Conservation

The plan area also extends close to a number of other European sites (also known as Natura 2000 sites), Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), and other sites as well as supporting ecosystems, habitats and species which occur inside and outside the protected site network. In addition to their importance for biodiversity and nature conservation, these elements also provide ecosystems services such as clean water supply, flood storage and regulation, navigation, recreation and amenity. Cognisance should be taken of such sites in any plans or programmes that may be submitted to the Planning Authority.

Ecological Networks

Ecological networks are supported at EU level through the *European Spatial Development Perspective* and *Natura 2000* and underpin the *Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy*, which has been ratified by Ireland. Inland and coastal waterways, which include lakes, rivers, and streams, are living systems of high local biodiversity value due to the habitats associated with them, and function as ecological corridors that connect related habitats/designated sites, enabling species to move between them. The River Suck, Deepark River, Bunowen River, the Suck-Cuilleen and Suck-Kellysgrove waterbodies perform such an ecological network function. Trees and hedgerows are also of high local biodiversity value and contribute to ecological connectivity. Features that contribute to the creation of an ecological network should be retained and included in the design plans for development proposals.

Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure can be defined as networks of green areas that provide multiple environmental, social, educational and economic benefits to society and can include open spaces, woodlands, parks, farmland and private gardens. The environmental benefits of identifying a green infrastructure network cannot be underestimated as the protection of natural features like flood plains, wetlands, woodlands and hedgerows provide far-reaching benefits, e.g. climate change adaptation. Developing a green infrastructure approach can assist with the loss of biodiversity while enhancing an environment in which we live and thereby creating a high quality environment. Comhar Sustainable Development Council publication (2010) *Creating Green Infrastructure for Ireland: Enhancing Natural Capital for Human Wellbeing* sets out how a network of green spaces can be developed to benefit natural heritage and biodiversity as well as the greater economy and society.

Invasive Species

Non-native species both animal and plants can represent a major threat to local, regional and global biodiversity. Terrestrial and aquatic habitats can be negatively affected, resulting in significant damage to conservation and economic interests such as agriculture, forestry and civil infrastructure. The *Third Schedule of European Communities (Birds & Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011* lists restricted non-native species and Regulation No.49 and No. 50 specifically relate to recognised invasive species. Development proposals must ensure that the presence or absence of invasive alien species has been addressed in accordance with the new European Regulation - *Regulation (EU) No. 1143/2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species* and the EC (Birds and Habitats) Regulations 2011. Where invasive alien species are present on a development site an Invasive Alien Species Management Plan will be required.

3.10.2 Natural Heritage and Biodiversity Policy and Objectives

Natural Heritage and Biodiversity Policy

Policy NH 1 – Natural Heritage, Landscape and Environment

It is the policy of Galway County Council, to support the conservation and enhancement of natural heritage and biodiversity, including the protection of the integrity of Natura 2000 sites, the protection of Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas and the promotion of the development of a green/ecological network within the plan area, in order to support ecological functioning and connectivity, create opportunities in suitable locations for active and passive recreation and to structure and provide visual relief from the built environment. The protection of natural heritage and biodiversity, including Natura 2000 sites, will be implemented in accordance with relevant EU Environmental Directives and applicable national legislation, policies, plans and guidelines, including the following (and any updated/superseding documents):

- EU Directives, including the *Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)*, the *Birds Directive (2009/147/EC codified version of Directive)*, the *Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (85/337/EEC) & EIA Directive (2014/52/EU)*, the *Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)* and the *Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC)*; the *Environmental Liability Directive 2004/35/EC*;
- National legislation, including the *Wildlife Act 1976*, the *European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1989 (SI No. 349 of 1989) (as amended)*, the *Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000*, the *European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (as amended)*, the *Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010* and the *European*

Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011) and the *Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Prevention and Management of the Introduction and Spread of Invasive Non-Native Species [2013/0307 (COD)]*.

- National policy guidelines, including the *Landscape and Landscape Assessment Draft Guidelines 2000*, the *Environmental Impact Assessment Sub-Threshold Development Guidelines 2003*, *Strategic Environmental Assessment Guidelines 2004* and the *Appropriate Assessment Guidelines 2010*.
- Catchment and water resource management plans, including the *Western River Basin District Management Plan 2009-2015* (and as updated).
- Biodiversity plans and guidelines, including *Actions for Biodiversity 2011-2016: Ireland's National Biodiversity Plan*, the *Biodiversity Action Plan for County Galway 2008-2013* and the *Biodiversity Guidelines* produced by Galway County Council.

Natural Heritage & Biodiversity Objectives

Objective NH 1 – Natura 2000 Sites

Protect European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network (including Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation) in accordance with the requirements in the *EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)*, *EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC)*, the *Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010*, the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011)* (and any subsequent amendments or updated legislation) and having due regard to the guidance in the *Appropriate Assessment Guidelines 2010* (and any 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 a Habitats Directive 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 Natura 2000 site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects); or
2. The plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000 site (that does not host a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000; or
3. The plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000 site (that hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, restricted to reasons of human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000.

Objective NH 2 – Protected Habitats and Species

Support the protection of habitats and species listed in the Annexes to and/or covered by the *EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC, as amended)* and *Birds Directive (2009/147/EC)*, and regularly occurring-migratory birds and their habitats, and species protected under the *Wildlife Acts 1976-2000* and the *Flora Protection Order*.

Objective NH 3 – Environmental Management (Refer to Maps 2A/2B)

Ensure that any new development proposals on or near the environmental management area that may impact on River Suck Callows Special Protection Area (SPA; Site Code 004097), the Suck River Callows Natural Heritage Area (NHA: Site Code 000222; S.I 575 of 2005) are adequately assessed, undergo environmental and/or Habitats Directive Assessments, including the evaluation of cumulative/in combination effects, and any impacts identified can be avoided, reduced and/or

mitigated, as appropriate, in accordance with applicable environmental legislation and policy prior to any consent being given.

- Seek to ensure that a **minimum setback of 10 metres** is maintained on either side of the River Suck, save for exceptional circumstances where it can be reasonably demonstrated that this setback is not feasible.
- In the event of lighting being proposed along watercourse corridors an Ecological Impact Assessment (and where necessary an Appropriate Assessment) including bat and otter survey shall be conducted by specialists. The recommendations of the specialist studies shall be implemented to the greatest extent possible. No lighting will be installed without prior consultation with NPWS and shall be in line with advances in knowledge into the impact of lighting on bats and other species and also to reflect advances in technology in the lighting industry.
- Support the carrying out of a river corridor habitat survey of the River Suck that is located within the plan area in conjunction with other agencies and/or local community groups as resources permit.

Objective NH 4 – Natural Heritage Areas and Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (Refer to Map 2A/2B)

Protect Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas in accordance with the requirements of the *Wildlife Act 1976*, the *Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000* and the *Planning and Development Act 2000* (as amended). Where a proposed development within the plan area may give rise to likely significant effects on any Natural Heritage Area or proposed Natural Heritage Area (e.g. Ballinasloe Esker proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA: Site Code 001779), an Ecological Impact Assessment may be required.

Objective NH 5 – Impact Assessment

Ensure full compliance with the requirements of the EU *Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)*, *SEA Directive (2001/42/EC)* and *EIA Directive 2011/92/EU* and associated legislation/regulations, including the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011)*, *European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004-2011*, the *Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004-2011* and the *European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1989-2011* (or any updated/superseding legislation). Planning applications for proposed developments within the plan area that may give rise to likely significant effects on the environment and/or any designated site may need to be accompanied by one of more of the following: an Environmental Impact Statement, an Ecological Impact Assessment Report, a Habitats Directive Assessment Screening Report or a Natura Impact Statement, as appropriate. Ensure that Natura Impact Statements and any other environmental or ecological impact assessments submitted in support of proposals for development are carried out in accordance with best practice methodologies and contain all necessary baseline assessments.

Objective NH 6 – Biodiversity and Ecological Networks (Refer to Maps 2A/2B)

Support the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and ecological connectivity within the plan area, including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, semi-natural grasslands, rivers, streams, natural springs, wetlands, stonewalls, geological and geo-morphological systems, other landscape features and associated wildlife where these form part of the ecological network and/or may be considered as ecological corridors or stepping stones in the context of Article 10 of the Habitats Directive:

- a) Seek to retain and/or incorporate these natural features into developments, in order to avoid ecological fragmentation and maintain ecological corridors and stepping stones.
- b) Protect and enhance the water quality and ecology of the area of the River Suck and other rivers/streams in the plan area and their function as ecological corridors, by maintaining the existing banks and channel and ensuring that new developments are set back at least 10m from the near river bank, (this distance may be increased and decreased on a site by site basis, as appropriate) in the plan area.
- c) Ensure maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity through the appropriate planting of native trees, shrubs and hedgerows indigenous to the Ballinasloe area and of Irish provenance in public and private areas and in new developments.
- d) Seek to prevent the introduction of imported ash trees/plants or other such species, into the plan area in line with the *EU Plant Health Directive* and any other relevant legislation.

Objective NH 7 – Water Resources

Protect the water resources in the plan area, including the River Suck and Deerpark River that fall within the plan area, tributaries and downstream water bodies, other rivers, streams, springs, surface water and groundwater quality and wetlands 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 *Shannon International River Basin Management Plan (2009-2015* including any updated/superseding document) and other relevant EU Directives, including associated national legislation and policy guidance (including any superseding versions of same). Support the application and implementation of a catchment planning and management approach to development and conservation, including the implementation of Sustainable Drainage System techniques for new development in the plan area.

Objective NH 8 – Riparian Zones & Water Bodies and Watercourses

Protect the riparian zones of watercourse systems throughout the plan area, recognising the benefits they provide in relation to flood risk management, the protection of the ecological integrity of watercourse systems and ensure that they are considered in the land use zonings of this Local Area Plan. This will include a general 10 metre protection buffer from rivers and other water bodies within the plan area as measured from the near river bank, (this distance may be increased and decreased on a site by site basis, as appropriate). Any proposed development having potential biological or hydrological connectivity with Natura 2000 sites will be subject to AA Screening and Stage 2 AA if required under the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

Objective NH 9 – Control of Invasive and Invasive Alien Species

Seek to prevent the spread of invasive and invasive alien species and noxious weeds and require a landscaping plan to be produced for developments near water bodies and ensure that such plans do not include invasive species.

Objective NH 10 – 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 of Irish provenance.
- b) Seek to retain natural boundaries, including stone walls, hedgerows and tree boundaries, wherever possible and replace with a boundary type similar to the existing boundary where removal is unavoidable. Discourage the felling of mature trees where possible. All works to be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the *Forestry Act, 1946*.
- c) Carry out a tree survey on important tree stands within the LAP area by a suitably qualified personnel as resources permit.

Objective NH 11 – Geological and Geo - Morphological Systems

Protect and conserve geological and geo-morphological systems, sites and features from inappropriate development that would detract from their heritage value and interpretation and ensure that any plan or project affecting karst formations, eskers or other important geological and geo-morphological systems are adequately assessed with regard to their potential geophysical, hydrological or ecological impacts on the environment.

Objective NH 12 – Eskers (Refer to Specific Objectives Maps 2A/2B)

- Recognise that the Eskers in the plan area have a unique landscape, scientific and amenity values and ensure that any development proposals shall not detract from these values;
- Maintain ridge tops of eskers to the south and northwest of the town as areas of open space.

Objective NH 13 – 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.

Objective NH 14 – NPWS & Integrated Management Plans

Galway County Council shall seek to engage with and support the National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) to ensure integrated Management Plans are prepared for all Natura Sites within the sphere of influence of the Ballinasloe LAP area and ensure that such plans are practical, achievable and sustainable and have regard to all relevant ecological, cultural, social and economic considerations and with special regard to the local community.

Objective NH 15 - Protection of Bats and Bat Habitats

Seek to protect bats and their roosts, their feeding areas, flight paths and commuting routes. Ensure that development proposals in areas which are potentially important for bats, including areas of woodland, linear features such as hedgerows, stone walls, watercourses and associated riparian vegetation including the River Suck, other water bodies within the plan area and the railway line corridor which may provide migratory/foraging uses shall be subject to suitable assessment for potential impacts on bats. This will include an assessment of the cumulative loss of habitat or the impact on bat populations and activity in the area and may include a specific bat survey. Any assessment shall be carried out by a suitably qualified professional and where development is likely to result in significant adverse effects on bat populations or activity in the area, development will be prohibited or require mitigation and/or compensatory measures, as appropriate.

3.10.3 Development Management Guidelines

Control of Invasive Species Development Management Guideline

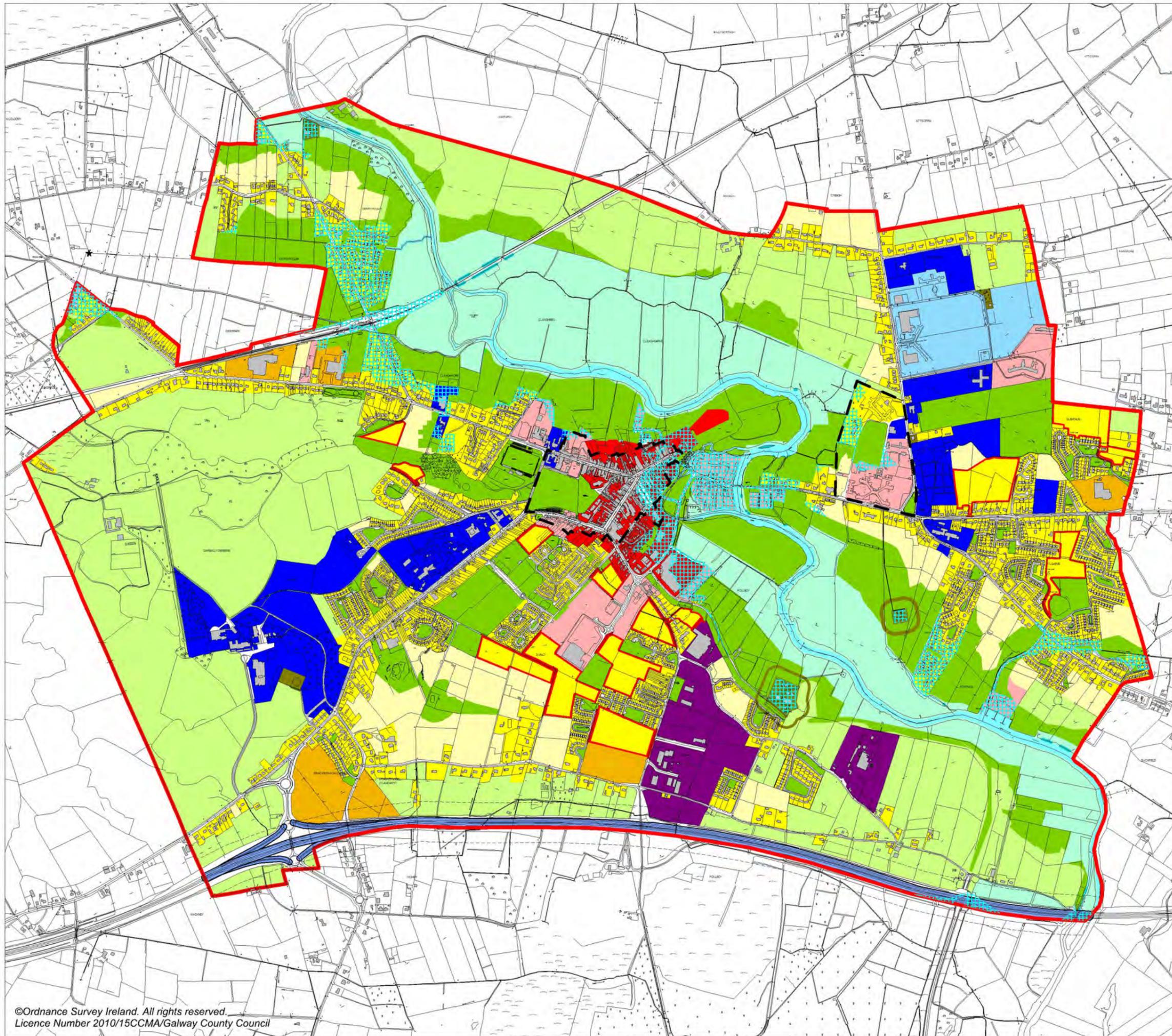
DM Guideline NH 1 – Control of Invasive Species & Bio-Security Measures

Ensure larger developments include the relevant documentation with their planning application to demonstrate the bio-security measures proposed to ensure that invasive species will not be introduced and/or spread within the development site.

4. Local Area Plan Maps

The following maps form part of the Local Area Plan:

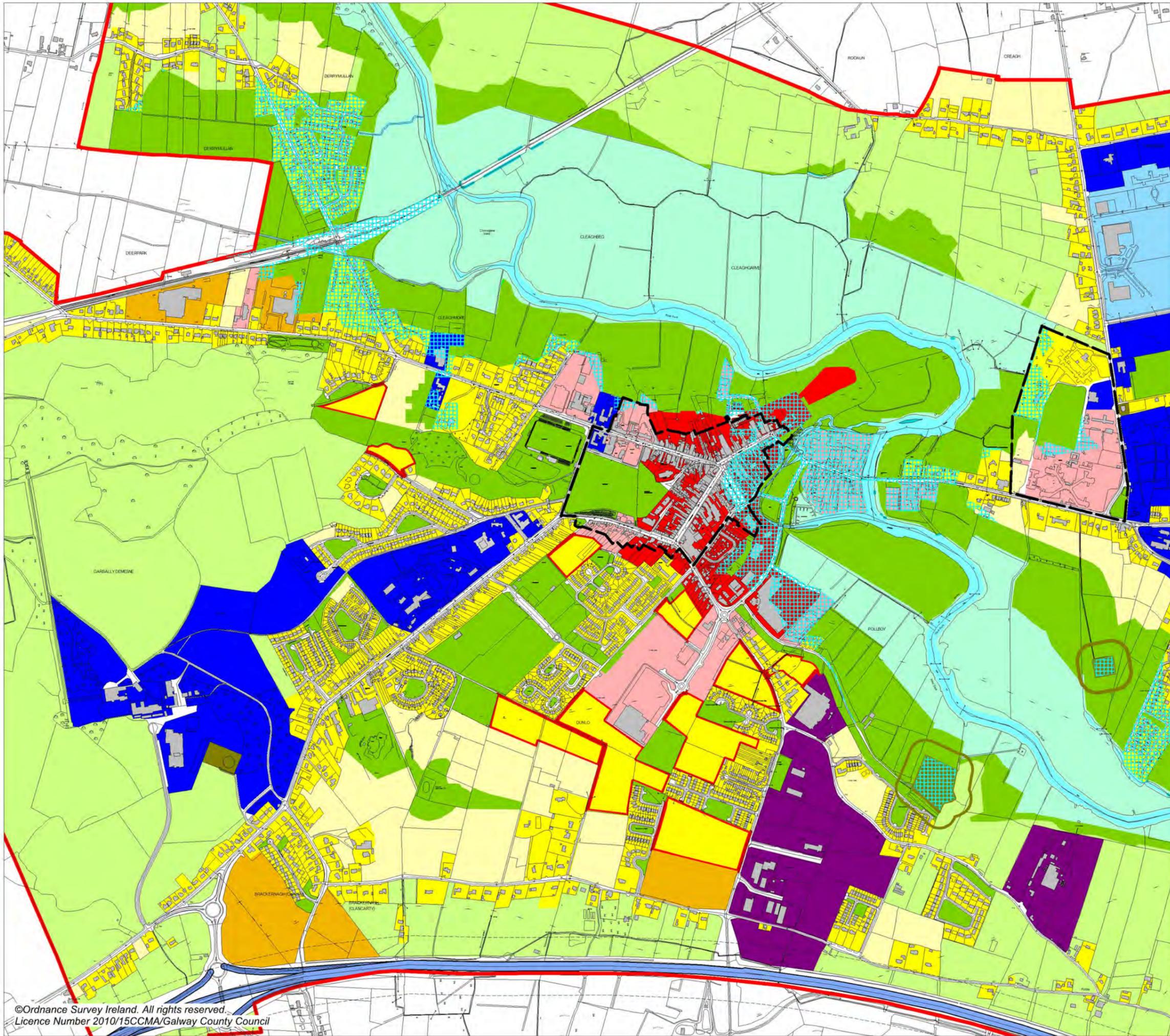
- Map 1A – Land Use Zoning
- Map 1B – Land Use Zoning (Town Centre)
- Map 2A – Specific Objectives
- Map 2B – Specific Objectives (Town Centre)
- Map 3A – Flood Risk Management
- Map 3B – Flood Risk Management (Town Centre)



- Local Area Plan Boundary
- R - Residential Existing
- R - Residential.(Phase 1)
- R - Residential.(Phase 2)
- C1 - Town Centre / Commercial.
- C2 - Commercial / Mixed Use.
- BE - Business and Enterprise.
- BT - Business and Technology
- I - Industrial
- CF - Community Facilities
- OS - Open Space / Recreation & Amenity
- EM - Enviromental Management
- A - Agriculture
- PU - Public Utilities
- Buffer Zone
- TI - Transport Infrastructure
- CL - Constrained Land Use

- River Suck
- M6 Motorway
- ACA - Architectural Conservation Area

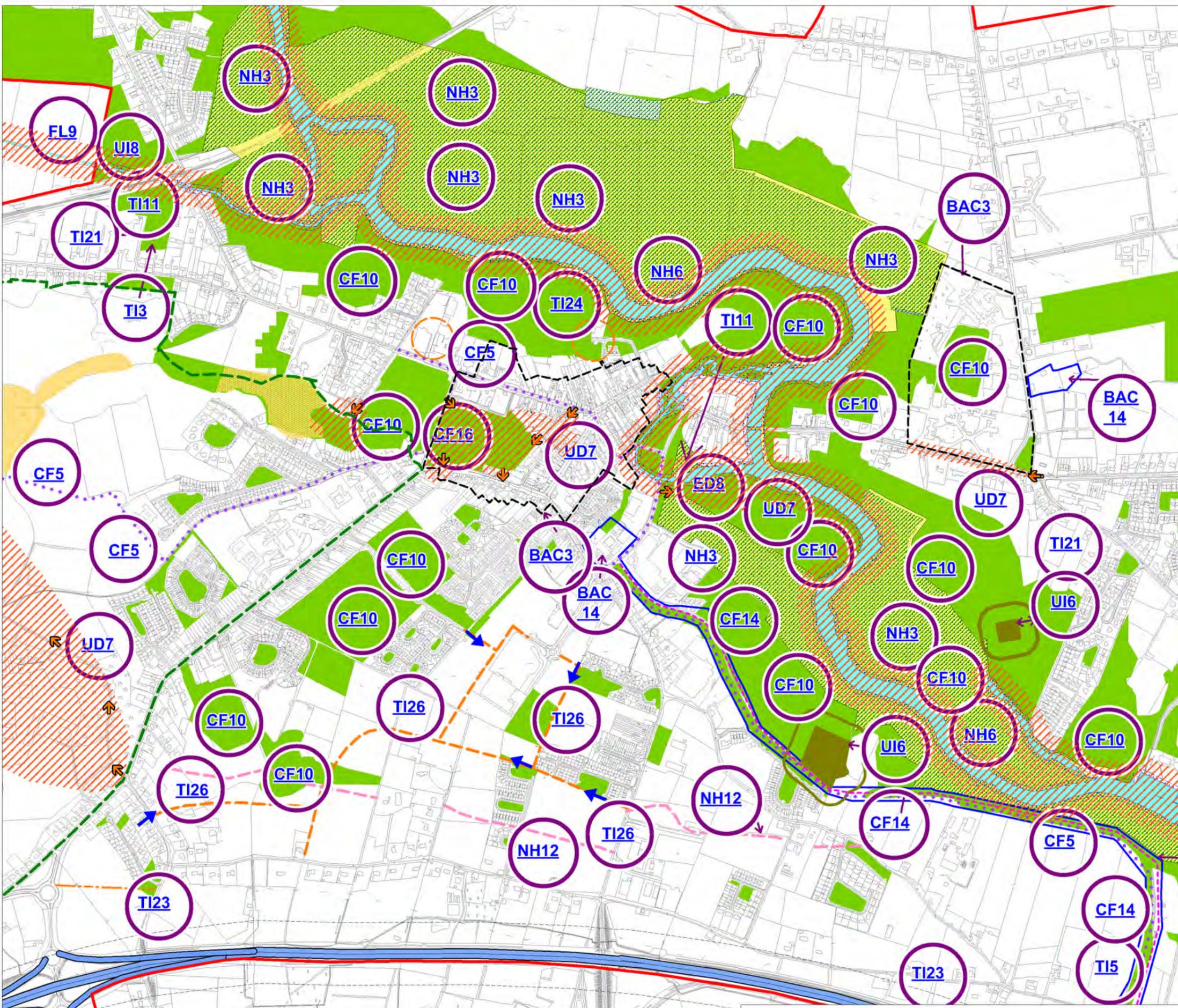
NOTE:
 This Map should be read in conjunction with Maps 2A/2B Specific Objectives, Maps 3A/3B Indicative Flood Risk Management Areas and the policies, objectives and guidelines outlined with Section 2 and Section 3 of the plan, including those in relation to land use management and zoning.



- Local Area Plan Boundary
 - R - Residential Existing
 - R - Residential.(Phase 1)
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- River Suck
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NOTE:
 This Map should be read in conjunction with Maps 2A/2B Specific Objectives, Maps 3A/3B Indicative Flood Risk Management Areas and the policies, objectives and guidelines outlined with Section 2 and Section 3 of the plan, including those in relation to land use management and zoning.



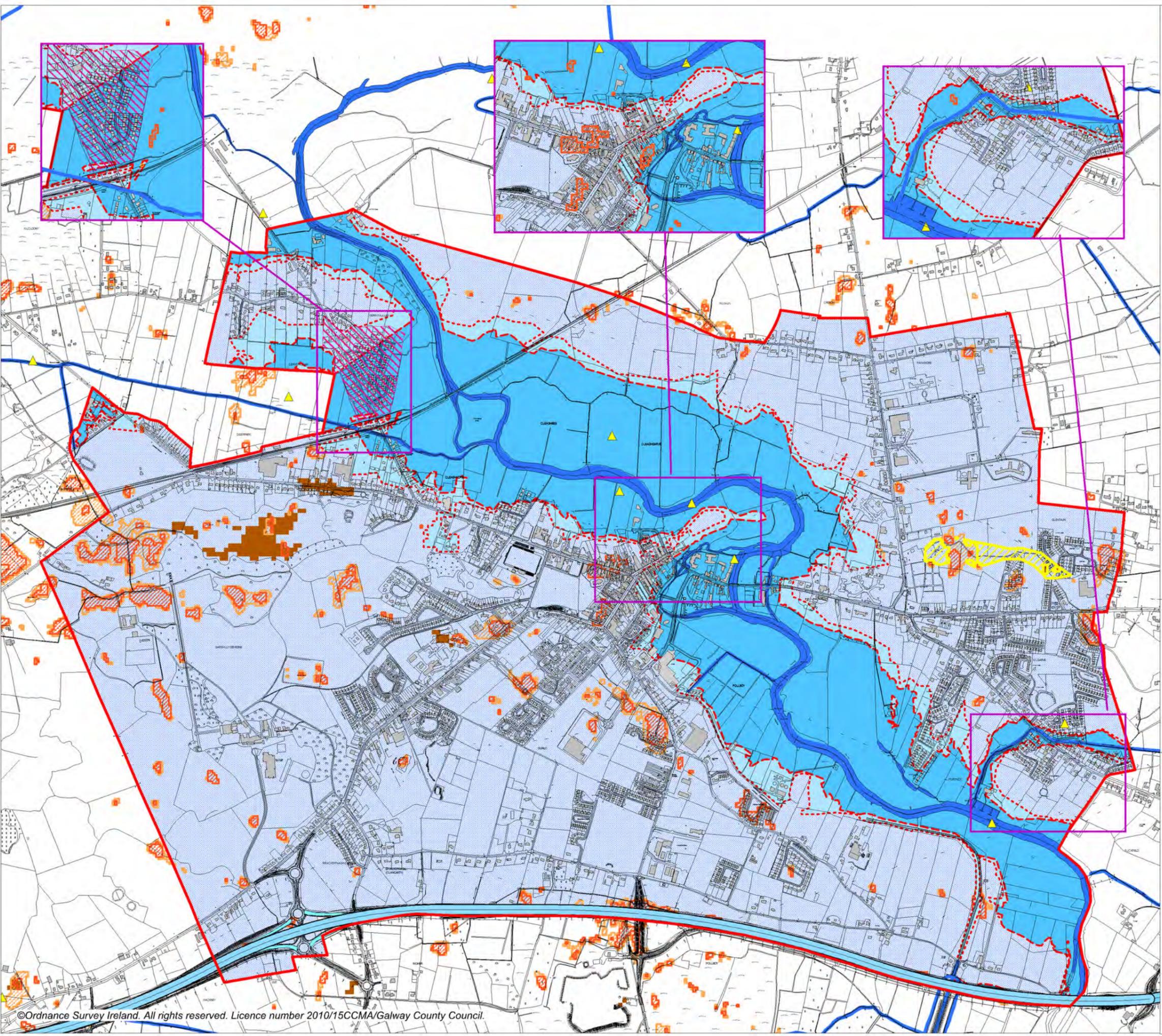


Objective Key	Objective Description
	S.3.3.2 Social and Community Development
CF5	Indicative locations for Educational Facilities
CF10	Open Spaces
CF14	Linear Park (Indicative route)
CF 16	Fair Green Enhancement Scheme
	S. 3.4.3 Economic Development
ED8	Water based tourism and public marina
	S. 3.5.5 Transportation Infrastructure
TI 3	Public Transport & proposed Integrated Public Transport Location
TI 5	Cycle and pedestrian networks
TI 11	Bus facilities/services
TI 21	Provide parking and long stay parking facilities
TI23	M6 Galway to Dublin Motorway Building Setback: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Min 90m building setback in areas where a speed limit greater than 50kph applies (>50kph).
TI24	Townspark Relief Road (Indicative access points)
TI25	Proposed Link Roads (Indicative)
TI 26	Reservation of Access Points (Indicative)
	S.3.6.2 Utility and Environment Infrastructure
UI 6	Provide and protect a 50m buffer around the public wastewater treatment plant and at St. Brigid's Hospital.
UI 8	Wetlands & Natural Drainage of the Deerpark River
	S. 3.7.3 Flood Risk Management
FL9	Storm Water Retention Facilities & Integrated Constructed Wetlands
	3.8.2 Urban Design & Landscape
UD 7	Landscape, Townscape, Views and Prospects
	3.9.2 Built & Cultural Heritage
BAC3	Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs)
BAC14	Archaeological Assessment & Zones of Archaeological Potential
	3.10.2 Natural Heritage & Biodiversity
NH 3	Environmental Management area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a minimum setback of 10 metres to be maintained on either side of the River Suck
NH6	Biodiversity and Ecological Networks
NH12	Eskers and ridge tops

LEGEND

- LAP Boundary
- XX Specific Objectives Number
- OS - Open Space / Recreation & Amenity (CF10)
- ACA - Architectural Conservation Area (BAC3)
- Designed Landscape "Garbally Demesne" (BAC10)
- ZAP - Zone of Archaeological Potential (BAC14)
- Minimum 10m setback to be maintained along the banks of the River Suck (NH3)
- River Suck Callows Special Protection Area (SPA: Site Code 004097) (NH1)
- River Suck Callows Natural Heritage Area (NHA: Site Code 000222) (NH4)
- Ballinasloe Esker Proposed Natural Heritage Area (PNHA: Site Code 001779)
- Linear Park (Indicative Route) (CF14)
- Cycle and pedestrian networks (TI5)
- Rivers and Streams
- M6 Galway to Dublin Motorway 90m setback (TI23)
- Eskers and ridge tops (Indicative - Refer to www.gsi.ie) (NH12)
- Proposed Link Roads (Indicative) (TI25)
- ↑ Reserve Access Points (TI26)
- ↑ Protected Views (UD7)

Note:
 This map should be read in conjunction with Map 1A/1B - Land Use Zoning, Map 3A/3B - Flood Risk Management and the policies, objectives and guidelines contained within Section 2 and Section 3 of the Local Area Plan, including those in relation to flood risk management and assessment. Refer to more detailed wording of above objectives in Section 3 of the Plan. Locations of Specific Objectives shown on Maps 2A/2B are indicative and objectives would also apply in other locations where appropriate.



- Local Area Plan Boundary
- Indicative Flood Zone A
(Local knowledge, photography, site walkovers and published data sources indicative of flood risk. Areas where site specific flood risk assessment will be required)
- Indicative Flood Zone B
(Local knowledge, photography, site walkovers and published data sources indicative of flood risk. Areas where site specific flood risk assessment will be required)
- Indicative Flood Zone C
(Areas not covered by Flood Zones A or B)
- Defended Area (Indicative)
From OPW Draft CFRAMS & SFRA. Area where site specific flood risk assessment will be required)
- Pluvial Indicative
(From OPW PFRA Layers and SFRA. Areas where a site specific flood risk assessment will be required)
- Pluvial Extreme
(From OPW PFRA Layers. Areas where a site specific flood risk assessment will be required)
- Groundwater
(From OPW PFRA Layers. Areas where a site specific flood risk assessment will be required))
- ▲ Recorded / Historical Flood Events
(From OPW Data)
- Rivers / Streams
- Alluvium Soil
(EPA/Teagasc soils mapping). (Area where a site specific flood risk assessment will be required)

Important User Note:

The indicative Flood Risk Zones were produced as part of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), the findings of which accompany the plan. The delineation of Indicative Flood Risk Zones has taken into account various factors including local knowledge, photography, site walkovers and published data sources indicative of flood risk. The Zones indicate broadly areas that may be prone to flooding and have informed the Plan. They zones are indicative and should not be relied upon solely for site-specific flood risk assessments. The zones may be updated in the future to take account of new information.

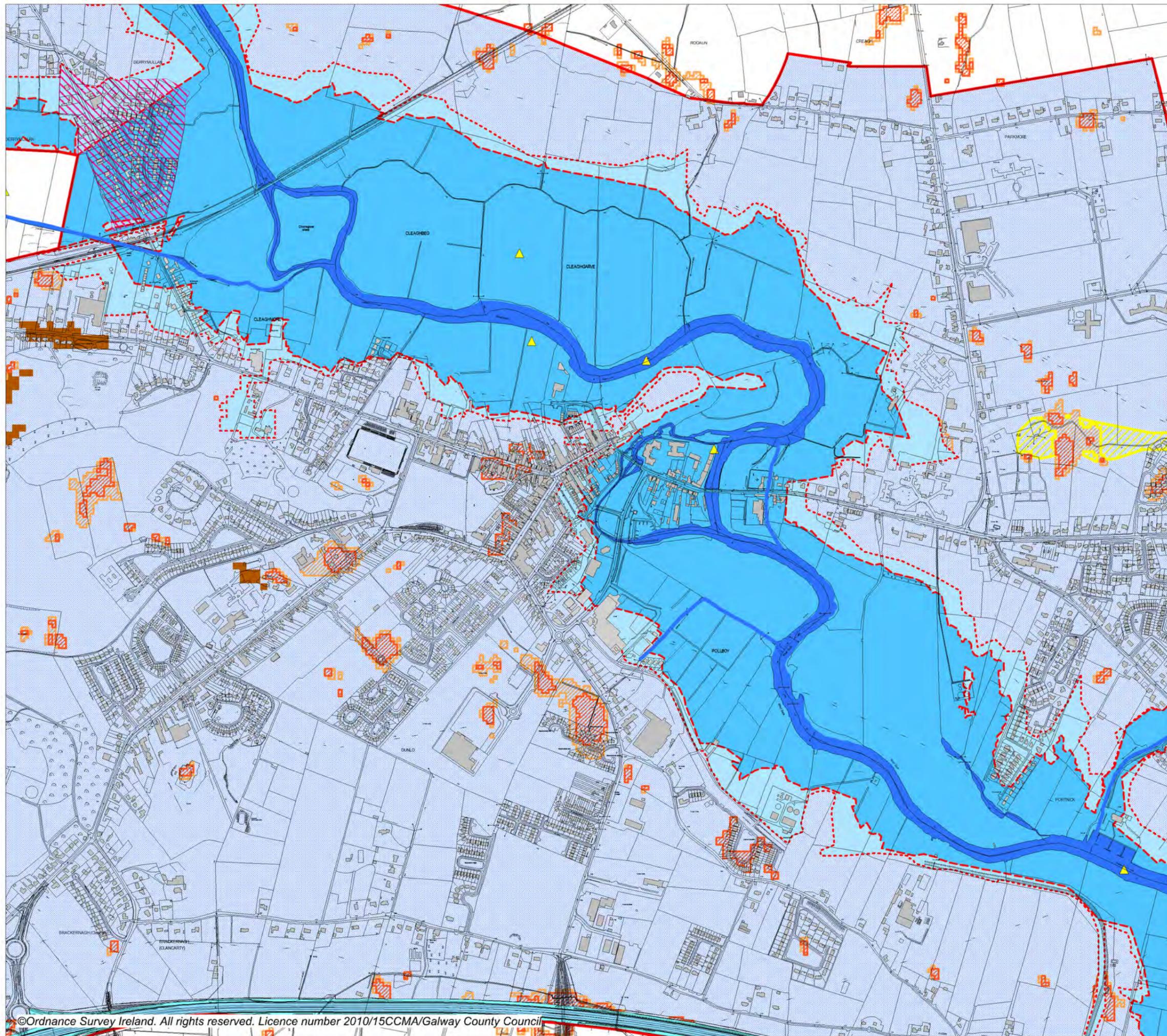
DRAFT

**BALLINASLOE LAP 2015
DRAFT
MAP 3A FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT**



NOTE:

This map should be read in conjunction with Maps 1A/1B Land Use Zoning; Maps 2A/2B. Specific Objectives and the policies, objectives and guidelines outlined with Section 2 and Section 3 of the plan, including those in relation to flood risk management and assessment.



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(Local knowledge, photography, site walkovers and published data sources indicative of flood risk. Areas where site specific flood risk assessment will be required)
- Indicative Flood Zone B
(Local knowledge, photography, site walkovers and published data sources indicative of flood risk. Areas where site specific flood risk assessment will be required)
- Indicative Flood Zone C
(Areas not covered by Flood Zones A or B)
- Defended Area (Indicative)
From OPW Draft CFRAMS & SFRA. Area where site specific flood risk assessment will be required)
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(From OPW PFRA Layers. Areas where a site specific flood risk assessment will be required)
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- ▲ Recorded / Historical Flood Events
(From OPW Data)
- Rivers / Streams
- Alluvium Soil
(EPA/Teagasc soils mapping). (Area where a site specific flood risk assessment will be required)

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**BALLINASLOE LAP 2015
DRAFT
MAP 3B FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT
(TOWN CENTRE)**



NOTE:

This map should be read in conjunction with Maps 1A/1B Land Use Zoning; Maps 2A/2B. Specific Objectives and the policies, objectives and guidelines outlined with Section 2 and Section 3 of the plan, including those in relation to flood risk management and assessment.