



# Gort Local Area Plan (2013 - 2019) SEA Statement

August 2013






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# Gort Local Area Plan 2013-2019 SEA Statement

## DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA) STATEMENT

This is the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Statement of the Gort Local Area Plan (LAP) 2013 -2019, adopted by Galway County Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2013. This statement forms the final part of the requirements for the SEA of the Gort LAP. SEA is a key process that promotes sustainable development and highlights significant environmental issues within the planning regime. The purpose of SEA is to formally and systematically evaluate the likely significant effects of implementing a plan or programme, in this instance the new Gort LAP.

- EU Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment were transposed into Irish law under:
- The European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 435 of 2004);
- The Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 436 of 2004);
- Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment )(Amendment) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 201 of 2011), and
- Planning and Development (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (S.I No 200 of 2011).

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

## 1.2 PURPOSE OF SEA STATEMENT

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

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

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

### **1.3 IMPLICATIONS OF SEA FOR THE GORT LAP PROCESS**

As a result of the above legislation, the Gort LAP 2013-2019 was required to undergo SEA. The findings of SEA were presented in the Environmental Report which was submitted to the Elected Members alongside the Draft LAP. The purpose of the report was to provide a clear understanding of the likely environmental consequences of decisions regarding the future development of Gort over the lifetime of the plan.

Amendments were made to the Draft LAP at each stage of the process and these were evaluated for their environmental consequences. In turn this evaluation was presented to the Elected Members in the form of an Addendum Report. Addendum reports assessed whether the proposed material alterations would require full SEA or Habitats Directive Assessment and these were assessed against the Environmental Protection Objectives (EPOs).

It was considered that significant adverse effects are not likely as a result of all the proposed Material Alterations with the exception of proposed Material Alteration No.2 (MA2). A full SEA of MA2 was carried out and is required by Section 13(b)(iv)(f) of the Planning and Development Act 2010. On adoption of the Draft LAP, these Addenda were used to update the original Environmental Report into a final Environmental Report (ER) which accompanies the adopted Plan. In the Final ER, additional text is included in bold and italic font with a footnote to highlight who or what agency provided the submission during the consultation processes. The SEA Screening Reports prepared for each material alteration is also provided as an Annex to the Final ER.

At each stage of the process the Elected Members were required by the legislation to take into account the Environmental Report - including the Addenda - before the adoption of the LAP. The Final Land Use Zoning Maps, Specific Objective Maps and Flood Risk Maps as adopted and included in the final Gort Local Area Plan are presented in Appendix A at the end of this SEA Statement.

## **2 HOW ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS HAVE BEEN INTEGRATED**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The SEA process can be broken down into a number of steps that ran parallel to the drafting of the LAP. At each stage of the process the impacts of the LAP on the environment was assessed. The SEA was also informed by the Appropriate Assessment which ran parallel with the drafting of the LAP.

In undertaking the SEA, where it was assessed that the LAP may conflict with the environmental protection objectives (EPOs) then mitigation measures were proposed. The mitigation measures entailed amendments to or the addition of an objective in the draft LAP.

The draft LAP was assessed during the following phases: -

- Scoping – consultation with the statutory consultees and non-statutory consultees
- Evaluation of draft LAP objectives and policies (included in environmental report)
- Evaluation of submissions and observations to draft LAP
- Evaluation of proposed material alterations to draft LAP

### **2.2 SCOPING**

The Scoping Report for the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the LAP outlines the procedures undertaken in the preparation of the Scoping Report and was prepared in parallel with the Draft LAP. It was carried out in December 2012. The integration of the SEA and the plan was achieved through close liaison between personnel delivering the SEA and the LAP itself. The scoping process also considered the LAP alternatives, environmental protection objectives, targets, indicators and monitoring arrangements. The overall outcome of the scoping process was to focus attention and resources on the most important environmental issues as a result of implementing the LAP.

### **2.3 EVALUATION OF DRAFT PLAN OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

Chapter 2 of the Environmental Report outlines the methodology of preparing the draft LAP and the Environmental Report. The Environmental Report evaluated the likely significant impacts of implementing the draft LAP on the environment using and augmenting the baseline environmental data collected during the scoping process.

As stated above the purpose of the Environmental Report was used to assess the likely significant effects of the LAP on the environment and to ensure that these significant impacts are considered during the preparation of the draft LAP.

The Environmental Report also considered a number of alternatives to the Plan. These alternatives were assessed and a preferred strategy chosen. This is further discussed in Section 4 of this SEA Statement.

The Environmental Report also outlined mitigation measures to remedy/reduce any potential significant impacts and a monitoring programme was developed to assess the impacts of the Plan on the environment. The monitoring programme is shown in Section 5 of the SEA Statement.

Section (f) of the Schedule 2B of the SEA Regulations, as amended, requires an assessment of the likely significant effects of the Plan on the environment. The Plan objectives were assessed against the Environmental Protection Objectives (EPOs) in the Environmental Report prior to the release of the draft LAP. The Environmental Protection Objectives set out in Chapter 5 of the Environmental Report are described under a range of topics and are used as the standards against which the future development objectives of the Plan can be evaluated, to help to identify areas in which significant adverse impacts are likely to occur.

## **2.4 EVALUATION OF PROPOSED MATERIAL ALTERATIONS TO DRAFT PLAN**

The assessment of the proposed material alterations to the Draft LAP following public consultation (from 7<sup>th</sup> June 2013 to Friday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2013) and the receipt of nine submissions was carried out by assessing each of these nine submissions from a SEA perspective. Proposed material alterations were assessed against environmental protection objectives created as part of the SEA process. An initial screening process was conducted to determine the level or degree of impact that the proposed material alterations to the LAP may or may not have on the SEA environmental objectives. A further assessment phase considered the proposed amendments to the LAP that may significantly conflict with the environmental protection objectives. Mitigation measures were recommended where significant conflict may arise.

The mitigation measures proposed in the report mainly required the rewording, amending or additional text to an objective. However, the material alteration arising from Submission No. 6 on the Draft LAP relating to lands currently with permission for development but located mostly within Flood Zone A, was considered to have the potential for significant environmental effects and therefore full SEA was carried out. Addenda to both the SEA Environmental Report and the AA Natura Impact Report were prepared which included screening of proposed Material Alterations and full assessment of MA2.

The SEA Addendum determined that the zoning of Town Centre/Commercial lands as proposed under MA2 would conflict with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009 and with Environmental Protection Objective 'Wat3' which seeks to prevent unsuitable development on lands recognised as at flood risk. It was considered that without adequate flood risk assessment the potential for significant environmental effects exists particularly on aspects such as flooding, water quality and biodiversity.

The main aim of SEA is to improve the Gort Local Area Plan 2013-2019 in terms of sustainability and its impact on the environment. This section outlines how the Plan originally evolved and at what stage SEA of the Plan was considered necessary.

## **2.5 BASELINE DATA COLLECTION**

From the outset, a key aspect of the SEA has been the collection of relevant environmental baseline data for the administrative area covered by the Gort Local Area Plan. This was achieved through consultation with and review of various existing databases and datasets available through Galway County Council and public bodies such as the EPA, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Geological Survey Ireland.

The identified environmental baseline data and maps outlined below have been used to assess the alternative scenarios with regard to adoption of the Draft LAP and with regard to adoption of Material Alterations No. 2 to the Plan and how this might affect development of the town and the draft plan policies and objectives.

Environmental considerations were integrated into the draft LAP before it was placed on public display for the first time. Environmental sensitivities were mapped in order to identify which areas of the LAP would be most sensitive to development and would suffer the most adverse effects if growth was to be accommodated in those areas unmitigated.

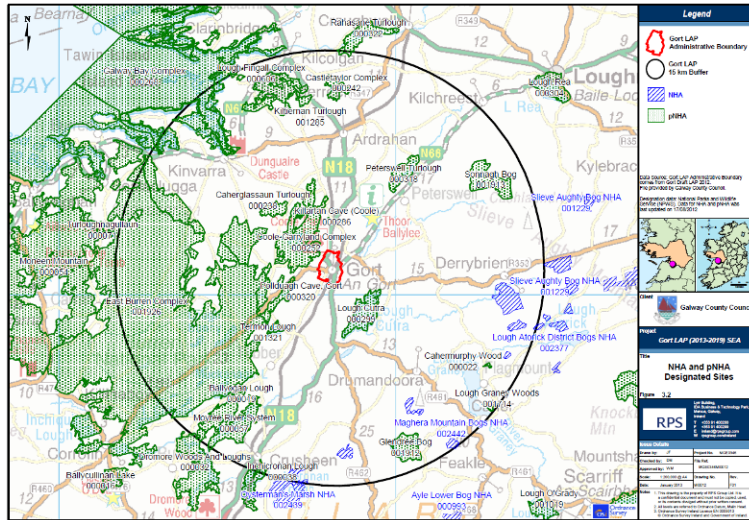
These sensitivities were communicated to the Plan making team on a regular basis from the outset of the preparation process. Identifying areas with the most limited carrying capacity within the Plan area guided the preparation of the LAP.

The sensitivities considered by the SEA included the following:

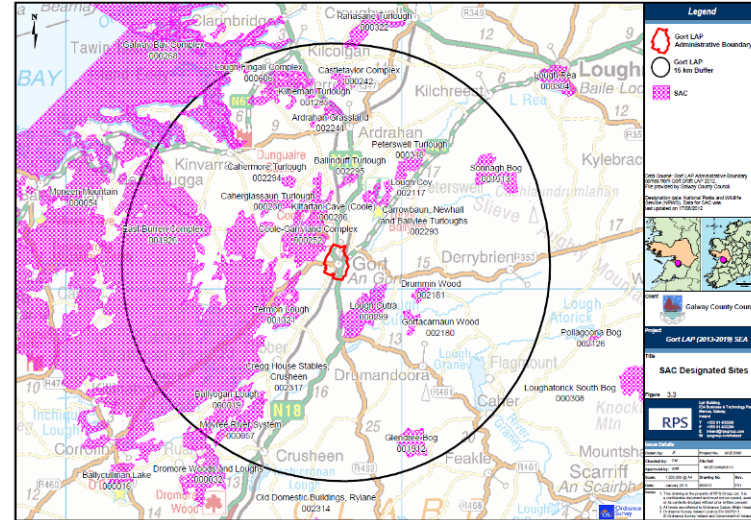
- Designated Sites
- Corine 2006 Landuse
- Ecological Network
- Soils Map
- Bedrock Geology and Areas of Geological Interest
- Water Framework Directive Surface Water Status
- Groundwater
- Flooding
- Noise
- Transportation Network
- Archaeology, Architecture and Cultural Heritage
- Landscape and Scenic Amenity

Previews of the maps associated with each topic are provided in the following pages however full page maps are provided in the SEA Environmental Report.

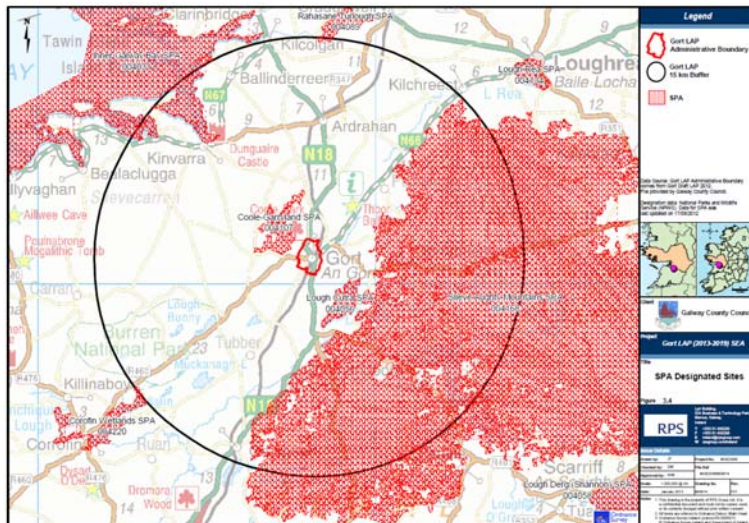




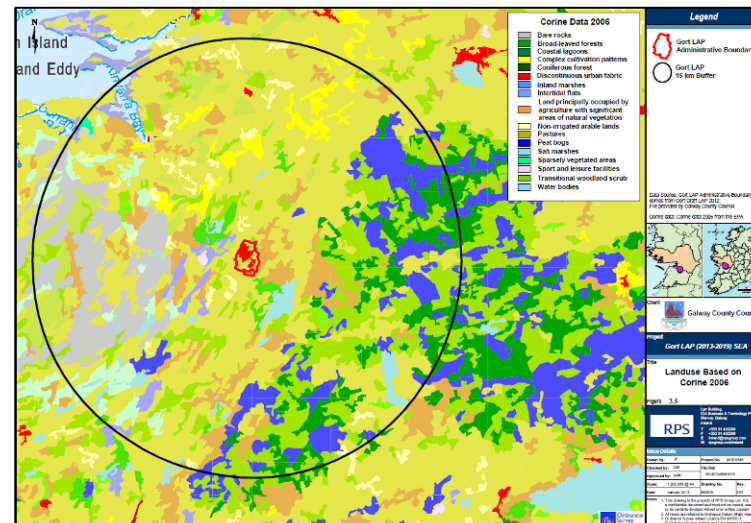
Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed NHAs



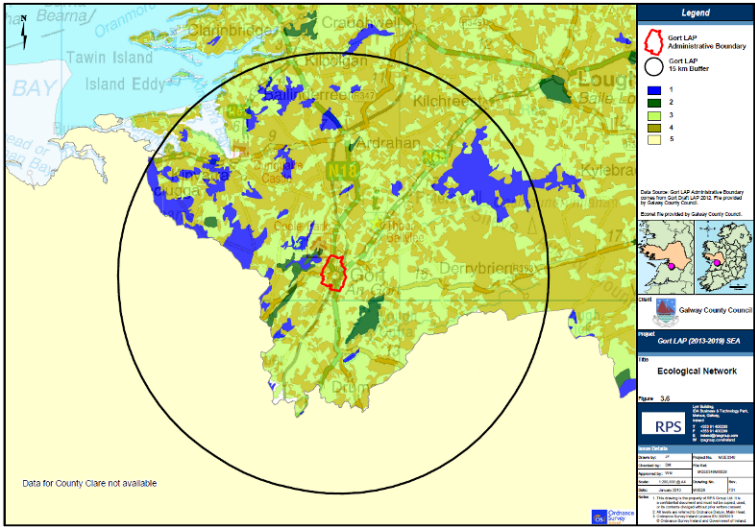
Special Areas of Conservation



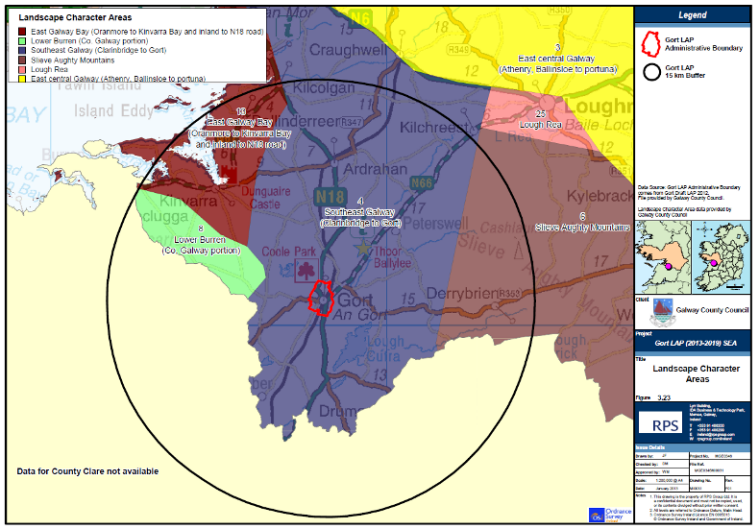
Special Protection Areas



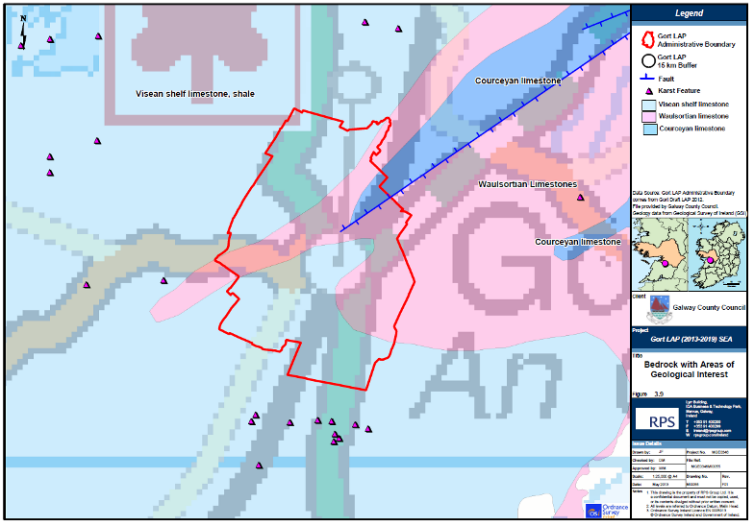
Corine 2006 Mapping



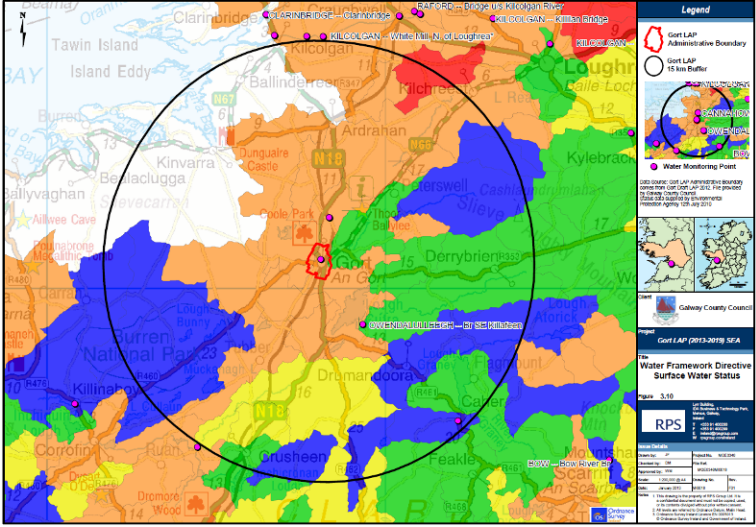
Ecological Network



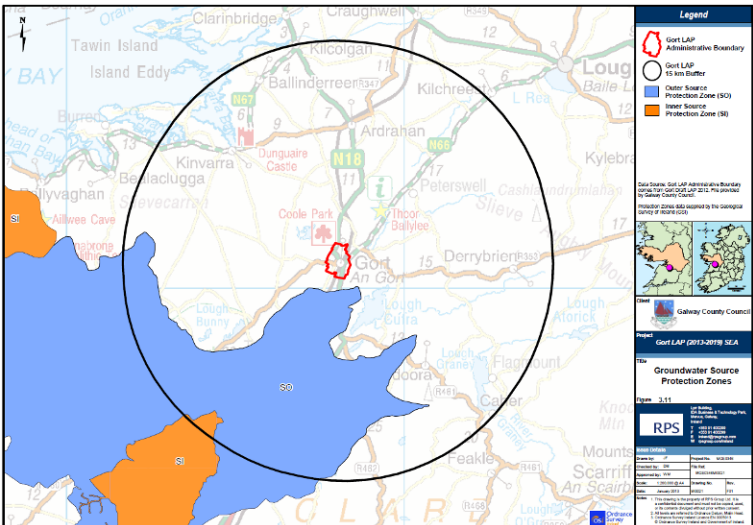
Landscape Character Areas



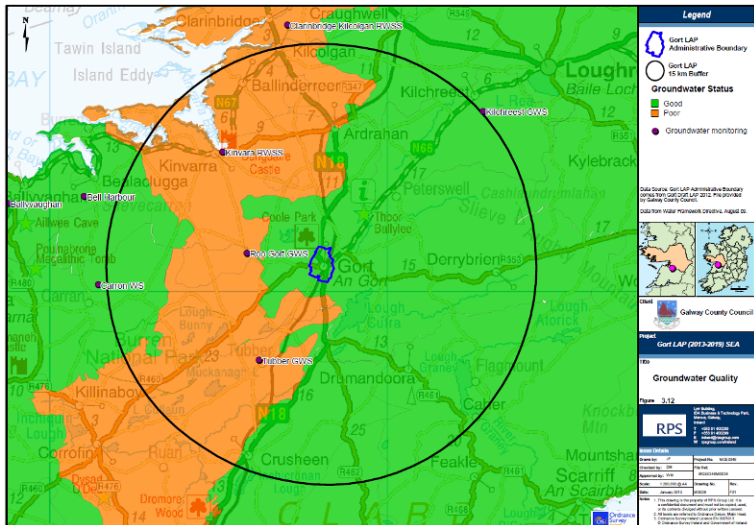
Geological



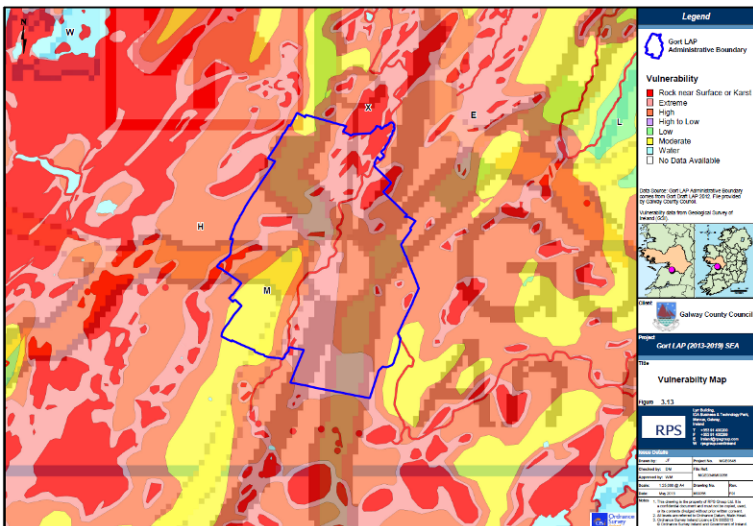
Aquifer



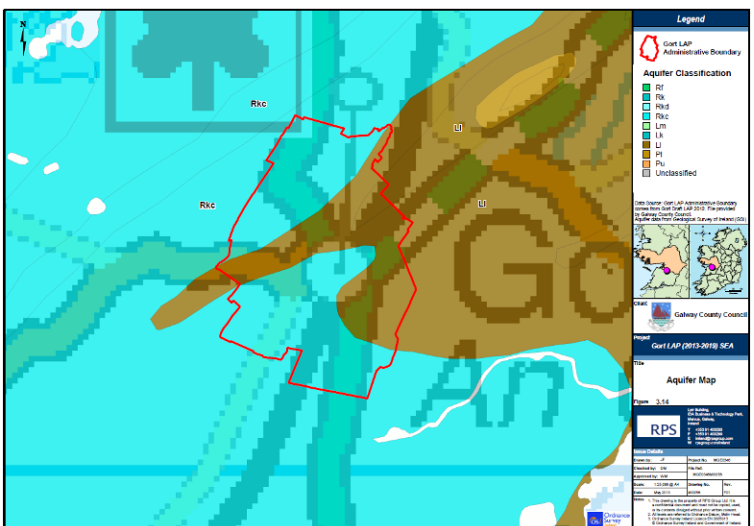
**Groundwater Protection Zones**



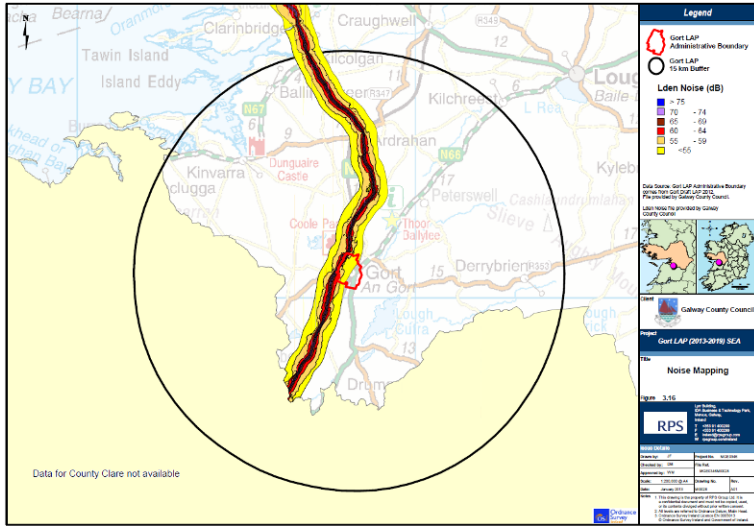
**Groundwater Quality**



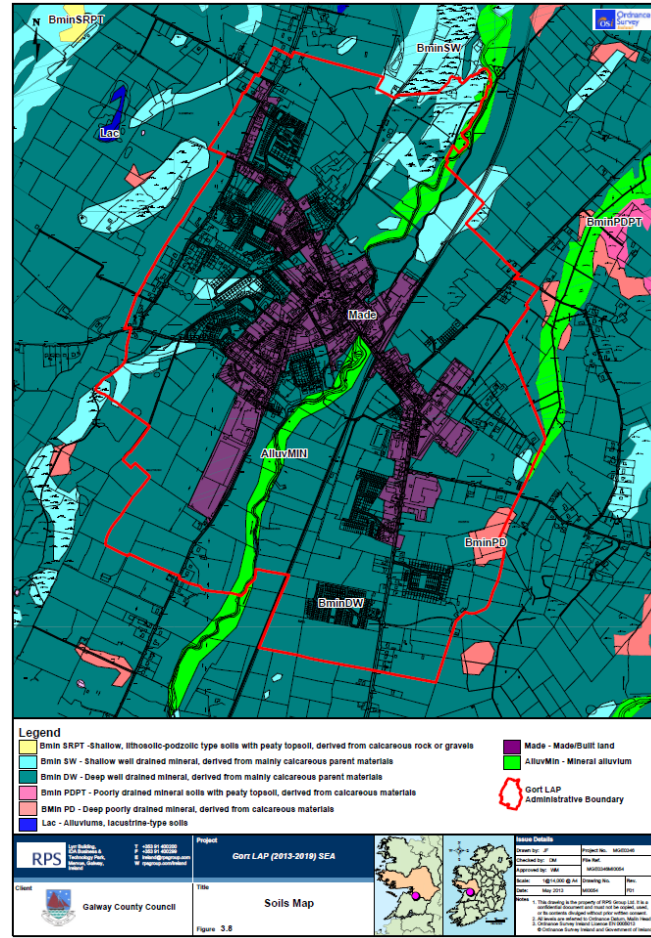
**Groundwater Vulnerability**



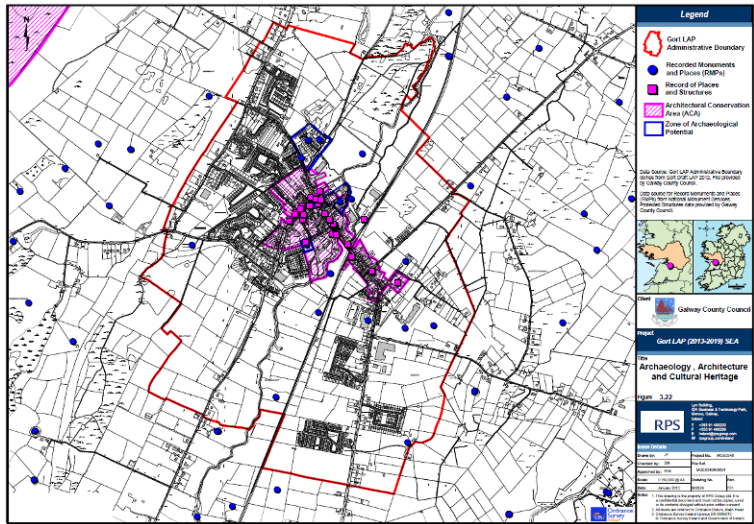
**Aquifer**



**Noise**



**Soils**



**Archaeology, Architecture and Cultural Management**

## 2.6 INFLUENCE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

The following table demonstrates the relationship between assessment of the key environmental baseline information during the Environmental Report in line with the objectives and proposals of the LAP and how these issues were taken into account during the formulation of the Gort Local Area Plan 2013-2019.

Environmental Topic	Reference in the Plan
<b>Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna</b>	
<p>In order to protect biodiversity it was recommended to include reference to semi-natural grasslands and maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity within Objective NH5 – Biodiversity and Ecological Networks.</p> <p>It was also recommend to include reference to ash dieback as DAFM is introducing emergency measures under the Plant Health Directive.</p> <p>In addition it was recommended that reference be made to green infrastructure in a new objective or inclusion of text in existing suitable objective.</p>	<p>Objective NH5 was altered to include reference to the topics mentioned.</p> <p><b>Objective NH5 – Biodiversity and Ecological Networks pg.54</b></p> <p>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 geomorphological 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 Cannahowna/Gort River and its function as ecological corridors, by maintaining the existing banks and channel and ensuring that new developments are set back at least 10m from the top of the bank of the stream. c) Ensure maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity through the appropriate planting of native trees, shrubs and hedgerows indigenous to the Gort area and of Irish provenance in public and private areas and in new developments. Seek to prevent the introduction of imported ash trees/plants or other such species, into the Plan area in line with the Plant Health Directive and any other relevant legislation. d) Support the development of links between larger areas of green infrastructure including important tree clusters, hedgerows, watercourses and their riparian zones, the banks and buffer zones of the railway/motorway and the surrounding countryside.</p>
<p>In order to protect wetlands in line with Planning and Development (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2011 S.I. No. 454 of 2011 it was recommended that specific reference to this habitat should be made within a relevant objective of the LAP</p>	<p>Objective NH6 was altered to include reference to the topics mentioned.</p> <p><b>Objective NH6 – Water Resources pg. 54</b></p> <p>Protect the water resources in the Plan Area, including the Cannahowna/Gort River, its tributaries and downstream water bodies, other 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 Western River Basin District Management Plan 2009-2015 and other relevant EU Directives, including associated</p>

Environmental Topic	Reference in the Plan
	<p>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.</p>
<p>In order to ensure the protection of riparian habitat and its potential as a water pollution buffer it was recommended that additional text be included in Objective NH7.</p>	<p>Objective NH7 was altered to include additional reference and protection for riparian buffers and river corridors.</p> <p><b>Objective NH7 – Environmental Management Buffer pg. 54</b></p> <p>Protect and seek to improve the water quality in the Cannahowna/Gort River. Limit development within the environmental management buffer so as to protect the qualifying interests of all European Sites which are linked indirectly to the Gort Local Area Plan area via the Cannahowna/Gort River and to mitigate against pollution risks, reduce flooding potential and maintain habitat. Seek to ensure that a minimum setback of 10 metres is maintained on either side of the Cannahowna/Gort River, 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 Cannahowna/Gort River as resources permit.</p>
<p>It was recommended to include additional protection for trees and hedgerows in Objective NH8 in order to protect this habitat and to assess the potential for impacts on species such as bats as a result of removal.</p>	<p>Objective NH8 was altered to include additional reference to replacement planting of semi-mature trees.</p> <p><b>Objective NH8 – Trees, Parkland/Woodland and Hedgerows pg.54</b></p> <p>Protect important tree clusters and hedgerows in the Plan Area and ensure that development proposals take cognisance of significant trees/tree stands. 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. Ensure replacement planting of semi-mature trees where mature trees are removed within developments</p>
<p>New wording was recommended for Objective NH10 relating the control of alien/ invasive species with additional reference to the relevant legislation.</p>	<p>Objective NH10 was altered to include additional reference to the topics mentioned.</p> <p><b>Objective NH10 – Control of Invasive and Alien Invasive pg. 55</b></p> <p>Species Seek to prevent the spread of invasive and alien invasive species and noxious weeds and promote measures to achieve this objective. Raise</p>

Environmental Topic	Reference in the Plan
	<p>awareness and seek to inform developers of the need to comply with the requirements of the Noxious Weeds Act 1936, the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (or any updated/superseding legislation) with regard to the control of noxious weeds and non-native invasive species. Cognisance should also be taken of information available from The National Invasive Species Database. Where the potential for spread of invasive species are identified as part of a development proposal the developer will be required to submit an invasive species management plan. A landscaping plan will be required for developments near waterbodies and ensure that such plans do not include alien invasive species.</p>
<p>As bat species are common in the area and in particular the Lesser Horseshoe Bat is a qualifying interest of nearby cSACs it was recommended that a new objective specifically relating to the protection of bats and their habitats be included in the natural heritage section of the plan.</p>	<p>A new objective, Objective NH12 was included.</p> <p><b>Objective NH12 - Protection of Bats and Bats Habitats pg. 55</b></p> <p>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 Cannahowna/Gort River, the railway line corridor and specifically the entirety of the Plan area east of the Cannahowna/Gort River which may provide migratory/foraging pathways from Lough Cutra and Pollduagh Cave, 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. All development shall be required to include green infrastructure measures which provide the potential for enhancement of local bat populations.</p>
Waste Management	
<p>In order to ensure compliance with the Connacht Waste Management Plan a new objective was recommended which should also make reference to the EPA's National Hazardous Waste Management Plan.</p>	<p>A new objective, Objective UI17 was included in the plan</p> <p><b>Objective UI17 – Waste Management pg. 42</b></p> <p>Implement the Connaught Waste Management Plan 2006-2011, the Galway County Council's Litter Management Plan 2007-2010, the National Waste Prevention Programme, the EPA's National</p>

Environmental Topic	Reference in the Plan
	<p>Hazardous Waste Management Plan and any superseding plans/programmes over the lifetime of the Gort Local Area Plan.</p>
<b>Flood Risk Management</b>	
<p>In order to prevent inappropriate development in proximity to watercourses and provide protection for potential buffer zones adjacent to watercourses it was recommended that 10m buffer zones be included on all watercourses.</p>	<p>Objective UI10 was altered to include additional reference 10m buffer zones.</p> <p><b>Objective UI10– Waterbodies and Watercourses Pg.41</b></p> <p>Protect waterbodies and watercourses within the Plan Area from inappropriate development, including rivers, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains. This will include a 10m environmental management buffer between any new development and all watercourses including the Cannahowna/Gort River. Promote the sustainable management and use of watercourses and avoid the culverting or realignment of these features. Any hard landscaping proposals shall be located outside of any buffer zone areas.</p>
<p>In order to ensure that the recommendations from the SEA and Appropriate Assessment of the Western Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study are implemented it was recommended that the wording of Policy UI2 be altered.</p>	<p>The wording of Policy UI2 was altered to take account of recommendations.</p> <p><b>Policy UI2 – Flood Risk Management pg. 40</b></p> <p>It is the policy of Galway County Council to support, in co-operation with the OPW, the implementation of the EU Flood Risk Directive (2007/60/EC), the Flood Risk Regulations (SI No. 122 of 2010) and the DEHLG/OPW publication Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009 (and any updated/superseding legislation or policy guidance). Galway County Council will also take account of the Western Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study (Western CFRAMs), along with the mitigation measures and recommendations arising from the associated SEA and Appropriate Assessment. Galway County Council will also take account of the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) and the Stage 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the Gort LAP Area and any recommendations and outputs arising from same that relate to or impact on the Plan Area.</p>
<b>Surface Water Drainage</b>	
<p>In order to ensure that Surface Water legislation ‘Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (S.I. No 272 of 2009)’ was recognised in the plan it was recommended that specific reference to the regulations be made.</p>	<p>Additional reference to legislation was included as recommended.</p> <p><b>Objective UI6 – Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems pg. 40</b></p> <p>Maintain and enhance, as appropriate, the existing surface water drainage system in the Plan Area, ensure that new developments are adequately serviced with surface water drainage infrastructure and promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems in all new developments. Surface water</p>



Environmental Topic	Reference in the Plan
	<p>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. The Council will also implement all relevant Surface Water legislation including „Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (S.I. No 272 of 2009) or any updated/superseding document. Developers will be required to adopt site specific solutions to surface water drainage systems in all cases.</p>
<b>Water Infrastructure</b>	
<p>In order to ensure that new developments are adequately serviced with a suitable quantity and quality of a sustainably sourced drinking water supply and in order to 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 the following text was recommended and included.</p> <p>Verification of the effectiveness of the remedial action programme for the current water supply scheme will be progressed in consultation with the EPA.</p> <p>Ensure any new potential water supply for Gort, in particular any proposals for water abstraction from Lough Cutra, will be subject to required environmental screening, including Appropriate Assessment Screening.</p>	<p>Objective UI3 was altered to include reference to the topics mentioned.</p> <p><b>Objective UI3 – Water Supply and Water Conservation pg. 39</b></p> <p>Ensure that new developments are adequately serviced with a suitable quantity and quality of a sustainably sourced 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. Verification of the effectiveness of the remedial action programme for the current water supply scheme will be progressed in consultation with the EPA. Ensure any new potential water supply for Gort, in particular any proposals for water abstraction from Lough Cutra, will be subject to required environmental screening, including Appropriate Assessment Screening.</p>
<p>It was recommended that the Plan reference the EPA's code of practice in relation to wastewater treatment and disposal systems for individual one of housing.</p>	<p>Objective UI3 was altered to include reference to the EPA document.</p> <p><b>Objective UI4 – Wastewater Disposal pg. 39</b></p> <p>Restrict development that does not connect to the public sewer and discourage the proliferation of individual septic tanks and treatment plants in order to protect groundwaters, consolidate the town structure and control ribbon development along the approach roads into Gort. Implement and promote the Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations 2001 and 2004. Ensure the changeover from septic tanks to mains connections in all cases where this is feasible and that all new developments utilise and connect to the existing wastewater infrastructure subject to adequate capacity prior to any connection. Connection to the public sewer will be encouraged as an alternative to the provision of individual septic tanks and treatment plants in the Gort area in order to minimise the risk of groundwater pollution. Where such facilities are permitted, full compliance with the prevailing regulations and standards, including the</p> <p>EPA's a Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (p.e.≤ 10), (EPA, 2009), will be required.</p>

Environmental Topic	Reference in the Plan
<p>It was recommended that additional text be included in Objective UI5 in order to address the issue of the town's wastewater treatment plant being located within Flood Zone A.</p>	<p>Additional text was included in Objective UI5.</p> <p><b>Objective UI5 - Wastewater Treatment Plant Buffer pg.40</b></p> <p>Provide and protect a 100m buffer around the wastewater treatment plant (Public Utilities Zoning Objective) site and protect buffer zones around any other treatment plant in the town as appropriate. The council will support and facilitate protection measures for the town's existing wastewater treatment plant which is located within Flood Zone A.</p>
<p>It was recommended that waste leakage from the water system be addressed within the Plan.</p> <p>In addition it was recommended that the Plan should outline that any waste water treatment plant upgrade should be carried out in accordance with the Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations 2007, S.I. No. 684 of 2007.</p> <p>It was also recommended that reference to the town's water conservation strategy be included in the Plan.</p>	<p>Additional text was included in Objective UI1 to cover these topics.</p> <p><b>Objective UI1 – Water Services Infrastructure pg.39</b></p> <p>Support the maintenance, improvement and monitoring of the public water supply, wastewater disposal and surface water drainage infrastructure, as necessary to address any deficiencies in infrastructure capacity and/or service the development needs of the town. This will include the following and any other projects approved during the period of the Plan:</p> <p>a) Continue to implement the Water Conservation Strategy within Gort and carry out improvements to the existing infrastructure, including the partial network and reservoir upgrade works under the Water Conservation Rehabilitation works as proposed to commence in 2014/2015.</p> <p>b) Continue to implement the water leak detection programme including the use of a strategic metering system to aid in leak detection and reduction in unaccounted for water.</p> <p>c) Ensure that trade effluent from new development is managed properly and discharged to sewers in accordance with relevant discharge licenses.</p> <p>d) Progress the upgrading of the existing wastewater treatment plant and the sewer network for the town under the Water Services Investment Programme in accordance with the Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations 2007, S.I. No. 684 of 2007.</p> <p>e) Improve and maintain an adequate surface water drainage system throughout the Plan Area.</p>
<p>It was recommended that reference was made in the Plan to the Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations 2001 and 2004.</p>	<p>Reference to legislation was included in Objective UI4 as recommended.</p> <p><b>Objective UI4 – Wastewater Disposal</b></p> <p>Restrict development that does not connect to the public sewer and discourage the proliferation of individual septic tanks and treatment plants in order to protect groundwaters, consolidate the town structure and control ribbon development along the approach roads into Gort. Implement and promote the Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations 2001 and 2004. Ensure the changeover from septic tanks to mains connections in all cases where this is feasible and that all new developments utilise and</p>

Environmental Topic	Reference in the Plan
	<p>connect to the existing wastewater infrastructure subject to adequate capacity prior to any connection. Connection to the public sewer will be encouraged as an alternative to the provision of individual septic tanks and treatment plants in the Gort area in order to minimise the risk of groundwater pollution. Where such facilities are permitted, full compliance with the prevailing regulations and standards, including the EPA's a Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (p.e.≤ 10), (EPA, 2009), will be required.</p>
<b>Water</b>	
<p>It was recommended that reference to the WFD WRBMP Programme of Measures, which set out the key priorities for water quality management in the period to 2015, be included within Objective UI13.</p>	<p>Reference as recommended was included in Objective UI13.</p> <p><b>Objective UI13 – Western River Basin Management Plan and Protection of Waters pg.42</b></p> <p>Support the protection of water quality in accordance with the EU Water Framework Directive (2006/60/EC) and the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (SI No. 722 of 2003) (as amended) (or any updated legislation), including the implementation of the relevant recommendations and measures as outlined in the Western River Basin District Management Plan 2009-2015 and associated Programme of Measures and any updated/ superseding documents). Development will only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on the water environment, including surface water, groundwater quality and quantity, river corridors and associated wetlands. Galway County Council is statutorily obliged to protect the existing good quality status of the waters in the Gort area (including the Cannahowna/Gort River and tributary/stream, the Kiltartan drainage area and including the surface water catchments of the Coole-Garryland turlough (a wetland system of global significance).</p>
<b>Transport Infrastructure</b>	
<p>It was recommended that residential dwellings in proximity to the M18 be protected through mitigation measures.</p>	<p>Additional text was included in Objective T118.</p> <p><b>Objective T118 – Noise</b></p> <p>Require all new proposed development, within 300m of roadways with traffic volumes greater than 8,220 AADT to include a noise assessment and mitigation measures if necessary with their planning application documentation. Mitigation measures proposed as part of M18 in order to protect the noise environment of existing residential development will be facilitated or enforced as necessary.</p>
<b>Community Facilities</b>	
<p>It was recommended that within Policy CF2 relating to Community Facilities and Amenities, these developments should be promoted in close proximity to new and existing residential development.</p>	<p>Additional wording was included in Policy CF2.</p> <p><b>Policy CF2 – Community Facilities and Amenities pg.24</b></p>

Environmental Topic	Reference in the Plan
	<p>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. Community facilities and amenities projects will be facilitated in appropriate locations and additionally in the vicinity of all new and existing residential development, following an assessment of each proposal and, where appropriate, subject to co-operation and consultation with the local community and other relevant stakeholders, including the Department of Education and Skills, and available resources.</p>
<p><b>Objective CF5 – Childcare Facilities</b></p> <p>The inclusion of additional text to ensure childcare facilities are included in the vicinity of all new and existing residential development.</p>	<p>Additional wording was included in Objective CF5.</p> <p><b>Objective CF5 – Childcare Facilities pg.24</b></p> <p>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 (or any updated/superseding document) and in tandem and in the vicinity of all new and existing residential development.</p>
<b>Land use</b>	
<p>In order to promote sustainable landuse in all landuse decisions it was recommended that the word 'sustainable' be included in a number of Land Use Objectives.</p>	<p>The word 'sustainable' was included before the word 'development' in Objectives LU3, LU4 and LU5.</p> <p><b>Objective LU3 – Industrial pg.15</b></p> <p><b>Objective LU4 – Business &amp; Enterprise pg.16</b></p> <p><b>Objective LU5 – Community Facilities pg.16</b></p>

## 2.7 INFLUENCE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT ADDENDUM

At the Galway County Council meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2013, the Elected Members considered the adoption of the Draft Plan together with the Manager's Report on the submissions received and decided to make a number of Material Alterations to the proposed Draft Plan.

The proposed alterations were subject to a further SEA and AA screening and it was determined that a full SEA/ER and Stage 2 AA was required for Material Alteration No. 2 (MA2) and that a SEA/AA screening sufficed for the proposed remaining Material Alterations.

As outlined in the SEA ER Addendum, Material Alteration No. 2 is a material alteration which was proposed by the Elected Members otherwise than as recommended in the Manager's Report and which relates to a change in the Land Use zoning for a portion of one site (1.414Ha) located within Flood Zone A as identified in the Draft LAP and Stage 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for the Gort Draft LAP. MA2 resulted from a submission seeking the reinstatement of the town centre zoning across the entirety of the subject lands of 2.1 hectares at Lavally and with an existing planning permission for a significant mixed residential and commercial development under the terms of PI. Ref.

No. 05/3042 which has been further extended by the Council under Pl. Ref. No. 11/239 thereby remaining effective until April 2016.

It is was recommended in the Addendum to the Environmental Report that the lands proposed by the Elected Members to be rezoned from Open Space, Recreation and Amenity under MA2 as Town Centre/Commercial classified as vulnerable under 'The Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009' should currently be considered unsuitable for development and remain zoned as Open Space as had been proposed within the Managers Report on the Draft Submissions.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2013 the Elected Members accepted all of the Managers Recommendations in the Managers Report on the proposed Material Alterations thereby including the recommendation to rezone the lands considered under MA2 to Open Space, Recreation and Amenity.

### 3 CONSULTATION PROCESS AND TIMEFRAME

The SEA Regulations provide for extensive public consultation with respect to the Gort Local Area Plan and its subsequent Material Alterations for which SEA and Appropriate Assessment (AA) are undertaken, as appropriate. The consultation process ensures that individuals and organisations that wish to participate have an opportunity to do so. The Material Alterations to the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2013-2019 and associated SEA Screening Environmental Report for Material Alteration No 2 and AA Screening on the Proposed Material Alterations were put on public display to allow the general public to make submissions. The submissions were reviewed through the SEA and AA process and changes to the proposed Material Alterations to the Draft Plan were recommended.

The SEA legislation and guidelines also indicate that there should be complete integration between the preparation of the Plan, the SEA process and Appropriate Assessment (AA). This Environmental Report outlines the SEA process carried out in tandem with the Plan and the AA processes.

The SEA process ensures that the Plan will be informed by environmental considerations from the outset. **Table 3.1** summarises the Plan, SEA and AA processes.

**Table 3.1 Summary of Plan, SEA and AA Processes**

Gort Local Area Plan	SEA and AA
	Notice to Environmental Authorities requesting observations on whether Draft Plan would be likely to have significant environmental effects
	Consultation period for submissions from Environmental Authorities on SEA/AA Scoping of Draft Plan 4 <sup>th</sup> December 2012 to 9 <sup>th</sup> January 2013. (Both dates inclusive)
Notice in Newspaper advertising intention to prepare Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2013-2019	
Public Consultation on Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2013-2019 19 <sup>th</sup> February to 2 <sup>nd</sup> April 2013 (Both dates inclusive)	SEA Environmental Report and AA NIR on public display and sent to Environmental Bodies 19 <sup>th</sup> February to 2 <sup>nd</sup> April 2013
Manager's Report on Submissions received on the Draft Plan (for Elected Members) May 2013	
Members vote to make modifications/material alterations to the Draft Plan 27 <sup>th</sup> May 2013	All Material Alterations to the Draft Plan made on the 27 <sup>th</sup> May 2013 were screened out except for MA2 for which it was determined that SEA was necessary.
Public Display of Material Alterations and consultation period 7 <sup>th</sup> June 2013 to 5 <sup>th</sup> July 2013 (Both dates inclusive)	Public Display of SEA and AA Addenda for Material Alteration No. 2 and consultation period 7 <sup>th</sup> June 2013 to 5 <sup>th</sup> July 2013 (Both dates inclusive)
Submission of Manager's Report to Members on submissions on the Material Alterations to the Draft Plan, SEA and AA Screening and SEA ER 15 <sup>th</sup> July 2013	
Plan with Material Alterations (except MA2), SEA and AA adopted at Council Meeting 22 <sup>th</sup> July 2013	
Gort Local Area Plan, SEA (ER and Statement) and AA comes into effect 4 weeks after adoption August 2013	

#### 3.1 PRE-DRAFT CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

A Background Issues Paper was issued in February 2012 with the aim to promote discussion and consultation on issues affecting the sustainable development of Gort. A summary of the submissions received over this time period is provided in Table 2.2 of the SEA Environmental Report.

### 3.2 SEA SCOPING AND CONSULTATION

Following the screening process, a scoping exercise was undertaken whereby prescribed bodies were consulted. This established the scope and extent of the Environmental Report and facilitated consultation with the designated statutory consultees. Responses were received from the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht with relevant issues included in Table 2.3 of the Environmental Report.

### 3.3 SUBMISSIONS ON THE DRAFT LAP, SEA ER AND NIR

The draft Gort Local Area Plan 2013-2019 LAP, SEA Environmental Report and AA Natura Impact Report were put on public display from 19<sup>th</sup> February to 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2013 during which time a total of nine submissions were received, five from the Prescribed Authorities/Environmental Authorities/Statutory Bodies and four from General Public and Other Persons/Bodies. A Manager's Report was prepared which summarised the issues raised in each of the written submissions received, together with the Manager's opinion on the issues raised and recommendations in relation to the proposed Local Area Plan, whilst taking account of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, the statutory obligations of any local authority in the area, and any relevant policies or objectives for the time being of the Government or of any Minister of the Government. Environmental considerations were integrated into the Manager's Opinions through the SEA and AA processes.

Submissions received are discussed in the Addendum to the Environmental Report which is available as Annex A to SEA Final Environmental Report. Arising from these submissions a number of material alterations were recommended in the County Manager's Report (CMR) to the Elected Members. In addition a material alteration has been made by the Elected Members which was not recommended in the CMR.

### 3.4 SUBMISSIONS ON THE MATERIAL ALTERATIONS TO THE DRAFT LAP AND THE ADDENDA TO THE SEA ER AND NIR

The Material Alterations to the draft LAP, and the Addenda to the SEA ER and Natura Impact Report were put on public display from 7<sup>th</sup> June 2013 to 5<sup>th</sup> July 2013 and a total of nine written submissions were received. A Manager's Report was also prepared on the Material Alterations to the LAP which summarised the issues raised in submissions and made recommendations in relation to the material alterations. The submissions received are summarised below with SEA comment.

Submission	Issue	SEA Comment
<p><b>1. National Roads Authority</b></p>	<p>Section 3.2 Residential Development</p> <p>The authority considers that designation of Residential and Residential Phase 2 lands to the east of the town along the N66 at a location on the national route where a 100kph speed limit applies requires review to ensure compliance with the provisions of official policy and Objective TI 13 of the Plan.</p>	<p>The proposed Residential zoning to the east of the existing town centre adjacent to the Gort Railway station has been identified as a prime development quarter in terms of integrating land use and public transportation.</p> <p>Under Objective TI13 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</p>

Submission	Issue	SEA Comment
		<p>network.</p> <p>Newly proposed site access along the N66 route outside the 100kph limit should be required to submit Traffic and Transport Assessments.</p>
<p><b>2. Roscommon County Council</b></p>	<p>Acknowledgement received with no comments due to distance of Gort from Roscommon.</p>	<p>This comment is not considered to affect the Material Alterations for the plan.</p>
<p><b>3. Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine</b></p>	<p>Acknowledgement received with no comments.</p>	<p>This comment is not considered to affect the Material Alterations for the plan.</p>
<p><b>4. Noreen Shields</b></p>	<p>Request for a People's Park to be located within the town with easy access for both locals (especially elderly) and tourists.</p>	<p>This issue is not considered to relate to the Material Alterations for the plan.</p>
<p><b>5. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)</b></p>	<p><b><u>SEA Determination</u></b></p> <p>The need for SEA of the Proposed Material Alterations is noted.</p> <p><b><u>Specific Comments on Proposed Material Alterations</u></b></p> <p>Many points made in previous submission have been incorporated into alterations.</p> <p>The alternatives put forward in Section 2.8 may benefit from a summary on the preferred/recommended alternative</p> <p><b><i>Relating to MA2</i></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The EPA consider that in light of the fact that a justification test for the proposed re-zoning of the lands failed, the lands should be zoned as Open Space / Recreation, in keeping with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines (DEHLG, 2009).</li> <li>2. Any Flood Impact Assessment carried out by the developers should be in accordance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines (DEHLG, 2009) and should be independently assessed. Any proposed re-zoning should be subject to the findings and recommendations of SFRA.</li> </ol>	<p>Comments noted in relation to SEA Determination and specific comments.</p> <p><b><i>Relating to MA2</i></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The EPA agree with the conclusion of the SEA Environmental Report Addendum for MA2, that reverting to the zoning of Open Space is the most environmentally sustainable option. The zoning of the subject lands as 'Town Centre/Commercial', which are within Flood Zone A, would be contrary to the Flood Planning Guidelines and to Galway County Council's general approach to zone Flood Zones A and B lands as Open Space. This would open up the possibility of lands within Flood Zones A and B being opened to land use zonings not compatible with flooding potential, both within the Plan area in particular and within County Galway in general, and thereby have potential for detrimental effects on hydrology/hydrogeology, water quality, human health and biodiversity.</li> <li>2. The EPA agree with the conclusion of the SEA Environmental Report Addendum for MA2 to carry out a Flood Impact Assessment that is independently assessed and in</li> </ol>



Submission	Issue	SEA Comment
	<p><b><u>EPA comment on content to be included in the SEA Statement:</u></b></p> <p>a) How environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan;’</p> <p>b) How the Environmental Report, submissions, observations and consultations have been taken into account during the preparation of the Plan;’</p> <p>c) The reasons for choosing the Plan adopted in the light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with, and;</p> <p>d)The measures decided upon to monitor the significant environmental effects of implementation the Plan.</p>	<p>accordance with SFRA.</p> <p><b><u>On content to be included in the SEA Statement:</u></b></p> <p>The general comments from the EPA are noted. Screening will be carried out on any amendments and the SEA Statement will summarise the outlined detail.</p> <p>A copy of the SEA Statement will be sent to relevant environmental authorities.</p> <p>a) The EPA have stated that reverting to the original zoning for the subject lands in the Draft Plan, i.e. Open Space would be the most environmentally sustainable option. From an environmental perspective therefore it is recommended that subject lands revert to Open Space.</p> <p>b) The Manager’s Report will summarise the above detail. SEA comment on submissions will be incorporated into the Manager’s Report.</p> <p>c) Alternatives are outlined in the Environmental Report. The preferred alternative is reversion to Open Space of MA2. The Member’s should give reasons as to why the adopted alternative has been chosen, in light of the three other alternatives highlighted in the Environmental Report and the submissions received from the EPA and the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.</p> <p>d) Monitoring measures will be finalised after the Council Member’s meeting and included in the final SEA Statement. These will draw upon monitoring measures included in relevant documents such as the SEA for the County Development Plan (CDP) and Water Framework Directive (WFD) water quality monitoring.</p>
<p><b>6. Gerry, Eilisha,</b></p>	<p>This submission is seeking the continuation of the town centre zoning</p>	<p>A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared for County Galway,</p>

Submission	Issue	SEA Comment
<p><b>Gearoid and Fergal Lydon</b></p>	<p>across the entirety of the subject lands of 2.1 hectares at Lavally and with an existing planning permission for a significant mixed residential and commercial development under the terms of Pl. Ref. No. 05/3042 which has been further extended by the Council under Pl. Ref. No. 11/239 thereby remaining effective until April 2016.</p> <p>The applicants have provided an opinion of Consulting Hydrologist, Anthony Cawley of Hydro Environmental Ltd entitled '<i>Development of Lands at George's Street Gort Co. Galway</i>'.</p> <p>This reports states that the development of the site is compatible with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines (DEHLG, 2009) as the access road through the lower flood prone lands can be designed as a permanent structural flood defence to replace the existing earthen embankment. This would have the benefit of enhancing flood protection for George's Street, allow better access for maintenance and remove the requirement to tie into the railway embankment.</p> <p>The report also states that the back of the site is at higher ground and not within the floodplain area.</p>	<p>which also 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. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has examined and confirmed the flood risk areas identified as part of the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment mapping published by the Office of Public Works.</p> <p>A Stage 2 SFRA (Strategic Flood Risk Assessment) augmented by ground-truthing has been carried out by Galway County Council's Flood Risk Consultants and the lands in question have been zoned Flood Zone A.</p> <p>All undeveloped lands identified as Flood Zones A or B have been recommended for Open Space/Recreation and Amenity Zoning. As Map 3A of the draft LAP shows a portion 1.414Ha of this site is identified as lying within Flood Zone A and is therefore recommended as Open Space/Recreation. This is in line with the relevant Guidelines and has been assessed accordingly in the SEA.</p> <p>Should any proposed development come forward for this site (including the current extension of duration), the application of the justification test and relevant guidelines and objectives in the draft LAP (including Objective UI 12 Flood Risk Management and Assessment) will apply. Rezoning is not recommended.</p> <p>The report by Consulting Hydrologist, Anthony Cawley of Hydro Environmental Ltd entitled '<i>Development of Lands at George's Street Gort Co. Galway</i>' does not appear to provide evidence and mapping of the flood zones that would allow either the a) the zones in the Stage 2 SFRA to be updated or b) Criteria No. 3 from the Justification</p>

Submission	Issue	SEA Comment
		<p>Test set out in the Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009, to be passed.</p> <p>There has been sufficient lands proposed to be zoned as Town Centre/Commercial in the Plan area. There are also existing lands not within Flood Zone A which could be zoned Town Centre/Commercial adjacent to existing Town Centre/Commercial lands.</p> <p>Given the location of the lands in question it is considered that in order to align with Galway County Council's approach to generally zone undeveloped lands within Flood Zones A and B as Open Space/Recreation this zoning should be retained.</p> <p>If the land subject to proposed MA2 were to be zoned as Town Centre/Commercial it may be necessary for Galway County Council's flood consultants to carry out an up-to-date site specific hydrological impact study.</p>
<p><b>7. Cyril J. Kelly and Associates Consulting Engineers</b></p>	<p>A request for lands adjacent to the M18 to be zoned for commercial warehousing to accommodate a drop off facility for commercial vehicles servicing the town of Gort. This facility would result in reduced traffic in the town.</p>	<p>This issue is not considered to relate to the Material Alterations for the plan.</p>
<p><b>8. Department of Environment Community and Local Government</b></p>	<p>The Department wishes to state that the Gort Local Area Plan could be in conflict with the policy on Flood Risk Management that if the Material Alteration No. 2 is retained without the preparation of a Stage 2 Flood Risk Assessment and a Justification Test, based on the available evidence. Therefore the Plan would not represent proper planning and sustainable development.</p> <p>The Department refers to ensuring the observations of the Office of Public Works (OPW) are fully adhered to. A Stage 2 Flood Risk Assessment, as per the Flood Risk Management Guidelines, must be complied with prior to the zoning of such lands for development.</p> <p>The Department considers the Proposed</p>	<p>As per comments for Submission No. 6</p>

Submission	Issue	SEA Comment
	<p>Amendment (Material Alteration No.2) to the Gort Local Area Plan is considered premature without the Flood Risk Assessment. They further request the planning authority not to proceed with MA2 and will consider further actions should this not be adhered to.</p> <p>Continued monitoring will take place of the Council's decision by the Department.</p>	
<p><b>9. Noel Nestor</b></p>	<p>Layout of parking on public streets</p>	<p>This issue is not considered to relate to the Material Alterations for the plan.</p>

Submission No's 5, 6 and 8 were relevant to the MA2 and were therefore taken into consideration in providing SEA input in to the Manager's Report. The submissions from the EPA and the DECLG highlight the conflicts associated with MA2 while submission No. 6 states that development of the site in question is compatible with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines. Taking into consideration all submissions on the material alterations It was recommended in the SEA ER Addendum and the Manager's report that the lands revert to Open Space, Recreation and Amenity zoning. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2013 the Elected Members accepted all of the Managers Recommendations in the Managers Report on the proposed Material Alterations thereby including the recommendation to rezone the lands considered under MA2 to Open Space, Recreation and Amenity.

## **4 REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

In line with the requirements of the SEA Directive and the corresponding implementing Irish legislation (S.I. 436 of 2004), consideration was given to reasonable alternatives for delivery of the Gort Local Area Plan 2013-2019. Article 5 of the SEA Directive requires the Environmental Report to consider 'reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme and the significant effects of the alternatives selected. Alternatives must be realistic and capable of implementation and should present a range of different approaches within the statutory and operational requirements of the LAP'. A "Do Nothing" option has not been explored, as this is not considered reasonable, given the legislative requirement to update the LAP.

Alternatives were considered in two separate phases of the SEA process, during the Draft LAP/Environmental Report phase and the Material Alteration/SEA ER Addendum phase, and a preferred alternative proposed at each phase.

### **4.2 LOCAL AREA PLAN DEVELOPMENT OPTION ALTERNATIVES**

The Local Area Plan Development Option Alternatives are discussed in Chapter 6 of the SEA ER. Three alternatives for future development of the town are presented and evaluated in light of a number of Environmental Protection Objectives.

Alternatives 1 and 3 showed potential conflict with a number of Environmental Protection Objectives and it was considered that the preferred Alternative as proposed under the development strategy for the Gort LAP was Alternative 2. It was considered that this alternative scenario would meet a large number of the objectives of the Plan as it supports the consolidation of the town centre, promotes the infill and sequential development of the town and encourages street-oriented development along the existing urban street network. It also locates new Town Centre (C1) and Residential Phase 1 expansion potential to the east, adjacent to the Gort Railway station and along the N66 and recognises the area as a prime development quarter in terms of integrating land use and public transportation. This approach also integrates improvements in the public realm and smarter travel opportunities for the town. Alternative No. 2 was that included in the Gort Local Area Plan 2013 -2019.

### **4.3 ALTERNATIVES IN RELATION TO PROPOSED MATERIAL ALTERATIONS TO THE PLAN**

Section 2.8 of the SEA ER Addendum presents four alternatives available to the Elected Members and the preferred alternative is indicated.

In accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2010, the options available to the Elected Members, that were realistic and capable of implementation, included:

- 1. Adopt as per all Proposed Material Alteration to Draft Gort LAP 2013-2019 (May 2013),**
- 2. Adopt as per all Proposed Material Alterations except MA2 (May 2013),**
- 3. Adopt as per Draft Gort LAP 2013-2019 (February 2013), and**
- 4. Adopt as per Draft Gort LAP 2013-2019 (May 2013) with further modifications.**

Each alternative was considered in relation to its environmental sustainability and it was concluded that **Options 2 and 3** were both an environmental-led planned approach to development of the area incorporating the principles of sustainable development and therefore the option best suited to Gort.

At the Elected Member's Council meeting of 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2013 it was decided that all the Manager's Recommendations as outlined in the County Manager's Report be accepted and therefore **Option 2 Adopt as per all Proposed Material Alterations except MA2 (May 2013)** has been voted as the preferred option by the Elected Members of Galway County Council.

## 5 MONITORING PROGRAMME

Article 10 of the SEA Directive (2001/42/EEC) requires Member States to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans “in order, inter alia, to identify at an early stage unforeseen adverse effects to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action”. The primary purpose of monitoring is to cross-check significant environmental effects which arise during the implementation stage against those predicted during the plan preparation stage.

The Directive leaves considerable flexibility to Member States in deciding how monitoring shall be arranged, however it is generally agreed that a mixture of quantitative and qualitative indicators are required. The Directive recognises that the monitoring does not necessarily require new research activity and that existing sources of information can be used. In addition monitoring can be used to identify any information gaps and/deficiencies that were identified as part of the SEA process.

Furthermore, Government Guidelines state that monitoring should concentrate on the likely significant effects identified in the Environmental Report (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government 2004).

Monitoring will be based around SEA Environmental Objectives, Indicators and Targets for the various environmental topics which are set out below in **Table 5.1**. The Indicators chosen are at a level which is relevant to the Plan and are collated and reported on by a variety of government agencies including EPA, NPWS and Archaeological Survey.

Monitoring proposals must concentrate on likely significant environmental effects, which have been identified in the Environmental Report and the measures identified as necessary to prevent, reduce, or offset any significant adverse effects. The indicators/monitoring will act as an early warning sign so that appropriate remedial action is undertaken.

### Responsibilities of Reporting

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

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

The monitoring programme is subject to review at each reporting stage to reflect new data. Should the programme identify significant impacts (such as impacts on designated sites) early on in the LAP implementation, this should trigger a review of both the LAP and associated monitoring programme. The identification of positive impacts from monitoring should also be reported as this will assist in determining successful environmental policies. It is recommended that data arising from planning applications, particularly in terms of environmental constraints mapping and Environmental Impact Statements be integrated into the GIS and monitoring system. This will assist in assessing cumulative impacts in particular on ecology and water quality.

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

**Table 5.1 Monitoring and Reporting Programme**

Objectives	Indicator	Target	Source/ Responsibility
<b>Pop1</b> – Ensure only sufficient development is permitted, as required for in the projected increase of population within the Core Strategy targets.	Number of newly constructed developments. Population Equivalent input to WWTP. Also see Water and Biodiversity Indicators.	Development will be restricted to provide for population increase which can be adequately catered for by Gort WwTP i.e. no development will be permitted which increases the PE input to the WwTP above 469, unless the WwTP is given an upgraded capacity.	Galway County Council
<b>Soi1</b> – Protect and, where appropriate, enhance the function and quality of the soil resource in Gort.	Area of soil where function and quality is compromised e.g. where soil sealing occurs. Limit net loss of groundwater recharge capability through loss of permeable soil resource.	Limit development to undeveloped Phase 1 residential areas. Restrict new development to non-sensitive areas. Change in groundwater recharge capability through development in the Town.	Galway County Council
<b>Wat1</b> – Protect and enhance the status of aquatic ecosystems in line with WFD and, with regard to their water needs, terrestrial ecosystems and wetlands directly depending on the aquatic ecosystem (quality, level, flow).	Biotic Quality Rating (Q Values) and Risk Assessment of Cannahowna/Gort River. Effectiveness of the remedial action programme for the current water supply scheme.	Improve Q value status for river bodies in plan area and zone of influence. Aim to achieve Q4 value in line with WFD requirements by 2015. Ensure no development permitted which would lead to the exceedance of capacity of Gort WwTP. Remedial action programme for the current water supply scheme remains effective.	Galway County Council and EPA
<b>Wat2</b> – Prevent pollution and contamination of ground water by adhering to aquifer protection plans.	Risk Assessment Implementation of the Programme of Measures identified under the SERBD River Basin Management Plan. Ensure wastewater collection system capacity is provided either prior to construction of new development or is developed in parallel.	No reductions in Q values in relevant watercourses. No change or improvement in groundwater quality associated with development. % increase in waters achieving 'good status' as defined in the WFD. Wastewater collection system capacity compared with wastewater collection demand from development in the town.	EPA and Galway County Council



Objectives	Indicator	Target	Source/ Responsibility
<b>Wat3</b> – Reduce risk of flooding through avoidance of development in Flood Zones A or B	<p>Number and area of developments within Flood Risk Zones</p> <p>Ensure that there is no development granted on lands which are outlined in the flood risk assessment as not suitable for development.</p>	<p>No development in Flood Zone A.</p> <p>Developments proposed within Flood Risk Zones to comply with Floods Directive.</p> <p>Identify SUDS in all new developments.</p> <p>Number of developments granted permission on lands which are outlined in the flood risk assessment as not suitable for development.</p>	Galway County Council
<b>Bio1</b> – Protect, conserve and avoid loss of the diversity, range, area or population of habitats, species and wildlife corridors.	<p>Habitat Loss e.g. loss of hedgerow, loss of mature trees, treelines, wooded areas and stone walls</p> <p>No significant negative impacts on designated habitats and species of Coole/Garryland cSAC/SPA, Lough Cutra cSAC/SPA, East Burren Complex cSAC and other potentially impacted designated sites.</p> <p>No loss of locally rare species/habitats.</p> <p>No net loss of green linkages/ecological networks especially rivers and hedgerows etc.</p>	<p>No net habitat loss.</p> <p>Change in conservation status of qualifying habitats, species and associated environmental conditions of Coole/Garryland cSAC/SPA, Lough Cutra cSAC/SPA, East Burren Complex cSAC and other potentially impacted designated sites.</p> <p>Number of sites containing locally rare species/habitats.</p> <p>Number of planning permissions with biodiversity conditions ensuring no net loss of green linkages / ecological networks.</p>	Galway County Council in consultation with the NPWS
<b>Bio2</b> - Protect designated European Sites (SACs & SPAs) under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. Conserve and protect, or maintain and restore Natura 2000 sites and the Natura 2000 Network.	<p>Compliance with conservation objectives of European Sites through:</p> <p>Retaining Habitats (as above),</p> <p>Maintaining or improving water quality.</p>	<p>Improvement or at least no reduction in conservation status of habitats and species of European sites.</p> <p>No reduction in water quality.</p> <p>AA Screening carried out for all development which have the potential to impact Natura 2000 sites.</p>	Galway County Council in consultation with the NPWS
<b>Bio3</b> - Conserve and protect other nature conservation sites	Habitat quantity and quality and species abundance and	No net loss of habitat and species.	Galway County Council in consultation with the NPWS

Objectives	Indicator	Target	Source/ Responsibility
(NHAs, pNHAs, National Parks, Nature Reserves, Wildfowl Sanctuaries).	diversity.		
<b>Bio4</b> – Protect habitats (terrestrial and aquatic) from non-native invasive species and prevent non-native invasive species spread.	Spread of invasive species	Survey and monitor extent and distribution of invasive species. Species management plans to be submitted application for proposed development where invasive species occur.	Galway County Council in consultation with the NPWS and Invasive Species Ireland
<b>Cl11</b> – Contribute to mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change and air quality issues.	Average energy consumption of new residential housing stock Tonnes of CO <sup>2</sup> /capita/year All new development applications within areas at risk of flooding to be accompanied by a flood impact assessment. Increase access by households to public transport, including bus and rail services. Increase in number of people travelling to work and school via public transport.	Reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with 2020 commitments. % of planning applications for development in areas at risk of flooding accompanied by a Flood Impact Assessment. % of households granted planning permission within 500m of a bus service or 1km of a rail station. % increase in number of people travelling to work and school via public transport.	Galway County Council
<b>Mat1</b> - To ensure that drinking water supplies are free of contamination.	% compliance in potable water quality monitoring. % compliance in wastewater discharges from municipal treatment. Maximise development potential within urban envelope in order to reduce pressure on peripheral areas. Minimise the % of unaccounted for water. This refers to	100% compliance with water quality monitoring. Increase in population within urban area. % unaccounted for water. Change in length of cycle lanes, length of Quality Bus Corridors and number of bus services within the Town. Increase in planning permissions making provision for renewable energy and water conservation measures.	Corine Land Cover Project EPA Galway County Council

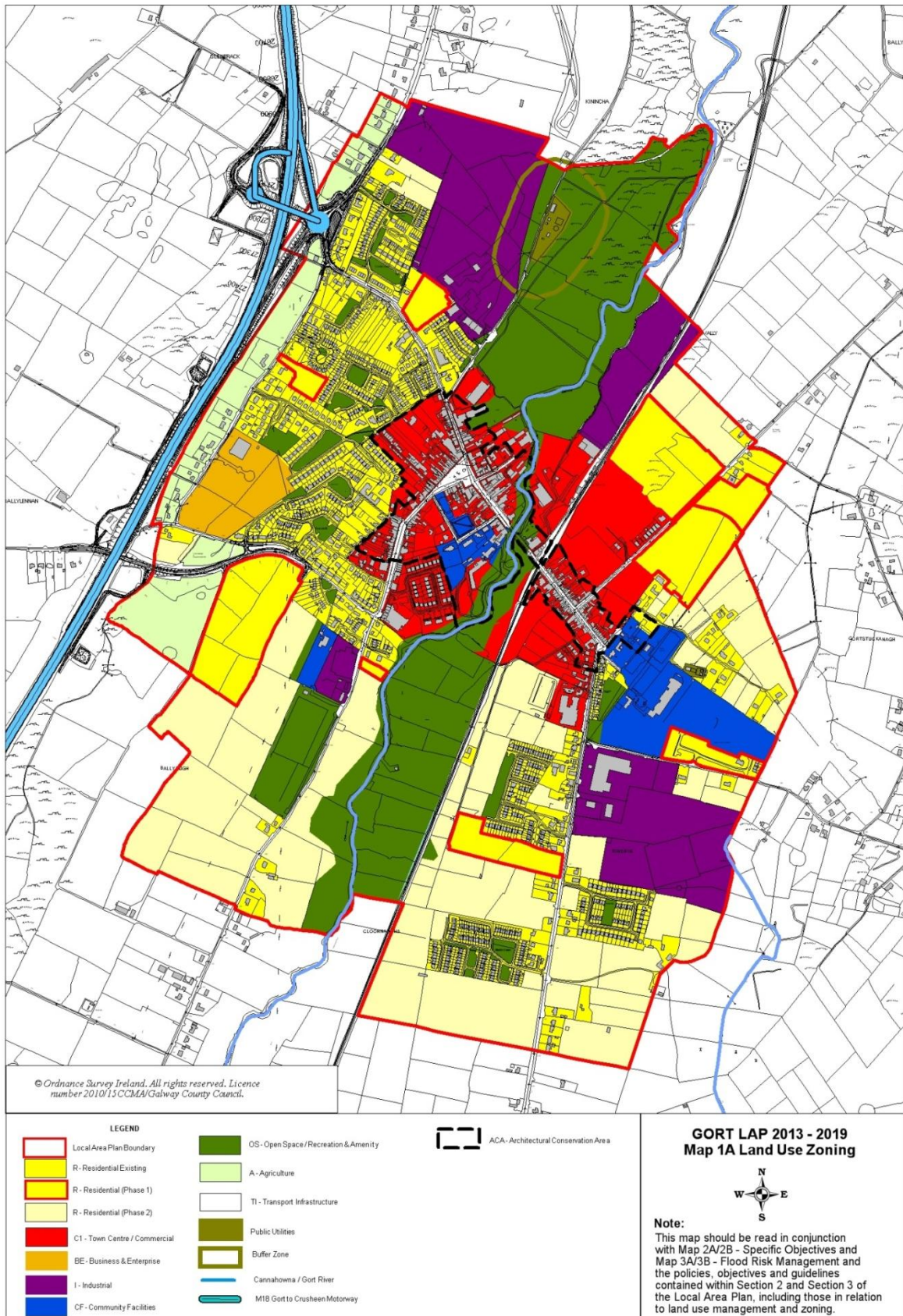
Objectives	Indicator	Target	Source/ Responsibility
	leakage from the system.  Maximise length of cycle lanes, length of Quality Bus Corridors and number of bus services within the Town.  Increase in planning permissions making provision for renewable energy and water conservation measures.		
<b>Mat2-</b> To ensure that all development is adequately serviced to EPA standards prior to discharge.	% compliance in wastewater discharges from municipal treatment	Improved % compliance.	Galway County Council
<b>H1</b> – Protect and conserve the cultural heritage including the built environment and settings; archaeological (recorded and unrecorded monuments), architectural (Protected Structures, Architectural Conservation Areas, vernacular buildings, materials and urban fabric) and manmade landscape features (e.g. field walls, footpaths, gate piers etc.).	% of Protected Structures ‘at risk’.  No. of ACAs.  No. of archaeological sites investigated.  No impact on the fabric or setting of monuments on the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) by development granted planning permission.  No impacts on the architectural heritage value or setting of protected structures by development granted planning permission.  No protected structures to be demolished because of long term neglect and dereliction.	Ensure that the cultural heritage of the town is maintained and protected from damage and deterioration.  Number of monuments on the RMP, impacted by granted planning permissions.  Number of protected structures impacted by development granted planning permission.  Number of protected structures that have been demolished because of long term neglect and dereliction.	The Archaeological Survey monitoring programme, Ireland  Buildings at Risk Register, Heritage Council Ireland.  Galway County Council
<b>H2</b> – To ensure the restoration and re-use of existing uninhabited	Number of buildings restored over lifetime of the plan.	To ensure a positive increase in such development over lifetime of LAP.	Galway County Council

Objectives	Indicator	Target	Source/ Responsibility
and derelict structures where possible opposed to demolition and new build (to promote sustainability and reduce landfill).			
<b>Lan1</b> – Protect designated landscapes and scenic views, routes and landscape features of local value.	<p>Number of developments impacting on designated landscapes and scenic views, routes and landscape features of local value.</p> <p>No planning permission granted within special qualities of landscapes that materially contravene the policies or objectives of the plan, within the lifetime of the plan.</p> <p>No negative alteration to protected views.</p>	<p>Minimal negative impacts on designated landscapes and scenic views, routes and landscape features of local value</p> <p>Number of planning permissions granted which materially contravene the special qualities of landscapes.</p> <p>Number of protected views lost through development.</p>	Galway County Council
<b>No1</b> - To protect residents from adverse noise levels	Number of complaints regarding noise.	<p>No complaints about noise</p> <p>Targets as set out in Draft Noise Action Plan.</p>	Galway County Council

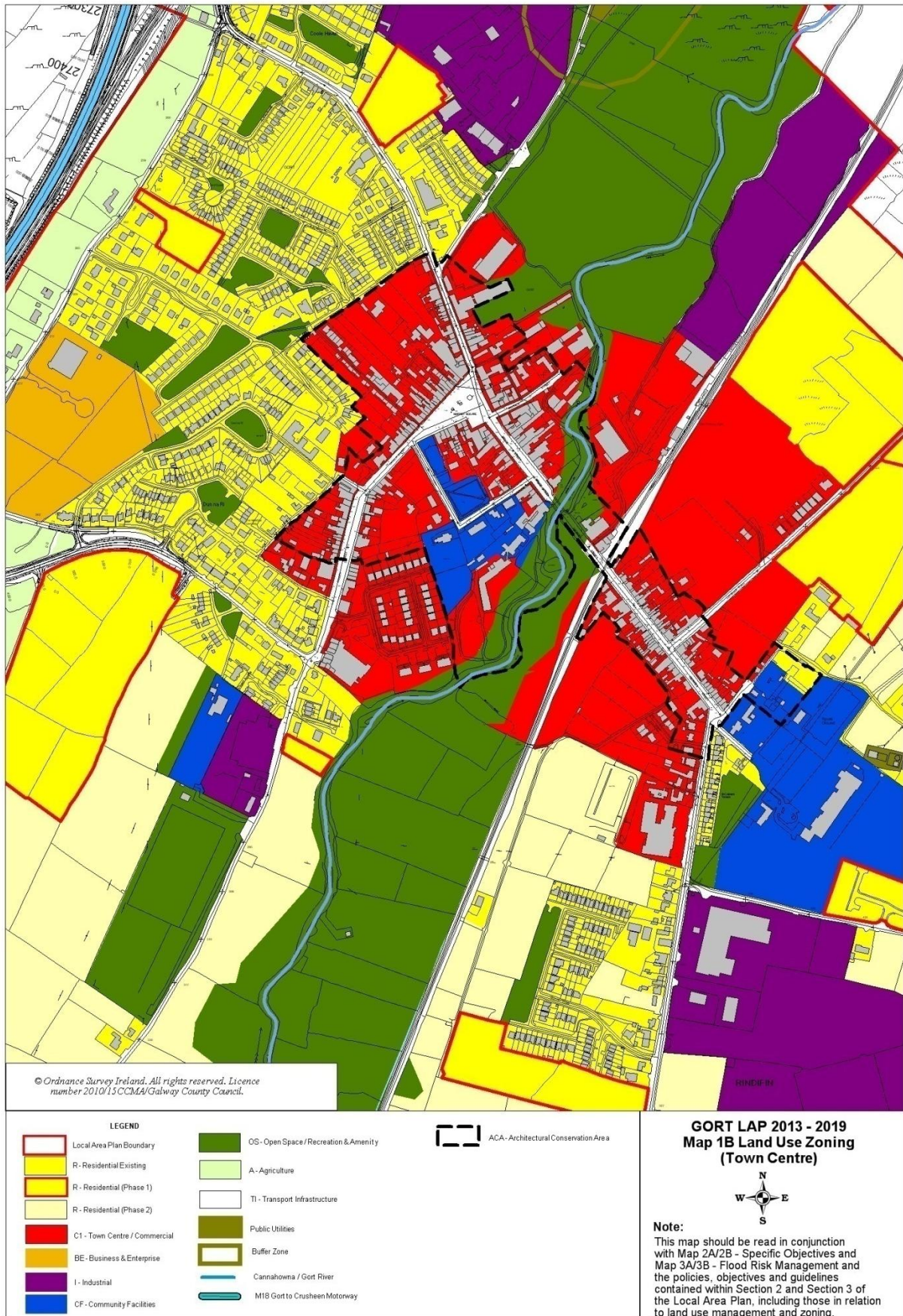
# **Appendix A**

## **Gort Local Area Plan 2013–2019 Maps**

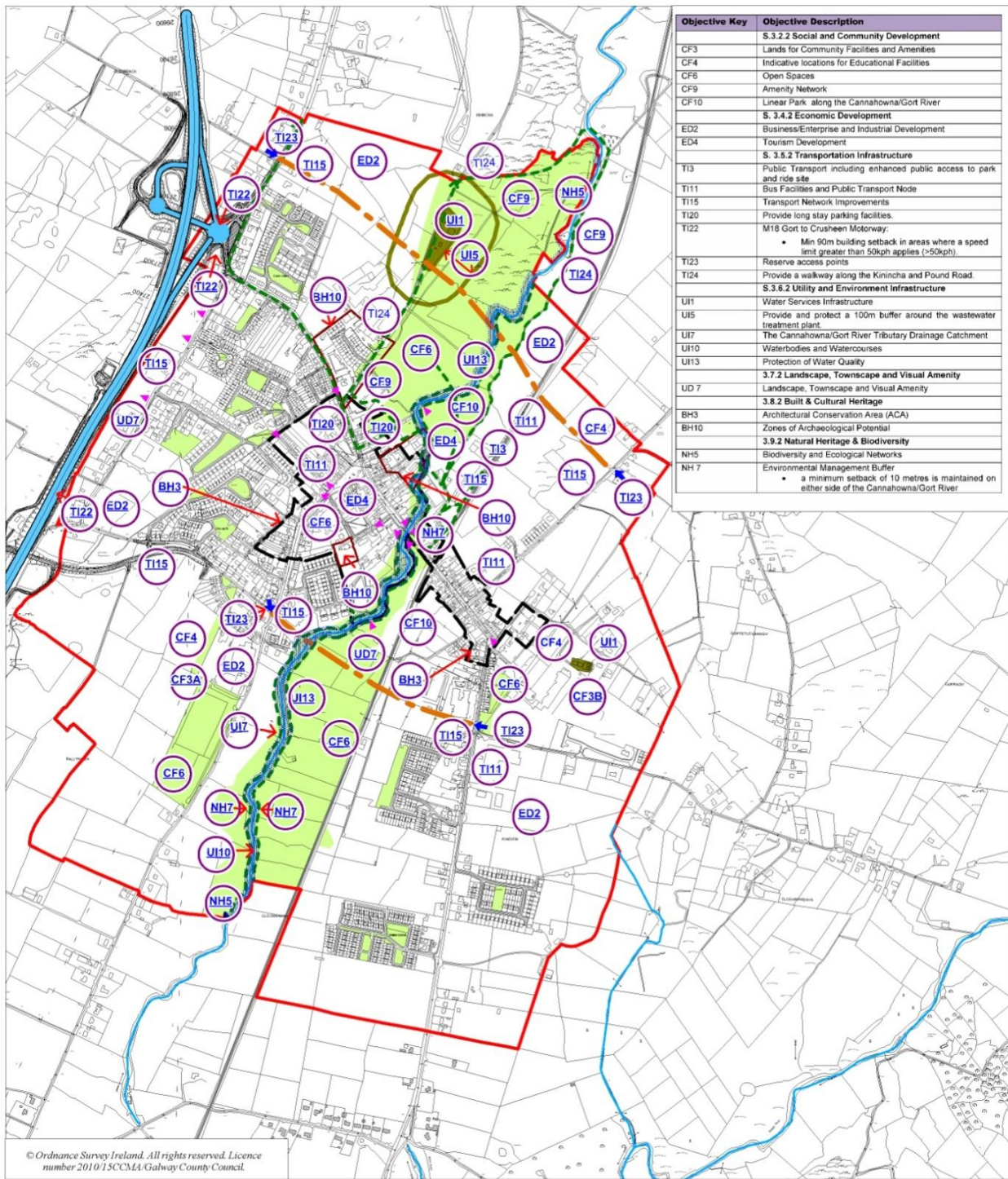
## 4.1 Map 1A – Land Use Zoning



## 4.2 Map 1B – Land Use Zoning (Town Centre)



### 4.3 Map 2A – Specific Objectives



Objective Key	Objective Description
<b>S.3.2.2 Social and Community Development</b>	
CF3	Lands for Community Facilities and Amenities
CF4	Indicative locations for Educational Facilities
CF6	Open Spaces
CF9	Amenity Network
CF10	Linear Park along the Cannahowna/Gort River
<b>S.3.4.2 Economic Development</b>	
ED2	Business/Enterprise and Industrial Development
ED4	Tourism Development
<b>S.3.5.2 Transportation Infrastructure</b>	
TI3	Public Transport including enhanced public access to park and ride site
TI11	Bus Facilities and Public Transport Node
TI15	Transport Network Improvements
TI20	Provide long stay parking facilities.
TI22	M18 Gort to Crusheen Motorway: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Min 90m building setback in areas where a speed limit greater than 50kph applies (&gt;50kph).</li> </ul>
TI23	Reserve access points
TI24	Provide a walkway along the Kinincha and Pound Road.
<b>S.3.6.2 Utility and Environment Infrastructure</b>	
UI1	Water Services Infrastructure
UI5	Provide and protect a 100m buffer around the wastewater treatment plant.
UI7	The Cannahowna/Gort River Tributary Drainage Catchment
UI10	Waterbodies and Watercourses
UI13	Protection of Water Quality
<b>3.7.2 Landscape, Townscape and Visual Amenity</b>	
UD7	Landscape, Townscape and Visual Amenity
<b>3.8.2 Built &amp; Cultural Heritage</b>	
BH3	Architectural Conservation Area (ACA)
BH10	Zones of Archaeological Potential
<b>3.9.2 Natural Heritage &amp; Biodiversity</b>	
NH5	Biodiversity and Ecological Networks
NH7	Environmental Management Buffer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a minimum setback of 10 metres is maintained on either side of the Cannahowna/Gort River</li> </ul>

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**LEGEND**

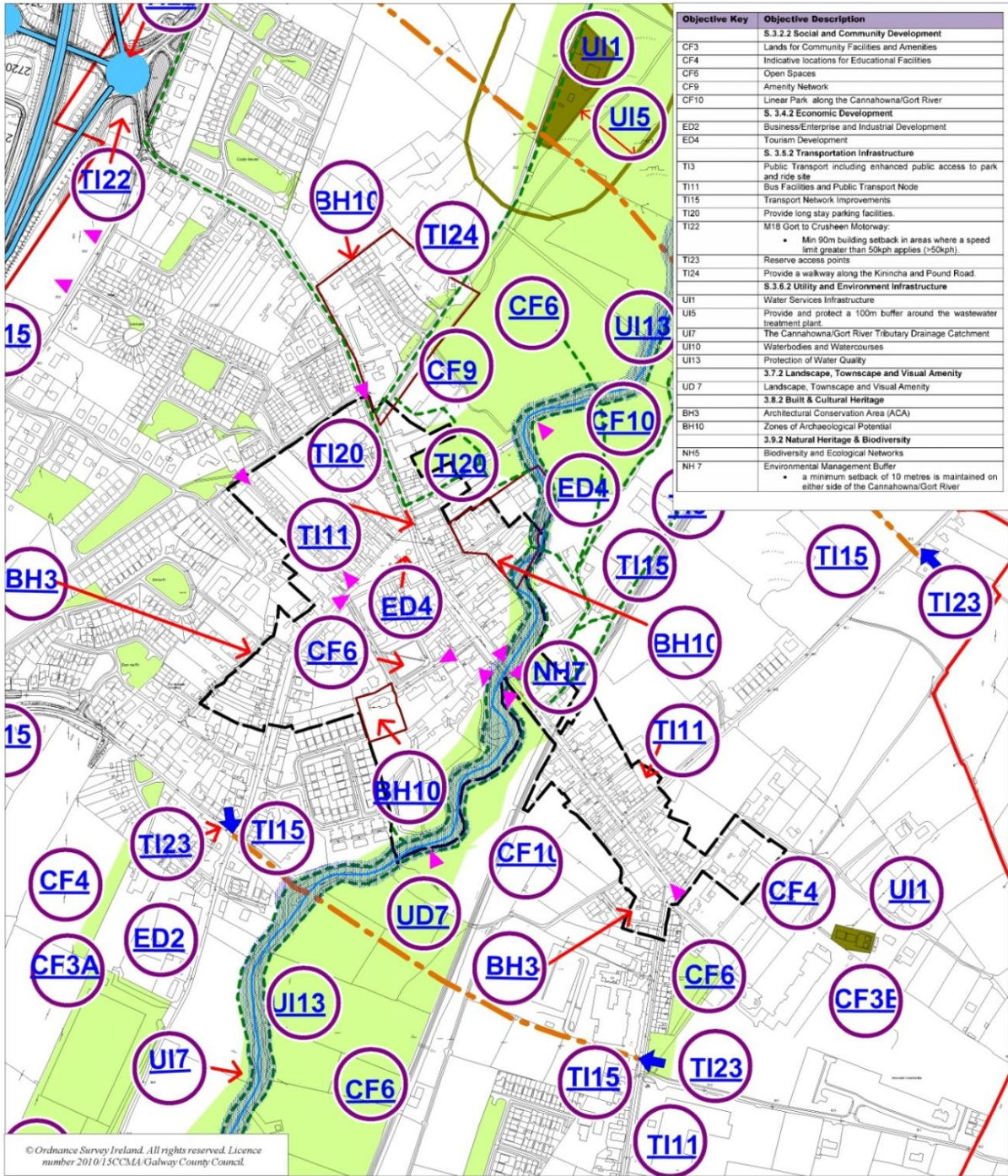
- LAP Boundary
- XX Specific Objectives Number
- OS - Open Space / Recreation & Amenity (CF6)
- Amenity Corridor (CF10/TI24)
- Transport Network Improvements - (TI15) Relief/Link Road/Street
- ↑ Reserve Access Points (TI23)
- ▲ Protected Views (UD7)
- ACA - Architectural Conservation Area (BH3)
- ZAP - Zone of Archaeological Potential (BH10)
- 10m Cannahowna / Gort River Environment Management Buffer (NH7)
- M18 Gort to Crusheen Motorway
- Cannahowna / Gort River & Streams

**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.

**GORT LAP 2013-2019  
 MAP 2A - SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**



### 4.4 Map 2B – Specific Objectives (Town Centre)



Objective Key	Objective Description
<b>S.3.2.2 Social and Community Development</b>	
CF3	Lands for Community Facilities and Amenities
CF4	Indicative locations for Educational Facilities
CF6	Open Spaces
CF9	Amenity Network
CF10	Linear Park along the Cannahowna/Gort River
<b>S.3.4.2 Economic Development</b>	
ED2	Business/Enterprise and Industrial Development
ED4	Tourism Development
<b>S.3.5.2 Transportation Infrastructure</b>	
TI3	Public Transport including enhanced public access to park and ride site
TI11	Bus Facilities and Public Transport Node
TI15	Transport Network Improvements
TI20	Provide long stay parking facilities.
TI22	M18 Gort to Crusheen Motorway: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Min 90m building setback in areas where a speed limit greater than 50km/h applies (&gt;50km/h)</li> </ul>
TI23	Reserve access points
TI24	Provide a walkway along the Kinincha and Pound Road.
<b>S.3.6.2 Utility and Environment Infrastructure</b>	
UI1	Water Services Infrastructure
UI5	Provide and protect a 100m buffer around the wastewater treatment plant.
UI7	The Cannahowna/Gort River Tributary Drainage Catchment
UI10	Waterbodies and Watercourses
UI13	Protection of Water Quality
<b>3.7.2 Landscape, Townscape and Visual Amenity</b>	
UD7	Landscape, Townscape and Visual Amenity
<b>3.8.2 Built &amp; Cultural Heritage</b>	
BH3	Architectural Conservation Area (ACA)
BH10	Zones of Archaeological Potential
<b>3.9.2 Natural Heritage &amp; Biodiversity</b>	
NH5	Biodiversity and Ecological Networks
NH7	Environmental Management Buffer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a minimum setback of 10 metres is maintained on either side of the Cannahowna/Gort River</li> </ul>

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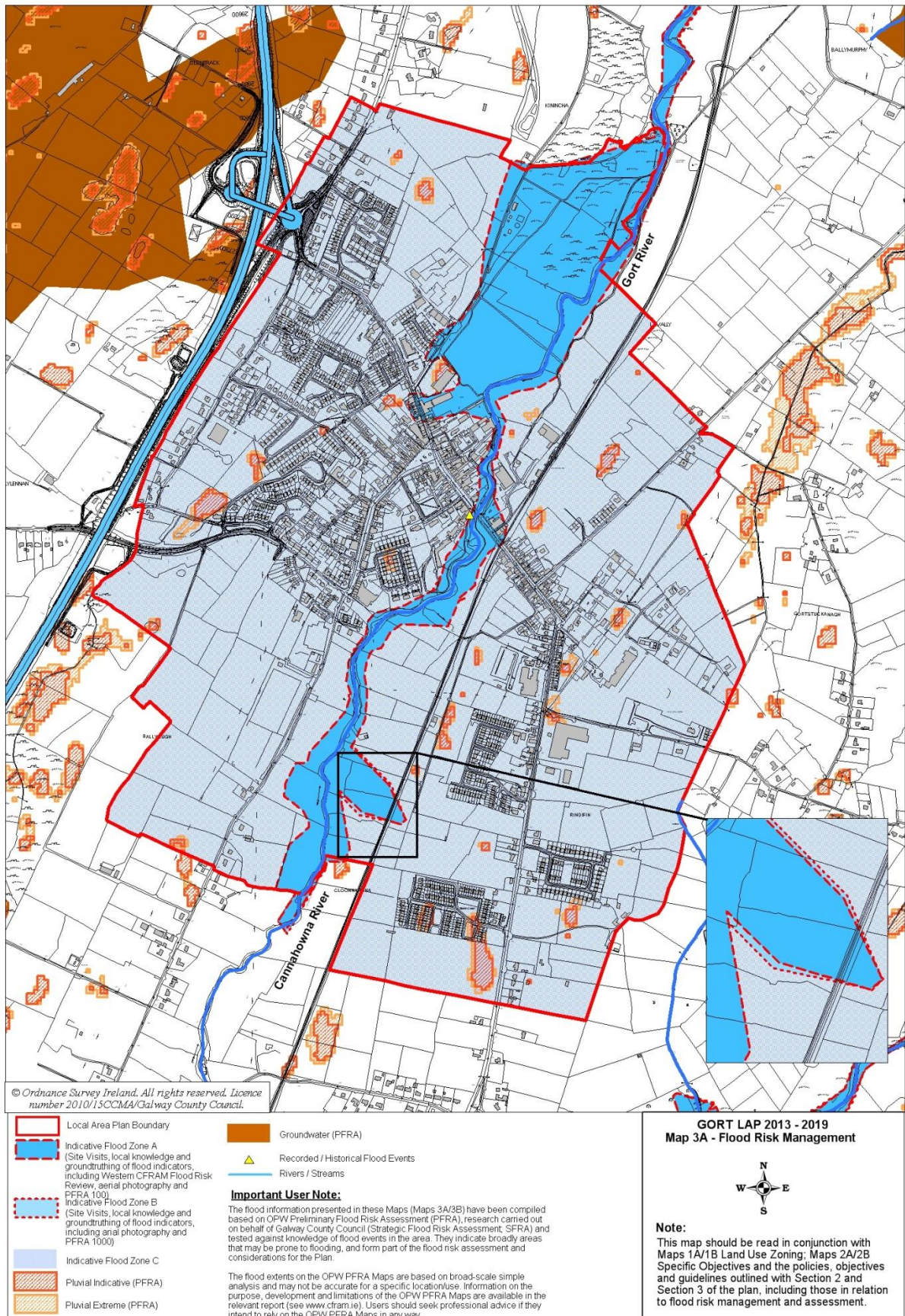
**LEGEND**

LAP Boundary	ZAP - Zone of Archaeological Potential (BH10)
Specific Objectives Number	10m Cannahowna / Gort River (NH7) Environment Management Buffer
OS - Open Space / Recreation & Amenity (CF6)	M18 Gort to Crusheen Motorway
Amenity Corridor (CF10 TI24)	Cannahowna / Gort River & Streams
Transport Network Improvements - (TI15) Relief/Link Road/Street	
Reserve Access Points (TI23)	
Protected Views (UD7)	
ACA - Architectural Conservation Area (BH3)	

**GORT LAP 2013 - 2019**  
**Map 2B - Specific Objectives (Town Centre)**

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.

## 4.5 Map 3A – Flood Risk Management



## 4.6 Map 3B – Flood Risk Management (Town Centre)

