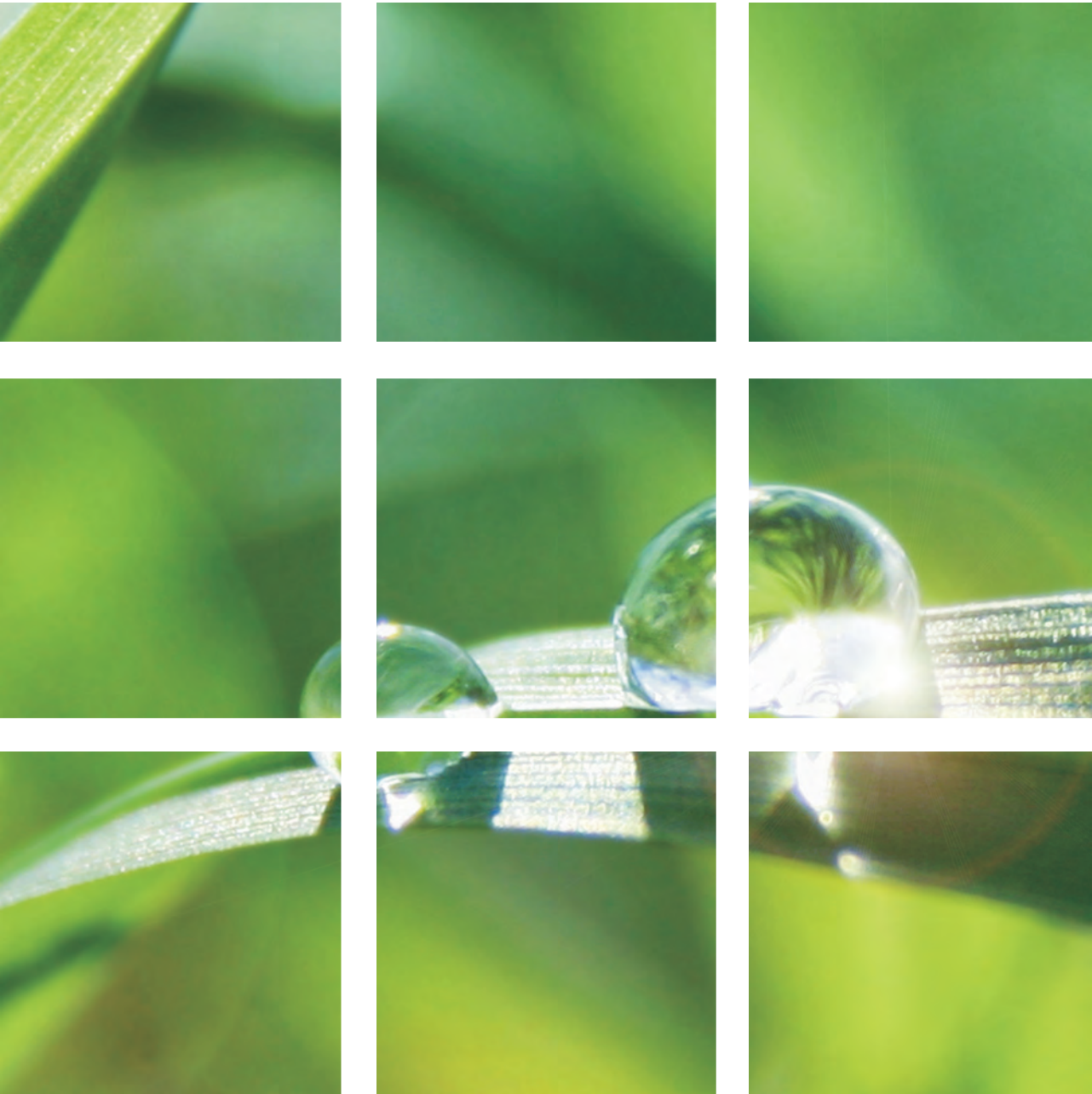




Gort Local Area Plan (2013 - 2019) Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report

August 2013



MGE0346CR0001



Draft Gort Local Area Plan
2013-2019
Strategic Environmental
Assessment

Final Environmental Report

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Appropriate Assessment
CFRAM	Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management
DAHG	Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
DCENR	Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources
DECLG	Department of Environment, Community and Local Government
EC	European Community
EIA	Environment Impact Assessment
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ER	Environmental Report
EU	European Union
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
IPPC	Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control
NHA	Natural Heritage Area
NIAH	National Inventory of Architectural Heritage
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
OPW	Office of Public Works
P.E.	Population Equivalent
POM	Programme of Measures
P/P	Plan or Programme
RBD	River Basin District
RBMP	River Basin Management Plan
RMP	Records of Monuments and Places
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SPA	Special Protection Area
WFD	Water Framework Directive
WWTP	Waste Water Treatment Plant

GLOSSARY

Appropriate Assessment:	An assessment of the effects of a plan or project on the Natura 2000 network. The Natura 2000 network comprises Special Protection Areas under the Birds Directive, Special Areas of Conservation under the Habitats Directive and Ramsar sites designated under the Ramsar Convention (collectively referred to as European sites). Also known as Habitats Directive Assessment.
Aquifers:	A water bearing rock which readily transmits water to wells and springs.
Baseline environment:	A description of the present state of the environment of the P/P area.
Biodiversity:	Word commonly used for biological diversity and defined as assemblage of living organisms from all habitats including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part.
Birds Directive (79/409/EEC):	Council Directive of 2nd April 1979 on the conservation of wild birds.
Cumulative effects:	Effects on the environment that result from incremental changes caused by the strategic action together with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. These effects can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over time or space.
Designated authority:	An organisation that must be consulted in accordance with the SEA Regulations.
Diffuse sources (of pollution):	These are primarily associated with run-off and other discharges related to different land uses such as agriculture and forestry, from septic tanks associated with rural dwellings and from the land spreading of industrial, municipal and agricultural wastes.
Ecology:	The study of the relationship among organisms and between those organisms and their non-living environment.
Ecosystem:	A community of interdependent organisms together with the environment they inhabit and with which they interact, and which is distinct from adjacent communities and environments
Environmental assessment:	The preparation of an environmental report, the carrying out of consultations, the taking into account of the environmental report and the results of the consultations in decision-making and the provision of information on the decision (in accordance with Articles 4 to 9 of the SEA Directive).
Environmental indicator:	An environmental indicator is a measure of an environmental variable over time, used to measure achievements of environmental objectives and targets.
Environmental objective:	Environmental objectives are broad, overarching principles which should specify a desired direction of environmental change.

Environmental receptors:	Include biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage (including architectural and archaeological) and landscape as listed in the SEA Directive. This list is not exhaustive, and can include other receptors which may arise for a particular P/P.
Environmental Report (ER):	A document required by the SEA Directive as part of a strategic environmental assessment which identifies, describes and evaluates the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing a plan or programme.
Eutrophication:	Enrichment of water by nutrients (phosphorus and nitrogen). The nutrients accelerate plant growth, which disturbs the balance of aquatic plants and animals and affects water quality.
Good status:	Is a general term meaning the status achieved by a surface water body when both the ecological status and its chemical status are at least good or, for groundwater, and when both its quantitative status and chemical status are at least good.
Groundwater:	All water which is below the surface of the ground in the saturation zone and in direct contact with the ground or subsoil. This zone is commonly referred to as an aquifer which is a subsurface layer or layers of rock or other geological strata of sufficient porosity and permeability to allow a significant flow of groundwater or the abstraction of significant quantities of groundwater.
Greenhouse Gas:	Gaseous constituents of the atmosphere that absorb/trap infrared (thermal) radiation which is mainly emitted by the earth's surface and thereby influence the earth's temperature.
Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC):	Council Directive of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna.
Hierarchy of plans:	Both higher and lower level P/P relevant to the P/P being assessed.
Interrelationships:	Associations or linkages, related to environmental impact of the proposed P/P usually on environmental receptors.
Key environmental issues:	Those significant environmental issues, which are of particular relevance and significance within a P/P area and/or the zone of influence of that P/P. These issues should be identified during SEA Scoping process.
Material assets:	Critical infrastructure essential for the functioning of society such as: electricity generation and distribution, water supply, wastewater treatment, transportation etc
Mitigation measures:	Measures to avoid/prevent, minimise/reduce, or as fully as possible, offset/compensate for any significant adverse effects on the environment, as a result of implementing a P/P.
Monitoring:	A continuing assessment of environmental conditions at, and surrounding, the plan or programme. This determines if effects occur as predicted or if operations remain within acceptable limits, and if

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

Natural Heritage Area:	An area considered important for the habitats present or which holds species of plants and animals whose habitat needs protection.
Non-technical summary:	A summary of the findings of the ER, summarised under the headings listed in Annex 1 of the SEA Directive that can be readily understood by decision-makers and by the general public. It should accurately reflect the findings of the ER.
Plan or Programme:	<p>Including those co-financed by the European Community as well as any modifications to them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - which are subject to preparation and/or adoption by an authority at national, regional or local level or which are prepared by an authority for adoption, through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government, and - which are required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions.
Programme of Measure:	Defines in detail those actions which are required to achieve the environmental objectives of the Directive within a river basin district.
Quantitative status:	An expression of the degree to which a body of groundwater is affected by direct and indirect abstractions. If this complies with WFD requirements the status is good.
Reasonable alternatives:	Alternatives should take into account the objectives and geographical scope of the P/P. There can be different ways of fulfilling the P/P objectives, or of dealing with environmental problems. The alternatives should be realistic, capable of implementation and should fall within the legal and geographical competence of the authority concerned.
River Basin:	Means the area of land from which all surface water run-off flows, through a sequence of streams, rivers and lakes into the sea at a single river mouth, estuary or delta.
River Basin Districts:	administrative areas for coordinated water management and are comprised of multiple river basins (or catchments), with cross-border basins (i.e. those covering the territory of more than one Member State) assigned to an international RBD.
Scoping:	the process of deciding the content and level of detail of an SEA, including the key environmental issues, likely significant environmental effects and alternatives which need to be considered, the assessment methods to be employed, and the structure and contents of the Environmental Report
Screening:	The determination of whether implementation of a P/P would be likely to have significant environmental effects on the environment. The process of deciding whether a P/P requires a SEA.

SEA Directive:	Directive 2001/42/EC 'on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment'.
SEA Statement:	<p>A statement summarising:</p> <p>How environmental considerations have been integrated into the P/P</p> <p>How the ER, the opinions of the public, and designated authorities, and the results of transboundary consultations have been taken into account</p> <p>The reasons for choosing the P/P as adopted in the light of other reasonable alternatives.</p>
Significant effects:	Effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors.
Special Area of Conservation:	Site designated according to the Habitats Directive.
Special Protection Area:	An area designated under the European Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds.
Statutory authority:	The authority by which or on whose behalf the plan or programme is prepared.
Surface water:	Means inland waters, except groundwater, which are on the land surface (such as reservoirs, lakes, rivers, transitional waters, coastal waters and, under some circumstances, territorial waters) which occur within a river basin.
Water body:	A discrete and significant element of surface water such as a river, lake or reservoir, or a distinct volume of groundwater within an aquifer.
Water Framework Directive:	The WFD is European legislation that promotes a new approach to water management through river basin planning. The legislation addresses inland surface waters, estuarine waters, coastal waters and groundwater.

1 INTRODUCTION

Galway County Council has prepared a Local Area Plan (LAP) for Gort 2013-2019. This Local Area Plan (LAP) is a land use plan and overall strategy for the development of Gort over the period 2013-2019. The successful implementation of the Plan will have a positive impact on Gort ensuring that it develops in a sustainable manner, and will also complement the implementation of the Galway County Development Plan 2009-2015. The Gort LAP was adopted on 22nd July 2013 by Galway County Council and this is the Final SEA ER. It is accompanied by the SEA Statement and a Final Natura Impact Report. New text in the Final SEA ER is shown in **red font**, and is accompanied by a footnote when additional text was inserted following the consultation processes.

1.1 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Strategic Environmental Assessment is a process for evaluating, at the earliest appropriate stage, the environmental quality and consequences of Policy, Plan or Programme initiatives. The objective of the SEA process is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of specified plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development. The purpose of SEA is to ensure that the environmental consequences of plans and programmes are assessed both during their preparation and prior to adoption. The SEA process also gives interested parties an opportunity to comment on the environmental impacts of the proposed plan or programme and to be kept informed during the decision making process.

The European Directive (2001/42/EC) on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment (the SEA Directive) was transposed into national legislation by the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 435/2004), as amended by S.I. 200/2011 and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 436/2004), as amended by S.I. 201/2011. The Gort LAP falls under the remit of S.I. 436/2004, as amended.

The SEA Directive requires that certain Plans and Programmes, prepared by statutory bodies, which are likely to have a significant impact on the environment, be subject to the SEA process. The SEA process is comprised of the following steps:

- Screening: Decision on whether or not an SEA is required;
- Scoping: Consultation with defined statutory consultees on the scope and level of detail to be considered in the assessment;
- Environmental Assessment: An assessment of the likely significant impacts on the environment as a result of the Plan or Programme, including reasonable alternatives;
- Publication of an Environmental Report;
- Consultation on the draft Plan/Programme and associated Environmental Report;
- Evaluation of the submissions and observations made on the draft Plan/Programme and Environmental Report; and
- Adoption of the Final Plan/Programme and issuance of an SEA Statement. The Statement identifies how environmental considerations and consultation have been integrated into the Final Plan/Programme.

Figure 1.1 shows the key steps required to complete the statutory SEA process in accordance with the relevant national legislation.

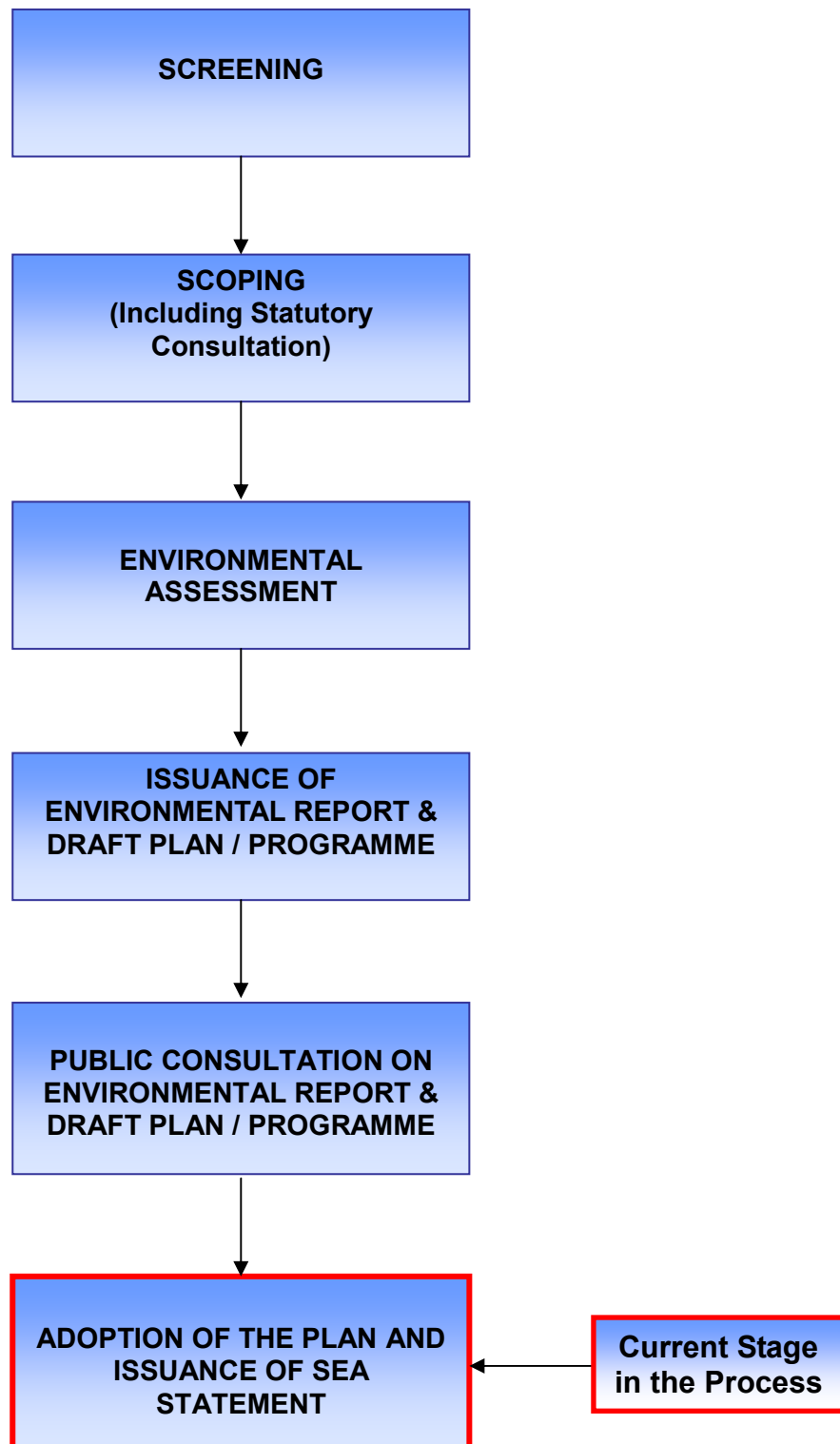


Figure 1.1 Overview of SEA Process

1.2 GORT LOCAL AREA PLAN 2013-2019

Galway County Council is currently preparing a draft Gort LAP 2013 – 2019 to replace the existing Gort LAP. The LAP is being prepared under the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) to develop and improve in a sustainable manner the environmental, social, economic and cultural assets of Gort. The Gort LAP (2013-2019) Administrative Boundary is shown in **Figure 1.2**.

The LAP will also provide the means by which the specific objectives and activities of the private and public sectors will be coordinated, to ensure that they are implemented in a mutually integrated, consistent, sustainable and supportive manner. It will promote and encourage development, conserve and protect the environment and make the best possible use of resources.

1.3 MAIN AIM OF THE LOCAL AREA PLAN

The main aim of the Gort Local Area Plan 2013-2019 is for Gort to:

“be a sustainable, self-sufficient, vibrant, socially inclusive and innovative growth centre within the County, protecting and enhancing its attractive medieval character and natural environment, supporting an educated workforce, providing a range of supporting services/facilities/ amenities and with a high quality of life for the local community. This will be delivered through a managed and phased development strategy on appropriately zoned and serviced lands in a manner that is balanced and sustainable for Gort and the immediate environs that it serves.”

This LAP identifies specific policies and objectives applicable to Gort in order to facilitate land use in a manner that will promote proper planning and sustainable development. A summary of the objectives of the LAP is as follows:

1) *Development Strategy*

Galway County Council seek to support and facilitate the sustainable development of the Plan Area in line with the preferred development strategy option, Option 2 – Consolidate Existing Town Centre, Sequential Development around Established Urban Core and Controlled Eastward Expansion, and 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.

2) *Land Use Management*

Galway County Council seeks 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.

3) *Residential Development*

The principles of quality and sustainability must be foremost in all future residential development in the Plan Area, including private, social, affordable and voluntary housing proposals. 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, to ensure compliance with the Core

Strategy in the 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.

4) Social and Community Development

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 seeks the creation of an inclusive and fair society, combating inequality, social exclusion and poverty. Gort is well served with community facilities and amenities, including primary and secondary schools, a training centre, community centre, churches, medical facilities, Garda station, fire and rescue service, post office, a public library at the Church of Ireland, a town hall, a community playground, sporting facilities including GAA and rugby pitches, a 18 hole golf course, open spaces and amenity walkways.

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. The role of Galway County Council is to reserve adequate appropriately zoned and located lands 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 the Local Area Plan.

5) Economic Development

Gort is identified as a 'Key Town' in the Galway County Development Plan and has the potential to become increasingly self-sufficient through the creation of new 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 Gort and provides a land use framework and policies and objectives to promote the development of a range of commercial, industrial, enterprise and tourism activities and to encourage and sustain a diversity of employment opportunities within the Plan Area.

6) Transportation Infrastructure

The Local Area Plan recognises and supports the importance of sustainable transport, including the 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 2012 and the Traffic Management Guidelines 2003.

The Ennis - Athenry portion of the Western Rail Corridor (WRC) provides Gort with rail services between Galway City and Limerick City and under Phase 11 of the WRC programme a new station was planned for Gort. The further development of new commuter rail facilities and the opportunities for new land uses that this and the opening of the new M18 Gort to Crusheen Motorway presents will have further positive impacts for the town. In this regard, it is important that the focus remains on sustainable public transport options and facilitating the continued improvement of same.

The current Plan will continue to support measures to improve the walking and cycling network in Gort and its immediate environs in accordance with any proposed recommendations for Gort as outlined for Galway County Walking and Cycling Strategy and the Gort Walking and Cycling Strategy and to encourage a modal shift from private/motorised transport to walking and cycling. The Council shall support proposals to create a town cycle network and to promote Gort as a mini hub for recreational cycling in County Galway.

Gort is located at the convergence of a number of national, regional and local roads. Major transportation projects such as the opening of the M18 Gort to Crusheen Motorway have dramatically changed the patterns of traffic movement in the Plan Area and its hinterland. It was noted through the public consultation process the need for signage on the Crusheen side of the motorway to increase footfall into Gort.

The Traffic Management Plan for Gort was reviewed in 2008 and deals with issues of traffic/parking management and including the provision of pedestrian crossings and disabled parking areas throughout the town.

7) Utility and Environmental Infrastructure

The sustainable growth of Gort is dependent on the satisfactory provision of utility and environmental infrastructure, including water supply, wastewater disposal, surface water drainage and energy and communication networks. There is a need to ensure that there is adequate availability and delivery of utility and environmental infrastructure to support future development in a manner that is environmentally appropriate, cost effective and efficient and that protects public health. 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.

8) Urban Design and Landscape

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.

It is important to protect the distinctive character of the town and to enhance the quality of the built environment so as to enable people to continue living in attractive and safe surroundings, and to ensure a similar standard for future generations. This can be achieved through promoting new development, places and spaces that are of high quality, which promote sustainable lifestyles, are appropriately scaled, are responsive to their contextual surroundings, amenity, heritage, environment and landscape of the town and contribute to the future potential of the area.

The townscape and streetscapes of Gort 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 and development of the town.

9) Built Heritage and Cultural Heritage

The built and cultural heritage within Gort contribute to the character and local distinctiveness of the area. The built heritage includes both architectural and archaeological heritage and Gort has a number of significant elements of both that form part of the history and character of the town. The built heritage is a significant asset for the town on account of the numerous sites and monuments identified for protection and the sense and quality of place this creates, which can have significant benefits in terms of the quality of life of residents and the attraction of visitors and tourism investment and activity.

10) *Natural Heritage & Biodiversity*

Natural heritage includes the variety of life we see around us every day and also includes the landscape and its geological foundation. 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.

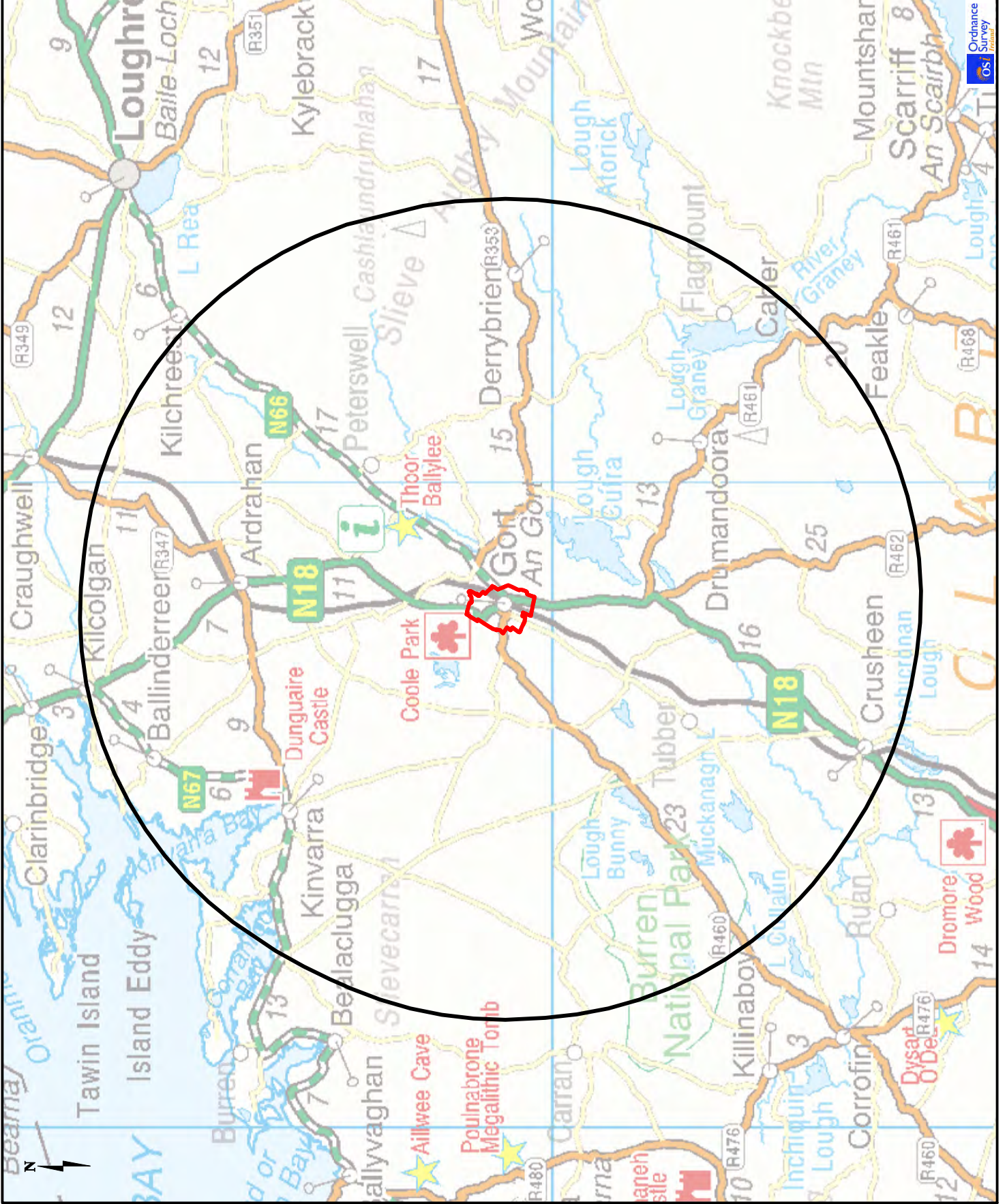
1.4 STRATEGIC VISION

The Strategic Vision of the LAP provides the overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of Gort town for the period up to 2019. The strategy for the future development of Gort town will focus on the framework provided by the Regional Planning Guidelines and the Galway County Development Plan 2009-2015 and Variations No. 1 and No. 2 to the CDP.



The Local Area Plan is underpinned by a strategic vision intended to guide the future growth and development of Gort in a sustainable manner, achieving the overall objectives set out for the town in the 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. The strategic vision is informed by the following number of guiding principles, the pursuit and progressive realisation of which will help to ensure that the strategic vision for Gort can be achieved:

- Realising the town's potential as a 'Key Town' as set out in the Galway County Development Plan and attracting and planning for the population target established in the Core Strategy up to 2015 and beyond.
- 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 new M18 Gort to Crusheen motorway and the Ennis-Athenry section of the Western Rail Corridor 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 Gort.
- Maintaining a strong and vibrant town centre that sustains the ability to attract new businesses and meets the retailing and service needs of the town 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 the elderly.
- Fostering economic development and employment creation by optimising the potential of the town's strategic location and enhancing Gort as a place of employment through the provision of a positive and flexible framework for the creation of new employment opportunities.
- Supporting the delivery of support infrastructure necessary 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 Gort.

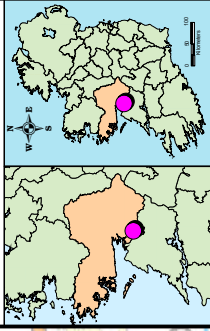
- Protecting and enhancing the heritage and character of Gort including the natural assets, environment, built heritage, public realm, local character and amenity, for the benefit of current and future generations.



Legend

-  Gort LAP Administrative Boundary
-  Gort LAP 15 km Buffer

Data Source: Gort LAP Administrative Boundary comes from Gort Drain LAP 2012. File provided by Galway County Council.



Client  Galway County Council

Project **Gort LAP (2013-2019) SEA**

Title **Gort LAP (2013-2019) Administrative Boundary**

Figure 1.2

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2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The SEA Directive requires that certain Plans and Programmes, which are likely to have a significant impact on the environment, be subject to the SEA process. As noted above, the SEA process is broadly comprised of the steps listed in **Table 2.1** below.

Table 2.1: Steps Comprising the SEA Process

SEA Step / Stage	Purpose	Status
Screening	Decision on whether or not an SEA required.	Completed in October 2012
Scoping	Consultation with the defined statutory bodies on the scope and level of detail to be considered in the assessment.	Completed in January 2013
Environmental Assessment	Assessment of the likely significant impacts on the environment as a result of the Plan or Programme culminating in the production of an Environmental Report.	Completed in February 2013
Consultation	Consultation on the draft Plan/Programme and associated Environmental Report.	Ongoing
SEA Statement	Identification of how environmental considerations and consultation have been integrated into the final Plan/Programme culminating in the production of an SEA Statement.	To be published with final adopted Plan in 2013

2.2 CONSULTATION

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** below.

Table 2.2: Pre-Draft Submissions on Gort LAP

Submission	Environmental Issue	Addressed in SEA
Benny Williams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refrain from further zoning as population has fallen • Lack of play areas in existing estates • Need for hard surface over old dump by riverside • Need for amenity area on council owned land by riverside • Extra roadway freed up by one way system in the square should be used for pedestrians and trade 	<p>Land use zonings will be assessed through SEA process.</p> <p>Play areas will be assessed in population and human health.</p> <p>Waste will be assessed under Material Assets.</p>

Submission	Environmental Issue	Addressed in SEA
		Issues relating to amenity will be assessed under Material Assets.
Ciaran O'Donnell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Litter issue on Kinincha Road • Lack of children's playground 	These issues will be assessed under Material Assets.
Renee Brennan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of Pound Road riverside walk • George's Street footpath in need of repair • Development of a playground for Gort 	These issues will be assessed under Material Assets.
Bryan Brennan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footpath on George's Street in need of repair • Sight line issues at N66 George's Street junction • Poor sight lines at the junction in the square • Need for playground in Gort • Need for walkway/cycleway • Illegal dumping issues along the waterways of Gort, with potential to cause flooding 	These issues will be assessed under Material Assets and Transport.
EPA	<p>Comments specific to the Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A commitment should be given to ensuring recommendations of Galway County Flood Risk Assessment will be fully integrated • Ensure Western River Basin Management Plan and associated Programme of Measures are fully integrated into the plan • Ensure Appropriate Assessment is carried out in accordance with the Habitats Directive • Consideration should be given to establishing/reviewing Traffic Management Plans for the plan area to address 'Transport Management' and Parking Issues' • In relation to Gort Wastewater Treatment Plant and to Drinking Water Abstraction adequate and appropriate infrastructure should be established in advance of the Plan being put in place or prior to permission for development being granted • Standard suggestions for the integration of a number of key environmental considerations within the Plan are made. 	<p>Flooding issues will be assessed under Material Assets.</p> <p>WRBMP will be assessed under Water and Material Assets.</p> <p>AA will be assessed under Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna.</p> <p>Traffic issues will be assessed under Material Assets – Transport.</p> <p>WwTP and Water Supply will be assessed under Water, Biodiversity and Material Assets.</p> <p>Environmental considerations will be assessed under relevant sections.</p>
Rachel Cunniffe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for repair of footpaths within the town • Need for improved wheelchair access to premises within the town • Need for improved wheelchair access i.e. at road crossings, at Gort Post Office 	Wheelchair access and footpaths will be addressed under Transportation.
NRA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to have regard to provisions of the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoECLG, 2012) • Zoning designations or development objectives in the immediate environs of national roads is not consistent with measures to provide for future upgrades etc. • Requests that implications of land use zoning on the strategic road network in the area in determining future 	Roads issues will be assessed under the Transportation.

Submission	Environmental Issue	Addressed in SEA
	<p>zoning strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and location of industry and employment type land uses should be reviewed • Plan should not compromise where where road shceme planning is underway including the N18/N17 Gort – Tuam PPP Scheme • Requests the inclusion of policies and objectives in the Local Area Plan the provide for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of relevant national road schemes • Protection of routes of national road schemes free from adverse development that may compromise the development of route options or the construction of preferred routes • Specific reference should be made to support the objective of maintaining and protecting the safety and efficiency of national roads • Consideration should be given to undertake a Strategic Transport Assessment for the Plan considering the implications of planned development on the adjoining strategic road network • The National Secondary Roads Needs Study (West Region) should be consulted for any recommendations for the N66 • Recommends that significant development proposals should be accompanied by a Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) and Road Safety Audit (RSA) • If addressing the provision of motorway service areas the <i>'Policy Statement on the Provision of Service Areas on Motorways and High Quality Dual Carriageways'</i> should be referred to • Referred to Section 3.8 of the Spatial Planning and national Road Guidelines which indicates a requirement to control the proliferation of no-road traffic signage on and adjacent to national roads • Where warranted development proposal should identify and implement noise mitigation measures. Reference should be made in the Plan to the requirements of S.I. No. 140 of 2006 Environmental Noise Regulations 	
Grealish Glynn & Associates on behalf of Margaret Linnane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlights that lands owned by Ms. Linnane in Glenbrack townland can be accessed by a slip road off the new motorway and therefore is suitable for Industrial use or larger scale development that require a large area such as logistic companies or storage facilities 	Land use zonings will be assessed through SEA process.
Fiona O'Driscoll, First Chapter Book Shop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for car park as alternative to parking in Gort Square • The Weigh House in the square is in need of repair and could be used as a tourist office • Vision statement needed to market the town from a tourist point of view • Development of unsightly retail shops should be stopped and people should be encouraged into the town centre • Proximity to Shannon airport should be exploited by business • The town roundabout needs to be improved 	Car parking issues will be assessed under Material Assets - Transportation Tourism issues will be assessed under Material Assets.

Submission	Environmental Issue	Addressed in SEA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More free parking on Queen Street near the library to address parking issues in the town • First fifteen minutes of parking should be free 	
Dermot Rock, Gort Heritage Group	<p>Objectives from the 2006-2012 Plan which should be included in the new Plan including RA1 to RA7 with reference to playgrounds and a people's park in RA2 replacing playing pitches;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear, level, fence and gate the land owned by the County Council between the Railway and Station Road • Restore existing footbridge over the river where it splits with Pound Road and clear existing trail that leads out of this • Resurface public road on Kinincha Road side and Pound Road/Station Road side to complete Amenity Walking Circular Route • Provide public seating/benches overlooking the river at appropriate locations along the walking route • Plant indigenous trees, flowers and other shrubbery at appropriate locations along the walking route • Ensure public right of way between Kinincha Road and Footbridge is restored as it is currently blocked by a landowner • Update town tourist information sign • New public toilet should be completed or scrapped • A tourist information centre should be developed at the old weigh-house building or possibly at the site of the new public toilet • Public walkways should be provided around the town square and car parking bays should be removed • Pedestrian crossing/lights needed between the town square and the post office/courthouse • Public seating should be provided in the square • Floral displays and other shrubbery should be provided • A town car-park should be developed as a matter of urgency • Cycleways should be developed along the main streets of the town • Pedestrian crossings/lights should be provided for the schools in the town • Floral displays should be provided in the town • Illegal dumping should be tackled as a matter of urgency • A recycling centre should be developed near the railway station • Roundabout at Galway entrance to town should be landscaped and sign erected welcoming visitors to the town • Tourist information/attraction signs and signage in general on approach roads to the town should be improved 	These issues will be assessed under Material Assets.
Martin Murphy, Crowe St. Emergency Flooding Gort	<p>Request that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footpaths to be reinstated • Future development which may contribute to flooding be prohibited 	These issues will be dealt with under Material Assets.
Mary Counihan, Crowe St. Residents	<p>Requests that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pedestrian crossing for which provisions have already been put in place 	These issues will be assessed under Material Assets.

Submission	Environmental Issue	Addressed in SEA
Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • footpaths damaged by previous flooding be reinstated 	
Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht	<p>Key ecological issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The plan area contains or may contain: The Cannahowna/Gort River which flows northwards into Coole-Garryland cSAC/SPA downstream. • Species of flora or fauna and their key habitats which are strictly protected under national wildlife legislation • Birds Directive Annex I species and other regularly occurring migratory species and their habitats and Habitats Directive – Annex I habitats, Annex II species and their habitats, and Annex IV species and their breeding and resting places • Stepping stones and ecological corridors including nature conservation sites, habitat areas and species locations covered by Article 10 of the Habitats Directive • Objectives to conserve and protect the above should be included in the new Plan • The Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna section of the SEA should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All sites with nature conservation designations • Available information on habitats, including results of habitat surveys and habitat indicator mapping • Available information on rare and protected species and their habitats • All watercourses, surface water bodies and associated wetlands including floodplains and flood risk areas • Other sites of high biodiversity value • Local biodiversity areas • Ecological networks and corridors and stepping stones • No areas should be committed to development in the absence of basic ecological information • Environmental Protection Objectives for biodiversity, flora and fauna, should integrate with the objectives and obligations of other directives such as the Habitats and Birds Directives, the Water Framework Directive and the Floods Directive, and with the Wildlife Acts, 1976-2000, National Biodiversity Plan and the aims and objectives of the county's own Heritage Plan and Biodiversity Plan • Strategic environmental objectives should be included for all nature conservation sites (not just Natura 2000 sites), protected species and ecological corridors and stepping stones 	These issues will be assessed under Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna and Water.
McCarthy Keville O'Sullivan Ltd. on behalf of Coen Steel Limited,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking the continued zoning of 8.9 ha of lands at Loughrea Road, immediately adjacent to Gort Train Station as Residential or Residential Phase 1. 	Land use zonings will be assessed through SEA process.
John Hansberry, Gort Neighbourhood Watch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urges completion of installation of pedestrian crossings before injury occurs • Requests the reduction in width of recently installed traffic islands by up to 1m to avoid cars hitting them 	These issues will be assessed under Material Assets.
Jackie Queally, Gort Heritage Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests development of walking/cycling route adjoining river be developed as soon as possible • Town square should be developed as focal point 	These issues will be assessed under Material Assets.

Submission	Environmental Issue	Addressed in SEA
	recreating a market feel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the town square seating and flower borders should be installed and the tourist notice board should be updated • Requests erection of a 'dolmen' on the main roundabout approach with an adjacent sign stating 'Welcome to Gort, Gateway to the Burren!' 	
Councillor Gerry Finnerty	Requests that walking routes be identified at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kinincha Road, past WwTP with installation of proper Bridge over the Gort River and return by Pound Road • Circular Road, to include speed limit and traffic management plan and installation of public lighting on the N66 to junction with Circular Road • Right of way to Gort River should be maintained from the Supervalu on the Tubber side 	These issues will be assessed under Material Assets.
Councillor Gerry Finnerty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footpath on Gallagher's Lane should be continued to Gort na Ri housing estate 	These issues will be assessed under Material Assets.
Department of Education and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attention drawn to the 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas' guidelines which provide that no significant development should take place without an assessment on impact of school provision • Lands adjacent to existing schools should be where possible protected for future educational use to allow for expansion • Based on the Core Strategy allocation of 820 persons to 2016 the Department expects that existing schools should be capable of catering for the increase in pupil numbers • A primary school site of 1.14ha will be required for Gaelscoil na bhFilí. 	These issues will be assessed under Material Assets and Zoning.
John Gallagher on behalf of Dairín Coen and the late Martin Raphael Coen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposes that lands owned in the townland of Glenbrack adjacent to the M18 Motorway are suitable for Residential and Enterprise zonings. A number of reasons are given to explain this suitability 	Land use zonings will be assessed through SEA process.
Peter Dooley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walkways and cycle ways specified in the 2006-2012 Plan have not happened. Development of these alongside the river and also to link up the town with Coole Park should occur as soon as possible • Period buildings and monuments within the town need to be protected by greater conservation policy • The Market Square should be developed as a focal point and resource with the Weigh House potentially used as a tourist information point • The town should be developed and promoted as a tourist destination 	Land use zonings will be assessed through SEA process. Other issues will be assessed under Material Assets.
ESB	Zoning of the ESB shop premises at Church Street as Town Centre to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the inconsistency between existing and proposed uses on-site and the current Residential zoning at this location • Provide an opportunity to improve the range of uses at the subject site, in full accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development. • Contribute to maintaining commercial activity and employment opportunities in Gort 	Land use zonings will be assessed through SEA process.

Submission	Environmental Issue	Addressed in SEA
Dermot Duffy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests that 0.8ha lands to the rear of their dwelling in Glenbrack be zoned Agriculture. 	Land use zonings will be assessed through SEA process.
West Regional Authority	<p>A number of environmental issues are detailed in the Authority's submission including issues relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010-2022 & County Development Plan Core Strategy • Atlantic Gateways Corridor Development Frameworks • Rail Infrastructure • Roads Infrastructure • Water Services • Wastewater Services • Groundwater & Surface Water • Ecologically Sensitive Sites • Energy Infrastructure • Telecommunications Infrastructure 	Each issue will be assessed under the relevant SEA issue.
Late Martin Mullins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests that land in Rindifin be zoned (presumably Residential but does not say which type of zoning) 	Land use zonings will be assessed through SEA process.

2.3 GUIDANCE

The following guidance / methodology documents have been referenced during the SEA process:

- *Further Transposition of EU Directive 2001/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)* Circular Letter PSSP 6/2011 Department of Environment, Community and Local Government. Available at: <http://www.environ.ie>
- *Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland*. Synthesis Report. 2003. Environmental Protection Agency. Available at: <http://www.epa.ie>
- *GISEA Manual, Current Practice And Potential On The Application Of Geographic Information Systems As A Support Tool In Strategic Environmental Assessment Of Irish Land Use Plans 2009* Environmental Protection Agency. Available at: <http://www.epa.ie>
- *Implementation of SEA Directive (2001/42/EC). Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment. Guidelines for Regional Planning Authorities*. November 2004. Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Available at: <http://www.environ.ie>
- *Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Checklist - Consultation Draft*. January 2008 (updated 6th September 2011). Environmental Protection Agency. Available at: <http://www.epa.ie>
- *Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment: Streamlining AA, SEA and EIA Processes. Best Practice Guidance (2012)* Environmental Protection Agency. Available at: <http://www.epa.ie>

2.4 KEY DELIVERABLES IN STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

2.4.1 Scoping

Process

The objective of scoping is to identify key issues of concern that should be addressed in the environmental assessment of the Plan so that they can be considered in appropriate detail. Scoping also helps determine the boundaries of the assessment in terms of geographical extent and the time horizon for the assessment. **Figure 2.1** outlines the various elements that contribute to the scope of the SEA. Consultation was undertaken with the statutory consultees for SEA during the scoping process. In addition public consultation was undertaken as part of the Plan Process for the draft Gort LAP.

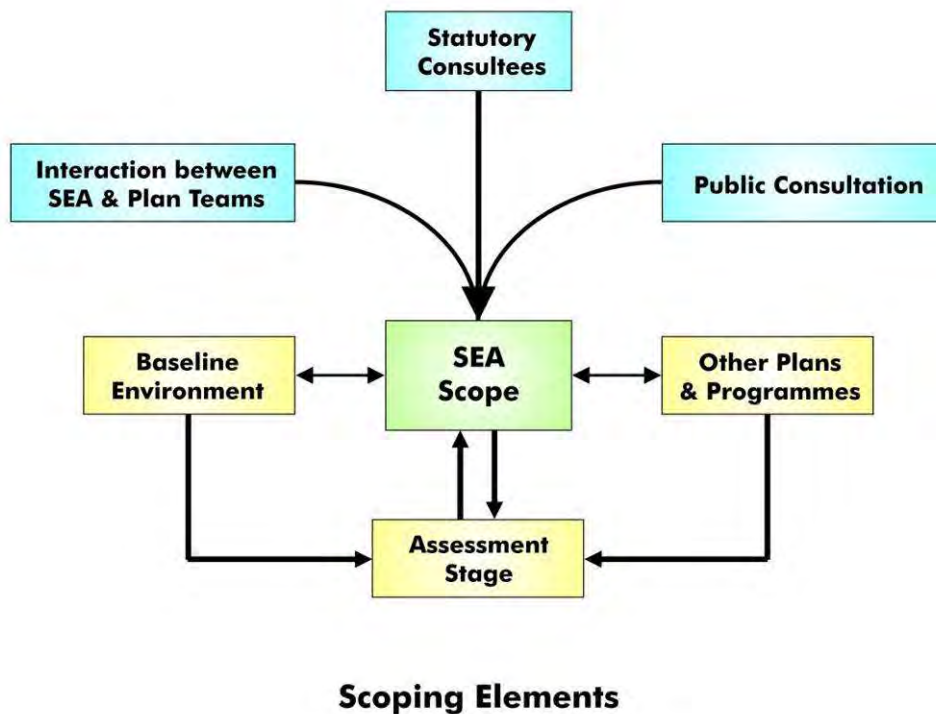


Figure 2.1 Overview of the Scoping Process

Consultation on Scope

Under Article 6 of the SEA Directive, the competent authority preparing the plan or programme is required to consult with specific “environmental authorities” (statutory consultees) on the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the Environmental Report.

The amendment regulations (S.I. 201 of 2011) have made alterations regarding the scoping process. Previously under S.I. 436 of 2004 three statutory consultees were identified, namely the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (formerly Communications, Marine and Natural Resources). The amended regulations now list five bodies which are outlined in Article 13A (4) (a) of S.I. 201 of 2011, as follows;

- (i) *the Environmental Protection Agency*
- (ii) *the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government,*
- (iii) *where it appears to the planning authority that the plan or programme or modification of the plan or programme, might have significant effects on fisheries or the marine environment, the Minister for Agriculture, Marine and Food, and the Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources,*
- (iv) *where it appears to the competent authority that the plan or programme or amendment to a plan or programme, might have significant effects in relation to the architectural or archaeological heritage or to nature conservation, the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht Affairs, and*

- (v) *any adjoining planning authority whose area is contiguous to the area of a planning authority which prepared a draft plan, proposed variation or local area plan.*

Following the SEA screening process, a scoping exercise was undertaken by RPS. This established the scope and extent of the Environmental Report and facilitated consultation with the designated statutory consultees. A draft Scoping Document was issued to the five environmental authorities on the 5th December 2012. 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**.

As part of the SEA Screening process and in addition to written responses, a meeting was held with the EPA on the 17th August 2012 and with the NPWS on the 17th September 2012 to discuss the scope and extent of the SEA and AA for Gort. These meetings informed the scope and issues of concern in relation to Gort LAP.

Table 2.3: Responses to the Scoping Report

Consultee	Issue Raised	Response
EPA	The Gort LAP and SEA Environmental Report should take into account the Western CFRAMS currently undergoing SEA.	Accepted, strategic flood risk assessments are informing the LAP and will be discussed under Water in Chapter 3.
	www.wfdireland.ie for River Basin Management Plans SEI for renewable energy information National Biodiversity Data Centre for species and habitat information Irish Landscape Institute and Comhar for green infrastructure information Invasive Species Ireland for invasive species management information	RBMP will be discussed under Water, Chapter 3. Noted, renewables discussed under Climatic Factors in Chapter 3. NBDC consulted and information included in Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna in Chapter 3. Green infrastructure discussed under Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna in Chapter 3 and change to CF9. Invasive species issues discussed under Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna in Chapter 3.
	Noise should be scoped in and considered in greater detail, mitigation measures may be required to protect existing residential developments, or any proposed rezoning in the event of alterations to the draft Plan.	Noted. Noise has been included in this report. Mitigation measures have been recommended in Chapter 9 Mitigation.
	It is noted that Lough Cutra, currently at 'moderate' Water Framework Directive (WFD) status, is proposed as a future source of drinking water. The Plan should include policies/objectives to ensure that the extraction of drinking water from Lough Cutra is not in conflict with the WFD requirements for the lake.	Galway County Council Water Services Section has informed the report that Lough Cutra is not currently proposed as a future source of drinking water for Gort. Water supply issues are discussed under Water in Chapter 3.

Consultee	Issue Raised	Response
EPA	It is also noted that the existing Waste Water Treatment Plant does not have the capacity to accommodate the population targets proposed in the Core Strategy. The Plan should include policies and objectives to ensure that adequate and appropriate waste water treatment infrastructure and capacity is in place, prior to further development in the Plan area.	Noted. Policies and objectives to ensure that adequate and appropriate waste water treatment infrastructure and capacity is in place, prior to further development in the Plan area. Monitoring, Section 10 has been proposed to deal with the issue of WwTP capacity.
	Consideration should be given to protecting features of local biodiversity importance such as hedgerows and other ecological corridors by incorporating them into green infrastructure/SUDs measures.	Noted. Issue discussed with changes recommended in Chapter 9 Mitigation.
	It should be ensured that Appropriate Assessment screening is carried out, and that any recommendations arising from AA are fully integrated into the SEA Environmental Report and Plan. This is of particular relevance in the proposed use of Lough Cutra SAC/SPA as a potential source of drinking water.	AA Natura Impact Report has been prepared and mitigation been included in Mitigation Section 9. Lough Cutra as a water supply is discussed above and in Water, Chapter 3.
	It is noted that public utilities are located within Flood Zone A. The SEA should assess the potential for significant effects of flooding on the public utilities, and the Plan should include policies/objectives for the development/installation of adaptation and protection measures to protect the public utilities from flooding.	Noted. Effects of flooding on public utilities are discussed in Chapter 7. Flood protection policies/objectives are included in Chapters 7 and 9.
	In assessing the environmental baseline, GIS systems should be used in accordance with the EPA GISEA manual,	Noted. GIS maps have been included within Chapter 4
	Each of the proposed Alternatives should be assessed against the Environmental Protections Objectives (EPOs) in order to identify the most appropriate Alternative. The policies and objectives of the preferred Alternative should also be assessed against the EPOs to highlight potential conflicts, and mitigation measures should be developed to minimise the potential for significant effects.	Alternatives have been assessed against EPOs in LAP Alternatives Chapter 6. Policies/Objectives of the Preferred alternative have been assessed against EPOs in Chapter 7. Mitigation measures have been included in Chapter 9 Mitigation.
	It should be clarified in the SEA Environmental Report and the Plan, whether Phase 2 lands will be available for development within the lifetime of the Plan.	Clarification of availability of Phase 2 lands included in Chapter 3 Population and Chapter 7.
	It should be ensured that the extreme/high groundwater vulnerability is taken into account in the development of the policies and objectives of the Plan. The potential for significant effects on the Coole-Garryland SCA/SPA complex should be fully assessed and policies/objectives for the protection of the SAC/SPA should be included in the Plan.	Groundwater is discussed under Water in Chapter 3. Objectives for protection of groundwater and Coole/Garryland included in the Plan.

Consultee	Issue Raised	Response
EPA	You are also referred to the EPA SEA Pack, Integration Guidance Document and Process Checklist, which should be integrated as appropriate into the Plan and SEA,	Noted. EPA Checklist has been included in Appendix A.
Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht	In addition to legislation, guidance and circulars previously listed by the Department (in an appendix), the EPA's Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment: Streamlining AA, SEA and EIA Processes. Best Practice Guidance (2012) should also be followed.	Noted.
	The Department agrees with the range of potential ecological and environmental issues identified for the plan as part of the SEA screening process. These should be addressed in the SEA Environmental Report and, where relevant, in the Natura Impact Report.	Noted.
	The Natura Impact Report must consider the potential significant effects of the plan, alone and in combination with other plans and projects, on European sites in view of their conservation objectives. In combination issues of potential concern include the new M18 road, and the permitted N18/M17 Gort to Tuam road. Care should be taken to avoid over-reliance on deferral of appropriate assessment obligations to project level.	Noted. Discussed in the NIR. In-combination effects also discussed in Chapter 8 of this report.
	Available information in the EISs and Route Selection and other reports for the major road projects in and near the plan area should be used in undertaking the environmental assessments. The plan should identify and protect any elements of ecological mitigation associated with projects in or near the plan area, notably mammal underpasses and the replacement badger sett on the existing M18 road.	Noted. Information from roads projects EISs used in this report.
	In general, no areas should be identified or targeted for development (e.g. through land use zoning or other strategies) without basic information on the ecological sensitivities of the lands in question, including a habitat map, i.e. the precautionary principle should apply and no areas should be committed to development in the absence of basic ecological information so as to avoid potential conflicts.	Each area of zoned land has been assessed in Chapter 7 with reference to habitats identified through aerial photography.

Consultee	Issue Raised	Response
	The Environmental Report is required to contain environmental protection objectives. For biodiversity, flora and fauna, these should integrate with the objectives and obligations of other directives such as the Habitats and Birds Directives, the Water Framework Directive and the Floods Directive, and with the Wildlife Acts, 1976-2000, National Biodiversity Plan and the aims and objectives of the county's own Heritage Plan and Biodiversity Plan.	EPOs included in Chapter 5.
	Of the draft objectives listed, the Department suggests that Bio1 is modified as follows: 'Bio1 – Protect, conserve and avoid loss of the diversity, range, area or population of habitats, species and wildlife corridors.	Suggested change to Bio1 made.

2.4.2 SEA Statement

The SEA Statement for the Gort LAP will be compiled after the statutory consultation on the draft Plan and Environmental Report has been completed.

The main purpose of the SEA Statement will be to provide information on the decision-making process and to document how environmental considerations, i.e. the views of consultees and the recommendations of the Environmental Report, have been taken into account in the adopted LAP. The SEA Statement will illustrate how decisions were taken, making the process more transparent.

2.4.3 Appropriate Assessment

The Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, better known as "The Habitats Directive", provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Articles 3 to 9 provide the legislative means to protect habitats and species of Community interest through the establishment and conservation of an EU-wide network of sites known as Natura 2000. These are Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79/409/ECC).

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect Natura 2000 sites (Annex 1.1). Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment (AA):

'Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [Natura 2000] site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subjected to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.'

The Habitats Directive is implemented in Ireland by the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations (SI 94/1997), which has been replaced by *European Communities (Birds and Natural*

Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011). This Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011 consolidate the Natural Habitats Regulations 1997 to 2005 and the Birds and Natural Habitats (Control of Recreational Activities) Regulations 2010.

In recognition of this, an Appropriate Assessment of Natura 2000 sites potentially impacted by the Plan was carried out in parallel with the SEA process. The Natura Impact Report informing the Appropriate Assessment of the Plan is published in tandem with this document and the Plan itself.

2.4.4 SEA Difficulties and Data Gaps

- Corine land cover data for the year 2006 was the most up to date data available.
- Noise mapping was limited to the N18/M18 and there was no data available for Gort Town.
- Although Corine mapping and aerial photography was available no detailed habitat mapping was available for Gort town.

3 BASELINE ENVIRONMENT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section of the Environmental Report examines the relevant significant issues of the current state of the environment within Gort town and its environs in relation to population, biodiversity, fauna, flora, soil, water, noise, climatic factors, material assets, cultural, architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between these factors. The baseline has been compiled using available datasets and indicators suggested during scoping. It has focused on mapping the relevant baseline information that relates to the policies and objectives contained within the Gort LAP.

3.2 CURRENT STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

According to recent EPA publications (EPA, 2008, 2012), Ireland's natural environment, although under increasing pressure, generally remains of good quality and represents one of the country's most essential national assets. In the EPA's *2020 Vision – Protecting the Irish Environment* document it is noted that pressures on the environment have increased significantly. As Ireland's economy grew in the past ten years, these pressures accelerated at a rate that far exceeds that observed in other EU countries.

The '*Environmental Challenges and Priorities*' for Ireland are set out in Chapter 10 of the recent report *Ireland's Environment 2012* (EPA, 2012). These are as follows:

Environmental Goals

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

Environmental Challenges

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

This document and the aforementioned goals and challenges are recognised by Galway County Council and reference is made through the addition of a bullet point within **Policy NH1 – Natural Heritage and Biodiversity** which will read as follows:

- Ireland's Environment 2012 (EPA, 2012), and to make provision where appropriate to address the report's goals and challenges.

In *2020 Vision – Protecting the Irish Environment* (EPA, 2007) the EPA outlines six environmental goals which reflect on the main challenges identified in the State of the Environment reports as well as key issues at the global and EU level as reflected in the 6th Environmental Action Plan (EAP). These goals are:

- Limiting and adapting to climate change;
- Clean air;
- Protected waters;
- Protected soils and biodiversity;
- Sustainable use of natural resources; and
- Integration and enforcement.

These goals are identified as a means of realising the vision of protecting and improving Ireland's environment. Many of these goals are relevant to the Gort LAP as this local level plan contains the policies and objectives to guide land use and development in the town.

3.3 POPULATION

The National Spatial Strategy sets out a national settlement structure which focuses on growing urban centres such as the identified gateways, the hubs and linked hubs and larger towns so that they reach a sufficient size or 'critical mass' in order to enhance economic competitiveness within the region. The *Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010-2022* set a target population of an additional 15,760 persons for County Galway for 2016.

The Core Strategy of the County Development Plan 2009-2015 has identified Gort as a 'Key Town' in the settlement hierarchy and has set a target population increase of 820 persons for Gort.

In terms of population trends, according to the most recent 2011 CSO figure, the population of Gort was recorded as 2,636 persons (**Figure 3.1**). This represents a population decrease of 5.2% or 146 persons, from the previous Census of 2006 (**Table 3.2**). It is recognised that the growth targets as set out in the Regional Planning Guidelines and the County Development Plan Core Strategy are ambitious in the current economic climate.

Table 3.2: Population trend for Gort town for Census periods 2002-2011

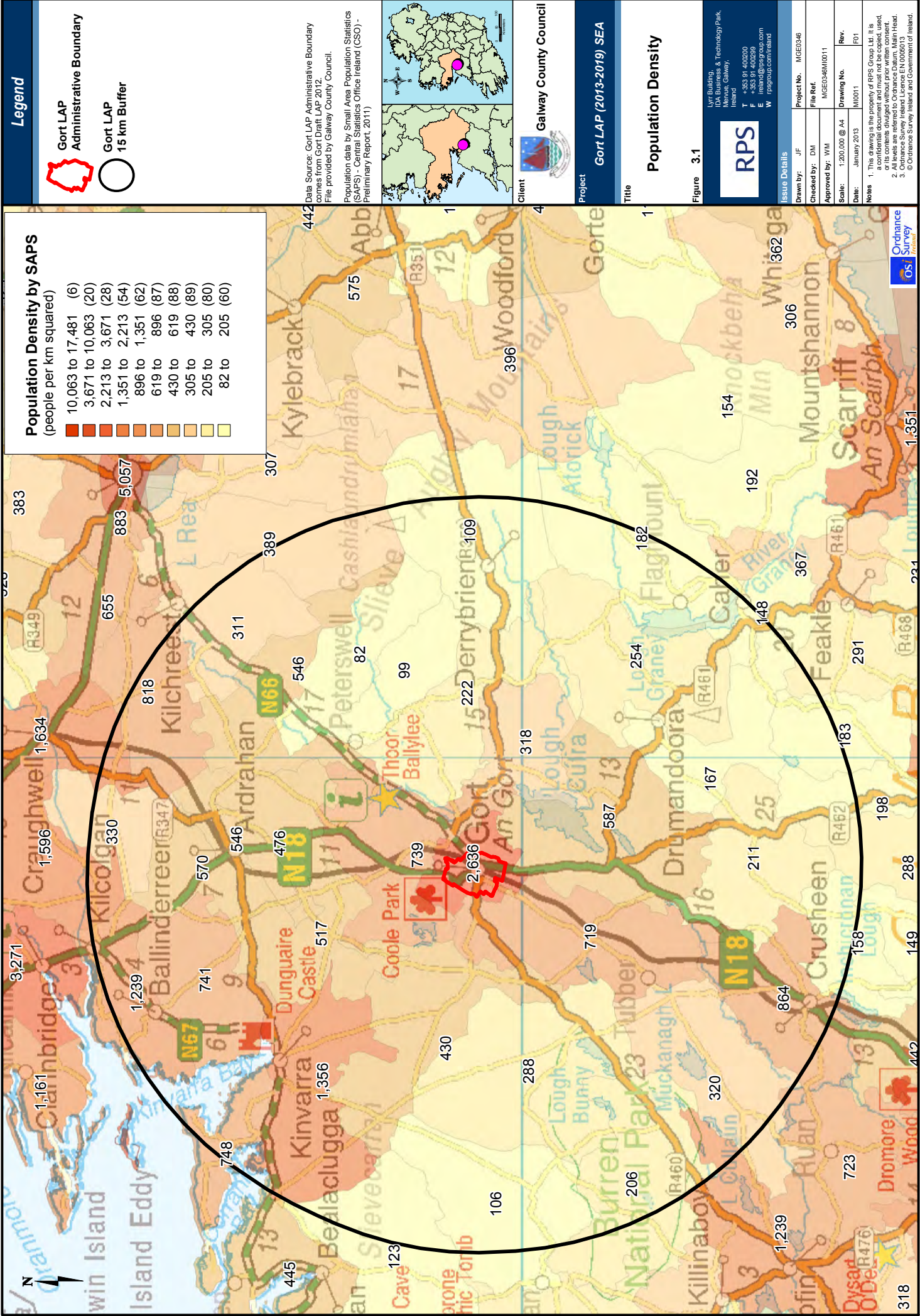
Population Census 2002	Population Census 2006	Population Census 2011
1,776	2,782	2,636

3.3.1 Existing Environmental Pressures / Problems

It is recognised that the population growth targets (an additional 820 persons by 2015) as set out in the Regional Planning Guidelines and the County Development Plan Core Strategy are ambitious in the current economic climate. Given this current economic climate it is considered that over the lifetime of the Plan the population of Gort will stay well within the population growth target.

This population growth target requires housing land of 15.77Ha, or 23.66Ha with 50% over-zoning, in order to accommodate residential development over the Plan period. Under the previous *Gort Local Area Plan 2006-2012*, there was over 106.20Ha of undeveloped zoned residential land within the development boundary. The current Local Area Plan considers various development zoning and phasing options so as to comply with the Core Strategy and to ensure that suitable lands are brought forward for development during the Plan period.



The projected population for Gort presents potential problems for the Gort Town Wastewater Treatment Plant which is currently operating within capacity. If the projected population increase of 820 persons does occur then the WwTP will be operating within 469PE of its capacity. This could present potential adverse issues for water quality, water supply and nature conservation and therefore monitoring and mitigation with regard to the town's population is required.



Population Density by SAPS
(people per km squared)

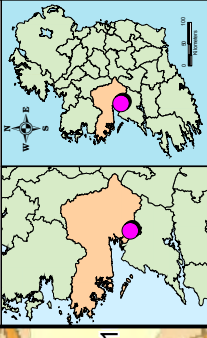
10,063 to 17,481	(6)
3,671 to 10,063	(20)
2,213 to 3,671	(28)
1,351 to 2,213	(54)
896 to 1,351	(62)
619 to 896	(87)
430 to 619	(88)
305 to 430	(89)
205 to 305	(80)
82 to 205	(60)

Legend

-  Gort LAP Administrative Boundary
-  Gort LAP 15 km Buffer

Data Source: Gort LAP Administrative Boundary comes from Gort Draft LAP 2012. File provided by Galway County Council.

Population data by Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS) - Central Statistics Office Ireland (CSO) - Preliminary Report, 2011)



Client  Galway County Council

Project **Gort LAP (2013-2019) SEA**

Title **Population Density**

Figure 3.1

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Issue Details

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3.4 BIODIVERSITY, FLORA AND FAUNA

3.4.1 Introduction

Urban growth on the island of Ireland has been accelerating at a greater rate over recent years as increased development expands city and town limits into the countryside. Artificial land cover throughout Ireland remains relatively low; however, the constant encroachment on natural habitats undoubtedly has an impact on natural flora, fauna and biodiversity. Outlined below are details on biodiversity issues and relevant information relevant to Gort LAP specifically relating EU and nationally designated ecological sites, Corine mapping, the Ecological Network, Rare and Protected Species and Invasive Species.

3.4.2 Designated Ecological Sites

Designated ecological sites in close proximity to the Draft LAP area are shown on **Figure 3.2, Figure 3.3 and Figure 3.4**. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) have been selected for protection under the European Council Directive on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (92/43/EEC) - referred to as the Habitats Directive. The Habitats Directive seeks to establish Natura 2000, a network of protected areas throughout the EU. It is the responsibility of each Member State to designate SACs to protect habitats and species, which, together with Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79/409/EEC), form the Natura 2000 network.

The integrity of a Natura 2000 site (referred to in Article 6.3 of the EU Habitats Directive) is determined based on the conservation status of the qualifying features of the SAC. The qualifying features for each site have been obtained through a review of the Conservation Objectives available from the NPWS.

The Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000 provides the legal basis for the establishment of a national network of sites known as Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs). NHAs aim to conserve and protect nationally important plant and animal species and their habitats. NHAs are also designated to conserve and protect nationally important landforms, geological or geomorphological features. Planning authorities are obliged by law to ensure that these sites are protected and conserved.

Coole-Garryland cSAC/SPA/pNHA and Lough Cutra cSAC/SPA are located in close proximity to the plan boundary. The conservation objectives of Coole-Garryland cSAC/pNHA relates to a number of habitats including the aquatic habitat '[3150] Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition-type vegetation' for which good water quality (and quantity) is required. The conservation objectives of Lough Cutra cSAC relate specifically to Lesser Horseshoe Bat '[1303] *Rhinolophus hipposideros*' which might potentially forage in the Gort LAP requiring a mixture of semi-natural habitats and stands of broadleaved trees. Coole-Garryland SPA is designated for its population of Whooper Swan, and Lough Cutra SPA is designated for its Cormorant population. Pollduagh Cave pNHA is designated for a Daubenton's Bat nursery roost. Protected sites within 15km of Gort and potential pathways from the Draft Plan area to the protected site are considered in **Table 3.3**.

An Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Report was prepared in tandem to this SEA Environmental Report and it provides an assessment of the Natura 2000 sites within a 15km radius of the LAP. This report will form part of the final package of the SEA Environmental Report.

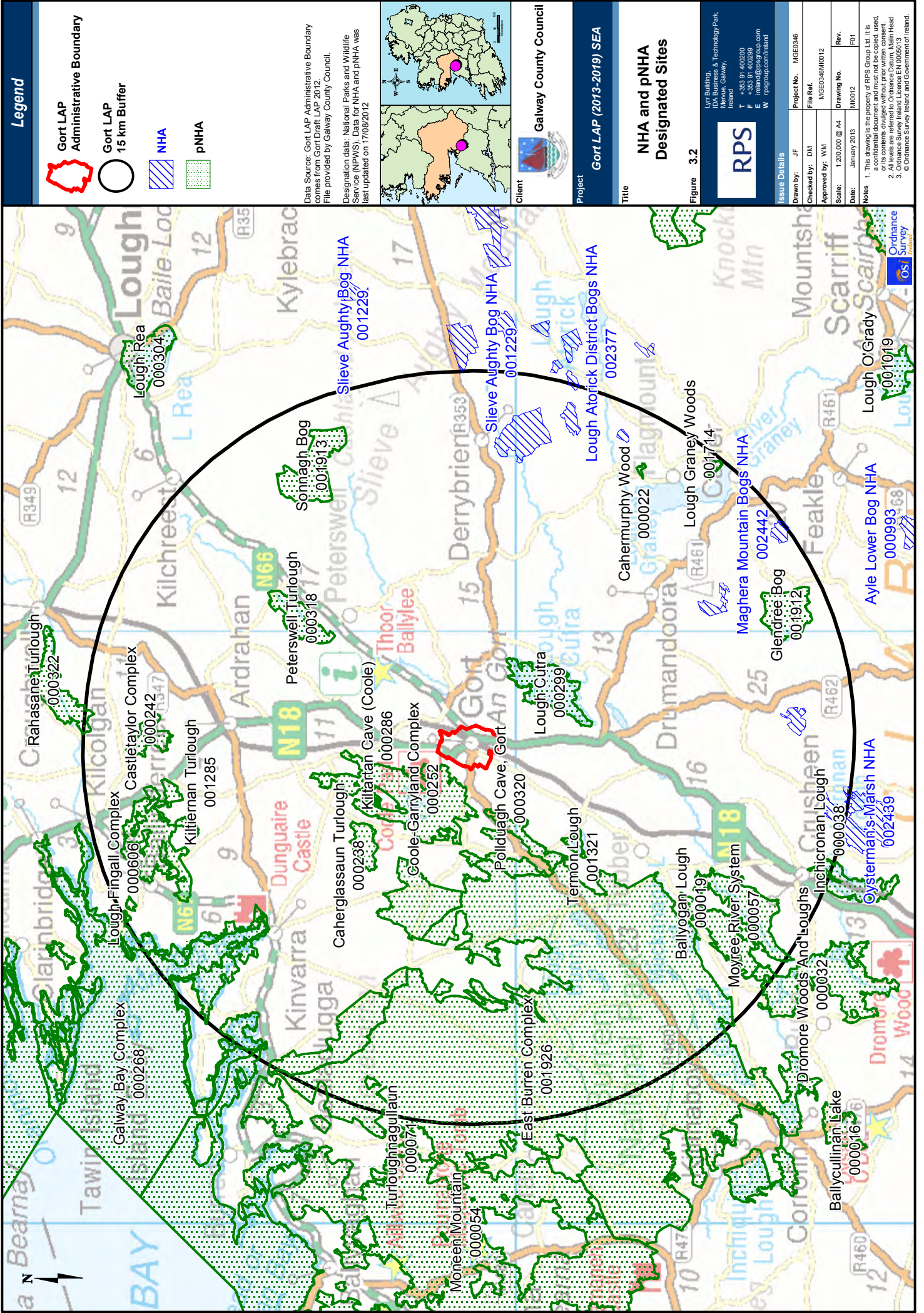
Table 3.3: Designated Sites within 15km of the Draft Gort LAP

Designated Sites	Distance from Gort LAP Boundary	Hydrological Pathway?	Aerial Pathway?	Disturbance Pathway? (LHB refers to Lesser Horseshoe Bat)
000252 Coole-Garryland Complex cSAC/pNHA	400m	Yes. This site is linked to Plan area through the Gort/Cannahowna River.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species.
004107 Coole-Garryland Complex SPA	800m	Yes. This site is linked to Plan area through the Gort/Cannahowna River.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	Yes. Whooper Swan from this site are likely to forage within the LAP area.
000299 Lough Cutra SAC/pNHA	2km	No. This site is over 1km upstream of the LAP boundary.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	Yes. LHB from this site are likely to forage within the LAP area.
004056 Lough Cutra SPA	2km	No. This site is over 1km upstream of the LAP boundary.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	No. Cormorants are unlikely to forage or roost within the LAP area.
001926 East Burren Complex SAC/pNHA	2km	No. This site is over 1km upstream of the LAP boundary.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	Yes. LHB and Otter from this site are likely to forage within the LAP area.
000286 Kiltartan Cave (Coole) SAC/pNHA	2.5km	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create hydrological impacts.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	Yes. LHB provide full title/text from this site could forage within the LAP area.
001321 Termon Lough cSAC/pNHA	3km	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create hydrological impacts.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species.
000238 Caherglassaun Turlough cSAC/pNHA	4km	Yes. This site is linked to Plan area through the Gort/Cannahowna River.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species
002295 Ballinduff Turlough SAC	4km	Yes. This site may be linked to Plan area through the Gort/Cannahowna River.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species
002117 Lough Coy cSAC	4km	Yes. This site may be linked to Plan area through the Gort/Cannahowna River.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species
002293 Carrowbaun, Newhall and	4km	Yes. This site may be linked to	No. Aerial pathways are	No. Qualifying interests of this





Designated Sites	Distance from Gort LAP Boundary	Hydrological Pathway?	Aerial Pathway?	Disturbance Pathway? (LHB refers to Lesser Horseshoe Bat)
Ballylee Turloughs SAC		Plan area through the Gort/Cannahowna River.	unlikely.	site do not include mobile species
004168 Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA	4km	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create hydrological impacts.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	No. Qualifying bird species from this site are highly unlikely to forage or nest within Plan area.
002317 Cregg House Stables, Crusheen cSAC	7.5km	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create hydrological impacts.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	No. LHB* from this site are highly unlikely to forage or nest within Plan area.
002180 Gortacarnaun Wood SAC	5km	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create hydrological impacts.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species
002181 Drummin Wood SAC	5km	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create hydrological impacts.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species
002294 Cahermore Turlough SAC	5km	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create hydrological impacts.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species
000318 Peterswell Turlough SAC/pNHA	7km	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create hydrological impacts.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species
000057 Moyree River System SAC/pNHA	10km	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create hydrological impacts.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	No. The LAP boundary is likely to be outside the range of the qualifying mobile species of this site.
000268 Galway Bay Complex SAC	10km	Yes. This site at Kinvarra Bay is hydrologically linked to Plan area.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	No. The LAP boundary is likely to be outside the range of the qualifying mobile species of this site.
000019 Ballyogan Lough SAC/pNHA	10km	No. This site is not hydrologically connected to the Plan area.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species
004031 Inner Galway Bay SPA	10km	Yes. This site at Kinvarra Bay is hydrologically linked to Plan area.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	No. The LAP boundary is likely to be outside the range of the qualifying mobile species of this

Designated Sites	Distance from Gort LAP Boundary	Hydrological Pathway?	Aerial Pathway?	Disturbance Pathway? (LHB refers to Lesser Horseshoe Bat)
				site.
002244 Ardrahan Grassland SAC	10km	No. This site is not hydrologically connected to the Plan area.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species
001285 Kiltiernan Turlough SAC	11km	No. This site is not hydrologically connected to the Plan area.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species
000242 Castletaylor Complex SAC/pNHA	11km	No. This site is not hydrologically connected to the Plan area.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species
001913Sonnagh Bog SAC/pNHA	11km	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create hydrological impacts.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species
000606 Lough Fingall Complex cSAC/pNHA	11km	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create hydrological impacts.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	No. The LAP boundary is likely to be outside the range of the qualifying mobile species of this site.
001912 Glendree Bog SAC/pNHA	12km	No. This site is not hydrologically connected to the Plan area.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species
004089 Rahasane Turlough SAC/SPA	15km	No. This site is not hydrologically connected to the Plan area.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species
000320Pollduagh CavepNHA	500m	Yes. This site is linked to Plan area through the Gort/Cannahowna River.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	Yes. Daubenton's or Lesser Horseshoe Bat may forage in the LAP area.
000038 Inchicronan Lough pNHA	14km	No. This site is not hydrologically connected to the Plan area.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	No. The LAP boundary is likely to be outside the range of the qualifying mobile species of this site.
001714 Lough Graney Woods pNHA	10km	No. This site is not hydrologically connected to the Plan area.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species
000022 Cahermurphy Wood pNHA	12.5km	No. This site is not hydrologically connected to the Plan area.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species

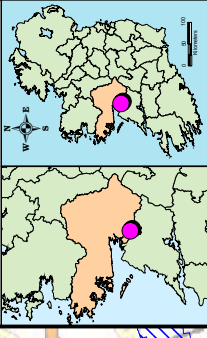
Designated Sites	Distance from Gort LAP Boundary	Hydrological Pathway?	Aerial Pathway?	Disturbance Pathway? (LHB refers to Lesser Horseshoe Bat)
002439 Oysterman's Marsh NHA	13.5km	No. This site is not hydrologically connected to the Plan area.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species
002442 Maghera Mountain Bogs NHA	10km	No. This site is not hydrologically connected to the Plan area.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	No. The LAP boundary is likely to be outside the range of the qualifying mobile species of this site.
002377 Lough Atorick District Bogs NHA	13km	No. This site is not hydrologically connected to the Plan area.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	No. The LAP boundary is likely to be outside the range of the qualifying mobile species of this site.
001229 Slieve Aughty Bog NHA	11.5km	Yes. This site is linked to Plan area through the Caherglassaun groundwater region.	No. Aerial pathways are unlikely.	No. The LAP boundary is likely to be outside the range of the qualifying mobile species of this site.



Legend

-  Gort LAP Administrative Boundary
-  Gort LAP 15 km Buffer
-  NHA
-  pNHA

Data Source: Gort LAP Administrative Boundary comes from Gort Draft LAP 2012. File provided by Galway County Council.
 Designation data: National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). Data for NHA and pNHA was last updated on 17/08/2012



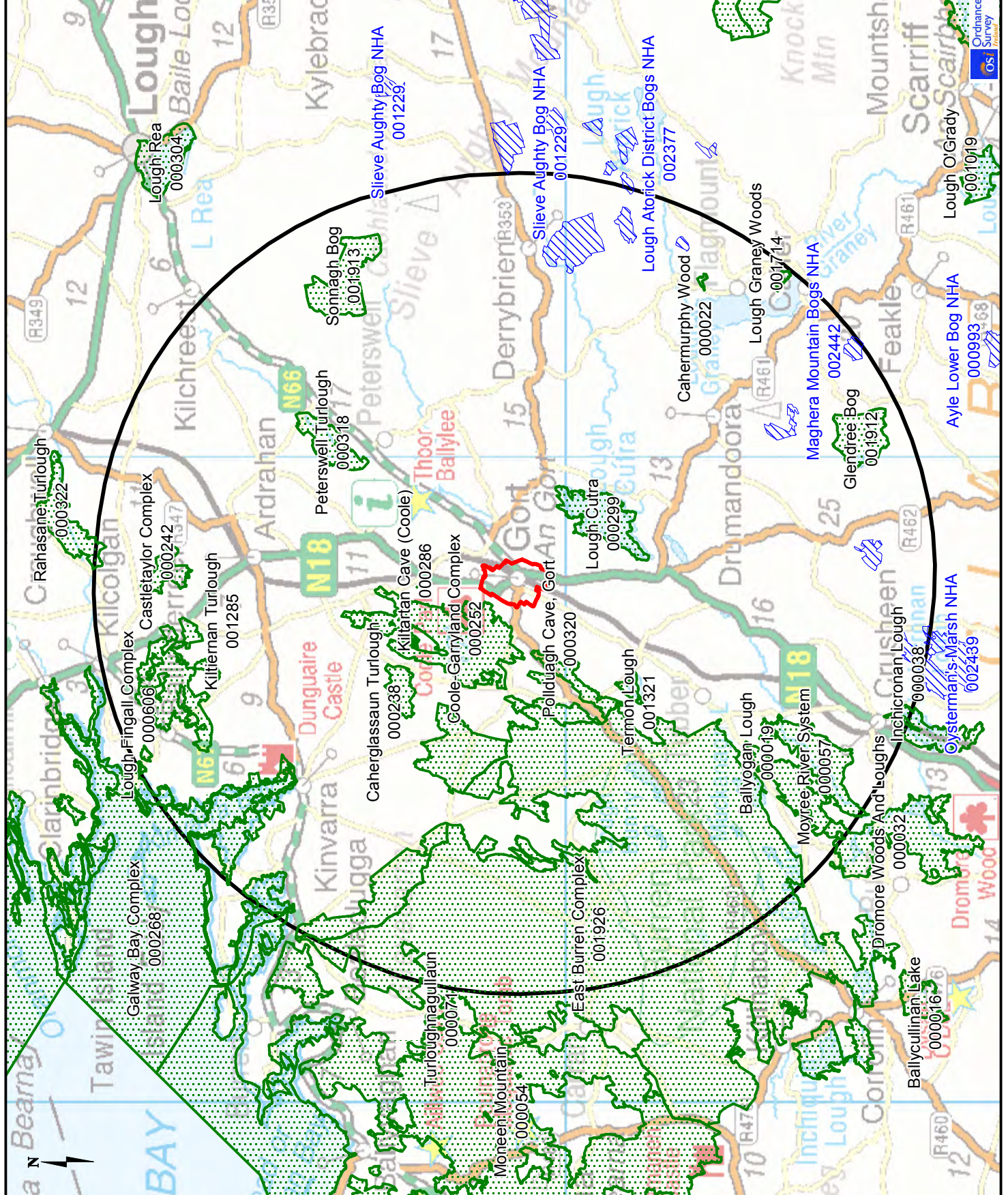
Client: Galway County Council
 Project: Gort LAP (2013-2019) SEA

Title: NHA and pNHA Designated Sites
 Figure 3.2

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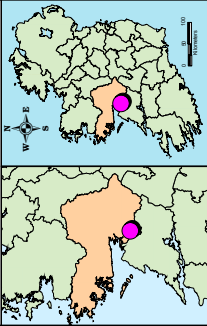


Legend

- Gort LAP Administrative Boundary
- Gort LAP 15 km Buffer
- SAC

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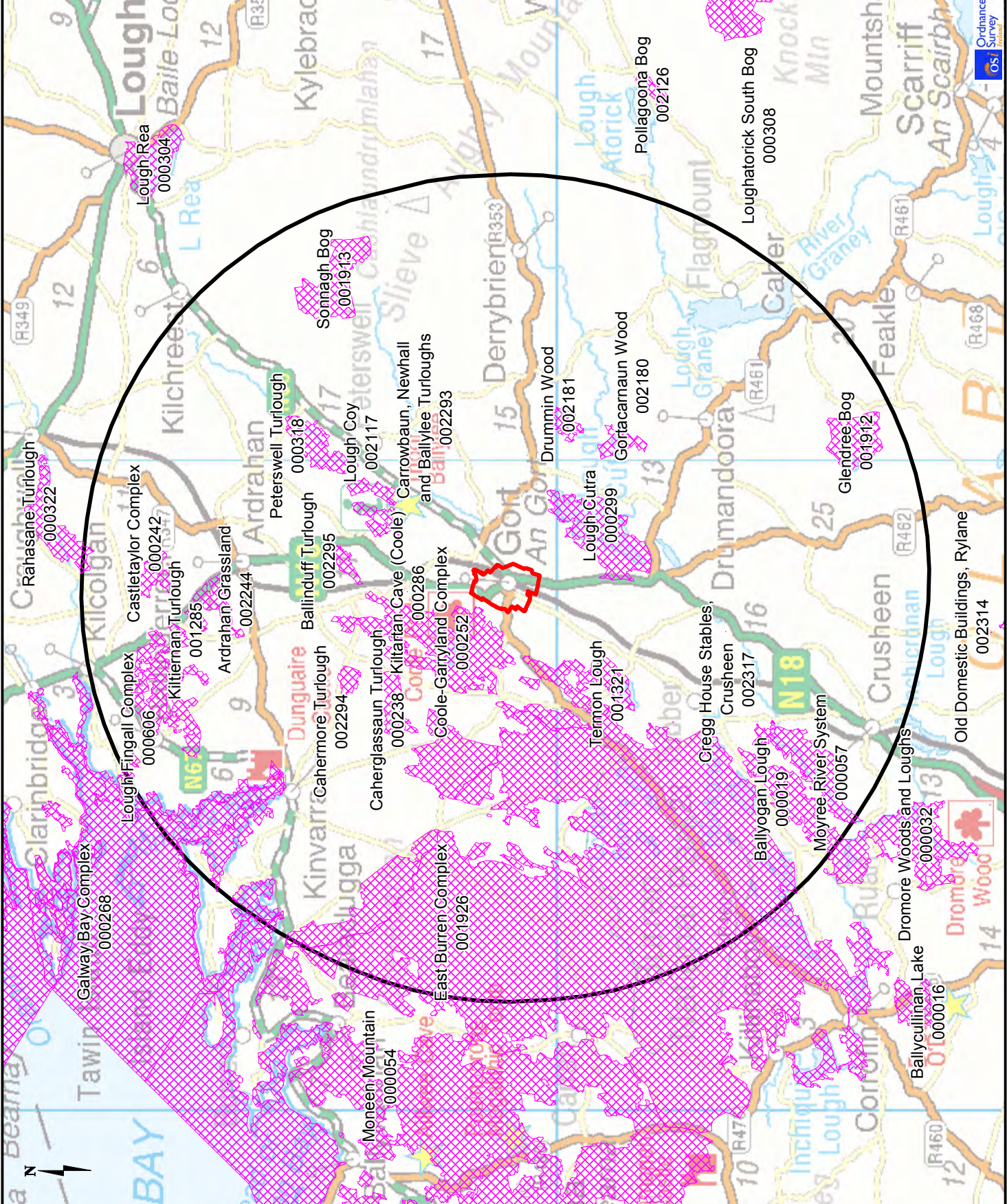


Client Galway County Council

Project **Gort LAP (2013-2019) SEA**

Title **SAC Designated Sites**

Figure **3.3**



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Legend

- Gort LAP Administrative Boundary
- Gort LAP 15 km Buffer
- SPA

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Designation data: National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). Data for SPA was last updated on 17/08/2012

Client Galway County Council

Project **Gort LAP (2013-2019) SEA**

Title **SPA Designated Sites**

Figure **3.4**

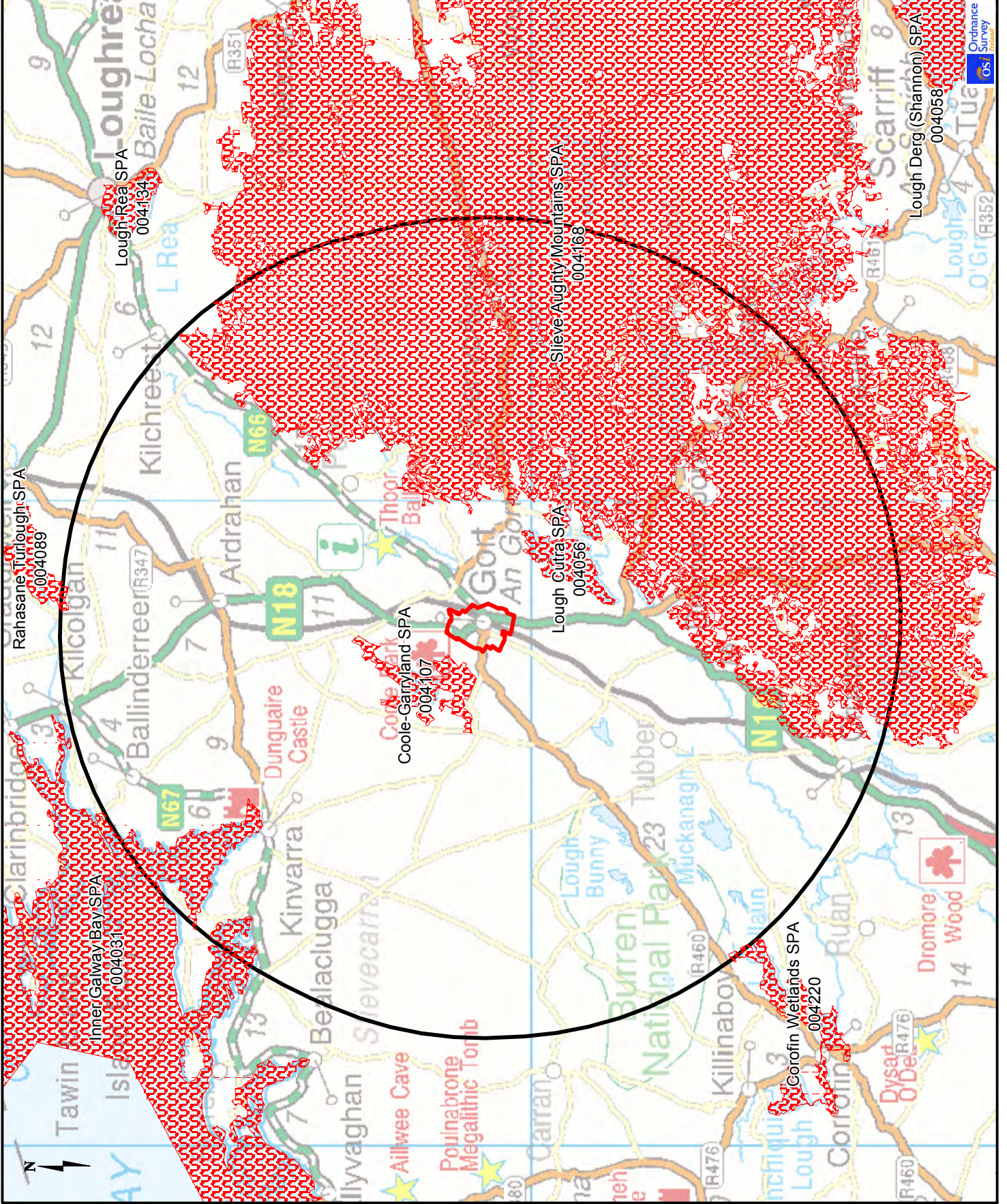
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3.4.3 Corine Mapping

A review of the CORINE land cover mapping for 2006 identified that the lands within the LAP have a large urban fabric (**Figure 3.5**). There is a predominance of this urban fabric to the eastern lands within the LAP and pasture lands within the southern area of the LAP. There is a small area of transitional woodland scrub to the north of the LAP boundary. The surrounding hinterland of Gort is mainly pasture land with some areas of bare rock to the west in the Burren and peat bogs with transitional woodland scrub to the east in the Slieve Aughty Mountains.

While protected areas cover a significant part of the country, approximately 90% of the country lies outside of this network. There are many other sites, which are of local importance for geology, flora and fauna. In Gort, there are many undesignated areas of natural and semi-natural vegetation. These natural heritage areas are coming under increased developmental pressure. A sustainable approach requires that natural heritage is conserved and protected for the benefit of future generations. This all requires that any development proposal must take account of and protect the amenities of the designated area and in particular the reasons for its designation.

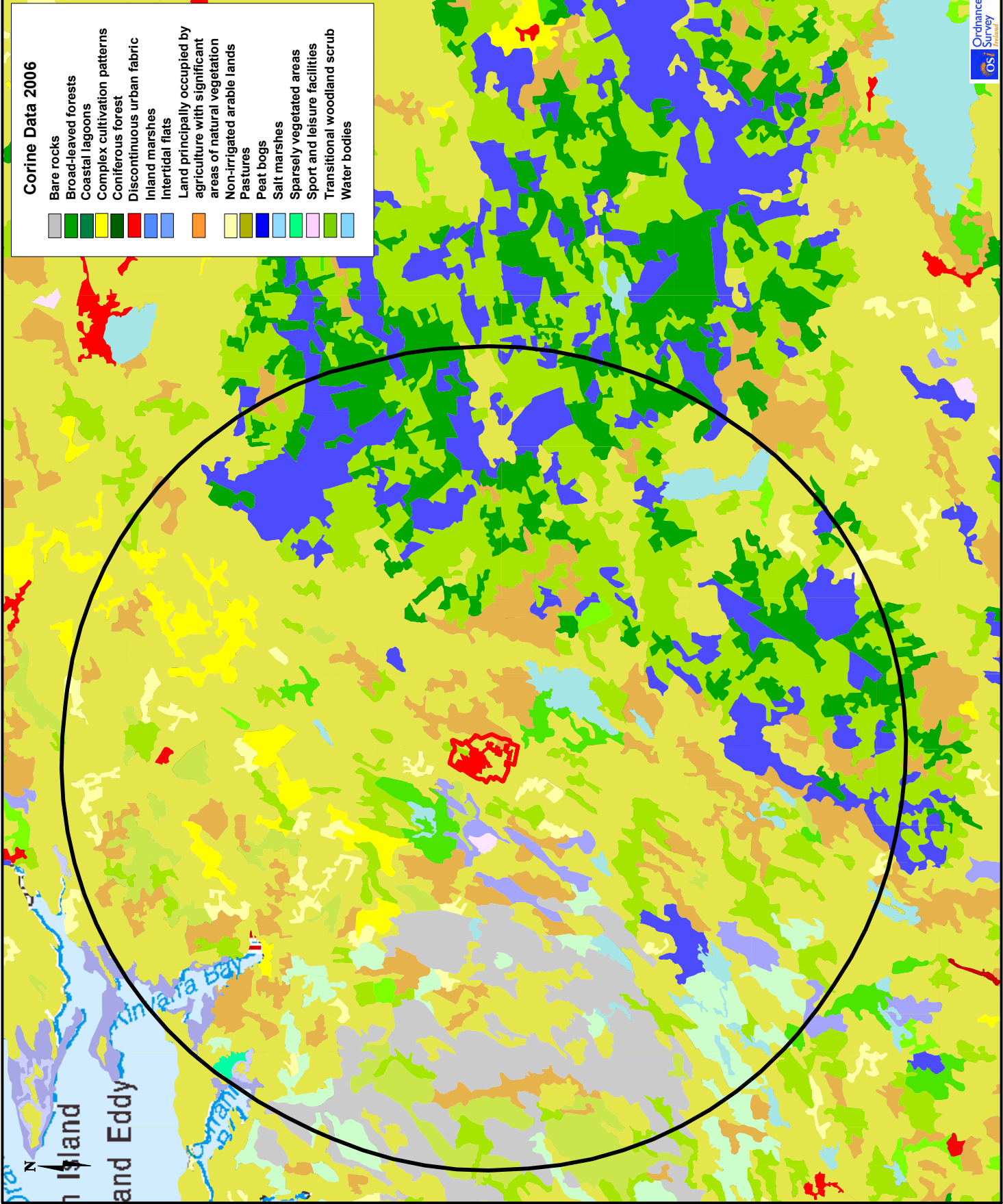
Galway County Council has included policies and objectives within the Draft Plan which seek to protect and enhance biodiversity and ecological connectivity within the Draft Plan area including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, rivers, streams, natural springs, wetlands, stonewalls, geological and geo-morphological 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. In addition, development which might impact on the Cannahowna/Gort River or other watercourses which act as ecological corridors will be restricted and subject to ecological assessment. Native, local provenance planting will also be encouraged to enhance local biodiversity. Policies and objectives are included within the Draft Plan which seeks to protect species such as Bat species along with their breeding, foraging and resting habitat.

3.4.4 Ecological Network

The various habitats in the County form part of an “ecological network” that facilitates the movement of species between areas and ensures the effective functioning and survival of the diverse range of habitats and species in the County. Ecological networks provide a spatial, network-based approach to the conservation of biodiversity, which differs from the site-based approach of environmental designations, by using ‘corridors’ or ‘stepping stones’ that support species migration, dispersal and daily movements between the ‘core areas’ and thereby contribute to a more integrated and functional ecological system. 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* (PEBLDS), which has been ratified by Ireland. Research has been carried out into a National Ecological Network for Ireland as part of the preparation of the *National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020* in a report entitled the *Preliminary Study of the Needs Associated with a National Ecological Network 2001*. This study proposes the classification of open space areas according to their ecological functioning or ‘naturalness’ ranging from Class 1 (predominantly natural areas of high biodiversity) to Class 5 (low biodiversity areas such as continuous urban fabric). These classifications have been used to identify the major elements of an ecological network for the County.

Figure 3.6 illustrates the ecological network classification for Gort and its hinterland and is based on the Corine 2000 land data. This map shows all the area is predominantly classified as either class 3 or class 4. Class 3 refers to transitional woodland scrub and class 4 as complex cultivation pattern. In terms of ecological significance, 1 ranks the as highest value and 5 (continuous urban fabric) as the lowest value.

Ecological mitigation measures implemented during construction of the M18 and which contribute to the functioning of an ecological network are shown in **Figure 3.7**. These include such measures as mammal underpasses and a replacement badger sett.



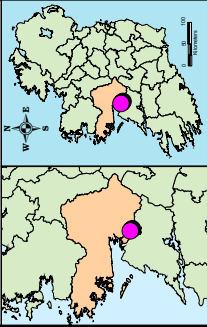
Corine Data 2006

- Bare rocks
- Broad-leaved forests
- Coastal lagoons
- Complex cultivation patterns
- Coniferous forest
- Discontinuous urban fabric
- Inland marshes
- Intertidal flats
- Land principally occupied by agriculture with significant areas of natural vegetation
- Non-irrigated arable lands
- Pastures
- Peat bogs
- Salt marshes
- Sparsely vegetated areas
- Sport and leisure facilities
- Transitional woodland scrub
- Water bodies

Legend

- Gort LAP Administrative Boundary
- Gort LAP 15 km Buffer

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 Corine data: Corine data 2006 from the EPA



Client **Galway County Council**

Project **Gort LAP (2013-2019) SEA**

Title **Landuse Based on Corine 2006**

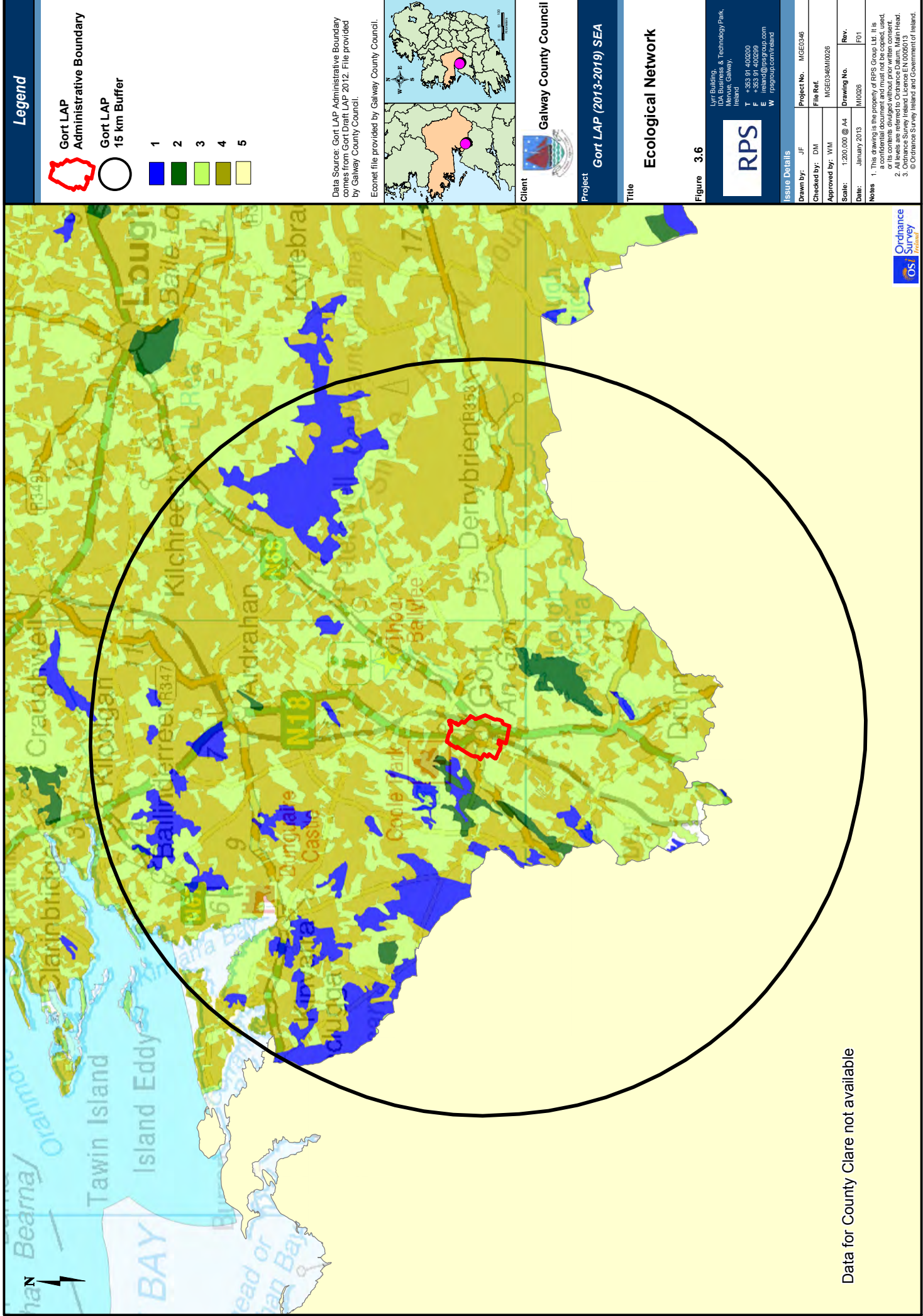
Figure 3.5

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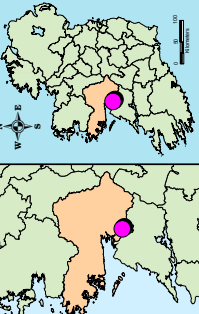


Legend

-  Gort LAP Administrative Boundary
-  Gort LAP 15 km Buffer
-  1
-  2
-  3
-  4
-  5

Data Source: Gort LAP Administrative Boundary comes from Gort Draft LAP 2012. File provided by Galway County Council.

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Client



Galway County Council

Project
Gort LAP (2013-2019) SEA

Title
Ecological Network

Figure 3.6



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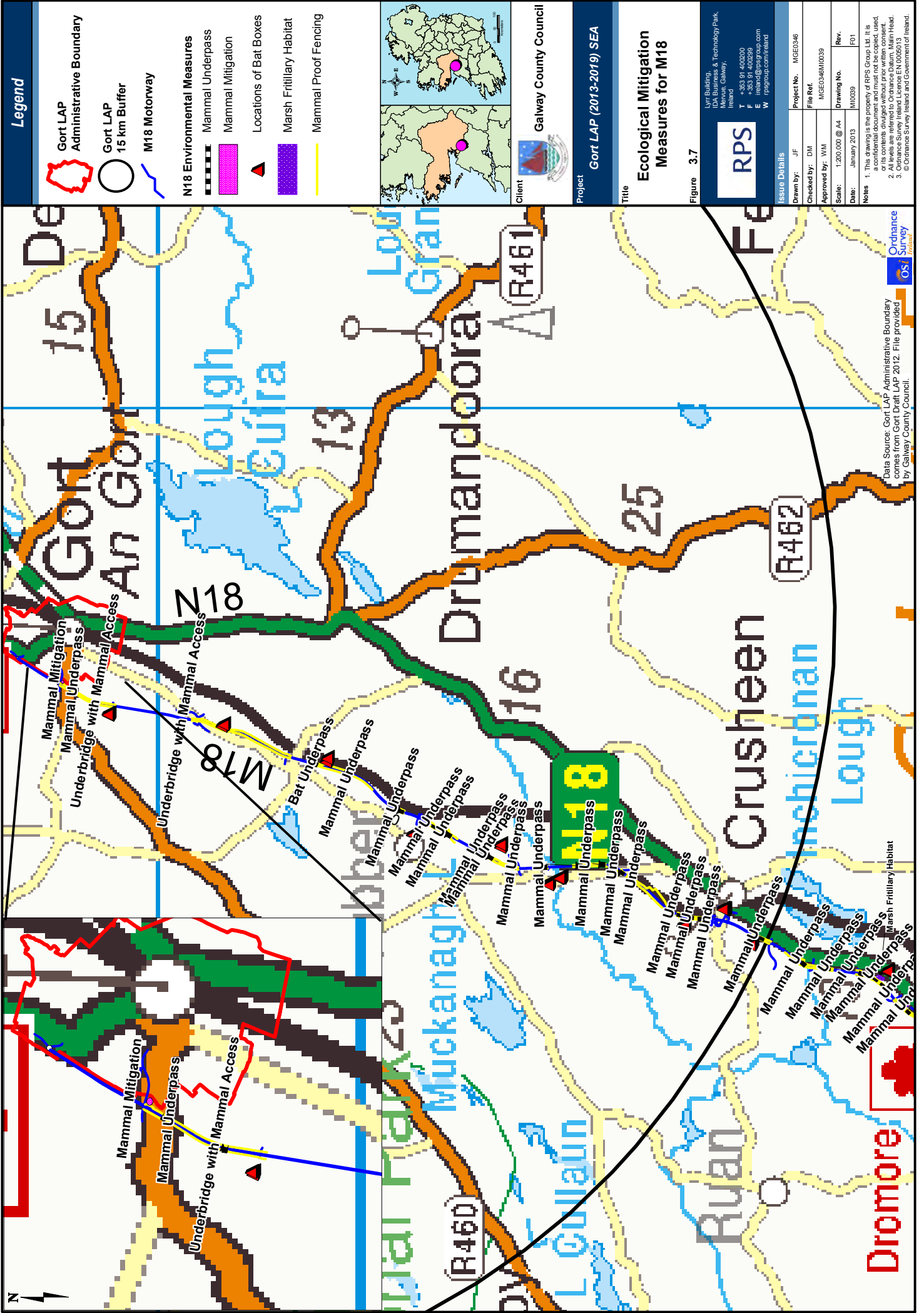
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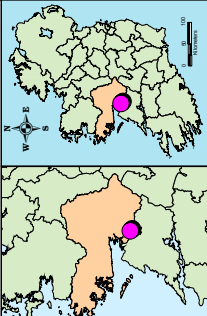
Data for County Clare not available





Legend

- Gort Lough Administrative Boundary
- Gort Lough 15 km Buffer
- M18 Motorway
- M18 Environmental Measures
- Mammal Underpass
- Mammal Mitigation
- Locations of Bat Boxes
- Marsh Fritillary Habitat
- Mammal Proof Fencing



Client Galway County Council

Project **Gort Lough (2013-2019) SEA**

Title **Ecological Mitigation Measures for M18**

Figure 3.7

Issue Details

Drawn by:	JF	Project No.:	MGED046
Checked by:	DM	File Ref.:	MGED046M00039
Approved by:	WM	Scale:	1:200,000 @ A4
Date:	January 2013	Drawing No.:	M10039
Rev.:	F01	Notes:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> This drawing is the property of RPS Group Ltd. It is to be used only for the project for which it is issued, and its contents divulged without prior written consent. All levels are referred to Ordnance Datum, Mean Head. Ordnance Survey Ireland Licence EN 0006013

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Data Source: Gort Lough Administrative Boundary comes from Gort Draft LAP 2012. File provided by Galway County Council.



3.4.5 Rare and Protected Species Records

The National Biodiversity Data Centre and National Parks and Wildlife Service websites were consulted for rare and protected species records within the Gort LAP area. Below is a non-exhaustive list of rare and protected species which have been recorded within the vicinity of Gort town.

- Mammals: Otter (Annex II and Annex IV listed species under the EU Habitats Directive and the Wildlife Acts), Badger and Hedgehog (protected species under the Wildlife Acts)
- Bats: Leisler's, Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Brown Long-eared Bat, Lesser Horseshoe Bat, and Daubenton's (all protected under Annex II and Annex IV listed species under the EU Habitats Directive and the Wildlife Acts)
- Amphibians and Reptiles: Common Frog (EU Annex V, Wildlife Acts) and Common Lizard (Wildlife Acts),
- Bird Species: Northern Lapwing and Black-headed Gull (Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCCI)-Red List Species)

3.4.6 Invasive Species

Although there are few records for Invasive Alien species in Gort it is highly likely that species such as Japanese Knotweed *Fallopia japonica* and Himalayan Balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* amongst others occur in the area. Aquatic invasive species such as Zebra Mussel *Dreissena polymorpha* and Asian Clam *Corbicula fluminea* have the potential to be spread through waterbodies in the area and have the ability to become highly invasive in a short period of time and at high densities altering the food web and competing with native mussel species.

In addition, the recent record in Ireland of Ash Dieback caused by the fungal pathogen *Chalara fraxinea* highlights the potential for devastating consequences to the native ash tree population. Ash is a common wild and planted tree in Ireland and therefore this issue should be addressed.

3.4.7 Existing Environmental Pressures / Problems

Gort has high quality ecological sites at an international, national and local level. Existing pressures in the town relate to losses of biodiversity flora and fauna through the construction of hard standing surfaces as a by-product of development.

The area has experienced a lot of pressure in the recent past from development. This has led to pressure on the Cannahowna / Gort River, which has been classified as 'poor' status under the Water Framework Directive (WFD). This status must be improved to at least 'good' status by 2015 which is within the lifetime of this Plan.

The close proximity of the town to Coole-Garryland Complex and Lough Cutra can put pressure on these water dependent habitats. These habitats are both Natura 2000 sites and are further outlined in the Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Report which accompanies this document.

3.5 SOIL

3.5.1 Soils Types

Soils are offered protection through the proposed EC Directive 2004/35/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council for establishing a framework for the protection of soil and amending Directive 2004/35/EC. This Directive provides a common strategy for the protection and sustainable use of soil based on the principles of integration of soil concerns into other policies, preservation of soil functions within the context of sustainable use, prevention of threats to soil and migration of their effects, as well as restoration of degraded soils to a level of functionality consistent with the current and approved future use.

The Gort administrative area is dominated by shallow and deep well drained mineral soils (**Figure 3.8**). This soil is freely draining and very fertile due to its large amount of organic matter. It has a soil horizon of clay material with the parent material being mainly limestone. Generally it is a "medium-heavy" textured soil with a weak to moderately good structure. It has desirable physical properties and ideally suited to tillage, pasture, meadow and forestry. The principal soil types within the LAP are:

- Mineral alluvium,
- Deep well drained mineral, derived from mainly calcareous parent materials,
- Shallow well drained mineral, derived from mainly calcareous parent materials, and
- Made ground.

There are large areas of blanket peat and poorly drained mineral soils with peaty topsoil to the east of the LAP boundary in the Slieve Aughty Mountains. To the west of the LAP lies the Burren, an area of karst landscape with shallow well drained mineral derived from mainly basic parent materials.

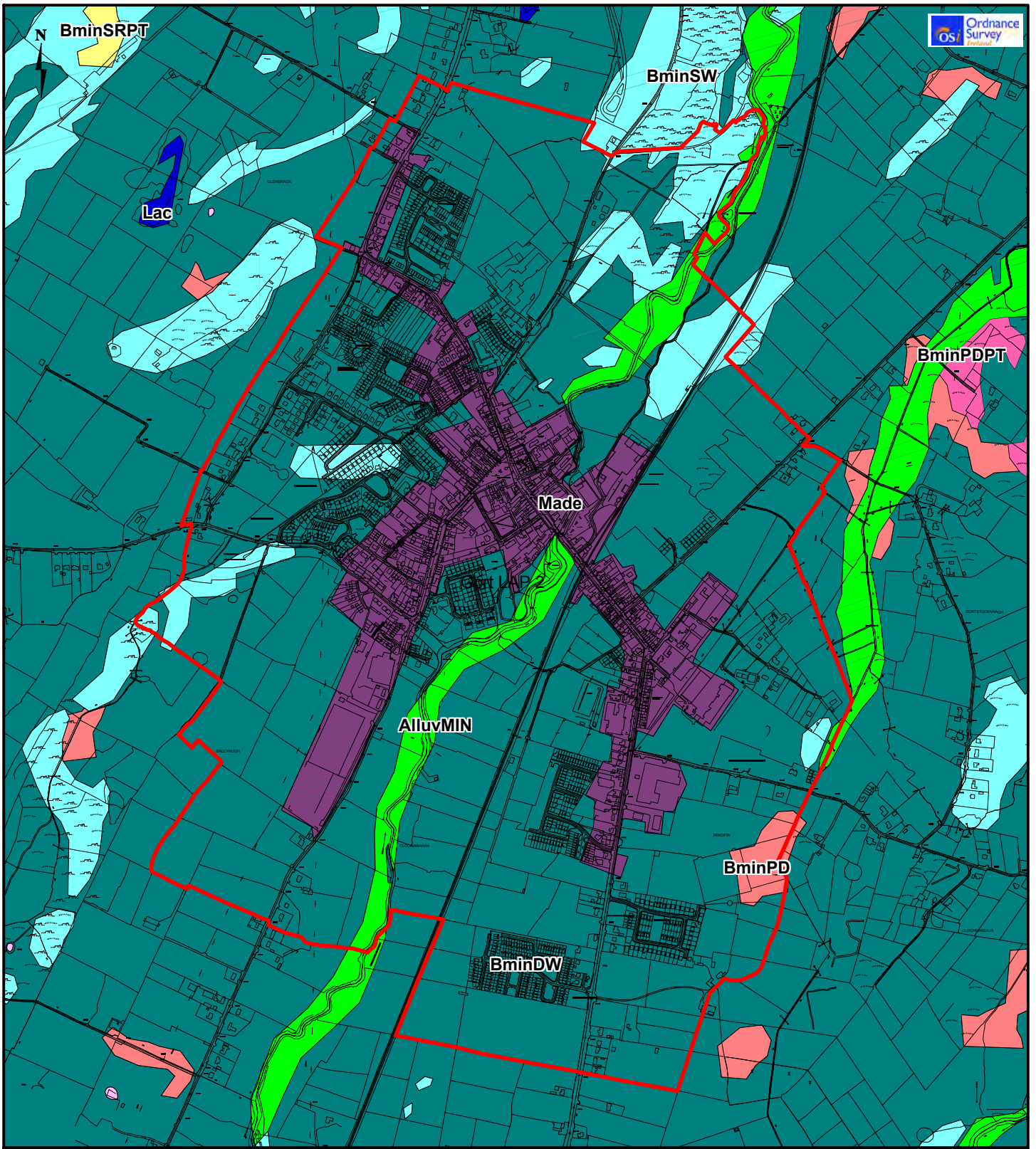
3.5.2 Geology

The geology within the administrative area of Gort and its surrounds is represented in **Figure 3.9**. The bedrock geology is classified as various families of limestone with Visean shelf limestone to the west of the LAP and Waulsortian limestones to the east of the LAP. Karst features are common in the vicinity of, but not located within Gort LAP administrative boundary.

3.5.3 Existing Environmental Pressures / Problems

Soil erosion due mainly to surface erosion resulting from construction works has major potential to impact on water quality and fisheries resources. In addition to water quality and fisheries, these can impact on infrastructure and can have health and safety implications.

Pressures on soils outside the administrative area include development on previously rural sites, which restricts the agricultural potential of these soils and decreases the sustainable production of food within proximity to urban areas.



Legend

- Bmin SRPT -Shallow, lithosolic-podzolic type soils with peaty topsoil, derived from calcareous rock or gravels
- Bmin SW - Shallow well drained mineral, derived from mainly calcareous parent materials
- Bmin DW - Deep well drained mineral, derived from mainly calcareous parent materials
- Bmin PDPT - Poorly drained mineral soils with peaty topsoil, derived from calcareous materials
- BMin PD - Deep poorly drained mineral, derived from calcareous materials
- Lac - Alluviums, lacustrine-type soils
- Made - Made/Built land
- AlluvMin - Mineral alluvium
- Gort LAP Administrative Boundary

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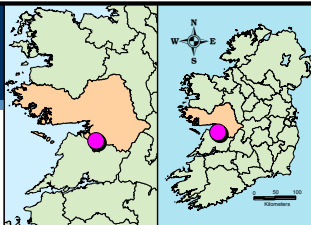
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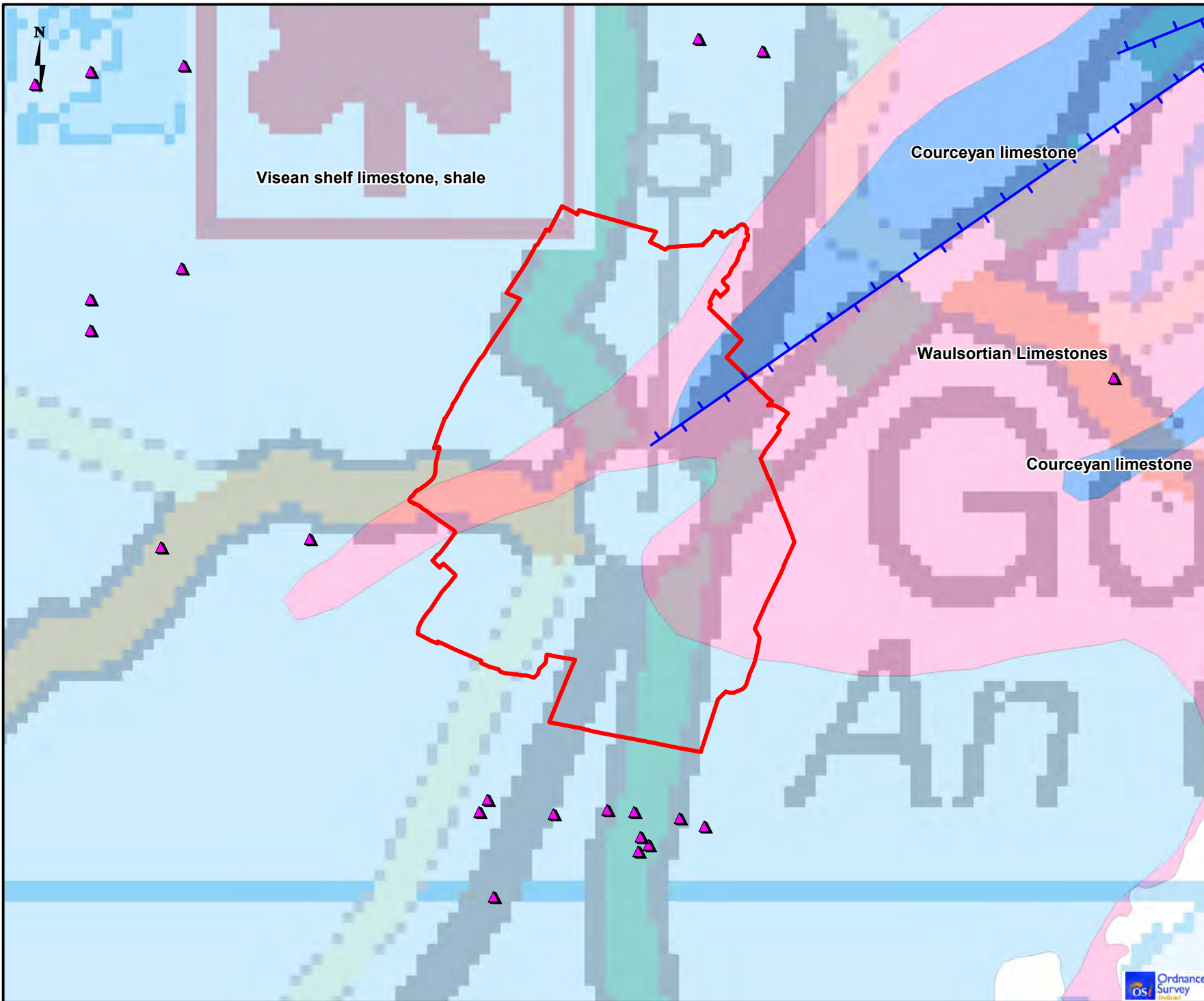
Project
Gort LAP (2013-2019) SEA

Title
Soils Map








Figure 3.8



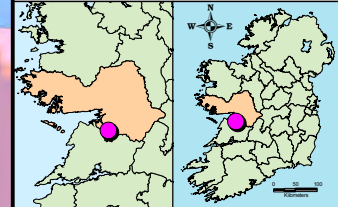
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Legend

-  Gort LAP Administrative Boundary
-  Gort LAP 15 km Buffer
-  Fault
-  Karst Feature
-  Visean shelf limestone
-  Waulsortian limestone
-  Courceyan limestone

Data Source: Gort LAP Administrative Boundary comes from Gort Draft LAP 2012.
 File provided by Galway County Council.
 Geology data from Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI)



Client  Galway County Council

Project **Gort LAP (2013-2019) SEA**

Title **Bedrock with Areas of Geological Interest**

Figure 3.9

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3.6 WATER

3.6.1 River Basin Districts and Water Bodies

Since 2000, the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC (WFD) has directed water management in the EU. The WFD requires that all Member States implement the necessary measures to prevent deterioration of the status of all waters (surface, ground, estuarine and coastal) and protect, enhance and restore all waters with the aim of achieving at least Good Status by 2015. All public bodies, including Galway County Council, are also required to coordinate their policies and operations so as to achieve/ maintain Good Status of waterbodies, within their jurisdiction in line with the relevant River Basin Management Plan and Programme of Measures.

For the purpose of implementing the WFD, Ireland has been divided into eight River Basin Districts and County Galway is wholly located within both the Western River Basin District (WRBD).

3.6.2 Register of Protected Areas

The WFD requires that Registers of Protected Areas (RPAs) are compiled for waterbodies or parts of waterbodies that must have extra controls on their quality by virtue of how their waters are used by people and by wildlife.

The WFD requires that these RPAs contain the following areas:

- areas from which waters are taken for public or private water supply schemes;
- designated shellfish production areas;
- bathing waters;
- areas which are affected by high levels of substances most commonly found in fertilisers, animal and human wastes - these areas are considered nutrient sensitive; and
- areas designated for the protection of habitats or species, e.g. salmonid areas; Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

The protected areas for the Gort LAP and its surrounds are listed in the Kinvara Water Management Unit Report 2010. This details all the designated sites of SACs, SPAs, NHAs and pNHAs including some drinking water sources. These include the proposal to abstract drinking water from Lough Cutra for future use in the Gort RWSS, which is now no longer proposed. Other surface water drinking waters abstraction points include Streamstown River and Coole River, Ballylee river, River discharging from Newtown Lough, River discharging from Hawkhill Lough to the seasonal Mannagh Lough, and river discharging from Coole Lough to Kinvara Bay.

3.6.3 Surface Water

The EU Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC (WFD) 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. Under the WFD Gort is located in the Kinvara Water Management Unit in the Western River Basin District (WRBD). 'The Western River Basin Management Plan' has recently been prepared, and 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.

The Gort River is the main river system within Gort LAP which bisects the LAP boundary in a north south direction. The river starts as the Cannahowna River which flows out of Pollduagh cave to the south of the Draft LAP boundary. As the river enters the town it turns into the Gort River, flowing north under the N18 towards the northern LAP boundary.

The overall status of the Cannahowna / Gort River is poor and water quality must be restored to "good status" by 2021 (**Figure 3.10**). Under the Water Framework Directive the river is defined as "not at risk" (2b) of not achieving good status. Monitoring by the Council and other agencies of all water sources is carried out for the purpose of implementing the Water Framework Directive.

Galway County Council has included policies and objectives which 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 any updated/ superseding documents). Waterbodies and watercourses and associated riparian zones, wetlands and natural floodplains within the Plan area will be protected from inappropriate development. Development will only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on the water environment and any development within the Plan area will be preceded by sufficient capacity in Gort WWTP. Specifically, the importance of the Cannahowna River and tributaries, and the surface water and groundwater catchments of the Coole-Garryland cSAC/SPA are recognised.

The surface water status within and surrounding Gort LAP is identified in **Figure 3.10**. It can be seen that the existing status is 'poor' within the majority of the LAP except for a small portion to the east of the LAP. This classification is for the status of the surface water determined by the ecological and chemical status of the water body.

3.6.4 Groundwater

Groundwater monitoring is undertaken by the EPA. Groundwater is an important source and is of critical importance in many regions. Groundwater Protection Schemes are a county based project to provide protection by placing tighter controls on activities within all or part of the zone of contribution of the source. The groundwater protection zones in proximity to the LAP are shown in **Figure 3.11**. The groundwater body underlying the Gort area (WE_G_0091 Caherglassaun) has been assigned 'Good' status under the Water Framework Directive as shown in **Figure 3.12**.

Gort is located within the groundwater and surface water catchments of the Coole-Garryland turlough and because of the hydro-geological links, the potential indirect effects on designated sites must also be recognised and protected in line with the EU Habitats Directive.

The Groundwater Protection Scheme identifies that approximately 40% of the area within the LAP is rated as having groundwater vulnerability of 'Extreme' (including bedrock at surface), 50% is rated as 'High' vulnerability and 10% is rated as 'Moderate' vulnerability (**Figure 3.13**).

The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) rates aquifers based on their hydrogeological characteristics as well as on the value of the groundwater resource. Ireland's entire land surface is divided into aquifer categories. Gort is underlain a regionally important karst aquifer as shown in **Figure 3.14**. The water bodies of relevance for water protection in Gort are surface water (rivers and streams) and groundwater.

The GSI further rates aquifers according to their vulnerability to pollution. Aquifer vulnerability refers to the ease with which pollutants of various kinds can enter underground water. The majority of the LAP is classed as having high vulnerability, except for a small section to the west of the LAP which is classified as moderate vulnerability.

3.6.5 Flooding

Figure 3.15 shows the latest available flood data for the town. This arises from the results of the findings of the Stage 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) which was undertaken alongside the review of the Gort Local Area Plan. The SFRA was undertaken and prepared in accordance with the 2009 Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and Office of Public Works document entitled *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management - Guidelines for Planning Authorities*. The SFRA is an assessment of flood risk within the Gort LAP as Gort is vulnerable to adverse effects from changes in the frequency and severity of rainfall events.

The European Directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risks requires member states to carry out preliminary flood assessments in order to identify the areas at risk. These flood risk maps will be constructed by 2013 and following this flood risk management plans will be drawn up.

The Planning System and Flood Risk Management, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2009) defines flooding as; 'a natural process that can happen at any time in a wide variety of locations. Flooding from the sea and from rivers is probably best known but prolonged, intense and localised rainfall can also cause sewer flooding, overland flow and groundwater flooding'. While there are different types and causes of flooding, the most common in County Galway is the flooding of rivers.

The Office of Public Works (OPW) has produced flood maps as part of the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) that identify areas at risk of flooding, including fluvial, coastal, pluvial and groundwater flooding, for the entire country. Galway County Council has also carried out a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for County Galway, including a specific Stage 2 Flood Risk Assessment for the Gort Plan Area. As part of the Stage 2 SFRA, the historic flood risk areas have been identified and a number of local level assessments have also been carried out, including local knowledge of flood events, aerial photography and site walkovers. The Stage 2 SFRA has confirmed the flood extents identified in the OPW PFRA mapping for the Gort Plan Area and identified additional flood risk areas near along the Cannahowna/Gort River south of the L4514 Tubber Road and south of the L85314 Kinincha Road to the south east of the Town Centre. **Figure 3.15** highlights areas of fluvial, pluvial and groundwater flood risk and Indicative Flood Zones within which development may be restricted.

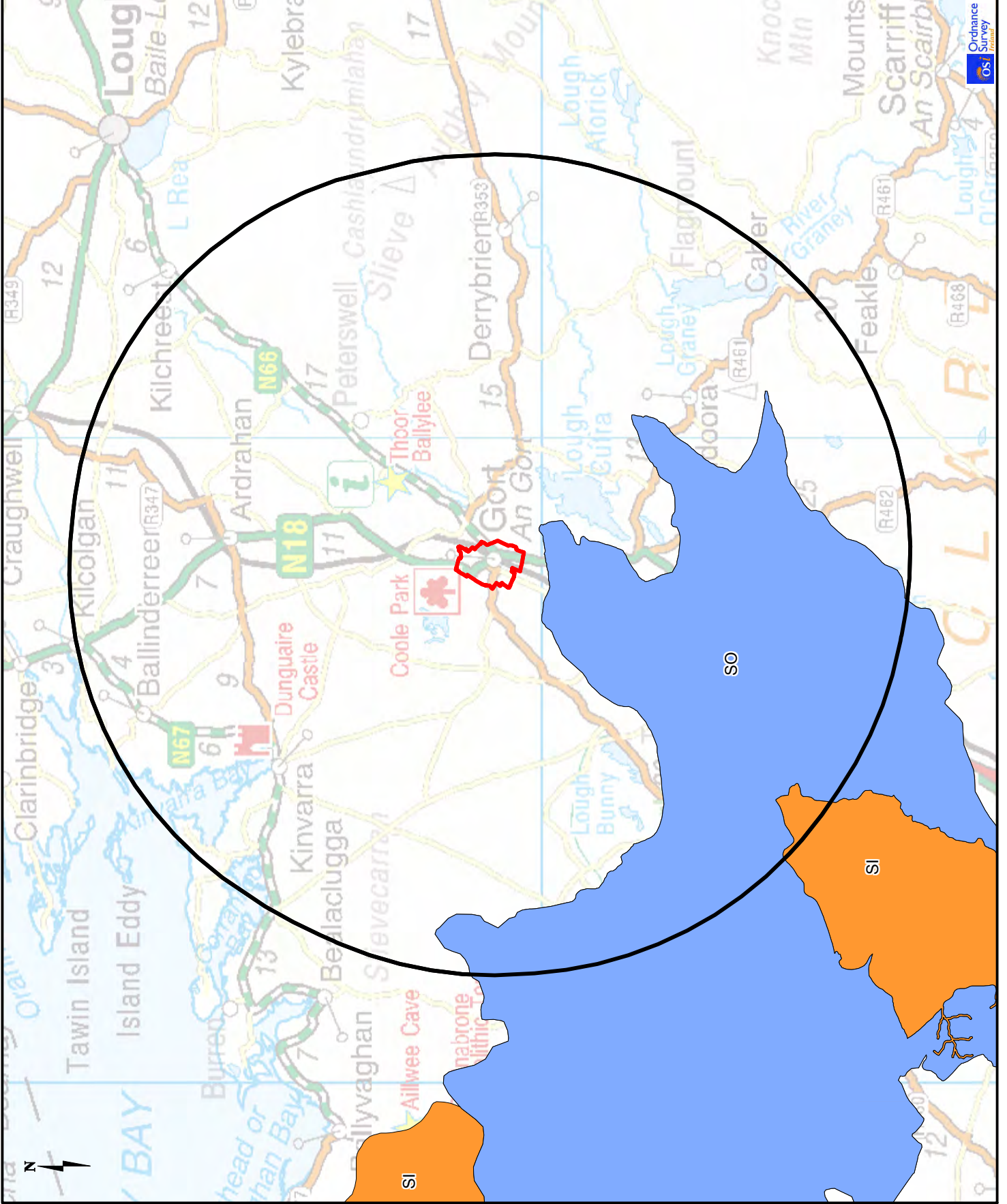
Undeveloped town centre, residential industrial, community facility and recreation and amenity lands that are located within identified flood risk areas (in particular Flood Zones A and B) have generally been rezoned as Open Space in accordance with the *Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009* in order to avoid inappropriate development in high to moderate flood risk areas and to address the potential impacts of climate change. The total amount of land re-zoned within the Gort Draft LAP to Open Space/Recreation & Amenity (OS) due to fluvial flood risk is estimated at approximately 50.4ha.

Galway County Council has included policies and objectives within the Draft Plan which 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). The Plan has also taken account of the *Catchment Flood Risk Management Plans* (CFRAMs), *Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment* (PFRA) and the recommendations from the Stage 2 SFRA on the Draft Plan. In addition, any proposed flood protection or alleviation works will be subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening.





The Draft Gort LAP 2013-2019 has taken cognisance of the *Guidelines for Planning Authorities on The Planning System and Flood Risk Management* (2009). The key principles of the risk-based sequential approach to managing flood risk as set out in Chapter 3 of the DEHLG Flood Guidelines will be met to avoid development in areas at risk of flooding and to ensure that flood risk will not be increased elsewhere. Galway County Council will take cognisance of the OPW's Flooding Report and any future reports in relation to flood risk for the Gort area and the remaining county. Whilst development in Flood Zones in the Draft Plan area will not normally be permitted some development may be suitable and may be permitted in accordance with the *Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009* and when it will not adversely impact on the ecological integrity of European 2000 sites. Developments granted permission in areas close to floodplains will contain measures to ensure that the risks of flooding are minimised or eliminated. In addition, Appropriate Assessment Screening will be required for any proposed flood protection or alleviation works.

The Local Area Plan takes due consideration of the national *Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009*, the flood risk mapping available from the PFRA and the recommendations emanating from the Gort Stage 2 SFRA. The Draft Plan identifies Flood Zones in accordance with the Guidelines using data from the PFRA and the Stage 2 SFRA (shown on **Figure 3.15 – Flood Risk Management**), designates land use zones considered appropriate to each Flood Zone and includes policies and objectives dealing with flood risk assessment and management and include the following: Policy UI2 – Flood Risk Management, Policy UI3 – Flood Risk in Pluvial and Groundwater Flood Areas, Objective UI11 – Groundwater and Pluvial Flood Risk, Objective UI12 –Boundaries of Flood Zones, Objective UI8 – Flood Risk Management and Assessment, Objective UI9 –Flood Zones and Appropriate LandUses.

The majority of areas identified as Flood Zones A or B under the Stage 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the Gort Draft LAP Area are zoned as 'Open Space/Recreation & Amenity (OS)' (see **Figure 3.15 -Flood Risk Management**), thus avoiding incompatible uses and directing inappropriate development away from these zones. Limited uses are open for consideration for the open space zoning. Such developments would be assessed in accordance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines (2009). There are small numbers of existing developments that lie within Flood Zones A or B; again any redevelopment activities associated with these existing structures would also require application of the above guidelines.

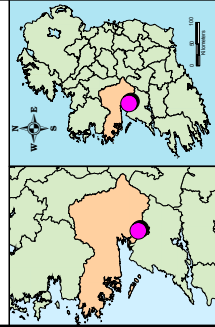


Legend

-  Gort LAP Administrative Boundary
-  Gort LAP 15 km Buffer
-  Outer Source Protection Zone (SO)
-  Inner Source Protection Zone (SI)

Data Source: Gort LAP Administrative Boundary comes from Gort Draft LAP 2012. File provided by Galway County Council.

Protection Zones data supplied by the Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI)



Client
Galway County Council

Project
Gort LAP (2013-2019) SEA

Title
Groundwater Source Protection Zones

Figure 3.11

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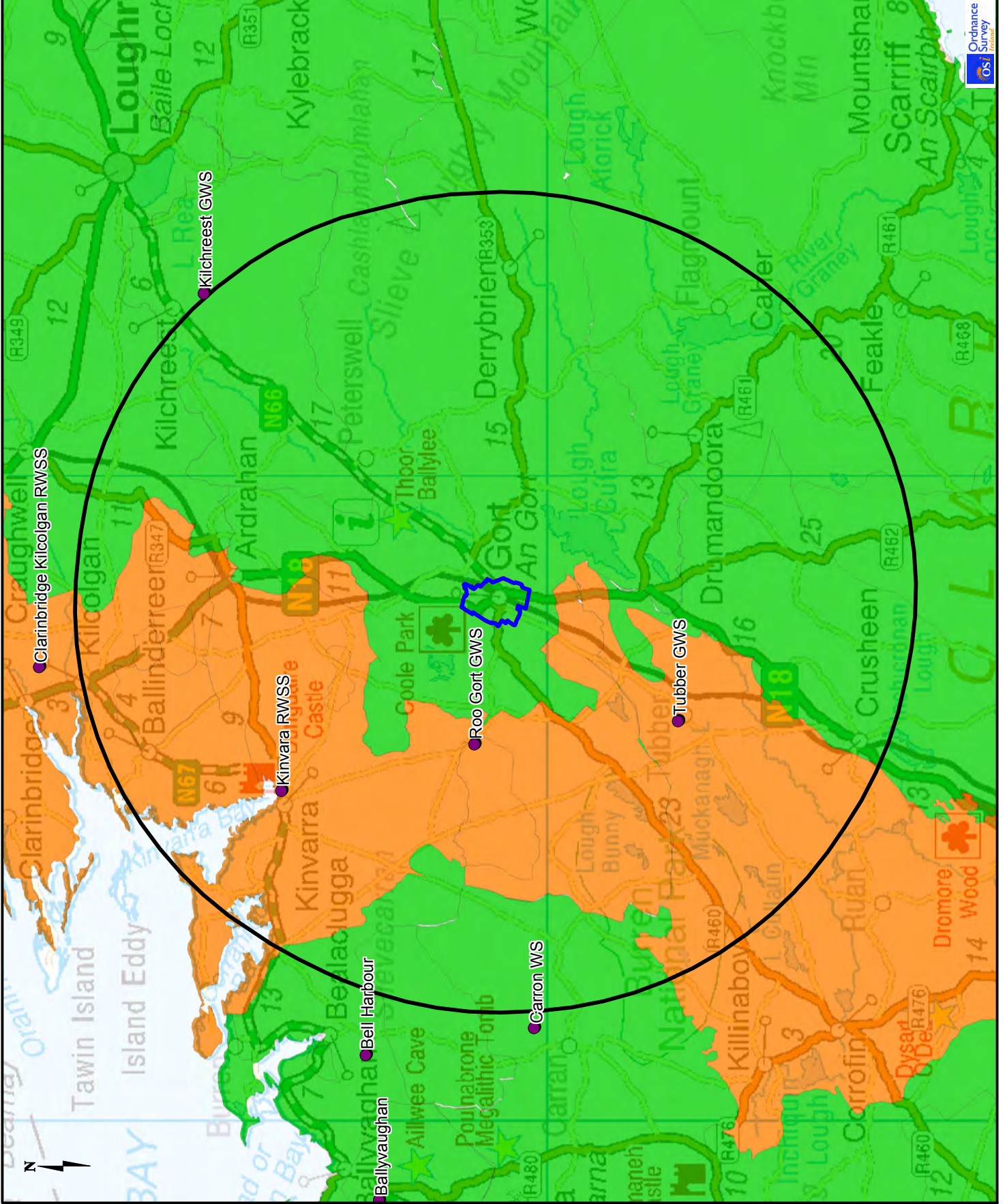
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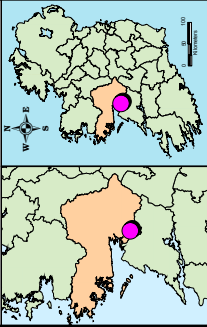




Legend

-  Gort LAP Administrative Boundary
-  Gort LAP 15 km Buffer
- Groundwater Status**
-  Good
-  Poor
-  Groundwater monitoring

Data Source: Gort LAP Administrative Boundary comes from Gort Diart LAP 2012. File provided by Galway County Council.
 Data from Water Framework Directive, August 09.



Client
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Project
Gort LAP (2013-2019) SEA

Title
Groundwater Quality

Figure 3.12

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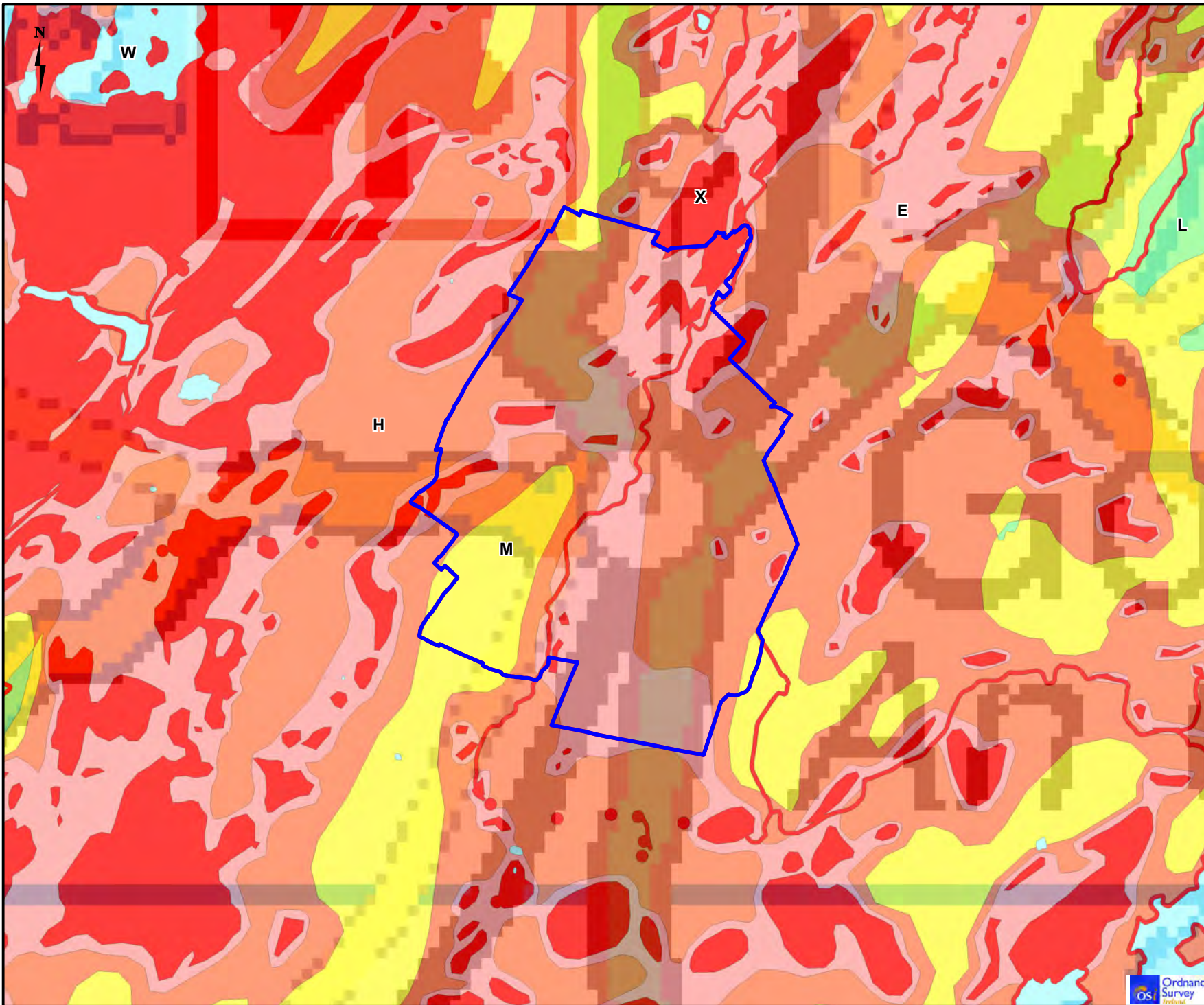
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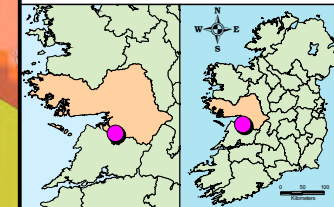
Gort LAP Administrative Boundary

Vulnerability

- Rock near Surface or Karst
- Extreme
- High
- High to Low
- Moderate
- Low
- Water
- No Data Available

Data Source: Gort LAP Administrative Boundary comes from Gort Draft LAP 2012. File provided by Galway County Council.

Vulnerability data from Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI).



Client Galway County Council

Project **Gort LAP (2013-2019) SEA**

Title **Vulnerability Map**

Figure 3.13

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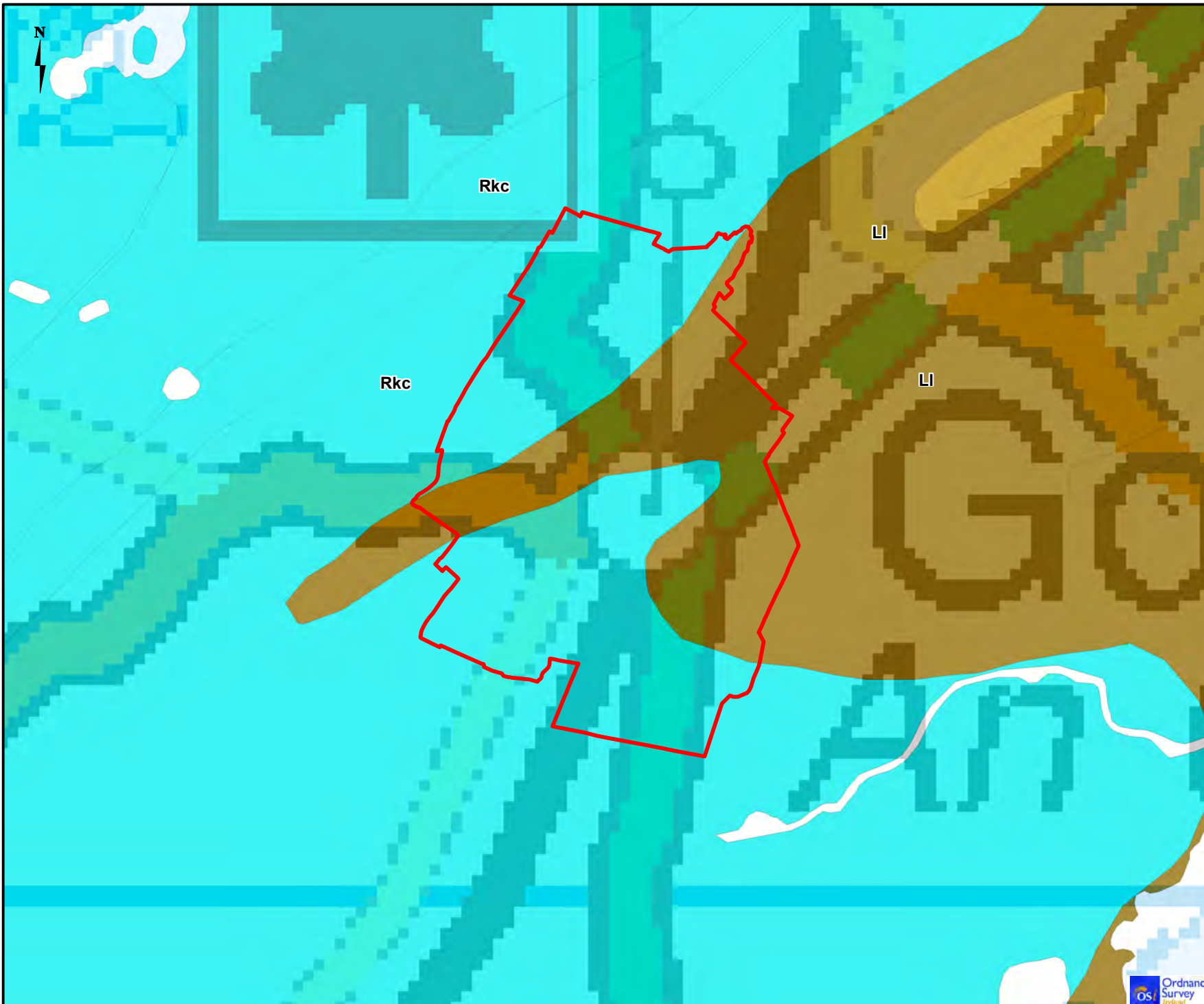
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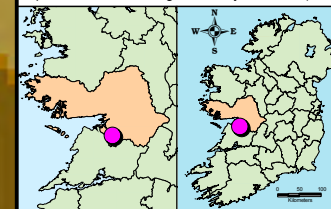
Legend


 **Gort LPA Administrative Boundary**

Aquifer Classification

-  Rf
-  Rk
-  Rkd
-  Rkc
-  Lm
-  Lk
-  LI
-  PI
-  Pu
-  Unclassified

Data Source: Gort LPA Administrative Boundary comes from Gort Draft LAP 2012. File provided by Galway County Council.
 Aquifer data from Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI)



Client  **Galway County Council**

Project **Gort LPA (2013-2019) SEA**

Title **Aquifer Map**

Figure 3.14

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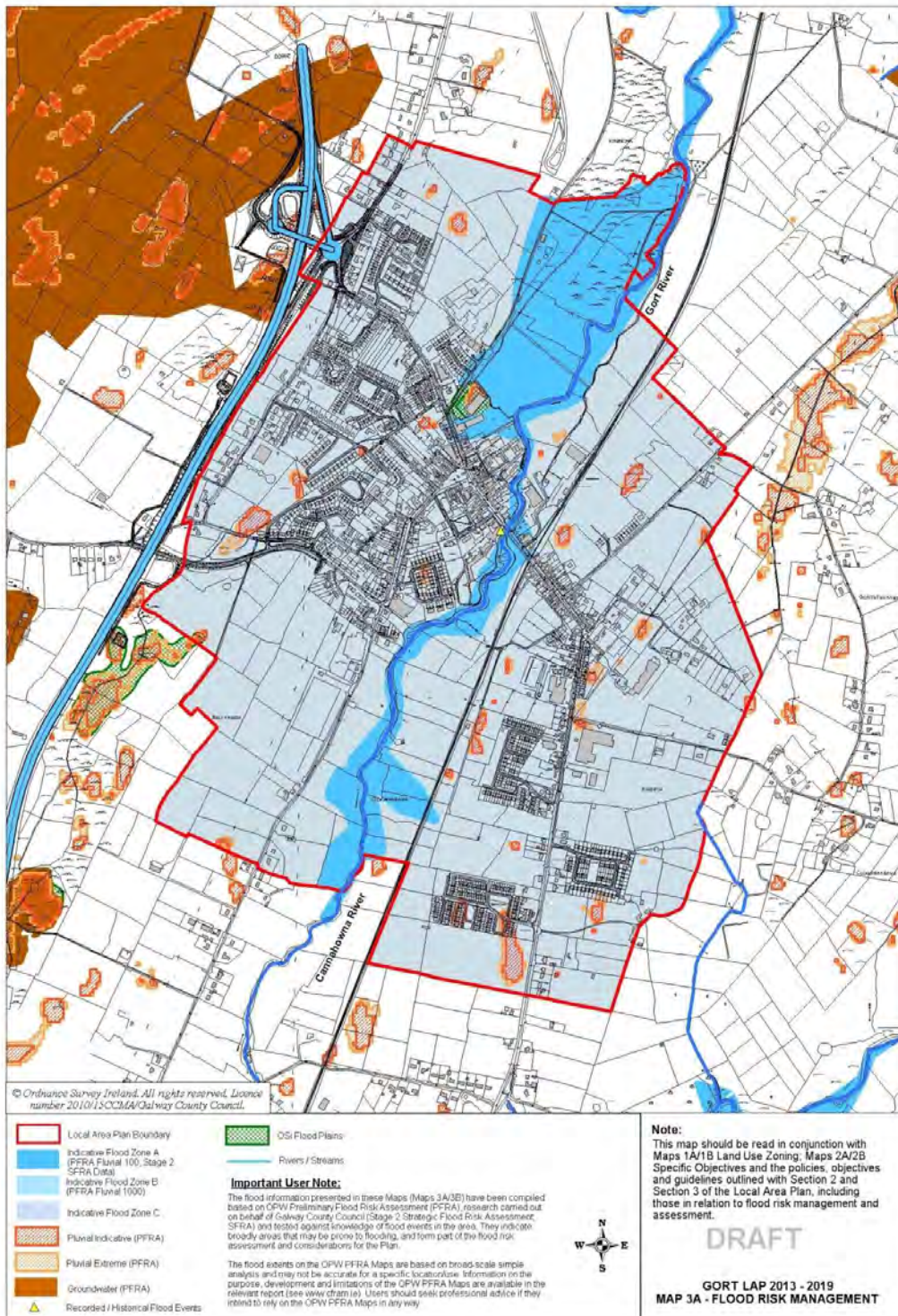


Figure 3.15 Flood Risk Management^a

^a It should be noted that the Flood Risk Management map has been changed since this map was produced and can be viewed in the Addendum to the ER and in the Adopted Gort LAP 2013-2019

3.6.6 Existing Water Environmental Pressures / Problems

The above descriptions identify a number of sensitivities with regard to the status of surface and groundwater bodies within the Draft LAP area. The existing surface water status identify the majority of the LAP to be classified under the WFD as having 'poor status', while the river running through the LAP is 'not at risk' as defined under the WFD. The majority of the town is overlain by a regionally important aquifer and pressure has already been put on this aquifer as a result of the construction of the motorway.

Changes in the occurrence of severe rainfall events as a result of climate change over the next 50 to 100 years would be likely to increase the frequency and severity of flooding events and inundation, which could result in damage and loss to houses and infrastructure. These risks could be further exacerbated by: urban development increasing the speed and volume of run-off; and changes to geomorphological processes such as sediment transport, siltation and erosion.

3.7 NOISE

Strategic noise mapping was undertaken in 2007 by the National Roads Authority and is shown in **Figures 3.16 to 3.18**. The overriding noise source for Gort is traffic which arises from the nearby M18 and N18. The mapping does not provide details on noise sources within Gort, but it is evident that all of the radial routes leading into Gort would be a source for noise pollution.

Streets in low lying areas that have high traffic counts as well as enclosing taller buildings are likely to have harsh sensory environments with regard to noise levels in relation to this source. Traffic hotspots, such as intersections, are likely to have higher noise levels. In addition, there are localised noise sources that include air conditioning equipment, train movements and night clubs.

Figure 3.16 shows that the highest noise level of >75dB is along the main carriageway and the noise levels decrease the further away from the centre of the carriageway. Noise levels of between 55dB and 64dB would be experienced for residents in proximity to the motorway (**Figure 3.18**).

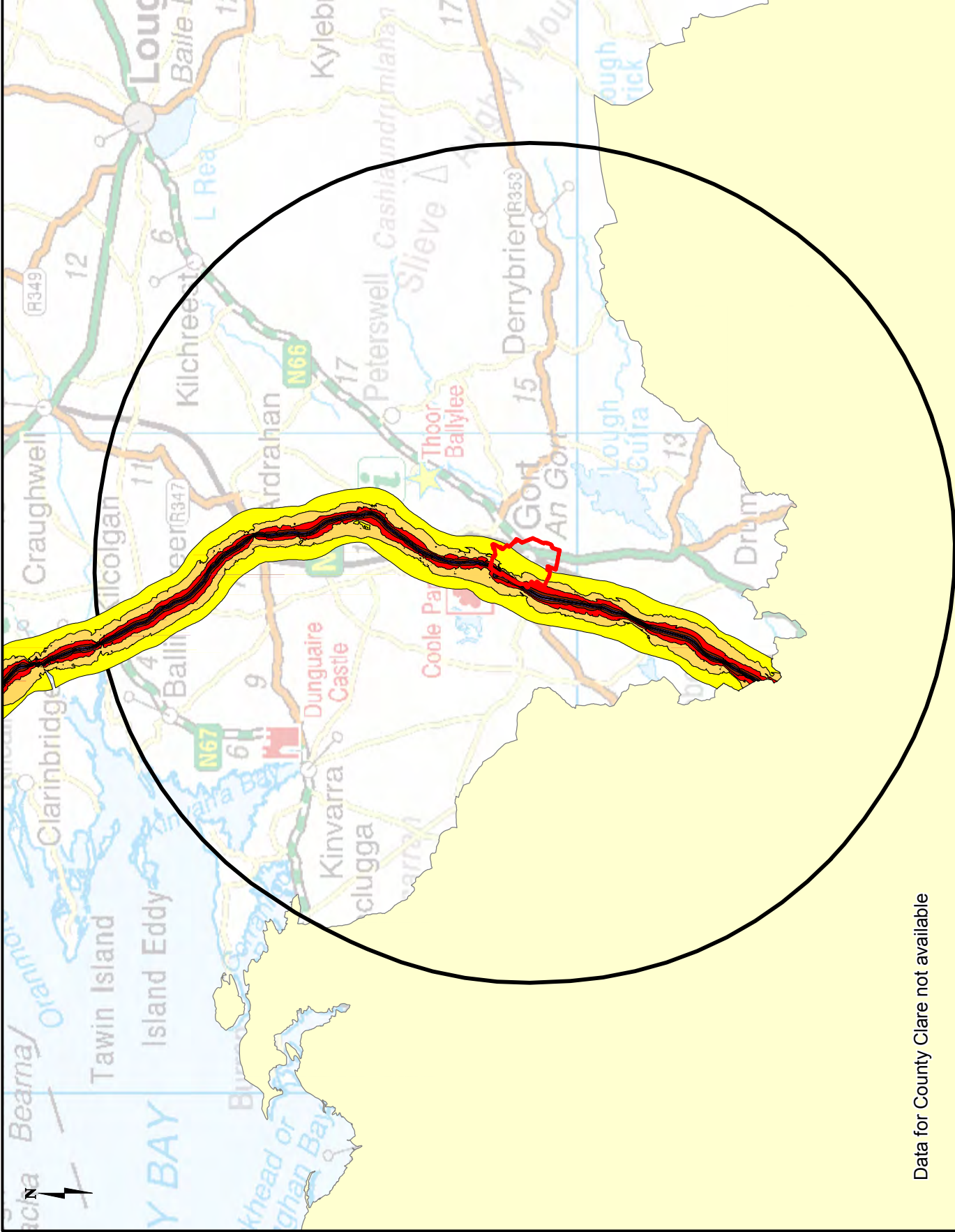
3.7.1 Existing Noise Environmental Pressures / Problems

The identification of quiet areas, which have low noise levels, and maintaining or reducing existing noise levels, in order to sustain quiet areas is important. Reducing high levels and maintaining low levels are the main noise issues facing development of the Gort.









3.8 CLIMATIC FACTORS

The impacts of climate change, partly due to man-made actions present very serious global risks and threaten the basic components of life, including health, access to water, food production and the use of land. The National Climate Change Strategy provides a framework for achieving Ireland's obligations under the Kyoto Protocol, which commits to limiting the increase in greenhouse gas emissions to 13% above the 1990 levels.

The way towns such as Gort develop into the future can have a significant impact at local level on reducing the impacts of climate change. This can include measures such as promoting reduced travel demand by integrating land use and transportation and encouraging passive solar design and energy efficient buildings. It can also include facilitating an increase in the modal share of sustainable modes of travel, promoting waste reduction and the re-use of existing building stock. Using renewable energy sources to limit greenhouse gases and other pollutants and the reduction of fossil fuels has immense environmental benefit.

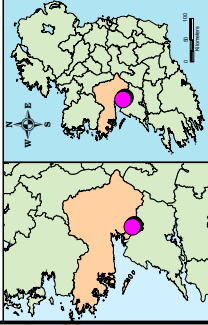


Legend

-  Gort LAP Administrative Boundary
-  Gort LAP 15 km Buffer
- Lden Noise (dB)**
-  > 75
-  70 - 74
-  65 - 69
-  60 - 64
-  55 - 59
-  <55

Data Source: Gort LAP Administrative Boundary comes from Gort Draft LAP 2012. File provided by Galway County Council.

Lden Noise file provided by Galway County Council



Client



Project

Gort LAP (2013-2019) SEA

Title

Noise Mapping

Figure 3.16

Unit Building,
IDA Business & Technology Park,
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Ireland



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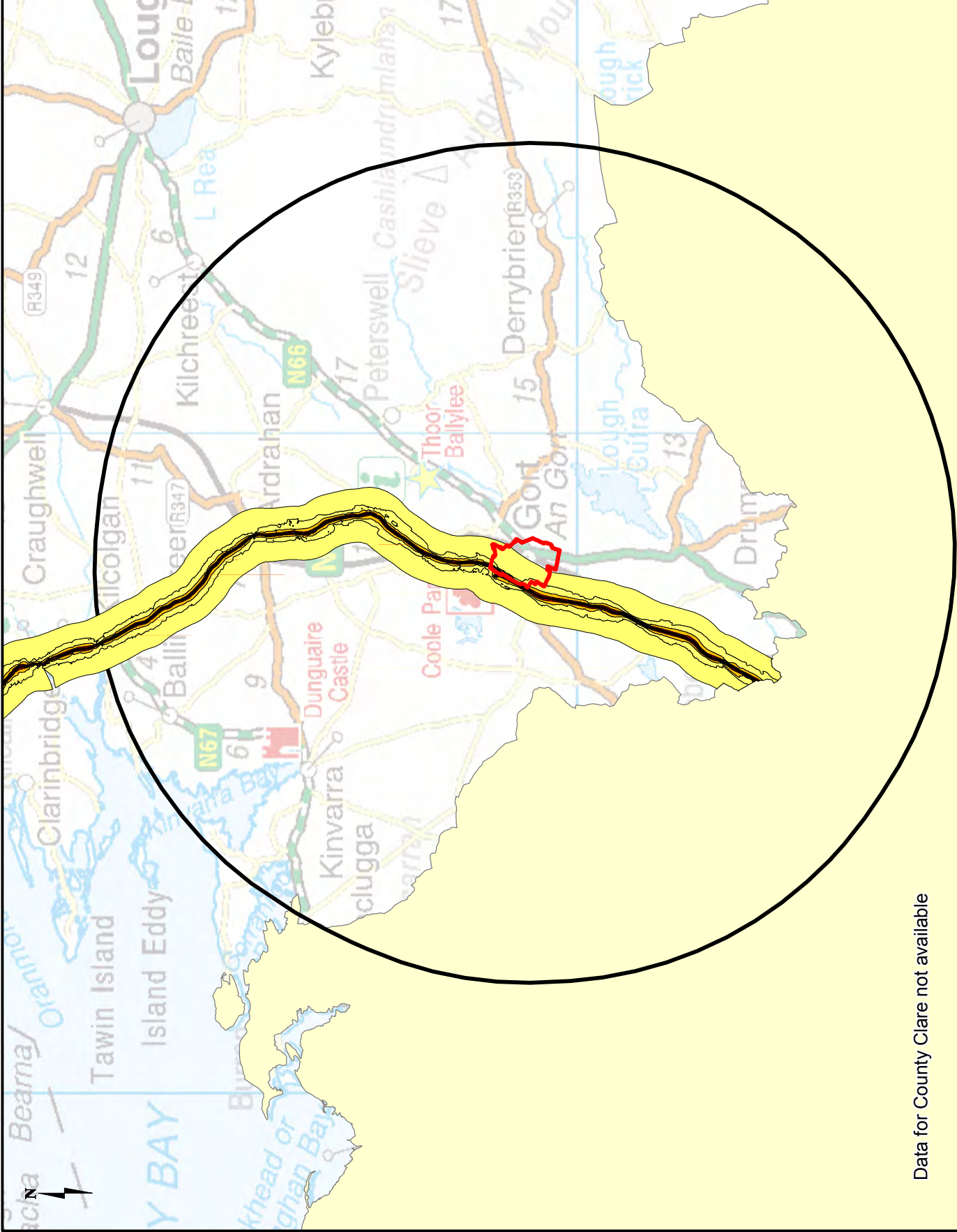
Issue Details

Drawn by:	JF	Project No.:	MGEC046
Checked by:	DM	File Ref.:	MGEC046M0028
Approved by:	WM	Drawing No.:	A01
Scale:	1:200,000 @ A4	Rev.:	
Date:	January 2013		









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Data for County Clare not available



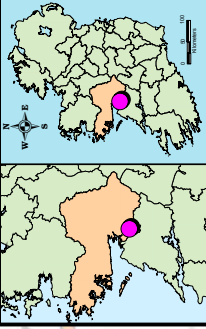


Legend

-  Gort LAP Administrative Boundary
-  Gort LAP 15 km Buffer
- Night Noise (dB)**
-  >75
-  70 to 74
-  65 to 69
-  60 to 64
-  55 to 59
-  <55

Data Source: Gort LAP Administrative Boundary comes from Gort Draft LAP 2012. File provided by Galway County Council.

Night Noise file provided by Galway County Council



Client



Project

Gort LAP (2013-2019) SEA

Title

Night Noise Mapping

Figure 3.17

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Issue Details

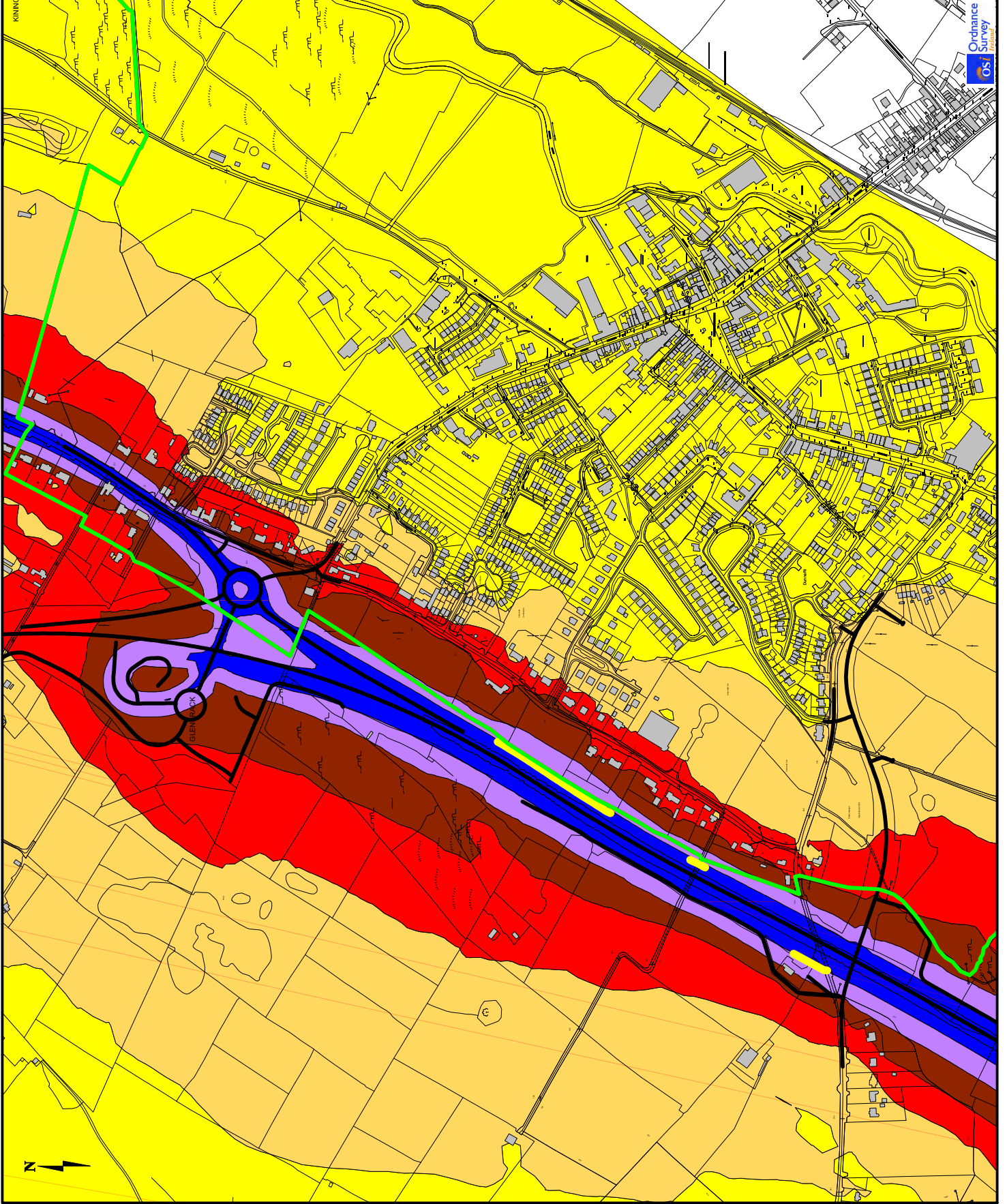
Drawn by:	JF	Project No.:	MGEO348
Checked by:	DM	File Ref.:	MGEO348M0032
Approved by:	WM	Scale:	1:200,000 @ A4
Date:	January 2013	Drawing No.:	M0032
		Rev.:	F01

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Data for County Clare not available





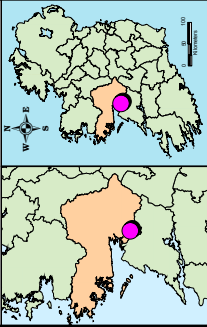
Legend

-  Gort LAP Administrative Boundary
-  M18 Road Alignment
-  Noise Mitigation

Lden Noise (dB)

-  > 75
-  70 - 74
-  65 - 69
-  60 - 64
-  55 - 59
-  <55

Data Source: GortLAP Administrative Boundary comes from Gort Draft LAP 2012. File provided by Galway County Council.




Client  Galway County Council

Project **Gort LAP (2013-2019) SEA**

Title **Noise Mapping with Vector Mapping**

Figure 4.18


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Issue Details

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Checked by:	DM	File Ref.:	MGEO348M00035
Approved by:	WM	Drawing No.:	M00035
Scale:	1:200,000 @ A4	Rev.:	F01
Date:	January 2013		

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As part of the preparation of the Draft Local Area Plan for Gort, Galway County Council has included policies and objectives to support the reduction of climate change impacts, energy conservation and greater use of renewable energy sources/technologies.

3.8.1 Greenhouse Gases

In order to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions the internationally agreed Kyoto Protocol established emissions reduction targets for developing countries. Ireland's emission target for greenhouse gases is to limit the increase in combined emissions during the five-year period 2008-2012 to 13% above 1990 levels.

Based on the inventory figures for 2006, the EPA estimates that Ireland's emissions in 2006 were 25.5% higher than the baseline estimate that underlies Ireland's allowable emissions for the period 2008-2012, as agreed in the peer review of Ireland's 2006 submission to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

With regard to overall emissions in Ireland, Agriculture is the single largest contributor, at 27.7% of the total, followed by Energy (power generation & oil refining) at 22.3% and Transport at 19.7%. The remaining 30% is made up by the Residential Sector at 10.4%, Industry and Commercial at 17.2%, and Waste at 2.6%.

Transport continues to be the dominant growth sector with emissions 682,000 tonnes higher in 2006 than in 2005. This represents a 5.2% increase on 2005 levels and 165% increase on the 1990 level of transport emissions. Road transport accounts for 97% of transport sector emissions. The increase in GHG emissions from the transport sector reflects sustained increases in fuel consumption with petrol usage up 3.4% and diesel consumption up 7.9% from the previous year.

At a national level the National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2011 provides for the protection of air quality. The strategy for reducing emissions will be shared across all sectors but the main focus will be on transport, residential, industry, electricity production, the public sector and waste. The new Programme for Government outlines a 3% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions per annum. The programme will also require Ireland to join the top five countries in the world, as measured by the Environmental Performance Index (EPI). The National Climate Change Strategy will also be supported by other relevant government policy such as the National Development Plan, Transport 21 and National Energy Policy 2007.

3.8.2 Climate Model Predictions

The EPA's Climate Change: Regional Climate Model Predictions for Ireland (2005) report provides an analysis of future Irish climate conditions for the period 2021–2060 based on the outputs from a new regional climate modelling facility located in Met Éireann. Projected temperature changes from the model output show a general warming in the future period with mean monthly temperatures increasing typically between 1.25 and 1.5°C. The largest increases are seen in the southeast and east, with the greatest warming occurring in July.

For precipitation, the most significant changes occur in the months of June and December. June values show a decrease of about 10% compared with the current climate, noticeably in the southern half of the country, while December values show increases ranging between 10% in the south east and 25% in the north west. For the east it is predicted that less rain will fall during the year, but that more intense storms will be experienced. Year on year the conditions will vary significantly, and from catchment to catchment, and it is not yet clear what conditions should be accommodated.

In the future scenario, the frequency of intense cyclones or storms over the North Atlantic area in the vicinity of Ireland increases by about 15% compared with the current climate. This is related to the projected general rise in sea surface temperatures. Sea level changes result from changes that occur

in external forcing mechanisms, such as changes in the redistribution of heat between the equator and the poles and other atmospheric changes. The EPA's Climate Change: Scenarios and Impacts for Ireland (2003) report chose three sea level rise scenarios in order to assess six selected areas along the Irish coastline (one of which is the Shannon Estuary, the closest to the Gort area) at risk from an increase in sea levels of 0.09 m, 0.48 m and 0.88 m in conjunction with a digital elevation model to project probabilities of inundation.

3.8.3 Potential Effects of Changed Climate

The EPA's Climate Change: Scenarios and Impacts for Ireland (2003) report identifies where vulnerability to climate change exists in Ireland and what adjustments are likely in the operation of environmental systems in response to such changes.

As increased temperatures will lead to greater amounts of water vapour in the atmosphere and an accelerated global water cycle, it is reasonable to expect that river catchment areas will be exposed to a greater risk of flooding. Heavier winter rain and summer storms may cause more flash flooding, causing an increase in diffuse pollution loads to waters from soil run-off or the overflow from CSOs (combined sewer overflows) and raising demand for flood controls. Summer droughts are more likely and there may be a reduction in drinking water supplies.

River flooding tends to be more common during the wetter winter months when soils are near saturation and can be exacerbated in coastal areas when interactions occur between high tides and high flows. Many of the rivers draining upland areas have a rapid or 'flashy' response to rainfall enhanced by rising topography. Steep slopes and thin soils favour rapid flow pathways and water is rapidly transmitted to the channel network especially in urbanised catchments with extensive areas of impermeable surfaces. A critical impact of climate change will be the likely changes to habitats and the flow conditions in rivers and lakes.

3.8.4 Existing Climate Change Environmental Pressures and Problems

Potential effects of climate change on Gort could result in an increase in the frequency and severity of flooding events from rainfall. Severe rainfall events as a result of climate change could adversely impact upon the Town's population, its biodiversity and its local economy.

3.9 MATERIAL ASSETS

3.9.1 Introduction

The sustainable growth of Gort is dependent on the satisfactory provision of service infrastructure, utilities, energy, and communication networks. These elements should be planned so as to ensure that there is adequate availability to support future development, in a manner that is environmentally appropriate, cost effective, and efficient and protects public health. The phasing of development in tandem with the provision of necessary infrastructure and utilities will also be critical to the future sustainable development of the town.

Galway County Council has included policies and objectives within the Draft Plan which state that the provision and maintenance of adequate wastewater disposal, water supply and surface water drainage infrastructure to service the development of Gort, will be in accordance with EU Directives, national legislation and applicable standards. Also included within objectives in the draft Plan is the promotion of Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) approaches and techniques for developments within the Plan Area. In addition, it is likely that any upgrades to infrastructure will be subject to AA Screening in accordance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive and may only proceed where it can be shown that they will not have significant negative impact on Natura 2000 sites and qualifying interests.

The material assets of Gort may be broken down into a number of relevant categories. These are: wastewater, drinking water, transport infrastructure, telecommunications and energy infrastructure and waste management.

3.9.2 Land Use

The Core Strategy in the Galway County Development Plan sets the context and parameters for the development of Gort as a 'Key Town' in the County. Based on population projections forecast by the West Regional Authority and set out under the Core Strategy, the amount of zoned residential land required to meet this target is set at 23.66Ha for Gort. Lands have also been zoned in the Local Area Plan for other land uses based on the designation of Gort 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 Draft Plan include Town Centre (C1), Industrial (I), Business and Enterprise (BE), Community Facilities (CF), Open Space/Recreation and Amenity (OS), Agriculture (A), Public Utilities (PU) and Transport Infrastructure (TI), with total area zoned and total area zoned and undeveloped is shown in **Table 3.4**. Proposed land use zoning for the Draft Gort LAP 2013-2019 is shown in **Figure 3.19**.

Table 3.4: Capacity of Zoned Lands within the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2013

Plan Zonings	Total Area Zoned in Ha	Undeveloped Zoned in Ha
Town Centre/Commercial (C1)	34.26	12.80
Residential (R):	(Total: 150.88)	(Total: 95.67)
Existing Developed	55.21	
R Phase 1	23.65	23.65
R Phase 2	72.02	72.02*
Business & Enterprise (BE)	5.27	5.09
Industrial (I)	35.04	27.36
Community Facilities (CF)	11.98	2.71
Agriculture (A)	13.47	10.32
Open Space/Recreation &	60.33	60.33
Public Utilities (PU)	0.89	0.19
Totals	312.12	214.47

Note:

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 in Appendix A (areas not estimated).
2. *Assuming all Residential Phase 2 are undeveloped.

The majority of the lands previously zoned as undeveloped Residential in the 2006-2012 Plan have been rezoned to Residential Phase 1 and Residential Phase 2. Policies within the Draft Plan refer to the land use zoning framework which is supported by this residential phasing framework to ensure compliance with the Core Strategy and to promote the orderly and sequential development of the town. A phasing scheme applies to residential uses on undeveloped Residential (R) zoned lands, as shown in **Figure 3.19**. Subject to appropriate infrastructure being in place prior to construction, the development of lands zoned Residential (Phase 1) will support the population assigned to Gort in the Core Strategy. Lands zoned residential (Phase 2) will be reserved for the longer term growth needs of the town and generally not developable during the lifetime of the Draft Plan.

As can be seen in **Figure 3.19** the lands identified within Flood Zone A, Flood Zone B and as estimated in the Stage 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for Gort are proposed to be rezoned as Open Space/Recreation and Amenity (development within flood zones is discussed further in **Section 3.6.5** and shown in **Figure 3.15**).

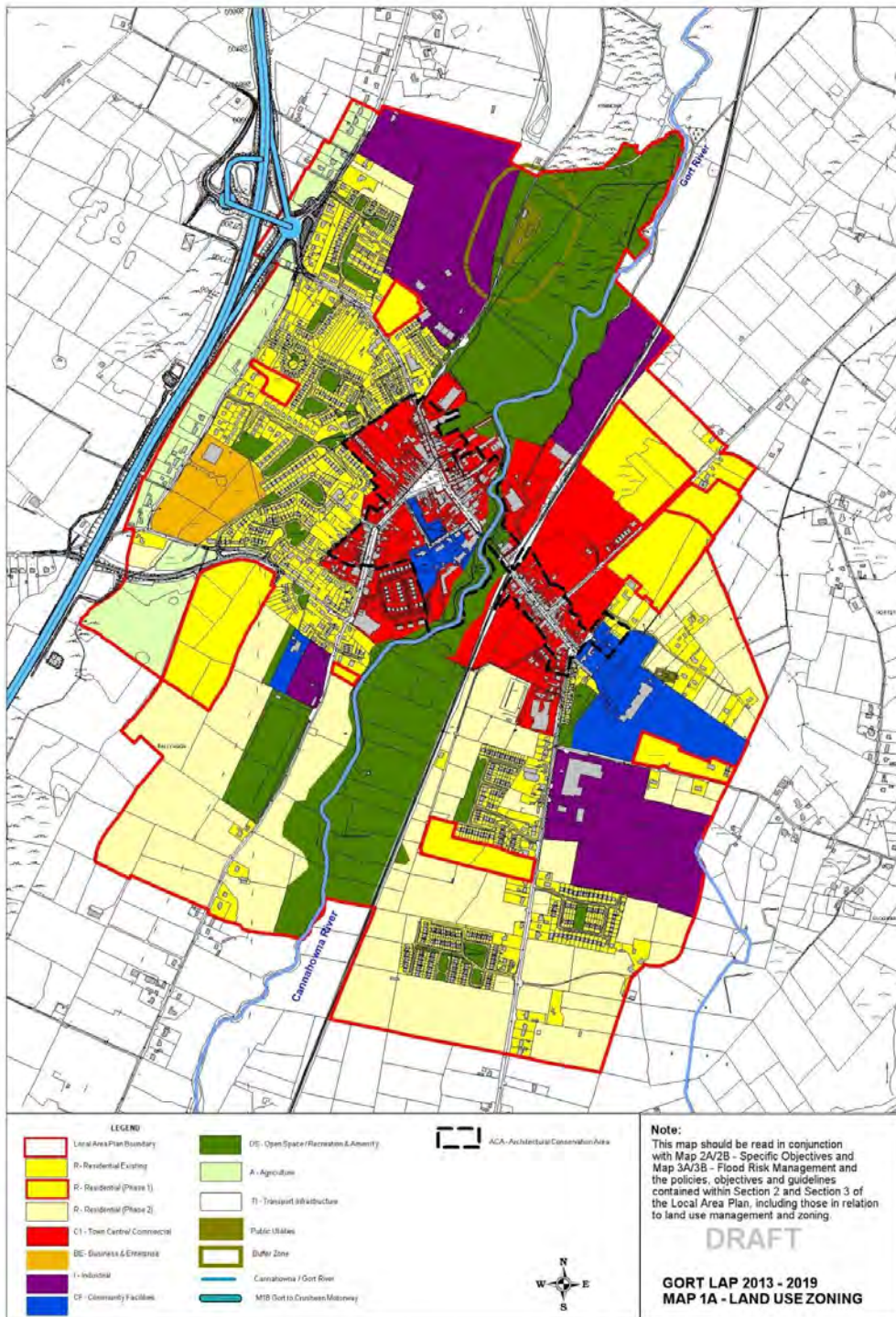


Figure 3.19 Proposed Land Use Zoning for the Draft Gort LAP 2013-2019^b

^b It should be noted that the Land Use Zoning Map has been changed since this map was produced and can be viewed in the Addendum to the NIR and in the Adopted Gort LAP 2013-2019

3.9.3 Drinking Water

The availability of a water supply of sufficient quality and quantity is essential for public health purposes and sustainable growth. Similarly water conservation is also essential to prevent the unnecessary loss of this precious resource.

The primary source of Gort's water is the Rindifin Treatment Plan which sources water from the Gort/Cannahowna River upstream of the town. The current demand on the Gort WSS, (including UFW) is approximately averaging at 970m³/day. The maximum capacity of the existing plant is 1,400m³/day, so there is a spare capacity of approximately 430m³/day. The projected population increase of 820 persons as outlined in the Core Strategy is equivalent to an increase in demand of 123m³/day^c. No future alternative drinking source is currently proposed.

The SEA Environmental Report for Galway County Core Strategy states that maximum daily supply and demand are at 1,480m³, that there is no spare water supply capacity and that there will be a shortfall in capacity of 443m³ by 2016. However Galway County Council Water Services Section have stated that the supply and the network, with the exception of minor improvements, are adequate for the lifetime of the Plan and beyond. Partial network upgrade works are proposed under the Water Conservation Rehabilitation works which are due to commence 2014-2015. Galway County Council recognises the importance of an adequate water supply and drainage system for the development of industrial, commercial, agricultural, domestic and other uses. Lough Cutra was proposed as a future source for regional water supply to the area and is currently classified at 'Moderate' status with 'Good' ecological status (GES) to be achieved by 2015. This future water source of Lough Cutra is no longer proposed as the requirement for a new water supply was deemed to be low.

Elevated levels of Trihalomethanes (THMs) above the standard in the Drinking Water Regulations EPA's were stated as the reason Gort Regional Water Supply Scheme (RWSS) was identified on the Remedial Action List. Coagulation, filtration, UV and turbidity monitors were identified as measures required of the remedial action programme.

The remedial action programme for the water treatment plant was completed in 2011 and included an upgrade in the intake/treatment of the plant and along with water conservation works have improved the capacity of the plant and secured the supply. According to the EPA document '*Drinking Water Remedial Action List Q1 of 2012*', sourced from the EPA website, although the remedial action programme was completed in December 2011, verification of the effectiveness of the action plan is needed. Improvement of the water supply network was undertaken along the Ennis, Corofin and Galway roads.

3.9.4 Wastewater

Gort is serviced by a public wastewater collection network with both primary and secondary treatment. The Gort Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) is located on the Kinincha Road to the north of the town. The treated effluent from the WWTP is finally discharged into the Cannahowna/Gort River which goes underground at Kiltartan before finally draining into Corranroe Bay south of Kinvara.

The system is a combined system (i.e. surface and waste) and can overflow in very wet weather. Un-serviced areas include Ennis Road, Gallagher's Lane and the Galway Road which have private septic tanks. Problem areas include flooding on Crowe Street which is the lowest point on the system.

^cBased on a conservative estimate of consumption of 150l/person/day as detailed in the 'National Water Study' (WS Atkins Ireland, 2000)

According to the Kinvara Water Management Unit Action Plan (2010) document the risks to water quality from Gort WWTP include insufficient future WWTP capacity, insufficient assimilative capacity for BOD and nutrients, and historical deterioration of Q value downstream of the discharge. The WMU document also states that the plant requires capital works, implementation of a performance management system and that it should be ensured that the capacity of treatment plant is not exceeded. Gort WWTP has been prioritised for capital works upgrades as this scheme is necessary to ensure compliance with the Water Framework Directive.

The current WWTP is operating with a 469 PE spare capacity. It was designed with the following design parameters; PE = 3000 persons, Dry Weather Flow = 795m³/day, BOD₅ = 20mg/l, Daily BOD load = 214 kg/day, Suspended Solids = 30mg/l. Galway County Council applied for an EPA Discharge Licence for Gort WWTP in October 2009.

The 2009 Gort WWTP licence document states that biological spare capacity of the treatment works was 19.35 kg BOD/day or 323PE, which was based on the 2006 Census population figures. The 2011 Census population of Gort is 2636, showing a decrease of -146 persons from the 2006 Census. This would indicate a current estimated loading of the treatment works of 2,531 PE resulting in a 469 PE spare capacity or 28.14 kg BOD/day.

As part of a response to information request from the EPA, submitted in November 2009, in relation to the Wastewater Discharge Licence for Gort WWTP, an Appropriate Assessment Report was submitted. This concluded that *'risks can be eliminated through judicious operating standards and an on-going stringent monitoring programme'* and that *'the discharge is not predicted to have a significant negative impact on the respective Natura 2000 sites'*. It also states that:

'Water quality in the Gort River has been seen to improve since the installation of WWTP; this may be attributed to a reduction in the release of pollutants from septic tanks within the agglomeration boundary. EPA water quality sampling does not indicate any reduction in Q-rating for the river as it moves from upstream to downstream of the plant. It is predicted that if strict protocols are adhered to, no deleterious effects on the Natura 2000 sites will occur.'

The EPA submission on the Background Issues document notes that the WWTP is operating at close to design capacity and comments that adequate and appropriate infrastructure should be established.

The discharge for the WWTP (SW1 shown in **Figure 3.20** below) occurs at a wide section of the Gort River which becomes significantly narrower and fast flowing approximately 50m downstream of the point.

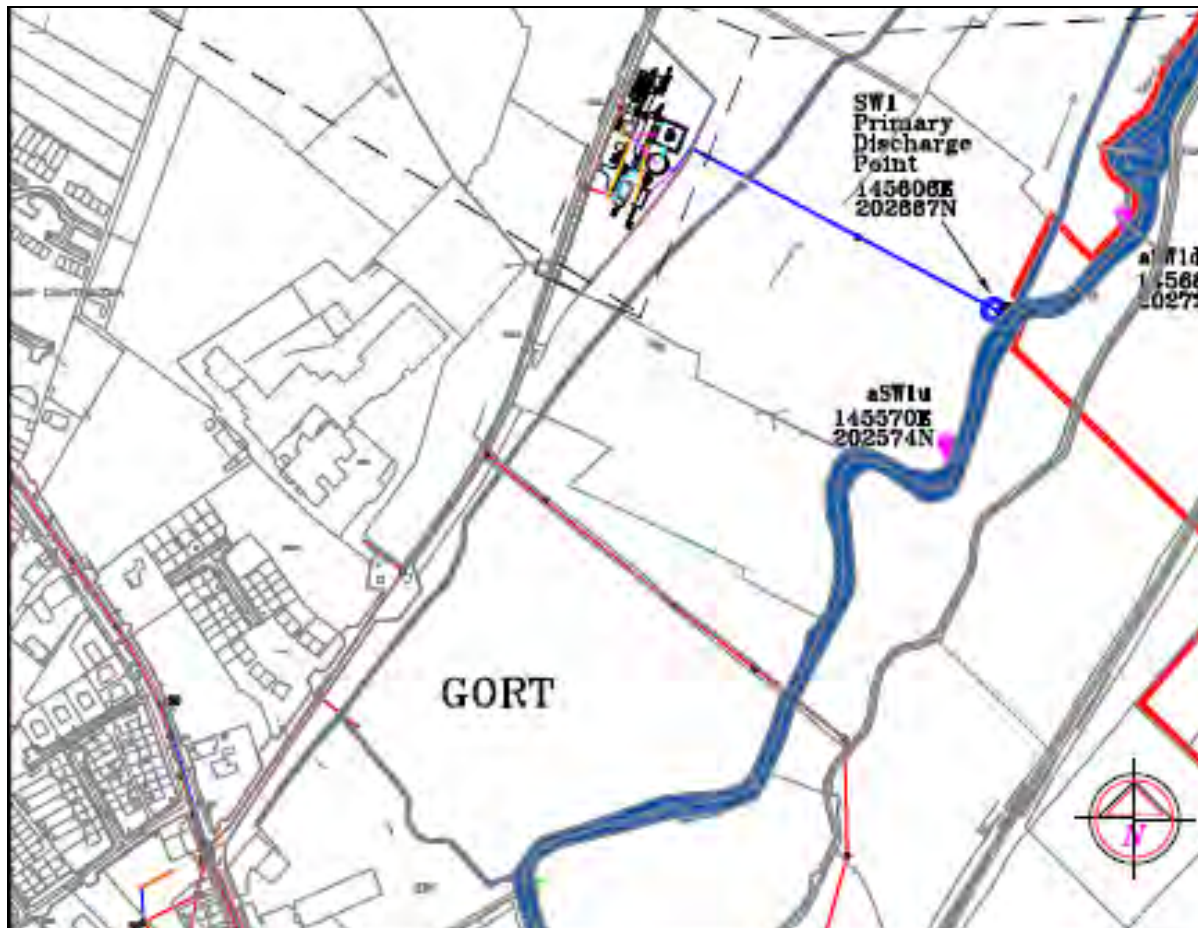
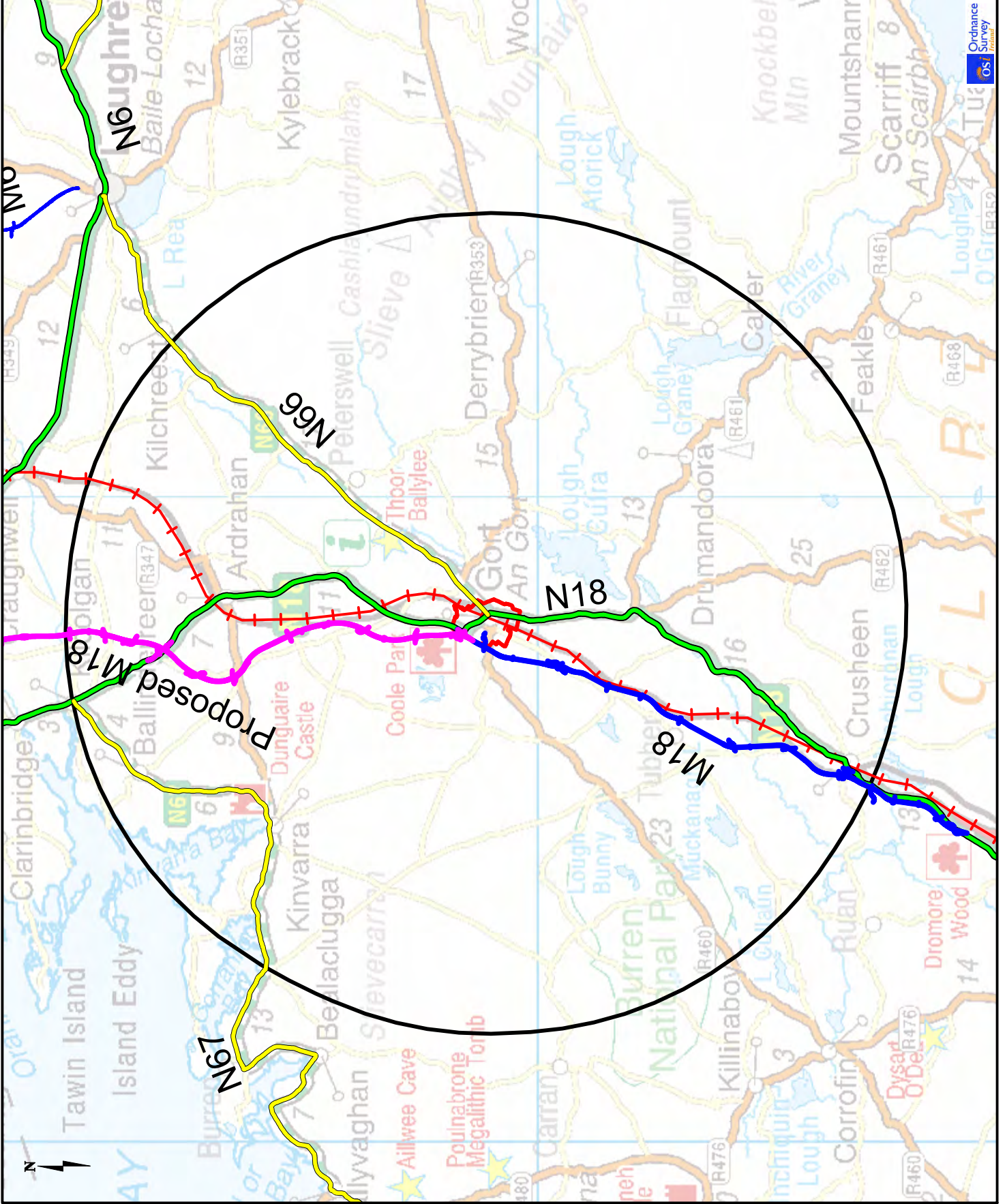


Figure 3.20 Primary Discharge Point of Gort WWTP (Source: GCC application for Waste Water Discharge Licence)








Galway County Council has included objectives within the Draft LAP, which state that the use of SuDS will be promoted in all new developments and surface water runoff from development sites will be limited to pre-development levels. The Draft Plan includes an objective, which requires that all new developments be adequately serviced with wastewater disposal and that only as much development be encouraged that can be provided for based on the utility services available and that any proposed development be prohibited that cannot be adequately serviced, that would lead to significant environmental effects or that would pose an unacceptable threat to the capacity of wastewater infrastructure. Objective UI1 within the Draft Plan states that the capacity of the wastewater treatment plant will be monitored as development takes place, to ensure that trade effluent from new development is managed properly and discharged to sewer in accordance with relevant discharge licenses, where appropriate and to progress the upgrading of the existing wastewater treatment plant and the sewer network for the town under the Water Services Investment Programme.

3.9.5 Transportation

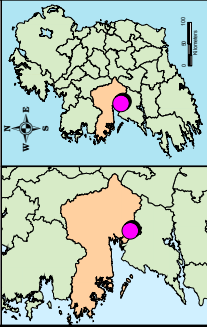
The development of Gort as a key commuter town and as a location for strategic development, building on its improved road connectivity (via M18, N18 and N66) is a particular focus in making the new Local Area Plan (**Figure 3.21**). The proposed section of motorway (proposed M18) from Gort to Tuam is awaiting construction commencement. The opening of the Ennis to Athenry portion of the Western Rail Corridor, which goes through Gort, linking Limerick City to Galway City, has also significantly enhanced accessibility both within County Galway and other adjoining regions. Bus services connect the town to the north and south. An efficient transport system is essential for the



Legend

-  Gort LAP Administrative Boundary
-  Gort LAP 15 km Buffer
-  Motorway
-  Proposed motorway
-  National Primary Road
-  National Secondary road
-  Rail

Data Source: Gort LAP Administrative Boundary comes from Gort Draft LAP 2012. File provided by Galway County Council.



Project: **Gort LAP (2013-2019) SEA**

Title: **Transport Network**

Figure 3.21



Issue Details
Drawn by: JF
Checked by: DM
Approved by: WM
Date: January 2013
Scale: 1:20,000 @ A4
Date: January 2013
Drawing No. M1002
Rev. F01

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sustainable development of a town. Galway County Council aims to provide a safe and efficient transport system and a quality road infrastructure.

New relief/link road/streets are indicated connecting the north-eastern approach N66 Loughrea road to the N18 Oranmore in the north western portion of the Draft Plan Area and connecting the south eastern approach road R458 Ennis Road to the L4514 Tubber Road on the north western portion of the Draft Plan Area.

Policies within the Draft Plan promote both the use of public transport, walking and cycling as environmentally sustainable alternatives, and that the road network has the capacity to accommodate motorised traffic. Objectives include the prioritisation of walking, cycling and public transport and support the provision of recharging points for electric powered vehicles. In particular, the document '*Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future – A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020 (and any updated/superseding document)*' is fully incorporated into the Plan.

The plan also includes for the provision of parking convenient to the town centre. A pay and display system is presently operating in the town centre including the availability of free car parking on Church Street. It is proposed to provide for a park and ride/park and stride facility within Industrial lands adjoining Gort Railway Station. This may induce a modal shift from the private motor vehicle to public transport and/or walking.

Galway County Council will ensure that any new movement or transportation development, with associated lighting, proposed in sensitive areas such as close to waterbodies or stands of broadleaved trees will be sensitively designed to avoid impacts to bats, otters and nocturnal species.

3.9.6 Telecommunications and Energy Infrastructure

Developments require adequate power, energy and telecommunications services, including electricity, gas supply, telephone services and broadband, which are provided by a number of different service providers. Gort is served by Eircom and a number of mobile telecommunications operators.

Galway County Council has included policies and objectives within the Draft Plan which seek to facilitate the continuous development of energy infrastructure and telecommunications at appropriate locations, subject to proper planning and sustainable development considerations. In addition, inappropriate development relating to energy infrastructure and telecommunications which may impact on the ecological integrity of European 2000 sites will be restricted through Appropriate Assessment Screening.

3.9.7 Waste Management

The Waste Management Plan for the Connacht Region 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 for disposal.

The Waste Management Plan for the Connacht Region covers the period from 2006-2011 and is based on the waste hierarchy established in the EU Framework Directive on Waste. The Plan has been adopted through an alternative legislative process and shall be the guiding document for the implementation of an integrated waste management approach within the Region as a whole.

A segregated waste collection service for dry recyclables and landfill waste is currently provided in the Gort area by a private operator for domestic and commercial waste. Properly segregated and managed waste is a potential material resource that can generate economic activity and employment. It can also protect the environment from the pollution caused by illegal dumping and backyard

incineration. A bring bank facility is provided for the collection of glass. Galway County Council is working with the private operators in County Galway to ensure that the segregated collection system is extended to include organic waste.

Galway County Council has included policies and objectives within the Draft Plan which seek to protect the environment through appropriate waste management including the prevention, reduction and recycling of waste.

3.9.8 Existing Environmental Pressures / Problems

The current WWTP is operating with a 469 PE spare capacity. However, the Regional Planning Guidelines and the County Development Plan Core Strategy set a target population of an additional 820 persons for Gort. The Draft Plan includes an objective, which requires that all new developments be adequately serviced with wastewater disposal and that only as much development be encouraged that can be provided for based on the utility services available and that any proposed development be prohibited that cannot be adequately serviced. It is proposed to monitor the capacity of the wastewater treatment plant as development takes place and to progress the upgrading of the existing wastewater treatment plant and the sewer network for the town under the Water Services Investment Programme.

The need to increase the use of existing public transport, and provide for additional systems to accommodate existing and future growth of the Gort and its environs is a pressing priority. Increasing the amount of pedestrian and cyclist movements is also a significant challenge.

3.10 CULTURAL, ARCHITECTURAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

3.10.1 Introduction

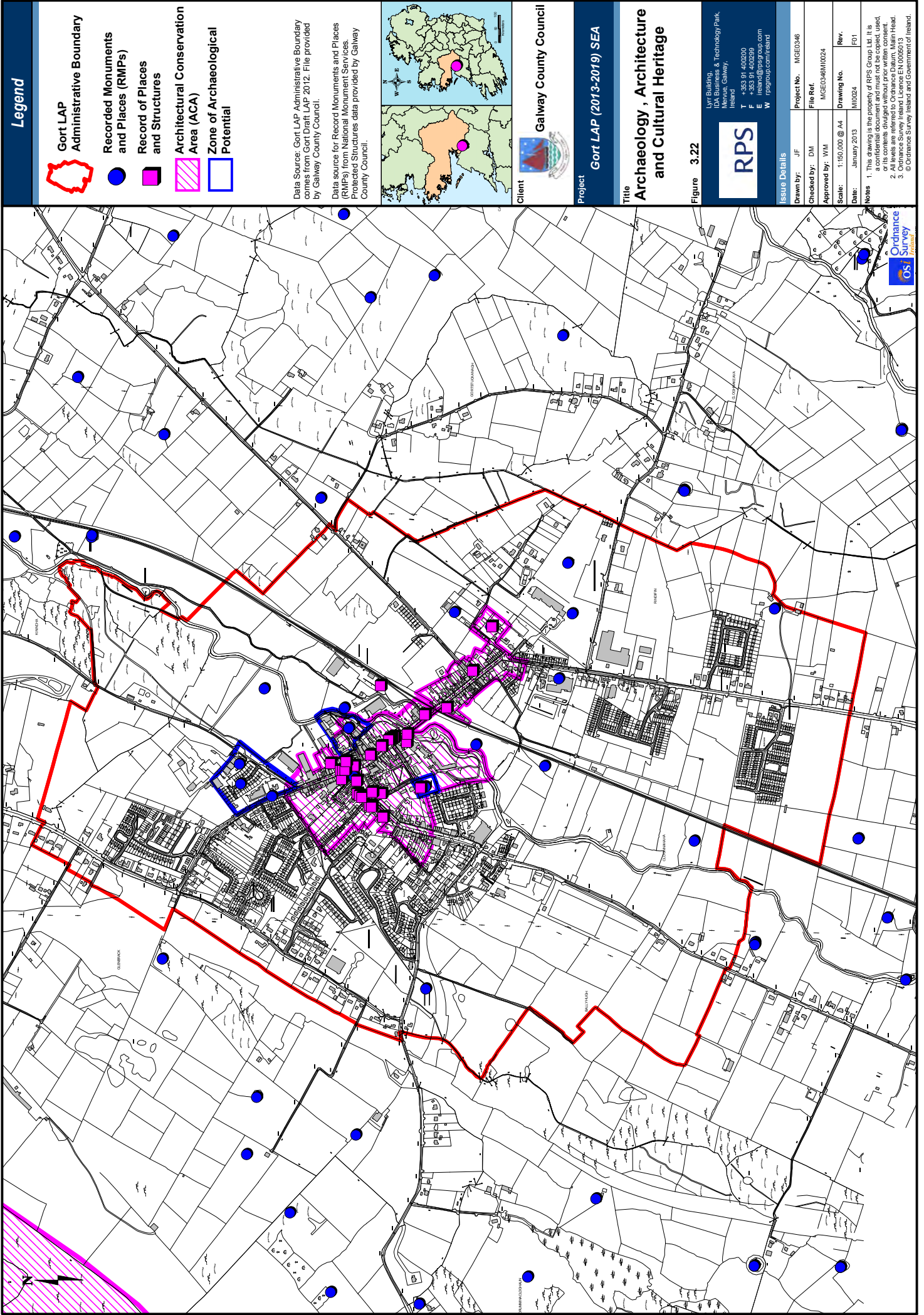
Heritage, by definition, means inherited properties, inherited characteristics and anything transmitted by past ages and ancestors. It covers everything, from objects and buildings to the environment. Heritage features include physical buildings, structures and objects, complete or in part, which have been left on the landscape by previous and indeed current generations.

Gort has both a rich and diverse architectural heritage, comprising a number of structures of historical and architectural importance. This heritage provides the town with a resource of tremendous social, educational, recreational and aesthetic value. In economic terms, it is of fundamental importance to the maintenance and development of the town's tourism industry. For present and future generations who will live and visit the town, the historic and cultural heritage of the town has the ability to enhance and enrich the context of everyday existence.






3.10.2 Archaeological and Cultural Heritage

The archaeological heritage of Gort includes structures, constructions, groups of buildings, developed sites, recorded monuments as well as their contexts, and moveable objects, situated on land. Archaeological heritage is not confined to the archaeological sites within the Record of Monuments and Places. It includes any archaeological site that may not have been as yet recorded, as well as archaeology beneath the ground surface, and the context of any site. The archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage of Gort LAP is shown on **Figure 3.22**.

The key elements of the architectural heritage in Gort include Protected Structures, which form part of the Record of Protected Structures in the Galway County Development Plan, the Gort Architectural Conservation Area and structures of local interest. The **Record of Protected Structures** (RPS) lists the structures that are considered to be of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, technical interest or value. A statutory framework for protecting, managing and enhancing protected structures is set out in the *Planning and Development Act 2000* (as amended).

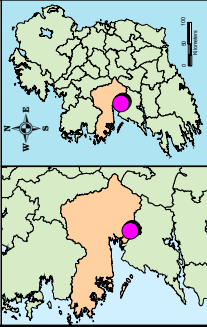


Legend

-  Gort LAP Administrative Boundary
-  Recorded Monuments and Places (RMPs)
-  Record of Places and Structures
-  Architectural Conservation Area (ACA)
-  Zone of Archaeological Potential

Data Source: Gort LAP Administrative Boundary comes from Gort Draft LAP 2012. File provided by Galway County Council.

Data source for Record Monuments and Places (RMPs) from National Monument Services. Protected Structures data provided by Galway County Council.



Client  Galway County Council

Project **Gort LAP (2013-2019) SEA**

Title **Archaeology, Architecture and Cultural Heritage**

Figure 3.22


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Structures that form part of the RPS are afforded protection under the Galway County Development Plan but this does not preclude appropriate use or development. Gort has a wealth of protected structures, including the Courthouse and the former Church of Ireland church designed by James Pain in 1811.

Gort has a rich archaeological heritage providing evidence of early settlement in the area. The *National Monuments Acts 1930-2004* provide 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*.

The Draft LAP also identifies **Zones of Archaeological Potential** (ZAPs) around recorded monuments and places (typically 30m from the outline indicated on the Archaeological Constraint Maps, prepared for County Galway as part of the RMP). In advance of any new development on a site of archaeological significance or within a ZAP there is a requirement for consultation with the Monument Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The Galway County Development Plan also provides that, where developments are located within areas of archaeological potential or within close proximity to a Recorded Monument, then further archaeological assessment and/or mitigation may be necessary.

Policies and objectives are included within the Draft Plan which seek to ensure that new development will not unduly effect the built heritage of the town. In addition, all planning applications for new development, redevelopment, any ground works, refurbishment, restoration etc. and within close proximity to the recorded monuments will have to take account of the archaeological heritage of the area and the need for archaeological mitigation. The Draft Gort LAP currently includes policies and objectives which support high quality developments that relate to local heritage and to ensure that new development respects and is responsive to the cultural heritage of Gort.

3.10.3 Architectural Heritage

The term architectural heritage is defined in the Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments Act 1999 as meaning all: structures and buildings together with their settings and attendant grounds, fixtures and fittings; groups of structures and buildings; and sites which are of historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. These are identified in **Figure 3.22**. The NIAHs purpose is to protect and conserve the built heritage and it is the NIAH surveys that provide the basis for the recommendations to the planning authorities for the inclusion of particular structures in their Record of Protected Structures (RPS).

The RPS has been compiled to protect the structures of the town that are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. In relation to a protected structure, the meaning of the term 'structure' includes the interior of the structure, the land lying within the curtilage of the structure, and any other structures lying within that curtilage and their interiors, and all fixtures and features which form part of the interior or exterior of these structures. Where indicated in the RPS, protection may relate to specified features within the attendant grounds of a structure, which would not otherwise be included. The specific structures within the town that are recorded as an RPS are detailed within the Historic Landscape Characterisation Report.

The Council may designate a place, area, group of structures or townscape, that is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest, or that contributes to the appreciation of a protected structure, as an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA). An **Architectural Conservation Area (ACA)** is a place, area, group of structures or townscape, which is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social, or technical interest. The ACA can also include areas that contribute to the appreciation of a Protected Structure. Gort has a designated ACA, which seeks to protect the special character of the historic core. 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 will significantly enhance the quality of the local environment within Gort.

3.10.4 Natural Heritage

Woodland and water amenities developed for the public enjoyment and located in and around villages and towns create a host of social, environmental and economic benefits. Trees, groups of trees or woodlands and significant watercourses that are important landscape features should be protected. There are currently no protected woodlands or watercourses within the Draft Plan area.

The Draft Plan does however contain the Cannahowna/Gort River which runs through the centre of the town. This watercourse is of natural heritage amenity value and is hydrologically linked to Coole/Garryland Turlough Complex which is a European (Natura 2000) site.

3.10.5 Existing Environmental Pressures / Problems

The accommodation of further development in Gort has the potential to cumulatively impact upon the heritage features of the area.

Development which involves material alterations or additions to protected structures can detract from the special character of the structure and its settings, and have the potential to result in the loss of features of architectural or historical interest. Development on sites adjoining protected monuments, places or structures can also impact the setting of these cultural heritage items.

Alternately, encouraging and facilitating the accommodation of growth on infill or redevelopment sites will contribute to mitigating a number of the adverse impacts associated with development of previously undeveloped sites, both within and outside the Gort administrative area.

3.11 LANDSCAPE

3.11.1 Introduction

Landscapes are areas that are perceived by people and are made up of a number of layers:

- Landform, which results from geological and geomorphological history;
- Land cover, which includes vegetation, water and human settlements; and
- Human values, which are a result of historical, cultural, religious and other understandings and interactions with landform and land cover.

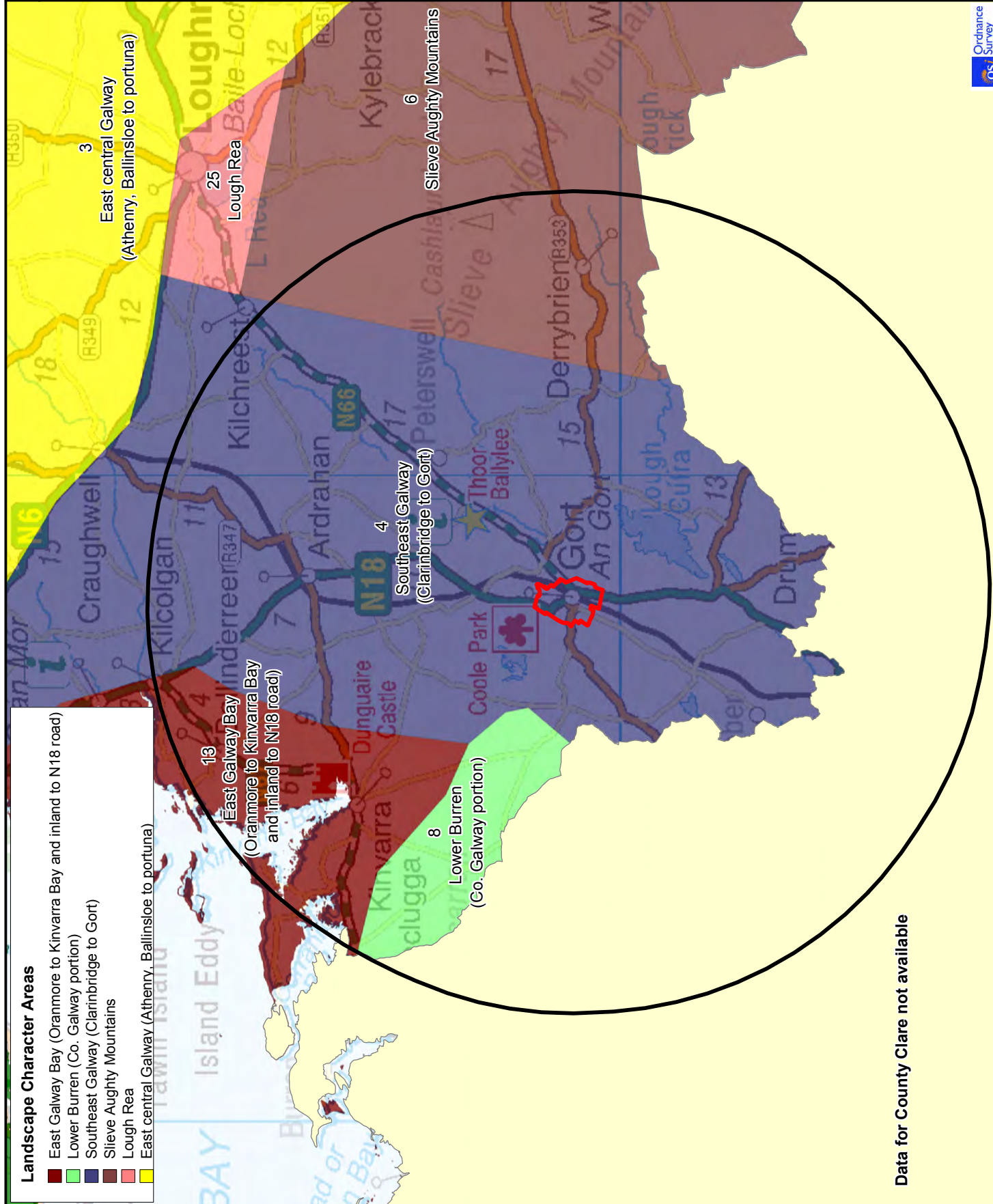
Figures 3.23 and **3.24** provide an overview of the landscape character and sensitivities within and surrounding the LAP.

3.11.2 Landscape Character and Sensitivity

Figure 3.23 outlines the indicative landscape characters for the lands within and surrounding the LAP. This classification was undertaken between September 2001 and January 2002 as part of a Landscape Character Assessment for the county. The assessment looked at the character of the landscape based on land cover and landform and also addresses landscape values relating to historical, cultural, religious and other understandings of the landscape.

Landscape Character Areas

- 13 East Galway Bay (Oranmore to Kinvarra Bay and inland to N18 road)
- 4 Lower Burren (Co. Galway portion)
- 17 Southeast Galway (Clarinbridge to Gort)
- 6 Slieve Aughty Mountains
- 12 Lough Rea
- 3 East central Galway (Athenry, Ballinsloe to portunna)

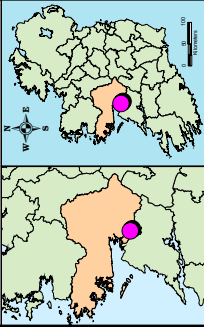


Legend

- Gort LAP Administrative Boundary
- Gort LAP 15 km Buffer

Data Source: Gort LAP Administrative Boundary comes from Gort Draft LAP 2012. File provided by Galway County Council.

Landscape Character Area data provided by Galway County Council



Client
Galway County Council

Project
Gort LAP (2013-2019) SEA

Title
Landscape Character Areas

Figure 3.23

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Data for County Clare not available



The findings of the Landscape Character Assessment were used to generate a landscape sensitivity rating for areas within Gort which are shown in **Figure 3.24**. This landscape sensitivity is a measure of the ability of the landscape to accommodate change or intervention without the implication of unacceptable effects to its character and values. Under the Landscape Sensitivity Rating in the County Development Plan, Gort and its hinterland are classified as Class 2 – Moderate Sensitivity (to the south and southeast and Class 3 – High Sensitivity (to the north and northwest).

3.11.3 Areas of High Amenity

These areas of high amenity are classified as such due to their outstanding natural beauty and/or unique interest value. There are a number of Areas of High Amenity adjacent to Gort and these areas are in general sensitive to development. The areas include, Lough Cutra to the south east of the LAP, the Slieve Aughty Mountains to the east of the LAP and the Burren to the west of the LAP.

3.11.4 Protected Focal Point / View

The Galway County Development Plan also identifies a number of protected focal points/views in the area including focal points to the south and south west of the LAP boundary including Cill Mac Duach – historic ecclesiastical village. **Figure 3.25** provides the location of the protected focal point / view which are important and valued areas within proximity to the LAP. **Figure 3.26** provides the protected views within the administrative boundaries of the LAP. A protected focal point / view is a requirement within the LAP to preserve the view of a specific place or historic building from another location. Within the LAP, a number of views are protected.

3.11.5 Habitats and Landscape Features of Importance for Biodiversity

Most of our biodiversity occurs outside sites that are subject to legal protection under national or EU law. There are habitats and features that are of particular importance for biodiversity throughout the landscape. These include, but are not limited to; woodlands, hedgerows and other field boundary types, such as stone walls, earthen embankments and ditches, rivers, streams and associated riparian zones. These elements should be protected and enhanced. It is also important to recognise that habitats and landscape features cannot be sustained in the long-term in isolation from one another. There must be a network of protected areas, ecological ‘corridors’ and ecological ‘stepping stones’ available to support the movement of species and to sustain the habitats, ecological processes and functions necessary to maintain biodiversity.

3.11.6 Existing Landscape Environmental Pressures / Problems


Gort has a number of sensitive landscapes adjacent to the LAP administrative boundary, including the Cill Mac Duach – historic ecclesiastical village which is classified as having high sensitivity. Therefore the areas of land to the west of the LAP are sensitive to the effects of development.

A problem with regard to the environment component of landscape is the cumulative visual impact that occurs as a result of developments such as one off housing. Such developments which individually often do not have significant adverse impacts have the potential to cumulatively impact upon sensitive landscapes. In the context of Gort this type of development has the potential to occur on the outskirts of the town boundary, but could have an impact on the protected focal views/points which occur throughout the town.


3.11.7 Inter-Relationships

The interrelationship between the SEA environmental topics is an important consideration for environmental assessment. **Table 3.5** highlights the key interrelationships identified in this SEA.

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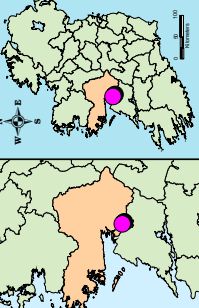
Gort LAP
Administrative Boundary



Gort LAP
15 km Buffer

Data Source: Gort LAP Administrative Boundary comes from 'Gort Draft LAP 2012'. File provided by Galway County Council.

Landscape Sensitivity data provided by Galway County Council

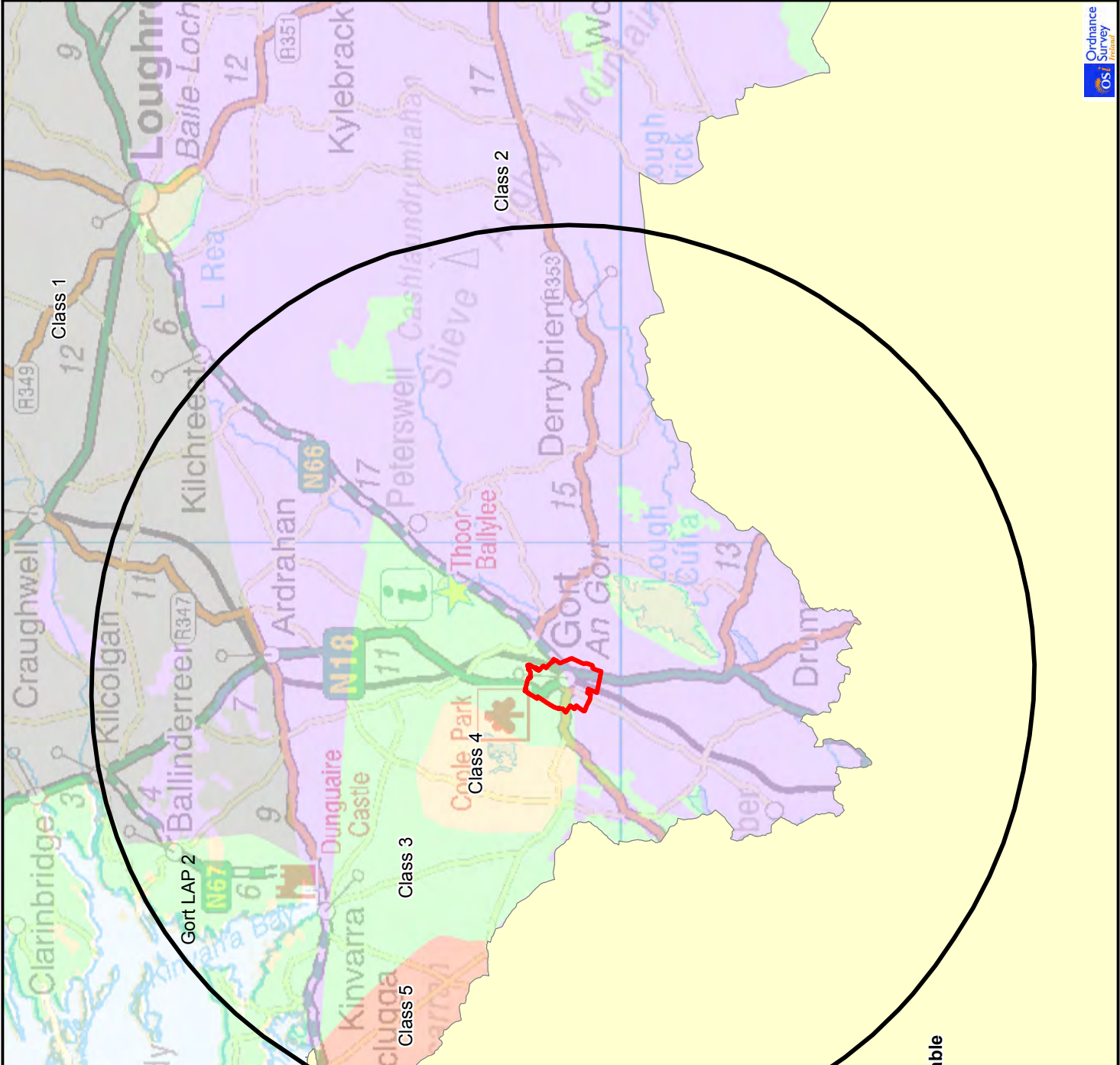


Client
Galway County Council

Project
Gort LAP (2013-2019) SEA

Title
Landscape Sensitivity

Figure 3.24




Landscape Sensitivity

	Class 5
	Class 4
	Class 3
	Class 2
	Class 1

Data for County Clare not available

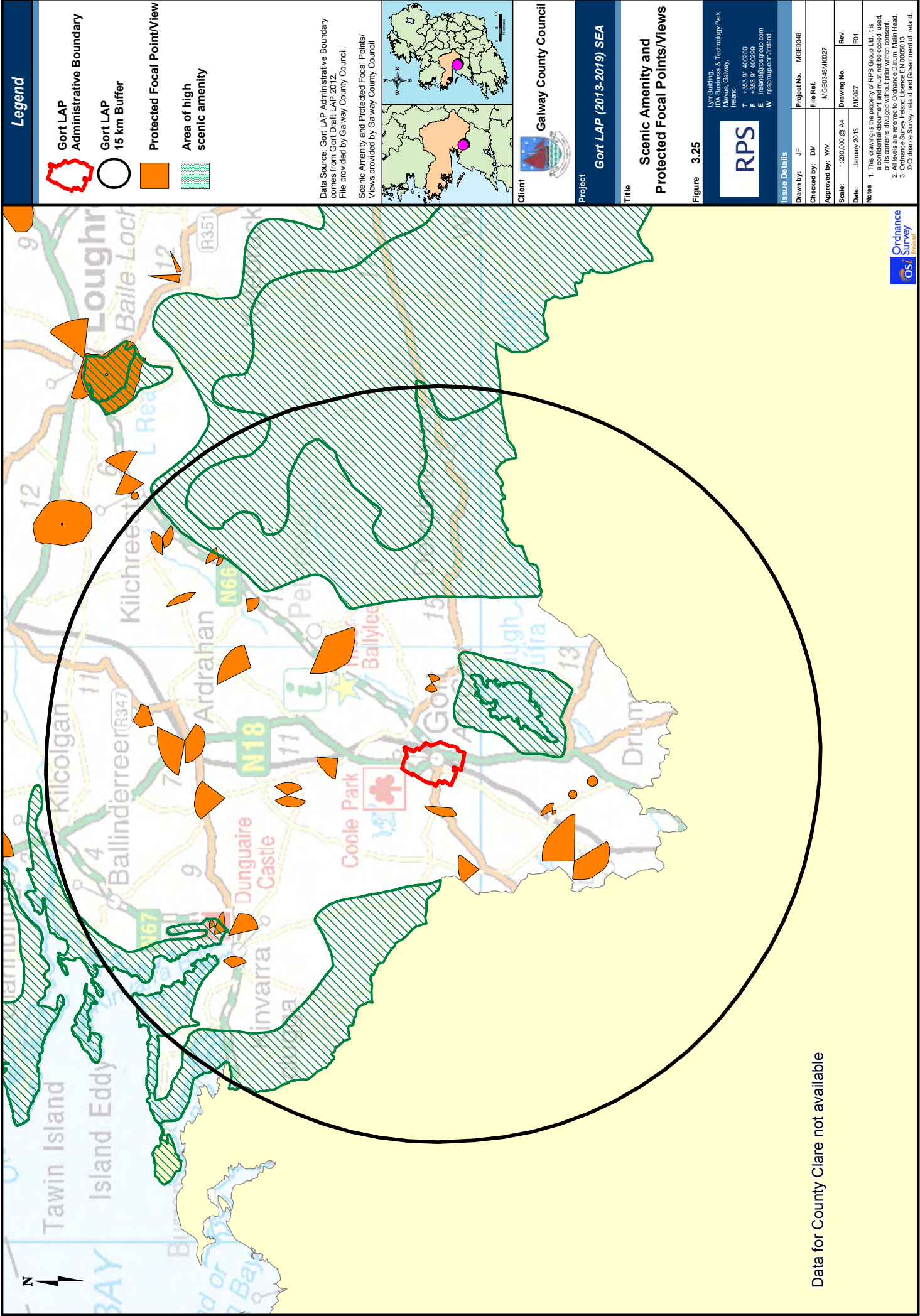
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Approved by: WM	
Scale: 1:200,000 @ A4	Drawing No: M0036
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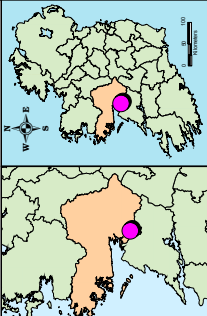
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Legend

-  Gort LAP Administrative Boundary
-  Gort LAP 15 km Buffer
-  Protected Focal Point/View
-  Area of high scenic amenity

Data Source: Gort LAP Administrative Boundary comes from Gort Draft LAP 2012. File provided by Galway County Council.
 Scenic Amenity and Protected Focal Points/Views provided by Galway County Council



Client  Galway County Council

Project **Gort LAP (2013-2019) SEA**

Scenic Amenity and Protected Focal Points/Views

Figure 3.25

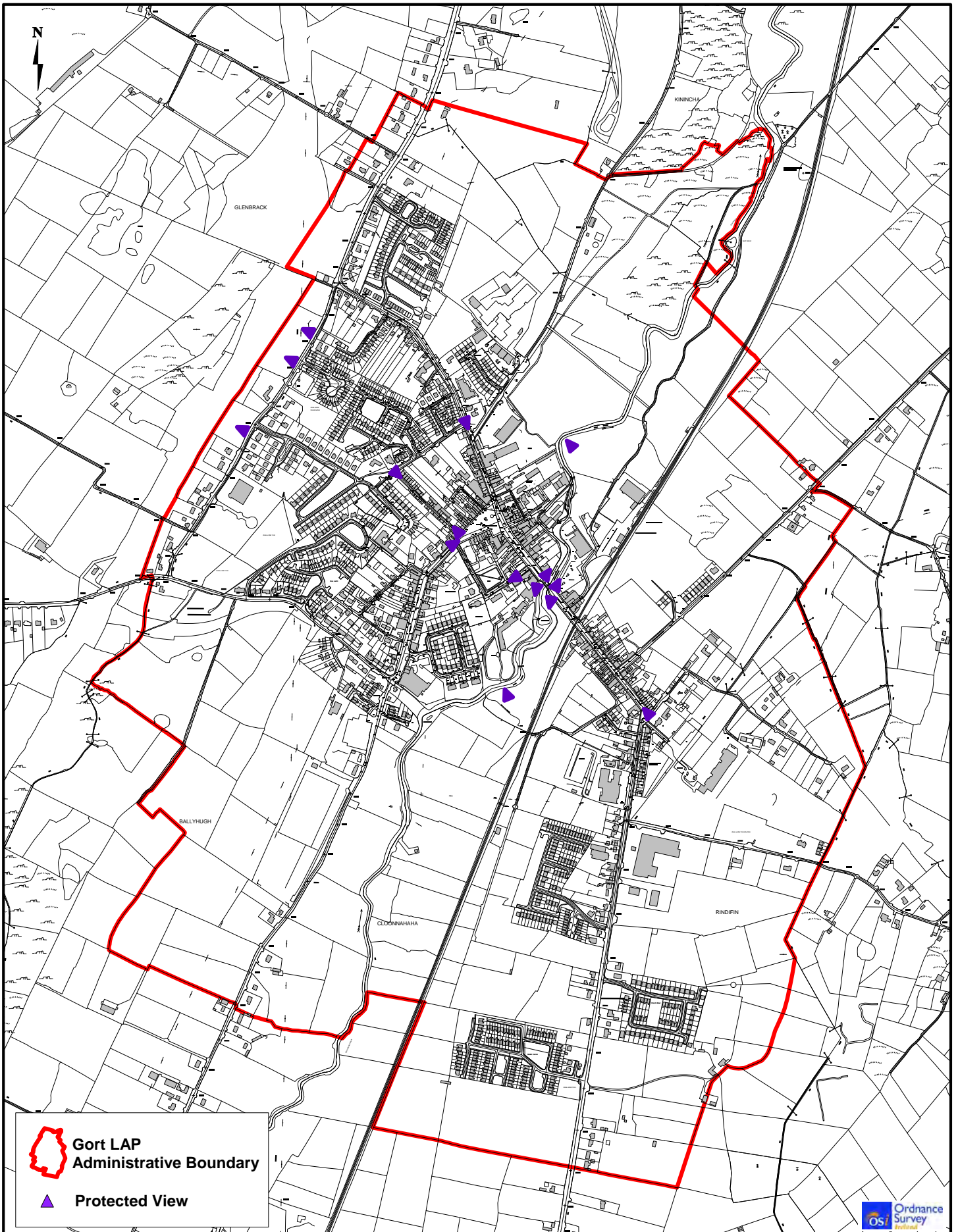
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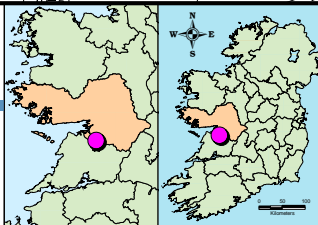




 **Gort LAP Administrative Boundary**
 **Protected View**




 Client  **Galway County Council**
 Title **Protected Views within the LAP Boundary**
 Figure **3.26**



Issue Details	
Drawn by: JF	Project No. MGE0346
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These potential interrelationships will be taken into account in the assessment of the different alternatives.

Of particular note are the primary relationships between water quality and biodiversity, flora and fauna. Flora and fauna, including protected species and habitats, rely directly on the aquatic environment as a habitat. Water and climate also have a key relationship. Global GHG emissions associated with transport, industry and other sources have the potential to negatively impact on climate change. This in turn can result in more frequent and more intense flooding and drought conditions affecting material assets, such as private residences and infrastructure, and biodiversity through changes in water quality and the hydrologic regime. In carrying out the assessment these important direct and indirect relationships have been taken into account fully to ensure a robust and complete assessment.

Table 3.5: Key Interrelationships between SEA Environmental Topics

Soils	√							
Water	√	√						
Noise	√	X	X					
Biodiversity, Flora, Fauna	√	√	√	√				
Climatic Factors	√	√	√	X	√			
Material Assets	√	√	√	X	√	√		
Cultural Heritage	√	√	√	X	√	√	√	
Landscape	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Population	Soils	Water	Noise	Biodiversity Flora, Fauna	Climatic Factors	Material Assets	Cultural Heritage

√ = interrelationship anticipated

X = no interrelationship anticipated

3.12 EVOLUTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE ABSENCE OF THE LAP

Population: In the absence of the LAP there may be pressure to increase population densities in an unsustainable manner with potential impacts on sensitive areas such as Coole/Garryland and other hydrologically connected designated sites. Without the provision of objectives that emphasise the consolidation of the town and set out its phased residential development only with sufficient wastewater and water supply infrastructure in place, development could take place which would impact on environmental issues on the Gort area.

Biodiversity, flora and fauna: There can be a conflict between development and biodiversity. Gort town has habitats both within the town and hydrologically connected to the town which are protected in their own right or support protected species. The progression of Gort without this LAP might result in development which would not be restricted or phased to mirror delivery of the appropriate infrastructure, such as drainage and wastewater, and this would also have negative impacts on biodiversity and water quality.

Soils: There could be increased pressure on greenfield lands as opposed to re-development of brownfield lands and infill development in the absence of the LAP. Focus should always be towards the redevelopment of existing brownfield sites and infill development within the town centre.

Water: The Cannahowna/Gort River flows through Gort LAP administrative boundary and both supplies drinking water for the town, upstream of the town, and receives discharges from the Gort Wastewater Treatment Plant downstream of the town. The catchment in which Gort town is situated is 'poor' within the majority of the LAP except for a small portion to the east of the LAP which is recorded as 'bad status' under the WFD classification system. There is a requirement to improve this to at least "good status" by 2015. The RBMP and associated Programme of Measures POM set out the approach to achieving improved status. The development plan process is the vehicle for implementation of many of the actions included in the RBMP and POMs, therefore, it is expected that improvement to "good status" would occur more swiftly if this LAP is adopted as it includes provisions to adhere to the RBMP POMs.

Noise: Although the new M18 is likely to have reduced amounts of traffic through the town the operation of the M18 has led to increased amounts of motor vehicle noise with subsequent impacts on residential dwellings to the west of the town. Large amounts of travel take place within, through and adjacent to the town, due to its close proximity to Galway City and Ennis Town and its position as a commuter town. The proposed LAP includes provision for many sustainable transport options, which will improve conditions within the town. Without the provision of promotion of these sustainable transport options in the LAP, it is anticipated that development of these may be more difficult in the long term and the result would be: increased numbers of private vehicles using the roads; development of new roads to service a more dispersed population; and resulting noise impacts on residential and recreational amenity. Noise barriers and bunds are provided on the N18 to mitigate traffic noise on sensitive receptors.

Climate: An issue facing Gort town in relation to climate change relates to the danger posed by flooding events, which may occur, at least in part, as a result of increased amounts of global GHG emissions from transport. Gort town has a significant recent history of flooding with a high incidence of rainfall events occurring more frequently which cause local flooding. Local solutions to this international issue include reduction in unsustainable transport movements, which is encouraged under the proposed LAP.

Material Assets: An increased population within Gort town there will likely bring an increased generation of waste and litter. The policies within the LAP will facilitate, on a local level, the county waste management plan and the strategies to deal with collection, recycling and disposal of waste from householders and industrial/ commercial businesses. Other material assets are included under the water section.

Cultural Heritage and Landscape: Further development in Gort has the potential to cumulatively impact upon heritage features in and surrounding the town. Development without the LAP has the potential to affect its landscapes as well as changing the context of existing architectural assets. The town contains zones of archaeological potential along with an architectural conservation area, a number of recorded monuments and places locally protected views. The LAP provides a way to balance the needs of the built, architectural, cultural and natural heritage in order to continue development in a sustainable manner. Without the drive for consolidation included in the LAP, it is likely that development will continue in rural areas away from the town centre. This scattered development, or sprawl, would impact on the rural landscape around Gort and would lead to loss of hedgerows and trees and their contribution to biodiversity. Fragmentation of habitats and field boundaries is also likely to result.

4 REVIEW OF RELEVANT POLICIES, PLANS AND PROGRAMMES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The objective of the SEA Directive is “to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations in the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development”.

In order to meet the requirements of the Directive in this respect, the environmental assessment must,

‘...identify the environmental protection objectives, established at International, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.’

The purpose of this review is to take into consideration the policy and legislative framework within which the Gort LAP 2013-2019 is being developed. Consideration has been given to the key statutory and non-statutory plans, programmes and policies relevant to the LAP in order to inform the SEA Strategic Environmental Objectives and Targets (discussed further in **Chapter 5**).

The following section provides an overview of the key relevant planning policies that are relevant and influence the Gort LAP. **Appendix B** provides details on all of the key legislation, plans and programmes considered most relevant to LAP.

4.2 THE KEY RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The following is a summary of the key relevant policies, plans and programmes in relation to the Gort LAP.

4.2.1 Planning and Development Policies

National Development Plan (2007-2013)

The National Development Plan integrates strategic development frameworks for regional development, for rural communities, for all-island co-operation, and for protection of the environment with common economic and social goals. The National Development Plan together with the National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines must inform the development of Galway through its County Development Plan and associated core strategy, which in turn informs the Gort LAP.

National Spatial Strategy (2002-2020)

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) is a 20 year planning framework to guide policies, programmes and investment in the interest of delivering balanced social, economic and physical development and population growth between the regions. The National Spatial Strategy together with the Regional Planning Guidelines must inform the development of Galway through its County Development Plan and associated core strategy, which in turn informs the Gort LAP.

The NSS is based on a hierarchy of settlements including gateways, hubs, county towns, smaller towns, rural villages and diverse rural economies. Within the NSS, Galway is recognised as a ‘Gateway’ which has a strategic location, nationally and relative to its surrounding areas, and provides national scale social, economic infrastructure and support services. Strategic issues of importance

relevant to Gort town include effective integration in terms of land use and transportation and maintaining a high quality environment.

The Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010 – 2022

These Guidelines cover the area of the West Regional Authority. The Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) work to implement the strategic planning framework set out in the National Spatial Strategy (NSS). As part of the planning framework, the Guidelines allocate housing and population targets for the individual counties based on national and regional population targets set by the NSS. The RPGs designate Gort town as a 'Key Town'. The RPGs set out that development will be promoted in Key Towns.

Galway County Development Plan (2009-2015, as varied in 2011) This Plan was prepared in accordance with the requirements and provisions of the Planning and Development Act and sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of County Galway over the period 2009-2015. This plan is very relevant to Gort LAP as it sets out an overall vision, core strategy, policies and objectives for the County.

Variation No. 1 Core Strategy to the Galway County Development Plan (CDP) designates Gort town as a 'Key Town'. The Core Strategy has set a target population increase of 820 persons for Gort town to the year 2016.

As a 'Key Town' within the Core Strategy Gort is recognised as providing an extensive range of services including health, community, financial employment and retail. It is further recognised as having a strong historical identity as a market town and having relatively well-developed infrastructure. Sustained growth in Gort is required to achieve its potential as a self-sustaining town in its own right.

4.2.2 Environmental Plans and Policies

Habitats (92/43/EEC) and Birds (2009/147/EC) Directives

These directives seek to protect habitats and species which are important at a European level. The Habitats Directive requires Ireland and other EU member states to designate Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) where either one or many Annex I habitats or Annex II species occur while the Birds Directive protects bird species through designation of Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Together, these form the Natura 2000 network of sites. There are many Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the LAP, however Coole-Garryland, which is a complex of Turloughs, is likely to be the Natura 2000 site most at risk from development within the Plan area. The LAP must protect these designated sites and the habitats and species for which they have been designated (see also the Natura Impact Report for Appropriate Assessment of the Gort LAP).

Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)

This Directive seeks to maintain and enhance the quality of all surface water and groundwater in the EU. The Directive is focused at the River Basin District (RBD) level to ensure that all potential pathways for pollution can be explored and measures to mitigate negative impacts can be better focused. There are eight RBD's on the island of Ireland and Gort town falls within the western RBD. River Basin Management Plans and associated programmes of measures have been developed for each region and must be implemented. The Gort LAP must have regard to these measures. The assessment of potential impacts on water quality needs to be considered in the context of the WFD and the River Basin Management Plan and Programme of Measures for the Western River Basin district which lays out the objectives for waters within Galway.

Surface Water Regulations (2009)

Aligned to the WFD is the Surface Water Regulations (S.I. 272 of 2009). These Regulations have significant implications across a range of existing legislation. They provide for the classification of surface water bodies by the EPA for the purposes of the Water Framework Directive.

Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC)

The Directive seeks to prevent and combat groundwater pollution in the EU. It contains key criteria for the assessment of the chemical status of groundwater, for identifying significant upward trends in groundwater pollution levels and for preventing and limiting indirect discharges of pollutants to groundwater. As Gort town has sensitive groundwater habitats in proximity to its administrative boundary the formulation of the Plan should have regard to these objectives.

Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC)

The Directive establishes a framework for environmental liability based on the "polluter pays" principle, with a view to preventing and remedying environmental damage. The principle of liability applies to environmental damage and imminent threat of damage resulting from occupational activities, where it is possible to establish a causal link between the damage and the activity in question.

Floods Directive (2007/60/EC) and Associated CFRAMS

Floods are a natural and inevitable part of life in Ireland. Floods pose a risk to human life and wellbeing, can cause extensive damage to property and have significant consequences for the environment. With the effects of climate change, it is likely that there will be more frequent and severe flooding events in the future. The EU has responded to this with the Floods Directive. This Directive sets a framework for proactive management of flooding and, like the WFD, will see measures being implemented through the development plan process. The first step in this is the development of Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Studies (CFRAMS) which are on-going. These studies will identify areas susceptible to flooding and identify measures to reduce or eliminate flooding in key areas.

Gort has a significant recent history of flooding within the town and the Gort/Cannahowna River runs through the centre of the town. The LAP should therefore take account of the Directive and monitor the CFRAMS for the west as it progresses to conclusion in 2015.

Urban Waste Water Directive (91/271/EEC), amended by Directive (98/15/EEC)

The primary objective is to protect the environment from the adverse effects of discharges of urban wastewater, by the provision of urban wastewater collecting systems (sewerage) and treatment plants for urban centres. The Directive also provides general rules for the sustainable disposal of sludge arising from wastewater treatment. If the population of Gort town reaches its target of an increase in 820 persons as projected in the Core Strategy, capacity of the Wastewater Treatment Plant is likely to be a key issue for the development of Gort Town.

Drinking Water Directive (80/778/EEC) as amended by (Directive 98/83/EC)

The primary objective is to protect the health of the consumers in the European Union and to make sure drinking water is wholesome and clean. The (Drinking Water) (No. 2) Regulations 2007 (SI No. 278 of 2007) have the following aims:

- To provide for the creation of EPA and local authorities as supervisory authorities;

- To set obligations for water suppliers to provide wholesome and clean drinking water;
- To ensure protection of public health;
- To inform the public; and
- To monitor and carry out remedial action.

The primary source of Gort's water is the Rindifin Treatment Plan which sources water from the Gort/Cannahowna River upstream of the town. The current demand on the Gort WSS, (including UFW) is approximately averaging at 970m³/day. The maximum capacity of the existing plant is 1,400 m³/day, so there is a spare capacity of approximately 430 m³/day. The projected population increase of 820 persons as outlined in the Core Strategy is equivalent to an increase in demand of 123m³/day^d. No future alternative drinking source is proposed. The LAP must have regard to ensuring adequate and clean water is available for all existing and planned developed within the Town.

Water Services Act (2007) and Water Services Investment Programme DECLG (2010-2012, extended to 2013)

The Water Services Act provides for provision of water services and gives effect to certain Acts adopted by the institutions of the European Communities. The Act identifies and prioritises national water infrastructure through the Water Services Investment Programme (WSIP). The WSIP has evolved from needs assessments received from the 34 Water Services Authorities in Ireland (and which includes Galway). The programme presents a balanced national strategic programme of works designed to support the national socio-economic objectives established by government in the National Development Plan and related plans and policies.

Surface Water Regulations (2009)

These Regulations have significant implications across a range of existing legislation. They provide for the classification of surface waterbodies by the EPA for the purposes of the Water Framework Directive which dictates that waterbodies are required to achieve Good Status by 2015.

National Climate Change Strategy (2007-2012)

This strategy outlines how Ireland will meet its 2008-2012 Kyoto commitments and identifies what further policy measures are needed. It shows sector by sector how the Kyoto commitments, to reduce national GHG emissions are to be met by a range of existing and additional measures including limiting emissions and investment in energy efficiency and renewable resources.

National Sustainable Development Strategy (1997) and Making Ireland's Development Sustainable (2002)

The aim for Ireland outlined in the Sustainable Development Strategy (1997) is "to ensure that economy and society in Ireland can develop to their full potential within a well-protected environment, without compromising the quality of that environment and with responsibility towards present and future generations and the wider international community". The subsequent report in 2002 "Making Ireland's Development Sustainable" was a five-year review of the original 1997 Strategy. The overall tenet of the Strategy is to balance economic growth with a continued commitment to promoting environmental quality.

^dBased on a conservative estimate of consumption of 150l/person/day as detailed in the 'National Water Study' (WS Atkins Ireland, 2000)

'Actions for Biodiversity 2011-2016', Ireland's 2nd National Biodiversity Plan

In response to the requirements set out in Article 6 of the UN Convention of Biological Diversity 1992, a Biodiversity Plan was prepared by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The Plan seeks to ensure the full and effective integration of biodiversity concerns in the development and implementation of other policies, legislation and programmes which is of critical importance if the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is to be achieved.

National Heritage Plan (2002-2006)

The core objective is to protect and enhance Ireland's heritage. The Plan sets out archaeological policies and principles that should be applied by all bodies when undertaking a development. An aim of this National Plan is to enhance the role of Local Authorities in heritage protection and management. This could take the form of a Heritage Plan which Galway County Council has developed. The Galway County Heritage Plan 2010-2016 aims to *"place heritage at the heart of the life of the county through increasing awareness, enjoyment, knowledge and understanding of our shared heritage thereby leading to its proper management and protection and safeguarding it for future generations"*.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION OBJECTIVES, TARGETS AND INDICATORS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

SEA is carried out at a strategic level with a focus on readily available information (primarily desktop assessment). It is therefore not possible for the baseline environment to be presented in as much detail as could be done for a project-level environmental impact assessment as often suitable baseline information does not exist at the regional or sub-regional level. Instead, SEA uses a system of *objectives*, *targets* and *indicators* to rationalise information for the purposes of assessment. This is the approach which has been taken for the LAP assessment in this case, however where possible baseline led assessment has also been undertaken to provide the most robust assessment possible.

In order to streamline the assessment process, this report has used broad themes, based on the environmental topics listed in the SEA Directive, to group large environmental data sets, e.g., biodiversity and climate change. Assigned to each of these themes are **Environmental Protection Objectives** that specify a desired direction for change, e.g. reduce CO₂ emissions, against which the future impacts of the Plan can be measured. These Environmental Protection Objectives are then paired with specific **Targets**. The progress towards achieving these specific Targets is monitored using **Indicators**, which are measures of identified variables over time and form part of the monitoring programme proposed as part of this SEA.

Appropriate Assessment (AA) of the Gort LAP is being undertaken in conjunction with the SEA process. The AA will specifically assess the likely impacts that will arise from the LAP having been examined in the context of a number of factors that could potentially affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 network. The EPO's for biodiversity, flora and fauna as outlined in **Table 5.1** has been developed with reference to the associated AA and in consultation with the AA ecologist.

5.2 DEVELOPMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION OBJECTIVES, TARGETS AND INDICATORS

5.2.1 Environmental Protection Objectives

The Environmental Protection Objectives reflect the existing environmental issues relevant to the Plan. They are focused on protecting and enhancing the natural and human environment and on minimising negative effects. The Environmental Protection Objectives were developed to be consistent with environmental protection objectives established by international, European and national environmental policies, objectives and standards.

The selected Environmental Protection Objectives for this SEA are set out in **Table 5.1**. These Environmental Protection Objectives are based on the current understanding of the key environmental issues identified as well as the indicative list of environmental protection objectives outlined in the document *Implementation of SEA Directive 2001/42/EC* (DoEHLG, 2004). Selection was also based on consultation with statutory consultees during the scoping stage and discussions between the SEA and Plan Teams.

SEA Objectives are different to objectives detailed in the Draft LAP, however, they are used to assess the development strategies of the LAP and allow its evaluation and identification of where conflicts may occur. This forms the basis of the environmental assessment of the Draft LAP, which is presented in Chapter 7.

Table 5.1: Environmental Protection Objectives

SEA Issue	Environmental Protection Objectives
Population/ Human Health	Pop1 – Ensure only sufficient development is permitted, as required for in the projected increase of population within the Core Strategy targets
Soil/Landuse	Soi1 – Protect and, where appropriate, enhance the function and quality of the soil resource in Gort
Water	Wat1 – 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).
	Wat2 – Prevent pollution and contamination of ground water by adhering to aquifer protection plans.
	Wat3 – Reduce risk of flooding through avoidance of development in Flood Zones A or B
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	Bio1 – Protect, conserve and avoid loss of the diversity and range, area or population of habitats, species and wildlife corridors.
	Bio2 - 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.
	Bio3 - Conserve and protect other nature conservation sites (NHAs, pNHAs, National Parks, Nature Reserves, and Wildfowl Sanctuaries).
	Bio4 – Protect habitats (terrestrial and aquatic) from non-native invasive species and prevent non-native invasive species spread.
Climatic Factors	Cli1 – Contribute to mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change and air quality issues.
Material Assets	Mat1 - To ensure that drinking water supplies are free of contamination.
	Mat2 - To ensure that all development is adequately serviced to EPA standards prior to discharge.
Cultural, Architectural and Archaeological Heritage	H1 – 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.).
	H2 – To ensure the restoration and re-use of existing uninhabited and derelict structures where possible opposed to demolition and new build (to promote sustainability and reduce landfill).
Landscape	Lan1 – Protect designated landscapes and scenic views, routes and landscape features of local value.
Noise	Noi1 -To protect residents from adverse noise levels

6 LOCAL AREA PLAN ALTERNATIVES

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The preparation of Local Area Plan (LAP) policy and objectives affecting a geographical area such as Gort town presents a significant opportunity to affect the way physical change and development occurs, where it happens and the character of that process. The SEA process seeks to document the development process where key decisions are reached, and consider the environmental impacts of the policy path chosen. The examination of alternative means of achieving the strategic objectives of the LAP, in the first place recognises the broad challenges before policy makers, as well as seeking the articulation of why the LAP prescribes one path over another.

The consideration of LAP alternatives is a real-world exercise that recognises that the plan must work within an existing context of National and Regional Strategic Plans, climate change, and an Irish and European legislative framework that has sustainable development at its core. It is not an open-book exercise, where every conceivable option is examined. Therefore, in selecting realistic alternatives that could be evaluated, 'no development' or 'unconstrained development', were considered unreasonable alternatives, as they are unlikely to be delivered and would not reflect the statutory and operational requirements of the LAP.

This section sets out:

- The legislative context for the consideration of alternatives;
- An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with;
- A description of the alternatives; and
- Evaluation of the alternatives and identification of preferred alternative.

6.1.1 Legislative Context

The consideration of alternatives is a requirement of the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC). It states under Article 5(1) that;

'Where an environmental assessment is required under Article 3(1), an environmental report shall be prepared in which the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme, are identified, described and evaluated. The information to be given for this purpose is referred to in Annex I.'

Annex 1 (h) of the Directive clarifies that the information to be provided on alternatives under Article 5(1) is *inter alia* an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information.

Article 9 of the Directive requires that a statement shall be prepared providing information on the reasons for choosing the plan as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with.

Annex 1 (f) details the environmental topics to be considered in the evaluation of the alternatives, which is the same as that addressed in the assessment of the plan itself:

'...biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors.'

Therefore, the Directive emphasises that the SEA process must consider alternatives that are 'reasonable', and take into account 'the objectives' of the plan, and 'the geographical scope of the plan'.

The term 'reasonable' is not defined in the legislation. Good practice points to the analysis of 'alternatives' as being a constructive and informative exercise for the policy makers, and that only 'possible' options for policy are examined. Plan scenarios that run counter to European environmental directives, the National Spatial Strategy (NSS), Ministerial Guidelines or Regional Planning Guidelines (RPG) would not be considered reasonable.

Alternatives are required to take into account the objectives of the plan. The alternatives study therefore must operate within the strategic objectives, set out for the plan, and provide an examination of alternative means of implementing the plan.

Section 3.14 of the DEHLG Guidelines notes that the higher the level of the plan, the more strategic the options which are likely to be available. Conversely, lower tier plans, such as LAPs, will be framed in a policy context set by the level(s) above them, and strategic options may be limited. As a result, the strategic options available to the preparation of the draft Gort LAP 2013-2019 are limited in terms of growth scenarios as population and housing growth is inherited from the strategic planning framework and growth is allocated from the NSS, RPGs and Galway County Development Plan. The preparation of local area plan policy and objectives affecting a geographical area such as Gort town boundary presents a significant opportunity to affect the way physical change and development occurs, where it happens and the character of that process.

The Directive does not prescribe at what stage consideration of alternatives should be undertaken, as it requires a rationale for choosing the LAP as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with. However, to present a useful input into the plan making process, all guidance points to alternatives assessing the implementation of the plan at a strategic level, at the stage where the preferred strategy is being finalised. This is not to say that location specific policies should not be examined. But this must be placed within the context of the SEA's role to examine the strategic environmental implications of the direction of the plan at the appropriate policy level.

6.2 REASONS FOR SELECTING THE ALTERNATIVES

The SEA process seeks to document the LAP process where key decisions are reached, and consider the environmental impacts of the policy path chosen. The examination of alternative means of achieving the strategic objectives of a LAP, in the first place recognises the broad challenges before policy makers, as well as seeking the articulation of why the LAP prescribes one path over another.

It is a mandatory objective of a LAP that sufficient lands are zoned for particular purposes. This is especially relevant in relation to the quantum and location of new residentially zoned lands which are required in light of the Core Strategy Variation No. 1 to the County Development Plan 2009-2015.

Three alternative plan options have been developed detailing potential scenarios for the future development of Gort Town. Options developed are not predictions or preferences; instead they offer a range of outcomes arising from different planning and development strategies. These three scenarios form the basis for comparative evaluation of the likely environmental effects of each as part of this study.

6.3 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED FOR SEA

The following strategic alternatives for the LAP were considered for assessment as part of the SEA process for the Gort LAP2013-2019, and are shown in **Figures 6.1 - 6.3**. The strengths and weaknesses of the various approaches are evaluated and a preferred alternative derived. A summary of the assessment of each alternative is included in **Tables 6.1 – 6.3**. The following criteria have been used in the Assessment Matrix: plus (+) indicates a potential positive impact, minus (-) indicates a potential negative impact, plus/minus (+/-) indicates that both positive and negative impacts are likely or that in the absence of further detail the impact is unclear, and a neutral or no impact is indicated by a zero (0). Combinations of these symbols have also been used, e.g.0/-, which indicates that an impact may be neutral or negative depending on how the policy or objective is delivered.

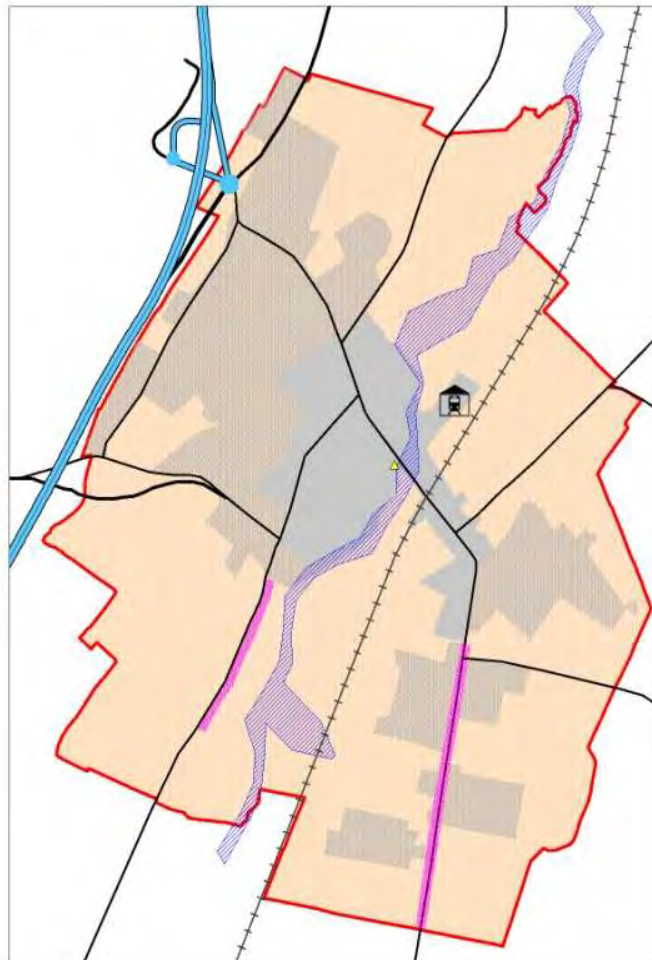


Figure 6.1 Development Option 1 – Extend Development Southwards

Table 6.1: Development Alternative No. 1

Alternative Considered	0	+	-	+/-
<p>Development Option 1 – Extend Development Southwards: This scenario would encourage peripheral, car based development on the southern edges of the town, mainly along the Ennis Road (R458) and Tubber Road (L4514) on undeveloped lands outside the 10 min walking distance (800m) of the town centre, existing built fabric and essential wastewater services.</p>	Pop1	H1	Wat3	Soi1, Wat1, Wat2, Bio1, Bio2, Bio3, Bio4, Cli1, Mat1, Mat2, H2, Lan1, Noi1
<p>This option is likely to impact negatively on the vitality and viability of the town centre, on the strategic function of the M18 Motorway, N18 and N66 as traffic arteries, national/regional routes and in relation to public transport via the Ennis - Athenry section of the Western Rail Corridor. Lands have also been identified within flood risk areas particularly south of the Tubber Road and north of the Cannahowna/Gort River. Pluvial flooding has also been identified on lands to the south eastern periphery of the LAP boundary between the Tubber Road (L4514) and the Cannahowna/Gort River and also to the north of the Ennis Road (R458).</p>				

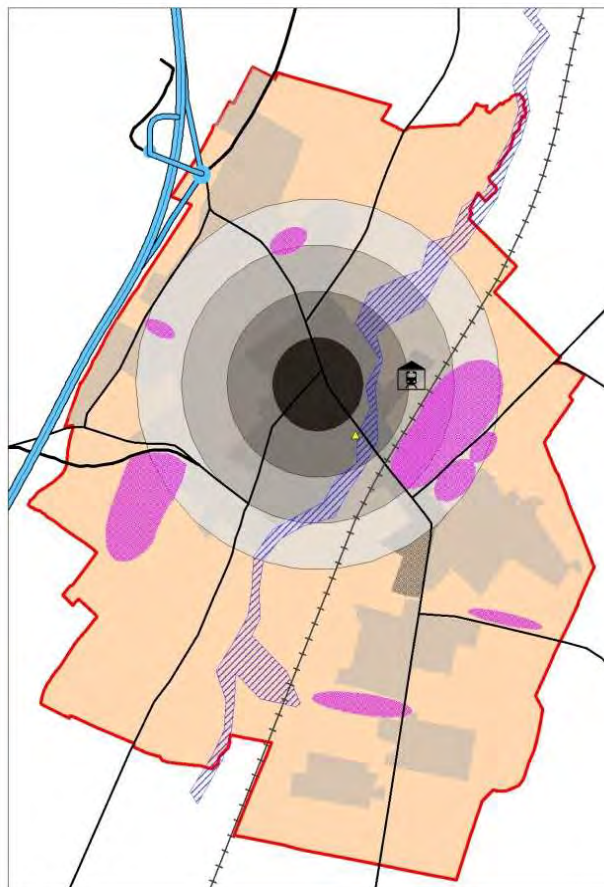


Figure 6.2 Development Option 2 – Consolidate Existing Town Centre, Sequential Development around Established Urban Core and Controlled Eastward Expansion

Table 6.2: Development Alternative No. 2

Alternative Considered	0	+	-	+/-
<p>Development Option 2 – Consolidate Existing Town Centre, Sequential Development around Established Urban Core and Controlled Eastward Expansion</p> <p>This option provides for the consolidation of the existing town centre, sequential development around the established urban core within the town and controlled eastward expansion along the N66 Route. Town centre consolidation is achievable through promoting appropriate densities at the right locations and supporting the redevelopment of brownfield, derelict and back land sites including existing laneways which primarily lead to Market Square and within the urban core of Gort.</p> <p>New Town Centre development (C1) and Residential Phase 1 (phased for residential development within the lifetime of the Plan) are proposed in a contiguous and sequential manner in an eastward direction along the N66 in particular.</p>	<p>Pop1</p>	<p>Wat2, Wat3, Cli1</p>		<p>Soi1, Wat1, , Bio1,Bio2, Bio3, Bio4, Mat1, Mat2, H2,Lan1, Noi1, H1</p>
<p>This development option will potentially maximise return on investment of services especially public transport, will also potentially ensure the availability of optimal, residential lands to accommodate anticipated growth defined by the County Core Strategy requirements. This option will also avoid significant environmental impacts in relation to identified flood risk areas and ensure compliance with the Flood Risk Guidelines 2009.</p>				

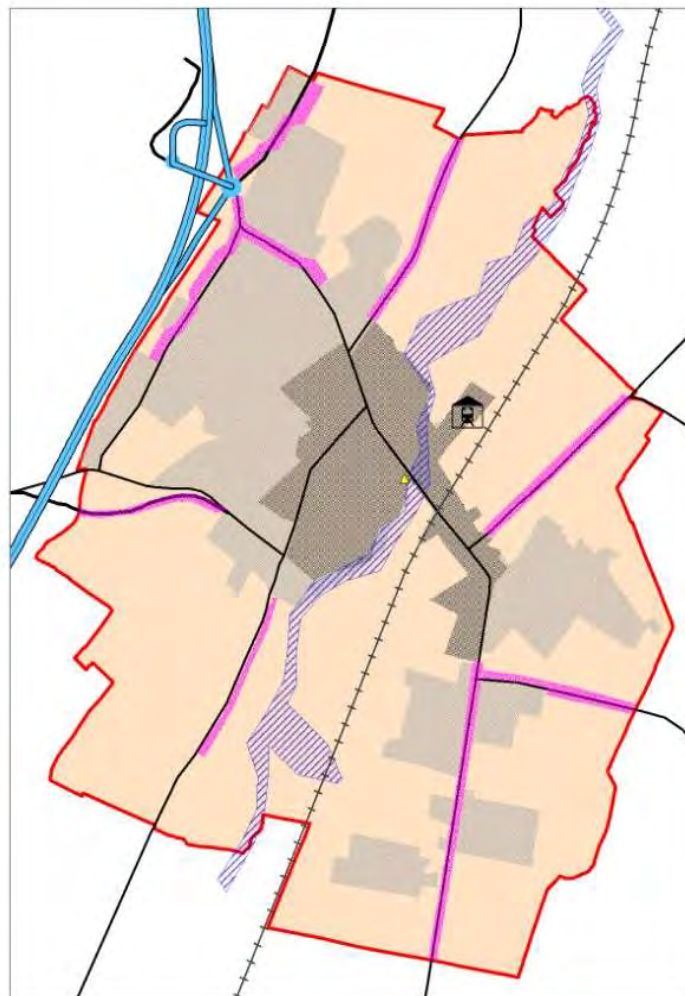


Figure 6.3 Development Option 3 – Extend Development out along Existing Approach Roads

Table 6.3: Development Alternative No. 3

Alternative Considered	0	+	-	+/-
<p>Development Option 3 – Extend Development out along Existing Approach Roads</p> <p>This scenario provides for the intensification and extension of new development along the existing approach roads into Gort.</p>	Pop1	H1	Wat3	Soi1, Wat1, Wat2, Bio1, Bio2, Bio3, Bio4, Cli1, Mat1, Mat2, H2, Lan1, Noi1
<p>Development under this option would result in an increase in ribbon development on all inward routes with associated impacts in terms of poor environmental quality, increased traffic and congestion along the approach roads, increasingly peripheral, car based development and would militate against easy walking distance to the town centre. This option may also lead to the unsustainable management of development in relation to flood risk areas, the continuance of urban sprawl and the improper management of development pressures at major transportation interchanges specifically in relation to the M18 Motorway located to the north west of Gort.</p>				

6.4 EVALUATION OF SEA ALTERNATIVES

The scoring for each development alternative against the Environmental Protection Objectives (EPOs) is shown in **Table 6.4**. Each alternative is mapped in **Figures 6.1 to 6.3** and should be referred to whilst reviewing **Table 6.4**.

Table 6.4: Alternatives Option Scores against SEOs

Alternative Scenarios	No likely interaction with EPOs	Likely to improve status of EPOs	Probable conflict with status of EPOs	Uncertain of interaction with EPOs or positive and negative interactions
Alternative 1	Pop1	H1	Wat3	Soi1, Wat1, Wat2, Bio1, Bio2, Bio3, Bio4, Cli1, Mat1, Mat2, H2, Lan1, Noi1
Alternative 2	Pop1	Wat2, Wat3, Cli1		Soi1, Wat1, , Bio1, Bio2, Bio3, Bio4, Mat1, Mat2, H2, Lan1, Noi1, H1
Alternative 3	Pop1	H1	Wat3	Soi1, Wat1, Wat2, Bio1, Bio2, Bio3, Bio4, Cli1, Mat1, Mat2, H2, Lan1, Noi1

6.4.1 SEA Preferred Alternative

Table 6.4 highlights that Alternative 2 is generally considered to be the most positive alternative when measured against the EPOs of this Environmental Report. Alternatives 1 and 3 are generally considered to be more negative when reviewed in relation to the SEOs of this environmental report. Therefore, the preferred SEA Alternative for the purposes of the Local Area Plan is Alternative 2.

6.5 THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The preferred Alternative as proposed under the development strategy for the Gort LAP is Alternative 2. The alternative as chosen within the Gort LAP is in accordance with preferred alternative scenario as prepared in this Environmental Report.

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.

7 EVALUATION OF LOCAL AREA PLAN POLICIES, OBJECTIVES AND ZONINGS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Chapters 7, 8 and 9 of the Environmental Report is to evaluate as far as possible the potential environmental effects of the LAP policies, objectives and zonings and to set out measures to prevent, reduce and as far as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment. **Chapter 7** provides an overview of the impacts under key policy headings and this is supplemented by a detailed policy by policy assessment matrix contained in **Appendix C**. Each policy in **Appendix C** has been assessed against the environmental protection objectives as set out in **Table 5.1**, taking into consideration likely significant impacts (positive and negative, direct and indirect, cumulative and synergistic).

The assessment matrices contain a comparison of each of the Plan policies and objectives against each of the Environmental Protection Objectives with an assessment rating assigned for the purposes of comparison. In this case, plus (+) indicates a potential positive impact, minus (-) indicates a potential negative impact, plus/minus (+/-) indicates that both positive and negative impacts are likely or that in the absence of further detail the impact is unclear, and a neutral or no impact is indicated by a zero (0). Combinations of these symbols have also been used, e.g.0/-, which indicates that impact may be neutral or negative depending on how the policy or objective is delivered.

Where negative impacts have been identified mitigation measures have been devised through inclusion of either new policies / objectives, or recommendations have been made to amend or include additional text within the policies / objectives. Comments with respect to the recommended mitigation measures identified as a result of this assessment are highlighted in bold and underlined within the comments section of the matrices of **Appendix C** of this report. Mitigation measures are highlighted in bold and underlined in the policies and objectives section of the same matrices.

All mitigation measures proposed as a result of this assessment are documented in the **Chapter 9** of this report.

7.2 OVERVIEW OF EVALUATION OF POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

7.2.1 Development Strategy

Development Strategy objectives aim to support orderly and sequential development, to be consistent with the core strategy, to protect the Natura 2000 Network and Habitats Directive Assessment, implement development management standards and guidelines as set out in the CDP and in Section 3 of the Gort LAP, to ensure that development is preceded by sufficient capacity in the public waste water and potable water infrastructure, to direct residential development into appropriately zoned and serviced areas and that new developments with assessed in accordance with the provisions of the *Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009*.

The policies and objectives for Development Strategy to support and facilitate the sustainable development of the Plan Area in line with the preferred development strategy option, Option 2 – Consolidate Existing Town Centre, Sequential Development around Established Urban Core and Controlled Eastward Expansion, and 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.

There is some potential for negative impacts on biodiversity, water and human health as a result of consistence with core strategy. Any new development applications in this regard will also be subject to the objective to ensure sufficient capacity in the public waste water and potable water infrastructure and therefore potential impacts will be minimised or mitigated at this stage.

7.2.2 Residential Development

The policies and objectives for Residential Development generally aimed at the provision of adequate suitable housing and at a rate and scale which is in line with the core strategy of the County Development Plan and subsequently this LAP. These policies are expected to result in positive direct and indirect impacts to population through improvements to quality of life and will provide suitable accommodation for a cross-section of the population.

Appropriate densities, housing mix and provision of services in parallel to development of new residential development is promoted. The prioritisation of development on infill lands, prior to rezoning previously undeveloped lands, will reduce disturbance of habitats and species in undeveloped rural areas and is likely to improve the overall quality of the environment in these brownfield areas. This will also allow for more efficient provision of facilities such as waste, transport, water and wastewater, provided that these are in place in advance or in parallel with new residential development.

Further, policies promote the phasing of development and prioritisation of Phase I residential development within close proximity of the town during the lifetime of this LAP. This will indirectly assist in maintaining the habitat networks and rivers in undeveloped rural areas, through increasing development capacity within the town centre. There is some potential for negative impacts on biodiversity, water and soils unless design and layout take such issues into account at the outset. Any new development applications in this regard will also be subject to development management requirements of this LAP and the Galway CDP 2009-2015 and potential impacts will be minimised or mitigated at this stage.

Impacts in relation to climate as a result of consolidating development within and immediately adjoining the town are expected to be positive, as this policy will focus development within the urban area, which is well served with public transport links and would also promote walking and cycling.

7.2.3 Social and Community Development

The policies for social and community are generally aimed at provision of services and education for the community.

Direct positive effects with respect to population are anticipated with respect to most of the community and education policies and objectives due to the requirement to provide adequate provision of services associated with population growth. Indirect positive impacts with respect to climate change are anticipated with respect to provision of adequate education and community services within the town as this is likely to result in a reduction in the number of students/people which would otherwise be required to commute (either outside of the settlement or outside of the area) for education and other community services purposes.

7.2.4 Economic Development

The policies regarding Economic Development are aimed at facilitating and encouraging tourism and economic development of Gort town which would help to reinforce the town's designation as a Key Town under the Regional Planning Guidelines. To achieve this, policies and objectives aim to build on the town's strategic location to take maximum advantage of lands strategically located to provide for future new employment hubs. This is likely to increase tourist numbers and employment opportunities and quality of life for those living in the Town. These policies are largely anticipated to have positive

impacts on population through improving the economic prosperity of Gort and improvement of the visitor experience and the quality of life of its population.

As with new residential developments outlined above, any new developments, such as commercial, industrial etc. development has potential for negative effects on biodiversity, water and soils unless design and layout take such issues into account at the outset. Any new development applications in this regard will also be subject to development management requirements of this LAP and the Galway CDP 2009-2015 and potential impacts will be minimised or mitigated at this stage.

7.2.5 Transport Infrastructure

Many of the policies and objectives for Transport promote the use of sustainable forms of transport, such as walking, cycling and public transport networks, and as such will have positive benefits on the wider environment. This also has positive indirect and cumulative impacts in relation to climate as a result of the decrease in emissions associated with a reduction in use of private vehicles; positive impacts on population through reduced congestion, lower transport emissions and improved economic competitiveness; and positive impacts on material assets through provision of improved infrastructure for users of sustainable transport modes, e.g. Public Transport, cycling and walking.

In addition, promotion of sustainable travel with integrated land use and transportation policies should encourage the redevelopment of Gort town rather than development on sites that are not currently serviced by public transport or cycle/walking networks, thus resulting in a positive direct impact on material assets.

There is potential for indirect negative effects with regard to the development of new road infrastructure with respect to biodiversity, water, soils and landscape in particular. Route selection and environmental assessment of road infrastructure will be important in terms of avoidance of impacts.

7.2.6 Utilities Infrastructure

The adequacy of water, drainage and environmental services in the future development of the town is necessary to facilitate sustainable development. These key issues are addressed in various policies and objectives to provide for sufficient water, wastewater and water drainage infrastructure to service the predicted requirements for future development of the town over the plan period. Relevant legislative requirements in relation to environmental requirements are also set out including policies and objectives relating to flood risk requirements.

The policies for public services relate to reliable and effective water, drainage, energy, waste management and communications infrastructure to service the existing and future development needs of the town, in an environmentally sustainable manner during the plan period. Objective UI 5 specifically addresses the presence of the town's wastewater treatment plant within Flood Zone A and provides a commitment to facilitate and support the development of flood protection measures for the plant.

The policies in relation to waste management will generally have positive direct and indirect impacts through the provision of recycling facilities throughout the plan area which benefits biodiversity, flora and fauna, population, soils, water, air quality and climate, cultural heritage, landscape, and material assets.

The policies relating to the provision of energy and communications infrastructure will have direct and indirect positive impacts on population by improving the quality of life of Gort town's population.

7.2.7 Urban Design and Landscape

The protection of built heritage and the integration and linkage of new retail developments with the existing urban form/layout are key objectives.

The importance of Gort's townscape qualities which are derived from its historic urban structure are noted throughout the LAP. In this regard a detailed urban design analysis of the existing townscape is set out together with policies and objectives specific to the future development of the town. The LAP encourages the regeneration and conservation of the town centre by using best practice urban design principles and requiring detailed design considerations.

It is anticipated that these objectives will help to reinforce the town's designation as a Key Town under the Regional Planning Guidelines and are likely to increase employment opportunities and quality of life for those living in Gort town.

Prioritisation of development on brownfield sites and infill lands in Gort town centre and immediately adjoining it would have a positive direct impact, as it would be expected to discourage sprawl of commercial and retail development in undeveloped rural areas outside the town boundary. This will also allow for more efficient provision of facilities such as waste, transport, water and wastewater, provided that these are in place in advance or in parallel with the new development. Also, impacts from infill development would be expected to be positive in terms of climate, as this will focus development within the urban envelope of the town, which is well served with public transport links.

7.2.8 Built and Cultural Heritage

Consolidation and expansion of the town centre will have positive direct impacts with respect to cultural heritage and landscape as this would allow for potential improvements to these areas through regeneration. However, care will have to be taken to protect the heritage setting.

The regeneration, consolidation and expansion of the town centre as planned is primarily expected to result in positive impacts as these would represent development on infill and brownfield lands, thereby protecting soils, water and biodiversity and population from cumulative impacts of new development. In certain circumstances, development and intensification may have unforeseen impacts in terms of placing pressure on water, soils and biodiversity. However, integration of these policies with the provision of required infrastructure would be expected to reduce indirect negative impacts on other these receptors.

The protection and enhancement of Gort town's built heritage is an important objectives of the Gort LAP. The policies for Cultural, Architectural and Archaeological Heritage will generally be positive particularly for cultural heritage and landscape through the recognition, protection and preservation of the cultural heritage (including archaeology and architecture) of Gort.

7.2.9 Natural Heritage, Green Infrastructure and Recreation and Amenity

The importance of green infrastructure is recognised in the Gort LAP. While there are no designated ecological sites within the LAP boundary, policies and objective requiring the protection of designated Natura 2000 sites which are either hydrologically connected to the town or which have mobile species that might occur within the town, are set out. Policies are also set out to ensure the protection of Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) from any development that would adversely affect their conservation and amenity value.

The policies for natural heritage for the Gort LAP will generally be positive for biodiversity as it aims to protect and promote opportunities for enhancement of local biodiversity features throughout the LAP area. Specific policies to protect the status of Natura 2000 sites and their associated habitats and

features are provided within the LAP which will have overall positive impacts with regard to biodiversity. Positive secondary impacts are also likely to occur in the areas of soil and water, as the protection, conservation and enhancement of biodiversity is expected to also result in protection of these resources due to the controls that would be placed on development during its implementation. Secondary impacts on landscape may also occur as a result of implementation of protective policies on the natural environment.

The policies for green infrastructure, recreation and amenity are aimed at protecting, improving and enhancing open spaces and a range of facilities providing for leisure and relaxation throughout the town. These policies are expected to result in largely positive direct, and indirect impacts to population through the improvements to the quality of life. Indirect positive effects are also anticipated with respect to biodiversity and landscape as a result. Policies and objectives with respect to green infrastructure and open space will primarily result in direct positive impacts to population and landscape with potential indirect and / or secondary impacts with respect to biodiversity, soils and water.

7.2.10 Overview of Evaluation of Land Use Zoning Objectives

The Gort LAP 2013-2019 provides a development framework to guide the development of the town for the next six years. As part of this development framework, one of the key principles to this approach as set out in the Gort LAP is to achieve consolidated growth rates over the short to medium term through development of residential, employment, recreational, cultural, retail and educational facilities. The framework for the town going forward is provided for in the land use zoning map in **Map 1A** and **Map 1B** of the Gort LAP and associated land use zoning objectives, which have been assessed in relation to strategic environmental objectives for the subject of this report. The purpose of land use zoning is to indicate to property owners, and to the general public, the types of development that the Council considers most appropriate in each zone.

Land use zoning objectives are provided for with respect to the following uses: Town Centre/Commercial, Residential Phase 1, Residential Phase 2, Business & Enterprise, Industrial, Community Facilities, Agriculture, Open Space/Recreation & Amenity and Public Utilities.

Town Centre/Commercial

Lands zoned for town centre uses are generally considered to be quite positive objectives with respect to population, climate change and material assets as they promote the consolidation and improvement of these areas and provision of services in close proximity to same, which will lend itself to the use of public transport, walking and cycling. These objectives are also likely to have indirect positive effects on landscape due to the promotion of infill development which will have a net positive effect through reduction in development of greenfield lands.

Residential Phase 1

Undeveloped Lands zoned for new residential development during the lifetime of the 2013-2019 LAP in Phase I are zoned R - Residential in Map 1A of the Gort LAP. These undeveloped zoned lands include lands which have the benefit of planning permission since the 2002 LAP and have not yet been developed. R- Residential (Phase 1) zoned lands also include residentially zoned lands identified as part of the development strategy for the Gort LAP 2013-2019 and to deliver on the Core Strategy allocations set out for Gort in the Galway County Development Plan. These lands also make provision for potential residential uses within pockets of land generally located in close proximity to existing residential developments.

Residential Phase 2

Map 1A of the Gort LAP also makes provision for residentially zoned Phase 2 lands under zoning R2. These undeveloped lands are reserved for the longer term growth needs of the town and are generally located in more peripheral areas to the east and south of the town. According to the Gort LAP these lands will not normally be eligible for development during the lifetime of this LAP. However consideration will be given to single house developments for family members on family owned lands or where it is apparent that Residential (Phase 1) lands cannot or will not be developed within the plan period, compliance with the Core Strategy in the 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, access and servicing requirements.

The phased development of lands for residential use in accordance with Map 1a will have an overall beneficial effect on population, climate change, landscape and material assets as residential development will be developed in a planned, phased and serviced manner. This would result in high quality living environments; it promotes sustainable transport, walking and cycling and will reduce potential effects on landscape from otherwise sprawling developments throughout the environs of the town.

As with all new developments on greenfield sites, there is potential for negative effects on biodiversity, water and soils. However it is anticipated that any potential mitigation measures would be offset or mitigated against through the normal development management process.

Business and Enterprise and Industrial

Objectives for the development of business and enterprise and industrial are anticipated to have a positive direct impact on population and material assets as these land uses will help to reinforce the town's designation as a Key Town under the Core Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines. The zoning of these lands provides an opportunity to increase employment in these areas and as a result to improve quality of life for those living in Gort Town.

Zoning of lands for these uses in close proximity to the town in line with the LAP's development strategy supports the use of public transport and walking and cycling and will as a result reduce impacts on climate change. Secondary positive impacts on population, climate, landscape and material assets as these objectives would be expected to discourage sprawl of these uses in an unregulated manner throughout the town.

As with all new developments, development within business and enterprise and industrial zones have potential for in combination effects (along with other developments planned for the town) to have impacts on biodiversity, soil, water and landscape through pressure on wastewater systems, water supplies and through development of greenfield lands. However, any new developments on these lands would be subject to the normal development management process which is likely to offset any significant impacts associated with development of these lands.

Community Facilities

The aim of the land use zoning objective for community facilities is to protect and provide for the development of schools, religious orders and other community and educational facilities. It is anticipated that this land use zoning objective would have an overall positive effect on population as it would improve educational and community facilities serving the public. As with all new developments there is potential to impact on biodiversity, soils, landscape and water through the development of greenfield lands. However any new development would be subject to development management requirements of the LAP and the Galway CDP 2009-2015.

Agriculture

The land use zoning objective for agriculture aims to protect the rural character of the area from inappropriate development and provide for agricultural and appropriate non-urban uses.

This land use objective will have overall positive effects with respect to population and climate change they would help to maintain the quality of people's lives through high quality environments and providing recreational areas which may indirectly have positive effects on people.

This land use objective is expected to result in direct positive impacts to biodiversity. Positive and secondary impacts are also likely to occur in the areas of soil and water due to the controls that would be placed on development as a result of implementation of this objective.

Open Space/Recreation & Amenity

The land use objective for open space and amenity aims to retain and protect existing open space and recreational facilities and uses and to protect these lands from urban sprawl and ribbon development. Additionally these lands are zoned to 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.

This land use objective will have overall positive effects with respect to population and climate change. It would help to maintain the quality of people's lives through high quality environments and providing recreational areas which may indirectly have positive effects on people.

This land use objectives is expected to result in direct positive impacts to biodiversity. Positive and secondary impacts are also likely to occur in the areas of soil and water due to the controls that would be placed on development as a result of implementation of this objective.

Public Utilities

The land use objective for public utilities aims to facilitate the provision and maintenance of essential public utility infrastructure, together with necessary ancillary facilities and uses, as appropriate.

Zoning of lands for public utilities is necessary to take account of existing wastewater treatment within the boundary of the Draft LAP area. This zoning provides lands for improvements to existing wastewater infrastructure and therefore has the potential to provide positive impacts on population, biodiversity and water quality. However as with all new developments, development within public utilities zones have potential for impacts on biodiversity, soil, water and landscape through construction activities and development of greenfield lands. However, any new developments on these lands would be subject to the normal development management process which is likely to offset any significant impacts associated with development of these lands.

8 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the Environmental Report provides an outline of the potential cumulative effects on the environment as a result of implementing the Gort LAP (2013-2019).

Cumulative effects are referred to in a number of SEA guidance documents and are defined in the EPA SEA Process Checklist (2011) as “effects on the environment that result from incremental changes caused by the strategic action together with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. These effects can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over time or space”. Therefore the combined effect of human activity can pose a serious threat on our environment. These effects can be insignificant individually but cumulatively over time and from a number of sources can result in the degradation of sensitive environmental resources.

The 2004 Guidelines produced by the DEHLG outlines that the SEA process is in a good position to address cumulative effects for which the Environmental Impact Assessment process is not equipped to deal with. Due to the strategic nature of the SEA process a forum is provided in which cumulative effects can be addressed.

8.2 LEGISLATION

The consideration of cumulative effects is a requirement of the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC). It states under Article 5(1) that an Environmental Report shall be prepared and relevant criteria is provided in Annex I, which states that;

“The likely significant effect (these effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects) on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors”.

Under Article 3(5) of the SEA Directive the determination of likely significant effects is addressed and within this it is stated that Member States shall take into account the relevant criteria within Annex II. Under Annex II (2) it is stated that “characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to the cumulative nature of the effects”.

8.3 PLANNING

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) sets out the national context for spatial planning with the overall aim of achieving a better balance of economic, social and physical development. This NSS together with the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) must inform the development within the county of Galway. The RPGs are a means by which to implement the NSS by providing detailed policy and guidance. These RPGs provide a long term planning framework for the development of a region, thereby providing a strategic forum in which cumulative effects can be identified. The Planning and Development Act clarifies the key obligations required of Planning Authorities whilst envisaging close alignment between the NSS, the RPGs, Development Plans and Local Area Plans.

Galway is within the geographical area of the RPGs for the Western Region 2010-2022. In accordance with national and European legislation SEA was undertaken to assess the potential significant environmental impacts and effects of the RPGs. Environmental factors have been integrated into the development of the RPGs and the related decision making process through the SEA process, thereby

addressing cumulative effects within the broad context of the geographical areas of Galway, Mayo and Roscommon.

The framework for development within the county of Galway is outlined within the Core Strategy Variation No. 1 to the Galway County Development Plan 2009-2015 which was prepared under the provisions of the Planning and Development Act. This document which sets out the strategy for proper planning and sustainable development of the County was also the subject of SEA and cumulative impacts with respect to the entire county of Galway were identified.

Under the Planning Act LAPs have the responsibility for presenting a strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of a specific administrative area which for the purposes of this LAP is Gort town. The LAP for Gort town will set out a strategic framework for planning covering the period 2013-2019. There are a number of potential pressures on the environment from this LAP including such issues as population increase, increased housing units and associated development within the town. The key environmental sensitivities affected by these potential pressures are addressed in the following section.

8.4 KEY ENVIRONMENTAL RECEPTORS

There are a number of ecological resources in close proximity to Gort town including Coole-Garryland cSAC/SPA, which lies to the north of the town and comprises a series of turloughs. These turloughs are a water-dependent EU priority habitat with unique ecology and are located downstream of the town and therefore downstream of any potential impacts on freshwater systems making them susceptible to development pressure from associated human activity. In addition to Coole-Garryland, there are many other Natura 2000 sites located within 15km of Gort LAP. These sites include Lough Cutra cSAC/SPA, Caherglassaun Turlough cSAC, Galway Bay Natura 2000 sites, East Burren Complex cSAC, Kiltartan Cave NHA and Pollduagh Cave pNHA.

Although field boundaries within the Gort area are dominated by stone walls aerial photography indicates that the density of hedgerows increases further from the town centre. Hedgerows act as an important wildlife habitat that host a wide range of plant and shrub species along with birds, mammals and insects. They typically form the boundary to fields and properties and are susceptible to development pressure and farming expansion. The removal of hedgerows as a result of greenfield development from Gort LAP has potential cumulative impacts in relation to biodiversity.

The accessible road and rail connections within and surrounding Gort LAP ensures that the town is a popular commuter town for people employed in the 'Galway City and Environs' and 'Ennis Town and Environs' areas. However the projected increase in population and associated numbers of dwellings from Gort LAP has the potential to raise noise levels through increased road traffic. With the introduction of sustainable transport policies and the buffering of residential dwellings to road/rail noise the cumulative impacts on human beings can be minimised.

Gort town partially overlies a regionally important aquifer. Gort LAP is located within the Western River Basin District. The Gort/Cannahowna which runs through the LAP is outlined as being 'not at risk' of meeting the objectives of the WFD. The wastewater discharged from Gort town is treated at Gort town WwTP which discharges into the Gort/Cannahowna River is located to the north of the town. There is currently 469PE spare capacity at the WwTP and no upgrade works are proposed in the current Water Services Investment Programme 2010-2013.

With an increased population for Gort town there will be cumulative pressure on the water supply demands for both towns. Cumulative pressures as a result of increased population will be addressed in the context of planning for this region. Strategic planning for water supply in the area will be addressed through the new authority Irish Water. No new water supply has been proposed however new water supply for the region will be assessed by under an SEA/AA on any new Plan/Programme. Therefore monitoring and review of water supply to serve the growing population of Gort will be required.

8.5 CONCLUSION

The environment surrounding the LAP of Gort town contains sensitive ecological environments and surface and groundwater systems. The Gort LAP has inherited population targets and projections from higher level plans in the planning hierarchy including the Regional Planning Guidelines and the Core Strategy for the County Development Plan. As a result, a core strategy has been formed which makes provision for projected targets at national, regional and local levels, which are not only in line with one another but also ensure a sustainable pattern of growth within the hierarchy. As a result, the Gort LAP has inherited population growth projections from the Core Strategy of the Galway County Development Plan 2009-2015, which will result in increased pressure on land resources and existing services such as wastewater disposal and water supplies within the area. Gort LAP will adhere to the Core Strategy for Galway taking into account the environment and sustainability and making provisions for the protection of the environment through phased development and the provision of adequate services.

9 MITIGATION MEASURES

Annex 1 (g) of the SEA Directive requires that the Environmental Report describe the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and/or offset as fully as possible any significant adverse effects on the environment from implementation of the LAP. While this section is largely focused on key mitigation measures that should be included in the LAP, in some cases recommendations are made as to issues that should be considered during the planning process during the lifetime of the LAP. A detailed assessment of policies and objectives within the Plan has been undertaken and proposed mitigation is presented in **Table 9.1**.

One of the key issues for the Gort LAP as identified through the baseline environment and assessment stage is the potential for its policies and objectives to impact on the designated European site of Coole/Garryland and potentially other hydrologically linked ecosystems and including mobile species which use the Gort area for either migration, foraging or resting. In recognition of the importance of these sites and species, the Council has added significant sections to the LAP to highlight the importance of these sites and the legal requirement for Appropriate Assessment of these Natura 2000 sites for any plan or project with potential to negatively impact on them.

Mitigation measures proposed as a result of the detailed assessment of policies and objectives of the LAP are set out in **Table 9.1**. Mitigation measures are proposed in the form of new policies / objectives and / or amendments to the text of policies / objectives. The mitigation included in the assessment of policies and objectives does not refer to the general requirement for assessment of impacts on the environment but instead assumes requirements for environmental assessment in accordance with the normal development management process and EIA Directive as a given.

The first column of Table 9.1 provides information on the policy or objective for which mitigation is considered necessary or where additional mitigatory objectives or policies are recommended and the second column sets out the exact wording suggested by the SEA team as mitigation measures. All proposed insertions and proposed amendments are highlighted in bold and underlined for ease of reference.

Table 9.1: Mitigation Measures Proposed as a Result of Assessment of Policies and Objectives

Recommendations	Policies, Objectives and Main Body Text (changes bold and underlined)	Changes to Policies & Objectives
Land use		
<p>Objective LU3, LU4 and LU5</p> <p>Suggest inclusion of the word 'sustainable' before development....</p>	<p>Inclusion of the word 'sustainable' before development in Objective LU3, LU4, LU5.</p>	<p>New text accepted.</p>
Residential Development		
<p>Objective RD1 – Phased Residential Development</p> <p>This objective could be improved by a prior commitment to undertake SEA and AA with regard to the re-zoning of Phase 2 residential development.</p> <p>Recommend inclusion of text within this objective to ensure that any future zoning of Phase 2 lands will</p>	<p>Additional wording to this objective:</p> <p><u>The inclusion of new residential Phase 2 lands within this plan will not in any way infer a prior commitment on the part of the Council regarding their future zoning for residential purposes within any future variation or review of the Gort LAP Any future zoning of the phase II lands would also be subject to appropriate environmental</u></p>	<p>Not accepted, already covered under existing Objectives DS3 and Objective NH1.</p>

Recommendations	Policies, Objectives and Main Body Text (changes bold and underlined)	Changes to Policies & Objectives
be the subject of SEA or AA as part of any future variation or review of the Gort LAP.	<u>assessment(s) as required under the relevant legislation.</u>	
Community Facilities		
<p>Policy CF2 – Community Facilities and Amenities</p> <p>Include reference to close proximity to new and existing residential development within policy</p>	Community facilities and amenities projects will be facilitated in appropriate locations <u>and additionally in the vicinity of all new and existing residential development</u> , 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.	New text accepted.
<p>Objective CF5 – Childcare Facilities</p> <p>The inclusion of additional text to ensure childcare facilities are included in the vicinity of all new and existing residential development.</p>	Facilitate and promote the development of childcare facilities in suitable locations in accordance with national policy, including the DEHLG <i>Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities</i> (or any updated/superseding document), <u>and in tandem and in the vicinity of all new and existing residential development.</u>	New text accepted.
<p>Under Section 3.3.1 reference should be made to allotments and community gardens which can have a number of benefits including promoting healthy lifestyles, providing an inexpensive and local source of food and enhancing biodiversity.</p> <p>Recommend inclusion of wording to Objective CF6 or new objective with reference to community-managed gardens /allotments.</p>	<p>CF Objective:</p> <p><u>Facilitate the development of community-managed gardens / allotments in the town subject to implementation of sustainable environmental practices.</u></p>	Not accepted
Economic Development		
<p>Objective ED4 – Tourism Development</p>	Encourage and facilitate the sustainable development of the tourism potential of Gort 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. Key	New text accepted

Recommendations	Policies, Objectives and Main Body Text (changes bold and underlined)	Changes to Policies & Objectives
	<p>projects and initiatives that will be supported will include:</p> <p>a) Support the sustainable development of a river walkway and 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 that recognises the EU Water Framework Directive, water quality, Natura 2000 conservation management objectives for the Coole-Garryland Complex <u>and associated protected species including otter and bat species.</u></p> <p>b) Investigate the provision of a tourist/information centre within the town centre.</p>	
Transport Infrastructure		
<p>Objective T118 – Noise</p> <p>Recommendation that residential dwellings in proximity to the M18 be protected through mitigation measures. Response to EPA submission.</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. <u>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.</u></p>	<p>New text included within Objective T118- Noise</p>
Water		
<p>Objective UI1 – Water Services Infrastructure</p> <p>Recommendation of inclusion of intention to prepare a water conservation strategy.</p>	<p>To prepare a water conservation strategy for the area during the lifetime of the Plan.</p>	<p>A Water Conservation Strategy is completed and works are on-going at present. Reference to the Water Conservation Strategy is included within of Objective UI1 – Water Services Infrastructure part a) as modified by inclusion of blue text (-Continue to implement the Water Conservation Strategy within Gort and carry out improvements to the existing infrastructure <u>and quality of the town's water supply system,</u> including the partial network and reservoir upgrade works</p>

Recommendations	Policies, Objectives and Main Body Text (changes bold and underlined)	Changes to Policies & Objectives
		under the Water Conservation Rehabilitation works as proposed to commence in 2014/2015.
<p>Objective UI13 – Western River Basin Management Plan and Protection of Waters</p> <p>Recommendation of inclusion of reference to Programme of Measures within this objective.</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>	<p>Change accepted.</p>
<p>Recommendation that the Plan should refer to the requirements of the European Communities Drinking Water Regulations 2007.</p>	<p>Following text included within the Gort LAP: <u>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 is of significant importance to the Council.</u></p>	<p>Accepted and new text inserted into Section 3.6.1 Utility and Environmental Infrastructure within the 'Context'.</p>
Water Infrastructure		
<p>Objective UI3 Water Supply and Water Conservation</p>	<p>Ensure that new developments are adequately serviced with a suitable quantity and quality of a sustainably sourced drinking water supply, promote</p>	<p>New text accepted and included within Objective UI3 Water Supply and Water</p>

Recommendations	Policies, Objectives and Main Body Text (changes bold and underlined)	Changes to Policies & Objectives
<p>Additional wording in response to EPA pre-draft screening submission relating to issues regarding existing and any proposed new water supply.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p><u>Verification of the effectiveness of the remedial action programme for the current water supply scheme will be progressed in consultation with the EPA.</u></p> <p><u>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.</u></p>	<p>Conservation</p>
<p>Objective UI4 – Wastewater Disposal Recommendation that the Plan reference the EPAs code of practice in relation to wastewater treatment and disposal systems for individual one of housing.</p>	<p>Following text included after existing text in Objective UI4: <u>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. The provision of individual septic tanks and treatment plants in the Gort area will be strongly discouraged 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.</u></p>	<p>New text in bold and underlined is accepted. <u>Objective UI4 Wastewater Disposal</u> to read as follows: 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. <u>Implement and promote the Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations 2001 and 2004.</u> Ensure the <u>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 will be strongly discouraged in order to minimise the risk</u></p>

Recommendations	Policies, Objectives and Main Body Text (changes bold and underlined)	Changes to Policies & Objectives
		<u>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.</u>
<p>Recommend additional text for Objective UI5 Wastewater Treatment Plant Buffer in order to address the issue of the town's wastewater treatment plant being located within Flood Zone A.</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.</p> <p><u>The council will support and facilitate protection measures for the town's existing wastewater treatment plant which is located within Flood Zone A.</u></p>	<p>Additional text accepted.</p>
<p>New objective recommended to address waste leakage from the system.</p>	<p><u>Develop a wastewater leak detection programme including the use of a strategic metering system to aid in leak detection.</u></p>	<p>Text modified and inserted within Objective UI1 – Water Services Infrastructure, part b)<u>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.</u></p>
<p>New objective recommended so that the plan implements and promotes the Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations 2001 and 2004.</p>	<p><u>Implement and promote the Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations 2001 and 2004.</u></p>	<p>New text accepted and inserted into Objective UI4 Wastewater Disposal</p>
<p>Objective UI1 – Water Services Infrastructure New wording recommended to ensure that the existing wastewater treatment facility (ies) are assessed to ensure they are in good working order. Response to EPA submission Pre-draft SEA Screening Submission.</p>	<p>b) As development takes place monitor the <u>adequacy of the existing wastewater treatment facility(ies) in terms of both capacity and performance as well as potential risk to human health and water quality.</u> <u>Implement the recommendations in the Kinvara Water Management Unit Action Plan requiring capital works, implementation of performance management systems of the Gort Wastewater Treatment Plant.</u></p>	<p>–Text not accepted, see modified text above in relation to Objective UI1 – Water Services Infrastructure, part b)</p>

Recommendations	Policies, Objectives and Main Body Text (changes bold and underlined)	Changes to Policies & Objectives
<p>New objective recommended to promote Integrated Constructed Wetlands within the administrative boundary of the LAP.</p>	<p><u>Promote the appropriate use of Integrated Constructed Wetlands (ICWs) within the Gort area were appropriate which follows the guidance provided by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.</u></p>	<p>Not accepted.</p>
<p>Recommendation 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>Following text included within the Gort LAP. <u>The waste water treatment plant upgrade will be carried out in accordance with the Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations 2007, S.I. No. 684 of 2007.</u></p>	<p>Text modified and inserted into part d) of Objective U11Water Services Infrastructure– Progress the upgrading of the existing wastewater treatment plant and the sewer network for the town under the Water Services Investment Programme <u>in accordance with the Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations 2007, S.I. No. 684 of 2007.</u></p>

Recommendations	Policies, Objectives and Main Body Text (changes bold and underlined)	Changes to Policies & Objectives
Surface Water Drainage		
<p>Objective UI6 – Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems Recommend that this policy refers to Surface Water legislation ‘Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (S.I. No 272 of 2009).</p>	<p>Inclusion of following within Section 3.6.1 of the Plan: <u>The Council will also implement all relevant Surface Water legislation including ‘Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (S.I. No 272 of 2009).</u> Also include at end of Objective UI6: <u>Developers will be required to adopt site specific solutions to surface water drainage systems in all cases.</u></p>	<p>All recommended text accepted and inserted into Objective UI6 with the inclusion of <u>‘or any updated/superseding document’</u> after first section.</p>
Flood Risk Management		
<p>Objective UI10– and Watercourses Recommended the inclusion of a 10m buffer zone on all watercourses to ensure protection of this habitat.</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 buffers <u>between any new development and all watercourses including</u> the Cannahowna/Gort River. Promote the sustainable management and use of watercourses and avoid the culverting or realignment of these features. <u>Any hard landscaping proposals shall be located outside of any buffer zone areas.</u></p>	<p>New text accepted and inserted into Objective UI10.</p>
<p>Policy UI2 – Flood Risk Management Change in wording to ensure that the recommendations from the SEA and Appropriate Assessment of the Western Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study are implemented. Response to scoping submission from the EPA.</p>	<p>It is the policy of Galway County Council to support, in co-operation with the OPW, the implementation of the EU <i>Flood Risk Directive (2007/60/EC)</i>, the <i>Flood Risk Regulations (SI No. 122 of 2010)</i> and the DEHLG/OPW publication <i>Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009</i> (and any updated/superseding legislation or policy guidance). Galway County Council will also implement the recommendations of the <u>Western Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study (Western CFRAMs)</u>, along with the mitigation measures and recommendations arising from the associated SEA and Appropriate Assessment. Galway County Council will also take account of the <i>Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA)</i> and the Stage 2 SFRA and any recommendations and outputs arising from same that relate to or impact on the Plan Area.</p>	<p>New text accepted. Galway County Council will also take account of the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) and, the <u>Stage 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the Gort LAP Area and</u> any recommendations and outputs arising from same that relate to or impact on the Plan Area.</p>

Recommendations	Policies, Objectives and Main Body Text (changes bold and underlined)	Changes to Policies & Objectives
Waste Management		
<p>New objective recommended to ensure compliance with the Galway Waste Management Plan, etc. Also include reference to EPA's National Hazardous Waste Management Plan</p>	<p><u>Objective UI17 Waste Management Implement the Waste Management Plan for the Connaught Region 2006-2011, the Galway County Council's Litter Management Plan 2007-2010, the National Waste Prevention Programme, the EPA's National Hazardous Waste Management Plan and any superseding plans/programmes over the lifetime of the Gort Local Area Plan.</u></p>	<p>New objective accepted UI17</p>
<p>Potential new Objective U1XX Bioenergy Crops</p> <p>Objective UI21 Renewable Energy has the potential with introduction of bioenergy crops to negatively impact on biodiversity. Recommend a new Objective U1XX specifically relating to Bioenergy.</p>	<p><u>Objective UI18 Bioenergy Crops</u></p> <p><u>Bioenergy crops will be facilitated only in circumstances where they avoid gene flow to wild relatives of crops in centres of diversity, that do not result in invasion by the crop into other habitats, that enhance field scale biodiversity, that increase landscape diversity, that do not threaten valued habitats within the local landscape, that promote the sustainable management of biodiverse habitats, that do not increase the risk of loss of primary habitats and that result in a proportionately large reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.</u></p>	<p>Not accepted.</p>
Natural Heritage		
<p>Objective NH5 – Biodiversity and Ecological Networks(refer to Maps 2A/2B) Include reference to <u>semi-natural grasslands and maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity.</u></p> <p>Recommend to include reference to ash dieback, DAFM is introducing emergency measures under the Plant Health Directive. These new measures being introduced by the Department under Statutory Instrument will require that any ash plants imported into the country would come from an area known to be free of the disease. This would be regulated under</p>	<p>Support the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and ecological connectivity within the Plan Area, including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, <u>semi-natural grassland</u>, 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:</p> <p>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.</p> <p>b) Protect and enhance the water quality and ecology of the Cannahowna/Gort River and its function as ecological corridors, by maintaining</p>	<p>In bold and underlined accepted, ...<u>semi-natural grasslands....</u> And <u>maintenance and enhancement</u> Additionally the following text will be inserted at the end of Objective NH5, part c) <u>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.</u></p>

Recommendations	Policies, Objectives and Main Body Text (changes bold and underlined)	Changes to Policies & Objectives
<p>the EU Plant Passport system. The Department is calling on the forest nursery trade and contractors to introduce a voluntary moratorium on imported stock from continental Europe with immediate effect.</p>	<p>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 <u>maintenance and enhancement</u> 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. <u>In consultation with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine seek to prevent the introduction of imported ash plants or ash plants infected with <i>Chalara fraxinea</i> into the Plan area in line with the Plant Health Directive any other relevant legislation.</u></p>	
<p>Reference should be made in the text to the protection of wetlands as provided by Planning and Development (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2011 S.I. No. 454 of 2011 probably under Section 3.9 Natural Heritage & Biodiversity</p> <p>Objective NH6 – Water Resources</p> <p>Reference to wetland should be included in this objective.</p>	<p>Protect the water resources in the Plan Area, including the Cannahowna/Gort, its tributaries and downstream water bodies, other streams, springs, surface water and groundwater quality, <u>and wetlands</u> 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 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>New text accepted and included within Objective NH6-Water Resources.</p>
<p>Objective NH7 – Environmental Management Buffer Recommend inclusion of additional text to ensure protection of this habitat and in response to EPA pre-draft SEA Screening submission.</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 <u>and to mitigate against pollution risks, reduce flooding potential and maintain habitat.</u> Seek to ensure that a <u>minimum setback of 10 metres</u> is maintained on either side of the Cannahowna/Gort River, save for exceptional circumstances where it can</p>	<p>The underlined text was accepted: 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 <u>and to mitigate against pollution risks, reduce flooding potential and maintain habitat</u></p>

Recommendations	Policies, Objectives and Main Body Text (changes bold and underlined)	Changes to Policies & Objectives
	<p>be reasonably demonstrated that this setback is not feasible. <u>The extent of the riparian buffer zone should be determined in consultation with a qualified ecologist. 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</u> 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. <u>Support the carrying out of a river corridor habitat survey of the Cannahowna/Gort River within the lifetime of the Plan.</u></p>	<p>The following text was not accepted by GCC as the 10m minimum setback is already set save for exceptional circumstances where it can't be achieved: The extent of the riparian buffer zone should be determined in consultation with a qualified ecologist.</p> <p>The majority of recommended text is accepted for Objective NH7</p> <p>New underlined text modified and inserted into NH7as follows – <u>The recommendations of the specialist studies shall be implemented to the greatest extent possible...</u></p> <p>And with the following modifications -</p> <p><u>...river corridor habitat survey of the Cannahowna/Gort River within the lifetime of the Plan as resources permit.</u></p>
<p>Objective NH8 – Trees, Parkland/Woodland and Hedgerows Include requirement to assess hedgerows/trees removal for impacts on bats and also requirement to replace mature trees with semi-mature trees</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 stonewalls, hedgerows and tree boundaries, wherever possible and replace with a boundary type similar to the existing boundary where removal is unavoidable. <u>Developments which propose to remove hedgerows shall be assessed by a suitably qualified expert for potential cumulative impacts on bat populations in the area.</u> <u>Ensure replacement planting of semi-mature trees where mature trees are removed within developments. Semi mature trees are defined by the BSI⁵ as ‘Trees with an overall height in excess of 4 metres</u></p>	<p>Following text is already contained within Objective NH12, so is not included: Developments which propose to remove hedgerows shall be assessed by a suitably qualified expert for potential cumulative impacts on bat populations in the area.</p> <p>The following text is included in Objective NH8:</p> <p><u>Ensure replacement planting of semi-mature trees where mature trees are removed within</u></p>

5 BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations (British Standards Institution)

Recommendations	Policies, Objectives and Main Body Text (changes bold and underlined)	Changes to Policies & Objectives
	<p><u>and or a stem girth measurement circumference of 20 centimetres or larger</u>'.</p>	<p><u>developments</u></p> <p>The following text not accepted:</p> <p><u>Semi mature trees are defined by the BSI as 'Trees with an overall height in excess of 4 metres and or a stem girth measurement circumference of 20 centimetres or larger'.</u></p>
<p>Objective NH10 – Control of Invasive and Alien Invasive Species</p> <p>New wording for invasive species objective recommended to ensure the control of alien/ invasive species.</p> <p>Also wording included referencing relevant legislation.</p>	<p>Seek to prevent the spread of invasive and alien invasive species (<u>e.g. Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam, etc.</u>) and noxious weeds (<u>e.g. Ragwort, thistle, dock, etc.</u>) and promote measures to achieve this objective. <u>Ensure compliance with the requirements of the Noxious Weeds Act 1936, the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 with regard to the control of noxious weeds and non-native invasive species.</u> Require a landscaping plan to be produced for developments near waterbodies and ensure that such plans do not include alien invasive species. <u>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.</u></p>	<p>New text for NH10 accepted with modifications, in blue, as follows:</p> <p>Seek to prevent the spread of invasive and alien invasive species (<u>e.g. Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam, etc.</u>) and noxious weeds (<u>e.g. Ragwort, thistle, dock, etc.</u>) and promote measures to achieve this objective. <u>Ensure compliance</u> <u>Raise 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.</u> <u>Cognisance should also be taken of information available from The National Invasive Species Database.</u> <u>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.</u> <u>A landscaping plan will be required for developments near waterbodies and</u></p>

Recommendations	Policies, Objectives and Main Body Text (changes bold and underlined)	Changes to Policies & Objectives
		<p><u>ensure that such plans do not include alien invasive species.</u></p>
<p>Suggest inclusion of a new Objective NH13 – Protection of Bats and Bat Habitats.</p>	<p><u>Objective NH 13 – Protection of Bats and Bat Habitats</u> <u>Ensure that development proposals in areas which are potentially important for bats, including areas of woodland, hedgerows and watercourses, 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.</u></p>	<p>The removal of specific reference to bats in Objective NH2 and the inclusion of a new objective <u>Objective NH12 – Protection of Bats and Bats Habitats</u> is accepted as modified with additional agreed text in blue.</p> <p><u>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,</u></p>

Recommendations	Policies, Objectives and Main Body Text (changes bold and underlined)	Changes to Policies & Objectives
		<u>as appropriate. All development shall be required to include green infrastructure measures which provide the potential for enhancement of local bat populations.</u>
<p>Include in main body of text reference to Green Infrastructure needed within the Plan which could be included in Section 3.9 Natural Heritage & Biodiversity. This is a response to EPA submission. This should refer to the following documents: <i>'Creating Green Infrastructure for Ireland Enhancing natural capital for human wellbeing'</i> (Comhar, 2010), <i>'Green Infrastructure - A quality of life issue'</i> (IEEM, 2012), and <i>'Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns & Villages)'</i> (DEHLG, 2009)</p> <p>Objective CF9 – Amenity Network</p> <p>And</p> <p>Objective UD4 – Green Network and the Landscape</p> <p>Objective NH5 Biodiversity and Ecological Networks</p> <p>New Green Infrastructure Objective or include reference to GI as part of UD4, CF9 and NH5</p>	<p>Include new objective or the following text where applicable in Objectives CF9, UD4 and NH5:</p> <p>Objective NHXX</p> <p><u>Require all proposals for major developments to submit, as part of the landscaping plan for the proposal, details of how any green infrastructure proposed as part of the development (e.g. green open spaces, hedgerows, tree lines, etc.) contribute positively to the development and protection of the overall green infrastructure assets of Gort Town and how it would protect and enhance linkages to the wider natural landscape features.</u></p>	<p>Not accepted, Galway County Council consider there to be no requirement for this proposed new text as a satisfactory landscape plan is considered sufficient.</p> <p>Reference to Ministerial Guidelines are contained within existing Policy UD1-Urban Design and Landscape</p>
<p>Recommended new green infrastructure objective or inclusion of text in existing suitable objective.</p>	<p><u>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</u></p>	<p>Text accepted and inserted as part d) of Objective NH5 - Biodiversity and Ecological Networks.</p>

Recommendations	Policies, Objectives and Main Body Text (changes bold and underlined)	Changes to Policies & Objectives
	<u>the railway/motorway and the surrounding countryside.</u>	

10 MONITORING MEASURES

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 (DoEHLG, 2004).

Monitoring will be based around the Strategic Environmental Objectives, Indicators and Targets. The Strategic Environmental Objectives, Indicators and Targets for the various environmental topics are set out below in **Table 10.1**. The indicators that are used will show changes that would be attributable to the implementation of the LAP. The indicators chosen are at a level, which is relevant to the LAP and are collated on and reported on by a variety of government agencies including the EPA, NPWS and OPW.

Monitoring proposals must concentrate on likely significant environmental effects, as 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 and Frequency of Reporting

The statutory Manager’s Report on progress in achieving objectives of the LAP, takes place two years after the adoption of the LAP and “shall include information in relation to the progress on, and the results of monitoring the significant environmental effects of implementation of the Plan”. If an objective or policy is resulting in a significant adverse effect then a variation may be considered during the lifetime of the LAP. It is largely the responsibility of Galway County Council to undertake the monitoring and to interpret the monitoring data relevant to Gort town and to deal with unforeseen effect as a result of implementing the Gort Local Area Plan.

Table 10.1: Monitoring and Reporting Programme

Objectives	Indicator	Target	Source/ Responsibility
Pop1 – 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
Soi1 – 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
Wat1 – 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
Wat2 – 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/Galway County Council

Objectives	Indicator	Target	Source/ Responsibility
<p>Wat3 – Reduce risk of flooding through avoidance of development in Flood Zones A or B</p>	<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>	<p>Galway County Council</p>
<p>Bio1 – Protect, conserve and avoid loss of the diversity, range, area or population of habitats, species and wildlife corridors.</p>	<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>	<p>Galway County Council in consultation with the NPWS</p>
<p>Bio2 - 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>	<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>	<p>Galway County Council in consultation with the NPWS</p>

Objectives	Indicator	Target	Source/ Responsibility
Bio3 - Conserve and protect other nature conservation sites (NHAs, pNHAs, National Parks, Nature Reserves, Wildfowl Sanctuaries).	Habitat quantity and quality and species abundance and diversity	No net loss of habitat and species	Galway County Council in consultation with the NPWS
Bio4 – 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
Cli1 – Contribute to mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change and air quality issues.	Average energy consumption of new residential housing stock Tonnes of CO2 /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
Mat1 - 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	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
	<p>pressure on peripheral areas.</p> <p>Minimise the % of unaccounted for water. This refers to leakage from the system.</p> <p>Maximise length of cycle lanes, length of Quality Bus Corridors and number of bus services within the Town.</p> <p>Increase in planning permissions making provision for renewable energy and water conservation measures.</p>		
<p>Mat2- To ensure that all development is adequately serviced to EPA standards prior to discharge.</p>	<p>% compliance in wastewater discharges from municipal treatment</p>	<p>Improved % compliance</p>	<p>Galway County Council</p>
<p>H1 – 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.).</p>	<p>% of Protected Structures ‘at risk’</p> <p>No. of ACAs</p> <p>No. of archaeological sites investigated</p> <p>No impact on the fabric or setting of monuments on the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) by development granted planning permission.</p> <p>No impacts on the architectural heritage value or setting of protected structures by development granted planning permission.</p>	<p>Ensure that the cultural heritage of the town is maintained and protected from damage and deterioration</p> <p>Number of monuments on the RMP, impacted by granted planning permissions.</p> <p>Number of protected structures impacted by development granted planning permission.</p> <p>Number of protected structures that have been demolished because of long term neglect and dereliction.</p>	<p>The Archaeological Survey monitoring programme, Ireland</p> <p>Buildings at Risk Register, Heritage Council Ireland.</p> <p>Galway County Council</p>

Objectives	Indicator	Target	Source/ Responsibility
	No protected structures to be demolished because of long term neglect and dereliction.		
H2 – To ensure the restoration and re-use of existing uninhabited and derelict structures where possible opposed to demolition and new build (to promote sustainability and reduce landfill).	Number of buildings restored over lifetime of the plan	To ensure a positive increase in such development over lifetime of LAP	Galway County Council
Lan1 – 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
No1 - To protect residents from adverse noise levels	Number of complaints regarding noise	No complaints about noise Targets as set out in Draft Noise Action Plan	Galway County Council

11 CONCLUSION

The Draft Gort LAP sets out an overall strategy, policies and objectives for the period 2013-2019 which seeks to provide for the long term planning and overall benefit of the town. This SEA Environmental Report demonstrates how environmental parameters have been addressed in the LAP preparation process to date. Consultation has been undertaken for the Scoping of the Environmental Report, and current baseline information has been described for all SEA parameters. This Environmental Report forms a key part of the consultation process and is accompanied by the Habitats Directive Assessment and Draft Gort LAP which is subject to public display.

Policies, objectives and land use zonings were assessed in terms of the impacts on the environment and mitigation measures proposed through rewording of the policies/objectives or rezoning where necessary. The mitigation measures proposed for the policies/objectives through the SEA and AA process have been incorporated into the Draft LAP. The SEA and Appropriate Assessment (AA) have informed the Draft LAP through an on-going iterative process that incorporated environmental considerations and sensitivities throughout the LAP development. The SEA and HDA has been undertaken in line with the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 to 2011 (as amended) and the European Union (Natural Habitats) Regulations 94 of 1999, as amended SI 233/1998 and SI 378/2005. Subject to the full and proper implementation of the mitigation measures outlined in this ER, including appropriate site level investigations, it is considered that significant adverse impacts on the environment will be avoided.

This Environmental Report, which identifies the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the LAP has been submitted to the Elected Members of Galway County Council for their consideration and should be read in conjunction with the Draft Gort LAP. The Environmental Report must be taken account of before adopting the Plan.

Appendix A
EPA Checklist

Section 11 – Environmental Report and Non Technical Summary

Note: This section provides an overview of the compliance of the ER with the requirements of the SEA Directive and the SEA Regulations. Where non-compliance has been highlighted in previous sections of the SEA Process Checklist, actions taken to resolve non-compliance should be highlighted in the 'Comment' section.

Minimum Requirements Question		Yes, No, Comment	Statutory Basis
11.1	Does the ER contain all of the aspects listed in Annex 1 of the SEA Directive and Schedule 2 and 2B of S.I. 435	Yes	SEA Directive Article 5 Annex 1 S.I. Nos 435 & 436 of 2004
11.2	Does the ER include a non-technical summary?	Yes	SEA Directive Article 5 Annex I (j) S.I. Nos 435 & 436 of 2004
11.3	Does the non-technical summary clearly summarise the following:		SEA Directive Article 5 Annex I (j) S.I. Nos 435 & 436 of 2004
	Y/N	Comment	
Contents and main objectives of the draft P/P/Proposed Variation	Y		
Current state of the environment and evolution	Y		
Environmental characteristics of area significantly affected	Y		
Existing environmental problems	Y		
Environmental protection objectives	Y		
Significant effects on the environment	Y		
Mitigation measures	Y		
Alternatives	Y		
Monitoring	Y		

Additional Recommended Tasks Question		Yes, No, Comment	Statutory Basis
11.4	Has a description been provided in the ER of the screening process and subsequent determination?	Yes	
11.5	Have the responses to the scoping exercises been included in the ER?	Yes	
	Has an explanation	Yes	

Additional Recommended Tasks Question		Yes, No, Comment	Statutory Basis
	been given as to how these responses were considered?		
11.6	Is the non-technical summary concise and easy to understand?	Yes	DoECLG Guidelines S.4.41
11.7	Has a description of the outcome of all consultations (including transboundary) been documented in the ER?	Yes	
11.8	Have relevant references, glossary of terms and scaled maps (with source identified) been included?	Yes	

Appendix B

Relevant Plans, Programmes and Policies

International Level Plans, Policies and Programmes

Topic	Title
Biodiversity	UN Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)
Climate Change	UN Kyoto Protocol The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Kyoto Protocol, 1997
Cultural Heritage	The World Heritage Convention United Nations Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Paris 1972)
Human Health/Air	World Health Organisation (WHO) Air Quality Guidelines (1999) and Guidelines for Europe (1987)

European Level Plans, Policies and Programmes

Topic	Title
Noise	The Environmental Noise Directive (END) (2002/49/EC)
Biodiversity	The EU Biodiversity Strategy Communication on a European Community Biodiversity Strategy [Com (98) 42]
	The EU Habitats Directive Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna (92/43/EEC)
	The EU Birds Directive Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79/409/EEC)
	Freshwater Fisheries Directive (78/659/EEC)
Cultural Heritage	Convention for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage of Europe (revised) (Valletta 1992)
	Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada 1985)
Sustainable Development	The Gothenburg Strategy (2001) Communication from the Commission on “a Sustainable Europe for a Better World”

Topic	Title
	The Sixth Environmental Action Programme (EAP) of the European Community 2002- 2012
	The SEA Directive (2001/42/EC)
	The EIA Directive (85/337/EEC) as amended by Directive 97/11/EC
	Second European Climate Change Programme (ECCP II) 2005.
Water	The Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)
	EU Floods Directive (2007/60/EC)
	Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC)
	The Groundwater Directive (1980/68/EC) and Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC)
	The Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC) as amended by Directive (98/15/EEC)
	Drinking Water Directive (80/778/EEC) as amended by Directive 98/83/EC
Waste	The Landfill Directive (99/31/EC)
Soil	Soil Thematic Strategy (COM(2006) 231) and a proposal for a Soil Framework Directive (COM(2006) 232)

National Level Plans, Policies and Programmes

Topic	Title
Biodiversity	'Actions for Biodiversity 2011-2016', Ireland's 2nd National Biodiversity Plan
	The Wildlife Act 1976 and the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000
	Flora Protection Order 1999

Topic	Title
	European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, S.I. 94/1997, as amended S.I. 233/1998, S.I. 378/2005 and European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011)
	Quality of Salmonid Waters Regulations 1988 (S.I. 293 of 1988)
Climate	National Climate Change Strategy (2000) and National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012
	Department of Transport, 2003: 'Statement of Strategy: 2003-2005'
Heritage	National Heritage Plan 2002 - 2006
	The National Monuments Acts (1930 to 2004)
	The Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1999
	Planning and Development Acts 2000-2011
Planning	National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020
	National Development Plan 2007-2013 Transforming Ireland - A Better Quality of Life for All.
	Planning and Development Acts 2000-2011
	Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act 2006

Topic	Title
	The Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines 2008
	Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2005
Sustainable Development	Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland, 1997
	Making Ireland's Development Sustainable - 2002
	National Sustainable Development Policy
	National Climate Change Strategy 2007 - 2012
	Housing Policy Framework: Building Sustainable Communities, 2005
	Towards Sustainable Communities; Guidelines on Local Agenda 21, 2001
Transport	Transport 21
Water	Arterial Drainage Acts, 1945 and 1995
	European Communities (Drinking Water) (No. 2) Regulations 2007 (SI No. 278 of 2007)
	Water Services Acts 2007 and 2012

Topic	Title
	Water Pollution Acts 1977-1990
	European Communities (Waste Water Treatment) Prevention of Odours and Noise) Regulations 2005 (SI No. 787 of 2005)
	Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations 2007 (SI No. 684 of 2007)
	Surface Water Regulations 2009
	Water Services Investment Programme
Waste	The Waste Management Act 1996 and amendments
	Changing our Ways (1998)
	Delivering Change - Recycling and Preventing Waste (2002)

Regional and County Level Plans, Policies and Programmes

Topic	Title
Transport	A Platform for Change Strategy 2000-2016

Topic	Title
	Galway County Council Walking & Cycling Strategy Report 2012
Cultural Heritage	Galway County Heritage Plan 2009-2014
Water and Wastewater	Water Services Investment Programme 2010-2012 (extended to 2013)
Planning	The Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010 - 2022
	Galway Development Plan 2009-2015 and Variation No. 1 and Variation No. 2 to the Plan
	Relevant Local Area Plans

Appendix C

Matrix Assessment of Policies/ Objectives

1. Development Strategy

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
<p>Policy DS1 Development Strategy</p> <p>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 – Consolidate Existing Town Centre, Sequential Development around Established Urban Core and Controlled Eastward Expansion, and 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.</p>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	<p>All interactions are either positive or neutral so no mitigation needed.</p>
<p>Objective DS1 Orderly and Sequential Development</p> <p>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.</p>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
<p>Objective DS2 Consistency with Core Strategy</p> <p>Ensure that developments permitted within the Plan Area are consistent with the zoned land allocations in the Core Strategy and associated provisions in the Galway County Development Plan. The amount of development permitted within the lifetime of the Plan on the totality of residential zoned land shall remain within the population allocation assigned to Gort in the Core Strategy of the County Development Plan and any updated version of same</p>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
<p>Objective DS3 Natura 2000 Network and Habitats</p>	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	0	0	0	+	

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments	
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1		
<p>Directive Assessment</p> <p>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:</p> <p>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</p> <p>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</p>																		

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments	
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1		
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 DS4 Development Management Standards and Guidelines Ensure that the general development management standards and guidelines set out in the Galway County Development Plan are applied 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.	0	0	+	+	+/-	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	+		Potential Impacts on Wat3 EPO mitigated by the following Objectives: UI10, NH7, DS7, LU6, LU10, CF10, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UD4 and Policies: UI2, RD1,
Objective DS5 Service Led Development Ensure that development is preceded by sufficient capacity in the public waste water and potable water infrastructure.	+	0	+	+	0	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	0	0		All interactions are either positive or neutral so no mitigation needed.
Objective DS6 Residential Development Phasing 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 DS7 Flood Risk Management and	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	0		

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments	
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1		
<p>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 any updated/superseding document) and the relevant policies, objectives and guidelines in this Plan.</p>																		

2. Land Use

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
<p>Policy LU1 Land Use Management (refer to Maps 1A/1B)</p> <p>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.</p>	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	+	<p>Potential impacts mitigated by Objectives UD1, UD4, UD6, UD7, UI10, BH1-BH10, NH1-13, DS3, DS7, LU6, LU10, CF10, UI7, UI8, UI10, UI13, UI14, UI19-UI21, UD4, RD7, TI18 and Policies BH1, BH2, NH1, UI2, UI6, RD1,</p>
<p>Objective LU1 Land Use Management (refer to Maps 1A/1B)</p> <p>Promote the 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 Gort.</p>	0	+	+	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	+	+/-	0	+/-	+	+/-	+/-	
<p>Objective LU2 Residential (R) (refer to Maps 1A/1B and Objective RD1)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</p>	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	0	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments	
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1		
<p>facilities, local services and public transport facilities, to serve the residential population of the area.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>A phasing scheme will apply to residential uses on Residential (R) zoned lands, as set out under Objective RD1 in Section 3.2.2.</p>																		
<p>Objective LU3 Industrial (I) (refer to Maps 1A/1B) Promote the 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.</p>	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	
<p>Objective LU4 Business & Enterprise (BE) (refer to Maps 1A/1B) Promote the 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, 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.</p>	+/	+/	+/	+/	+/	+/	+/	+/	+/	+/	+/	+/	+/	+/	+/	+/	+/	+/-
<p>Objective LU5 Community Facilities (CF) (refer to Maps 1A/1B) Promote the development of community facilities on</p>	+/	+/	+/	+/	+/	+/	+/	+/	+/	+/	+/	+/	+/	+/	+/	+/	+/	+/

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
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 LU6 Open Spaces/Recreation & Amenity (OS) (refer to Maps 2A/2B) Promote the 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.	0	+	+/-	+/-	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	0	0	0	0	+/-	+	
Objective LU7 Agriculture (A) (refer to Maps 1A/1B) (refer to Maps 1A/1B) Protect the rural character of the area from inappropriate development and provide for agricultural and appropriate non-urban uses.	0/+	+/-	+/-	+/-	0/+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	+/-	0	+	+/-	
Objective LU8 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.	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	+/-	0	0	0	0	+/-	
Objective LU9 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.	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	
Objective LU10 Flood Risk Areas and Land Use	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0/+	+	+	0	0	0	0	

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments	
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1		
Zones 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 the relevant policies and objectives of this Plan.																		
Objective LU11 Land Use Zoning Matrix 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 LU2. Ensure that proposed land uses are compatible with existing land uses and in keeping with the character of the area.	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	0	0	0	0	+/-	
Objective LU12 Development Densities 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, does not unduly impact on the amenities of the area and that it results in a positive relationship between new developments and any adjoining public spaces. Promote the development of higher density development in appropriate locations, such as suitable sites within the town centre and adjacent to public transport facilities, where such development is compatible with built and natural heritage and urban design objectives and infrastructure capacity. The density of developments will generally be in accordance with the guidance set out under DM Guideline LU1, although the planning authority may consider higher density developments where this is considered appropriate to secure the urban design or other objectives of the Plan.	0/+	+	+	+	+/-	+	+	+	+	+	+/-	+/-	+	+	+	+	+	
Objective LU13 Residential Densities	0/+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+/-	+/-	+	+	+	+	+	

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments	
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1		
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). 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 LU1, 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 services can be provided.																		

3. Residential Development

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
<p>Policy RD1 Residential Development</p> <p>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 versions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Galway County Council and Ballinasloe Town Council Housing Strategy 2009-2015. • 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. • Galway Clustered Housing Guidelines, where appropriate, in the assessment of any proposals for new multiple unit housing developments within the Plan Area. • Galway County Council Traveller Accommodation Programme. • Smarter Travel “A Sustainable Transport Future 2009 – 2020”, including the National Cycle Policy Framework 2009-2022, and any other related national policy documents. • Water Framework Directive and the Planning System and Flood Risk Management, Guidelines to Planning Authorities 2009. 	+	+/-	+	+	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	<p>Potential impacts are mitigated by Objectives UD1, UD4, UD6, UD7, UI10, BH1-BH10, NH1-13, DS3, DS7, LU6, LU10, CF10, UI7, UI8, UI10, UI13, UI14, UI19-UI21, UD4, RD7, T118 and Policies BH1, BH2, NH1, UI2, UI6, RD1,</p>
<p>Policy RD2 Phased Development on Residential Zoned Lands (refer to Maps 1A/B)</p> <p>It is the policy of Galway County Council to encourage orderly, sequential and phased residential development in accordance with the Preferred Development Strategy and</p>	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments	
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1		
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 Residential (Phase 1) lands in order to align the Local Area Plan with the Core Strategy/Settlement Strategy in the 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 Residential (Phase 2) within the lifetime of the Local Area Plan, subject to the exceptions provided for under Objective RD1.																		
<p>Objective RD1 Phased Residential Development (refer to Maps 1A/1B)</p> <p>Support the development of lands designated as Residential (Phase 1) within the lifetime of the Local Area Plan, subject to normal planning, access and servicing requirements, and reserve the lands designated as Residential (Phase 2) for the longer term growth needs of the town. Lands that have been designated as Phase 1 shall be reviewed for the next Plan having regard to development proposals or otherwise in the interim.</p> <p>Residential (Phase 2) lands 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 subject to a suitable case being made for the proposal:</p> <p>a) Single house developments for family members on family owned lands.</p> <p>b) Non-residential developments that are appropriate to the site context, any existing residential amenity and the existing pattern of development in the area.</p> <p>c) Where it is apparent that Residential (Phase 1) lands cannot or will not be developed within the plan period, residential development may be considered in a phased</p>	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	+/-	0	+/-	+/-		

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments	
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1		
<p>manner on some Residential (Phase 2) lands.</p> <p>The above exceptions will be subject to compliance with the Core Strategy in the 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, 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 the town.</p>																		
<p>Objective RD2 Quality Housing Environments</p> <p>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 (or any updated/superseding documents).</p>	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		
<p>Objective RD3 Housing Options</p> <p>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.</p>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	All interactions are either positive or neutral so no mitigation needed.
<p>Objective RD4 Open Space in Residential Areas</p> <p>Ensure the provision of adequate areas of high quality, safe, overlooked and suitably landscaped open space within residential developments and support the provision of play and multi-purpose recreational areas in all new large residential developments. The minimum public open</p>	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	+		

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
space required in new multiple unit residential developments will be 15% of the total site area and this open space shall be located in central, useable and suitably overlooked locations.																	
Objective RD5 Social and Affordable Housing Require that 20% of all new eligible residential sites are set aside for the development of new social and affordable units, unless addressed through suitable alternative arrangements by agreement with the Planning Authority, in accordance with Galway County Council's Housing Strategy 2009-2015 (and any updated/superseding document) and Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Objective RD6 Traveller Accommodation Provide adequate accommodations facilities for the traveller community in accordance with the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009-2013 (or any updated/superseding document).	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Objective RD7 Compatible Development Facilitate the development of appropriate, compatible uses within residential areas, subject to ensuring that adequate 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 RD8 Other Residential Development There shall be a general presumption in favour of the development of nursing homes and retirement facilities and	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
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 RD9 Agricultural Zoned Lands There will be a general presumption against residential development on Agricultural (A) zoned lands, with the exception of single house developments for family members on family owned lands, which may be considered subject to compliance with the 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 clause will be applied in the case of any permissions for single house developments for family members on family owned lands.	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	0	+/-	+/-	Potential Impacts mitigated by Objectives UD1, UD4, UD6, UD7, UI10, BH1-BH10, NH1-13, DS3, DS7, LU6, LU10, CF10, UI7, UI8, UI10, UI13, UI14, UI19-UI21, UD4, RD7, T118 and Policies BH1, BH2, NH1, UI2, UI6, RD1,

4. Social and Community Development

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
<p>Policy CF1 Social Inclusion and Universal Access</p> <p>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 Gort.</p>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<p>All interactions are either positive or neutral so no mitigation needed.</p>
<p>Policy CF2 Community Facilities and Amenities</p> <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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>Community facilities and amenities projects will be facilitated in appropriate locations 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>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
<p>Objective CF1 Social Inclusion</p> <p>Support the implementation of the provisions of the Galway County Council Social Inclusion Action Plan 2010 and Social Inclusion Work Programme 2011 (and any subsequent updates to these documents).</p>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<p>Objective CF2 Universal Access</p> <p>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</p>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
Disability Act 2005, Galway County Council's Disability Action Plan 2007-2015 and the Traffic Management Guidelines 2003 (and any updated/superseding documents).																	
<p>Objective CF3 Lands for Community Facilities and Amenities (refer to Maps 1A/1B and Maps 2A/2B)</p> <p>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. This will include the following:</p> <p>a) Reserve lands for existing community facilities and for the expansion and provision of additional community facilities adjacent to existing community facility lands.</p> <p>b) Reserve lands for the provision of community facilities adjacent to large blocks of residentially zoned lands to meet the needs of existing and future residents</p>	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	0	+/-	+	<p>Objectives UD1, UD4, UD6, UD7, UI10, BH1-BH10, NH1-13, DS3, DS7, LU6, LU10, CF10, UI7, UI8, UI10, UI13, UI14, UI19-UI21, UD4, RD7, T118. Policy BH1, BH2, NH1, UI2, UI6, RD1,</p>
<p>Objective CF4 Educational Facilities (refer to Maps 2A/2B)</p> <p>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 Gort and its environs.</p> <p>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 particularly in relation to the Gaelscoil which is in temporary accommodation. The indicative locations of areas considered suitable for new school provision are shown on Maps 2A/2B – Specific Objectives. Other sites may also be considered where these are considered suitable in terms of location, access, servicing, etc.</p>	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	+/-	+/-	0	0	+/-	0	
<p>Objective CF5 Childcare Facilities</p> <p>Facilitate and promote the development of childcare facilities in suitable locations and in accordance with</p>	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	0	+/-	0	

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
national policy, including the DEHLG Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities (or any updated/superseding document).																	
Objective CF6- Open Spaces (refer to Maps 2A/2B) Protect existing open spaces from inappropriate development so as to maintain their role in providing places for active and passive recreation, social interaction and civic activities, visual relief from the built environment and enhancing the residential and overall character of the town. Facilitate the development of open spaces, including local parks, civic spaces and amenity areas, at suitable locations within the Plan Area.																	
Objective CF7 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.	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	0/+	+/-	+/-	0	0	+/-	+	
Objective CF8 Existing Community, Recreation and Amenity Facilities and Zoned Lands 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 the Gort area.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	All interactions are either positive or neutral so no mitigation needed.
Objective CF9 Amenity Network (refer to Maps 2A/2B) Support the establishment of an accessible network of greenway linkages and amenities that provide safe and attractive circulation routes for pedestrians and cyclists for the enjoyment and recreational use of the entire	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	Objectives UD1, UD4, UD6, UD7, U10, BH1-BH10, NH1-13, DS3, DS7, LU6,

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
community. This network will include an amenity walking circular route along the Kinincha Road returning via the river bank to George's Street. The network will also link together community facilities, amenities and built heritage features in the Plan Area and surrounding areas. Galway County Council will also seek to promote the functioning of greenway networks as wildlife corridors and habitats to enhance biodiversity and the natural environment.																	
Objective CF10 Linear Park along the Cannahowna/Gort River Ensure that any development of lands along the Cannahowna/Gort River is designed in such a way to incorporate a linear park and amenity walkway in the identified flood risk area associated with the river. The existing river, riparian vegetation and nearby tree lines should be retained as part of the park and any new development along the river will be required to be compatible with the aim of achieving good ecological status for the Cannahowna/Gort River as well as having a positive relationship with the park, including high quality streetscapes, overlooking development and active/responsive ground floor uses, where appropriate. This will include the lands zoned Open Space (OS) both north and south of the Gort Bridge and Town Centre (C1) located to the north and south of the Gort River in the vicinity of the Pound/Kinincha Roads and in adjacent to the Gort Railway station.	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	LU10, CF10, UI7, UI8, UI10, UI13, UI14, UI19-UI21, UD4, RD7, T118. Policy BH1, BH2, NH1, UI2, UI6, RD1,

5. Economic Development

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
<p>Policy ED1 Economic Development</p> <p>It is the policy of Galway County Council to support sustainable economic development and employment creation in Gort through the identification of appropriately located and adequately serviced lands for business and enterprise, retail, industrial, 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/ townscape/streetscape character and the vitality and viability of the town centre. Support the aims, objectives and recommendations, where appropriate in the context of Gort, of the following (and any updated/superseding documents):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Regional Authority Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022. • The Small Towns Report 2012 drafted by the West Regional Authority and which analyses the towns of Gort, Swinford and Boyle. • Galway County Development Board Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development entitled Working Together, Shaping Our Future 2002-2012. • Economic Development Strategy for County Galway 2007- 2013. • Galway City and County Development Board Tourism Strategy entitled Developing Sustainable Tourism in Galway: A Framework for Action 2003-2012. 	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	<p>Objectives UD1, UD4, UD6, UD7, UI10, BH1- BH10, NH1- 13, DS3, DS7, LU6, LU10, CF10, UI7, UI8, UI10, UI13, UI14, UI19- UI21, UD4, RD7, TI18. Policy BH1, BH2, NH1, UI2, UI6, RD1,</p>
<p>Objective ED1 Employment and Economic Development</p> <p>Support the implementation of the Economic Development</p>	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
Strategy in the West Regional Authority Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 and the economic development and tourism policies and objectives set out in the Galway County Development Plan (and updated/superseding documents).																	
Objective ED2 Business/Enterprise and Industrial Development Facilitate and encourage the establishment of 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.	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-
Objective ED3 Retail Development Support the development of appropriate types, scales and patterns of retail development in suitable locations within the town and high quality designs that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the vitality and viability of the existing town centre and associated main streets and/or do not undermine their vitality and viability. Protect investment in strategic roads and infrastructure and that are easily accessible, particularly in terms of public transport. Comply with the provisions of the Guidelines for Planning Authorities Retail Planning 2012 (and any updated/superseding document), including the application of a sequential approach to retail development, the policies and objectives of any future Retail Strategy for Galway that may be adopted in the lifetime of the Local Area Plan and the guidance in the Retail Design Manual 2012 - A Good Practice Guide Companion Document to the Guidelines for Planning Authorities (and any updated/superseding documents). 	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	+/-	Policy UD1, Objective UD1, UD4, UD6, UD7

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments	
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to the creation of a high quality retail environment. <p>The Town Centre (C1) zoning will remain the primary focus for the location of new retail development and within proposed new CI lands located south east of the railway station. 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.</p>																		
<p>Objective ED4 Tourism Development</p> <p>Encourage and facilitate the sustainable development of the tourism potential of Gort 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. Key projects and initiatives that will be supported will include:</p> <p>a) Support the sustainable development of a river walkway and 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 that recognises the Water Framework Directive, water quality and Natura 2000 conservation management objectives for the Coole-Garryland Complex.</p> <p>b) Investigate the provision of a tourist/information centre within the town centre.</p> <p>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 and Enterprise (BE) zonings in order to contribute positively to the character and visual amenity of the area.</p>	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	+/-	0	0	0	0	0	+	<p>Objectives UD1, UD4, UD6, UD7, UI10, BH1-BH10, NH1-13, DS3, DS7, LU6, LU10, CF10, UI7, UI8, UI10, UI13, UI14, UI19-UI21, UD4, RD7, T118. Policy BH1, BH2, NH1, UI2, UI6, RD1,</p>

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
Objective ED5 Quality Working Environments 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 and Enterprise (BE) zonings in order to contribute positively to the character and visual amenity of the area.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+/-	0	0	0	Policy BH1, BH2 Objective BH1-BH10
Objective ED6 Non Conforming Uses Where existing uses do not conform with the land use zoning objectives or the matrix of the Plan, the Planning Authority shall facilitate their relocation to more sustainable and appropriately zoned lands.	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		All interactions are either positive or neutral so no mitigation needed.
Objective ED7 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.	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		

6. Transport Infrastructure

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
<p>Policy TI1 Sustainable Transport, Walking and Cycling</p> <p>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 (and any updated/ superseding documents), any forthcoming guidance in relation to street design and cycling facilities and any Smart Travel Plan(s) that may be adopted by Galway County Council.</p>	0	0	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	<p>All interactions are either positive or neutral so no mitigation needed.</p>
<p>Objective TI1 Integrated Land Use and Transport</p> <p>Ensure that land use planning is integrated with transportation planning and reduce the need to travel, particularly by private transport, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting the consolidation of development. Encouraging intensification and mixed use development along public transport corridors and at public transport hubs and nodes. 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. 	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+		
<p>Objective TI2 Sustainable Transportation</p> <p>Facilitate any Smarter Travel initiatives that will improve sustainable transportation within the Plan Area and facilitate sustainable transportation options including public transport, electric vehicles, car clubs, public bike schemes, park and ride/park and stride facilities, improved pedestrian and cycling facilities, as appropriate.</p>	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
<p>Objective TI3 Public Transport</p> <p>Promote Gort 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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek to provide enhanced public access along the Pound Road to the Railway Station, its existing parking facilities and to the proposed park and ride site. 	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	
<p>Objective TI4 Walking</p> <p>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, etc. New developments shall promote and prioritise walking, shall be permeable, adequately linked and connected to neighbouring areas, the town centre, 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). Galway County Council will ensure that new lighting in sensitive areas, such as close to waterbodies or stands of broadleaved trees, will sensitively designed so as to avoid impacts on foraging bats and other nocturnal wildlife.</p>	0	+	+	+	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	0	0	0	0	+	+	Policy DS3, NH1, Objective NH1-NH12
<p>Objective TI5 Cycling</p> <p>Facilitate the improvement of the cycling environment and network so that it is safe and accessible through adequate traffic management and the provision of the necessary infrastructure, such as surface treatment, junction treatment, cycle track/s, cycle lane/s, lighting, road crossings, etc. New developments shall promote and prioritise cycling, shall be permeable, adequately linked and connected to neighbouring areas, the town centre, recreational, educational and employment destinations and shall adhere to the principles contained within the national policy documents Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future – A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020 and the National Cycle Policy Framework 2009-2020 (and any updated/superseding documents).</p>	0	+	+	+	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	0	0	0	0	+	+	

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
Objective TI6 Bicycle Parking Ensure that adequate levels of bicycle parking are provided as required within the Plan Area in accordance with the standards set out in the Galway County Development Plan and ensure that new developments provide adequate safe, secure and sheltered bicycle parking facilities.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	All interactions are either positive or neutral so no mitigation needed.
Objective TI7 Walking and Cycling Strategy Support the preparation of a County Walking and Cycling Strategy and the implementation of any specified objectives for the town of Gort and its environs as resources permit, such as the provision of a walkway/cycleway from the town centre to Coole Park.	0	0	0	0	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	Policy DS3, NH1, Objective NH1-NH12
Objective TI8 Pedestrian Crossings Facilitate the provision of pedestrian crossings adjacent to schools and at other appropriate locations within the Plan Area, as required.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	All interactions are either positive or neutral so no mitigation needed.
Objective TI9 Mobility Management Plans Require Mobility Management Plans for all medium to large scale residential, commercial, mixed use, business/enterprise or industrial developments, as appropriate.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Objective TI10 Charging Points for Electric Vehicles Facilitate the provision of recharging points for electric powered vehicles within public car parks and at other appropriate locations in Gort for domestic, transition and end of journey type travel.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	
Objective TI11 Bus Facilities and Services Support the improvement of bus facilities and services within Gort, including the following: a) Facilitate the provision of an additional bus shelter in Market Square and at any other bus stops that may be provided in the future. b) Consider any proposals for the provision of additional bus stops serving Gort including stops on the Ennis Road and on the Loughrea Road. c) Investigate the potential of developing a Public Transport Node in the vicinity of Gort Railway station, or other suitable location/s, to provide a facility for transferring between one transport service or	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
mode and another.																	
Objective TI12 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 and 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, as shown on Maps 2A/2B – Specific Objectives.	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	
Policy T12 Roads, Streets and Parking It is the policy of Galway County Council to ensure that the road and street network is safe and convenient, that it has adequate capacity to accommodate motorised traffic and non-motorised movements, that it has 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. This policy and its associated objectives will be guided by relevant national policy, the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines 2012, the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines 2009 and accompanying Urban Design Manual 2009, the Traffic Management Guidelines 2003, the Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines 2007 (and any updated/superseding documents) and any forthcoming guidelines in relation to street design and cycling facilities.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	+	+/-	Objective RD7, T118
Policy T13 County Development Plan Policies, Objectives & Development Management Standards 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.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+/-	
Objective TI13 National Road/Motorway Network Protect the national road network and safeguard the efficiency, safety, capacity and strategic investment in the M18 Gort to	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	All interactions are either positive or

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments	
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1		
<p>Crusheen Motorway, the proposed M18/M17 Gort to Tuam PPP Motorway, N18 and the N66 national routes, having regard to the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012. Direct access from future development to these national roads should be avoided outside of the speed limit zones for the town and there will be a presumption against large retail centres located adjacent or close to existing, new or planned national roads. 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.</p>																		neutral so no mitigation needed.
<p>Objective TI14 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. Where appropriate, new developments will be required to facilitate the extension of the urban street network and/or the provision of improved connectivity and permeability, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.</p>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+		
<p>Objective TI15 Transport Network Improvements (refer to Specific Objectives Maps 2A/2B) Support the improvement of the road and street network in and around the Plan Area, subject to normal planning and environmental considerations, including in combination effects under the EU Habitats Directive Assessment as appropriate. This will include the following new routes and projects and any other appropriately approved transport schemes/improvements to roads and streets in and around the Plan Area: a) Continue to implement the provisions of the current Traffic Management Plan for Gort (and any updated/superseding documents) b) Consider the reservation lands for a new relief/link road/street connecting the north-eastern approach N66 Loughrea road to the N18 Oranmore in the north western portion of the Plan Area c) Consider the reservation of lands for a new relief/link road/street</p>	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-		Objectives UD1, UD4, UD6, UD7, UI10, BH1-BH10, NH1-13, DS3, DS7, LU6, LU10, CF10, UI7, UI8, UI10, UI13, UI14, UI19-UI21, UD4, RD7, TI18. Policy BH1, BH2, NH1, UI2, UI6, RD1,

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments	
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1		
<p>connecting the south eastern approach road R458 Ennis Road to the L4514 Tubber Road on the southwestern portion of the Plan Area. Both of the above new routes should be designed to provide adequate access points to adjacent lands with adjacent street-oriented development and provide opportunities for smarter travel improvements within the town.</p> <p>d) Continue to carry out road and junction improvement, widening and realignment as required.</p> <p>e) Improve and maintain existing public footpaths within the town as resources permit.</p> <p>f) Improve culverts and all roadside drainage, maintain and renew pavements, widen and improve existing roads, improve road signage and facilitate the provision of new roads/streets within Gort, as the need arises and as resources permit All new or modified culverts or bridges in the Plan Area shall be designed and constructed to allow for the safe passage of Otter, where this is required.</p> <p>Require proposed developments to consider incorporating provisions for busways, footpaths and cycleways where properties bound main arterial routes, new link routes or other routes determined by the NRA. Prohibit development on lands that are reserved for proposed road/street corridors and associated buffers and where development would affect a route, line, level or layout of any proposed new roadway or any junction required between a proposed and existing road.</p>																		
<p>Objective TI16 Galway County Development Plan Policies, Objectives and Guidelines</p> <p>Ensure that new developments, including developments proposed onto and in proximity to National and Class II Controlled roads are 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 and guidelines set out in the Galway County Development Plan.</p>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	<p>All interactions are either positive or neutral so no mitigation needed.</p>
<p>Objective TI17 Road Safety Audits and Traffic Impact Assessments</p> <p>Require all proposed new commercial, industrial and retail</p>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
developments (or where significant changes are proposed to existing commercial, industrial or larger retail developments) and residential developments greater than 4 units to submit Road Safety Audits and Traffic Impact Assessments as part of their planning application documentation.																	
Objective TI18 Noise 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.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+
Objective TI19 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.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Objective TI20 Parking Facilities Ensure that existing parking facilities in the town centre are managed appropriately. 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. 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. Requirements for car parking are contained in the Galway County Development Plan.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Objective TI21 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	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments	
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1		
<p>new individual vehicular access points.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 (C1) zone, where it would not conflict with residential amenity, geological, natural heritage or archaeological sensitivities or traffic safety.</p>																		
<p>Objective TI22 M18 Gort to Crusheen Motorway</p> <p>Protect the section of the M18 Gort to Crusheen Motorway which is located within the area covered by the Gort LAP from future inappropriate development. In this regard the following shall apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A building setback of 90m minimum shall be required on each side of the route edge for the M18 Gort to Crusheen route in areas where a speed limit greater than 50kph applies. Prevent new accesses onto the M18 route that have not been accommodated in the motorway design in the interest of traffic safety. 	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	
<p>Objective TI23 Access Points</p> <p>Reserve access points for future proposed relief/link roads/streets and at the junction of Bridge Street/Loughrea Road to undeveloped backlands. This will include those shown on Map 2 – Specific Objectives and any other access points that may be identified for reservation by the planning authority during the plan period.</p>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<p>Objective TI24 Walkways</p> <p>Provide a walkway along the Cannahowna/Gort River including the Kinincha and Pound Road in a sustainable manner where possible. Regard should be had to the protection of Otters and Otter breeding sites and resting places along the proposed river walk.</p>	0	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	Policy DS3, NH1, UI1, Objective UI2, NH1-NH12

7. Utilities Infrastructure

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
<p>Policy UI1 Water Supply, Wastewater Disposal and Surface Water Drainage Infrastructure</p> <p>It is the policy of Galway County Council to support the provision and maintenance of adequate wastewater disposal, water supply and surface water drainage infrastructure to service the development of Gort, in accordance with EU Directives, national legislation and applicable standards. This will include the provision of adequate capacity in the public wastewater sewer network, wastewater treatment plant and storm-water sewer network, an adequate quantity and quality of water supply and the promotion of Sustainable Drainage System approaches and techniques for developments within the Plan Area.</p>	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	
<p>Objective UI1 – Water Services Infrastructure (refer to Maps 2A/2B)</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</p>	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	Policy DS3, NH1, UI1, Objective UI2, NH1-NH12

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
<p>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>Objective UI2 Water Services for New Developments Require all new developments to be adequately serviced with water supply, wastewater disposal and surface water drainage in accordance with applicable legislation, standards and guidelines and to submit the necessary documentation with their planning applications to confirm same. Encourage only as much development, both in terms of quantity and type of development, that can be provided for based on the utility services available and prohibit any proposed development that cannot be adequately serviced, that would lead to significant environmental effects or that would pose an unacceptable threat to the capacity of water, wastewater or surface water infrastructure in the Plan Area.</p>	+	0	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	All interactions are either positive or neutral so no mitigation needed.
<p>Objective UI3 – Water Supply and Water Conservation 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.</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>	+	0	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
<p>Objective UI4 – Wastewater Disposal 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.</p> <p>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 EPA's a Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (p.e.≤ 10), (EPA, 2009), will be required.</p>	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	
<p>Objective UI5 - Wastewater Treatment Plant Buffer (refer to Specific Objectives Maps 2A/2B) 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>	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	
<p>Objective UI6 Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems 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 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</p>	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems proposals.																	
Objective UI7 The Cannahowna/Gort River and Drainage Catchment Require new development proposals within the catchment of the Cannahowna/Gort River 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.	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	
Policy UI2 Flood Risk Management 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 Catchment Flood Risk Management Plans (CFRAMs), Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) and County Galway Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2012 and any recommendations and outputs arising from same that relate to or impact on the Plan Area.	0	+	+/-	+/-	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	+	+	0	0	+/-	0	Policy DS3, NH1, UI1, UD1 Objective UI2, UD1, UD4, UD6, UD7, NH1-NH12
Policy UI3 Flood Risk in Pluvial and Groundwater Flood Areas Where the probability of flooding from rivers is low (less than 0.1%, flood zone C) the developer should satisfy him or herself that the probability of flooding is appropriate to the development being proposed. Among other things, mapping including the OPW's Pluvial and Groundwater Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment mapping should be considered for this purpose.	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	0	0	0	Policy DS3, NH1, UI1, UI6 Objective UI2, NH1-NH12, UI13, UI19-UI21
Objective UI8 (Flood risk) Flood Risk Management and Assessment Ensure the implementation of the DEHLG/OPW publication Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009 (or any updated/superseding document) in relation to flood risk management within the Plan Area.	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	+/-	0	Policy UD1, Objective UD1, UD4, UD6, UD7

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments	
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1		
<p>This will include the following:</p> <p>a) Avoid, reduce and/or mitigate, as appropriate in accordance with the Flood Risk management Guidelines 2009, the risk of flooding within the flood risk areas indicated on Maps 3A/3B – Flood Risk Management, including fluvial, coastal/tidal, 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.</p> <p>b) Development proposals in areas where there is an identified or potential risk of flooding or that could give rise to a risk of flooding elsewhere will be required to carry out a Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment, and justification test where appropriate, in accordance with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009 (or any superseding document). Any flood risk assessment should include an assessment of the potential impacts of climate change, such as an increase in the extent or probability of flooding, and any associated measures necessary to address these impacts.</p> <p>c) Development that would be subject to an inappropriate risk of flooding or that would cause or exacerbate such a risk at other locations shall not normally be permitted.</p> <p>d) 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 European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network downstream, such measures will undergo environmental assessment and Habitats Directive Assessment, as appropriate.</p>																		
<p>Objective UI9 Flood Zones and Appropriate Land Uses</p> <p>Protect Flood Zone A and Flood Zone B from inappropriate development and direct developments/ land uses into the appropriate Flood Zone in accordance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009 (or any superseding document) and the guidance contained in DM Standard UI1 – 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 the Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009.</p>	0	+/-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	+/-	0		Policy UD1, Objective UD1, UD4, UD6, UD7

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
<p>Objective UI10 Waterbodies and Watercourses</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 on either side of the Cannahowna/Gort River, measured from the near river bank. 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>	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	+	0	<p>All interactions are either positive or neutral so no mitigation needed.</p>
<p>Objective UI11 Groundwater and Pluvial Flood Risk</p> <p>Planning applications on lands identified within groundwater and pluvial PFRA 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 DEHLG Flood Guidelines (2009). 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</p>	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	+	0	
<p>Objective UI12 – Boundaries of Flood Zones</p> <p>In the case of lands transected by the outer boundary of Indicative Flood Zone A or B, where it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the PA [by more detailed local topographic survey information] that the outer boundary does not reflect local topographical and /or flood path conditions, the PA may consider the extension of uses allowed in an adjacent land use zone into the Indicative Flood Zone area, where the extended area inside the Indicative Flood Zone does not exceed 50% of the site area outside of the indicative flood zone or 1acre/.404ha, whichever is the lesser.</p> <p>The proposal will also be subject to the submission of a Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment and Justification Test as appropriate and the developer satisfying the PA and him/herself that the probability of flooding is appropriate to the development being proposed and will not increase flood risk elsewhere.</p>	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	<p>Objectives UD1, UD4, UD6, UD7, UI10, BH1-BH10, NH1-13, DS3, DS7, LU6, LU10, CF10, UI7, UI8, UI10, UI13, UI14, UI19-UI21, UD4, RD7, TI18. Policy BH1, BH2, NH1, UI2, UI6, RD1,</p>

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
<p>Policy UI4 Water Quality</p> <p>It is the policy of Galway County Council to protect and improve water quality in all waters, in conjunction with other agencies and stakeholders and 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 Western River Basin District Management Plan. Galway County Council will take account of the above requirements to protect and improve water quality when assessing new development proposals.</p>	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	<p>All interactions are either positive or neutral so no mitigation needed.</p>
<p>Objective UI13 Western River Basin Management Plan and Protection of Waters</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 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>	+	0	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	
<p>Objective UI14 Groundwater and Aquifers</p> <p>Support the protection of groundwater resources and dependent wildlife/habitats in accordance with the EU Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC) and the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations 2010 (SI No. 9 of 2010) (or any updated legislation). Protect the locally important aquifer that under lays the Plan Area from risk of environmental pollution and</p>	+	0	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
have regard to any groundwater protection schemes and groundwater source protection zones where data has been made available by the Geological Survey of Ireland																	
Policy UI5 Waste Management It is the policy of Galway County Council to support sustainable waste management through the prevention, reduction and recycling of waste and by facilitating the provision of adequate waste infrastructure, such as bring banks, at locations that will not adversely affect residential amenities.	0	+	+	+	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	+	0	0	0	+/-	0	Policy DS3, NH1, UD1 Objective NH1-NH12, UD1, UD4, UD6, UD7
Objective UI15 Waste Prevention, Reduction and Recycling Promote the prevention, reduction and recycling of waste in new developments. New development proposals will be required to submit proposals demonstrating how this is to be achieved with their planning applications.	0	+	+	+	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	+	0	0	0	+/-	0	
Objective UI16 Bring Bank Facility Facilitate the installation of bring bank facilities at suitable locations within the Plan Area and where they will not adversely affect residential amenities.	0	+	+	+	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	+	0	0	0	+/-	0	
Objective UI17 – Waste Management 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 Hazardous Waste Management Plan and any superseding plans/programmes over the lifetime of the Gort Local Area Plan.	0	0	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	+	+	0	All interactions are either positive or neutral so no mitigation needed.
Policy UI6 Energy and Communications It is the policy of Galway County Council to support the provision of adequate energy and communications infrastructure to service developments, including gas, electricity, broadband and telephone 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.	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	Objectives UD1, UD4, UD6, UD7, UI10, BH1-BH10, NH1-13, DS3, DS7, LU6, LU10, CF10, UI7, UI8, UI10, UI13, UI14, UI19-
Objective UI18 Electricity and Gas Supply Facilitate the provision of an adequate supply of electricity and gas	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
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.																	UI21, UD4, RD7, TI18. Policy BH1, BH2, NH1, UI2, UI6, RD1,
Objective UI19 Energy Conservation and Efficiency Continue to implement Galway County Council's Energy Action Plan regarding energy efficiency and conservation in existing and future residential, commercial and industrial buildings within Gort. Ensure that new buildings are sustainable in their siting, orientation, design and construction. Passive solar design techniques, high energy efficiency, low impact construction methods and the use of local/sustainable building materials, recycled aggregates and local craftsmanship will be encouraged to ensure that new developments minimise their environmental impacts and long term costs.	0	0	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	+	+	0	All interactions are either positive or neutral so no mitigation needed.
Objective UI20 Broadband and Telecommunications Facilitate the provision of adequate telecommunication infrastructure in the Plan Area, including telephone and broadband services (MANS), to the requirements of the relevant service providers and in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	0	0	+/-	0	+/-	0	Objectives UD1, UD4, UD6, UD7, UI10, BH1-BH10, NH1-13, DS3, DS7, LU6, LU10, CF10, UI7, UI8, UI10, UI13, UI14, UI19-UI21, UD4, RD7, TI18. Policy BH1, BH2, NH1, UI2, UI6, RD1,
Objective UI21 Renewable Energy Promote and facilitate the development and use of renewable energy sources and associated infrastructure within the Plan Area, including wind, solar, bioenergy, geothermal/CHP, hydropower and other renewable energy sources, as appropriate. Encourage the integration of micro-renewable energy sources into the design and construction of new developments, as appropriate.	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	+/-	0	+/-	+/-	Objectives UD1, UD4, UD6, UD7, UI10, BH1-BH10, NH1-13, DS3, DS7, LU6, LU10, CF10, UI7, UI8, UI10, UI13, UI14, UI19-UI21, UD4, RD7, TI18. Policy BH1, BH2, NH1, UI2, UI6, RD1,
Policy UI7 Climate Change and Air Quality It is the policy of Galway County Council to support and promote, in conjunction with other agencies, local, national and international initiatives for limiting/reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and encouraging the development of renewable energy in accordance with the National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012, the EU Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFE) Directive	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	+/-	0	+/-	0	Objectives UD1, UD4, UD6, UD7, UI10, BH1-BH10, NH1-13, DS3, DS7, LU6, LU10, CF10, UI7, UI8, UI10, UI13, UI14, UI19-UI21, UD4, RD7, TI18. Policy BH1, BH2, NH1, UI2, UI6, RD1,

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
(2008/50/EC) and the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (SI No. 180 of 2011) (or any updated/ superseding documents).																	
Objective UI22 Climate Change Support the implementation of the National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012 (or any updated/ superseding document) and continue to implement Galway County Council's Energy Action Plan regarding energy efficiency and conservation in existing and future buildings, in energy use and procurement activities and in raising awareness and stimulating action within local communities.	0	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	All interactions are either positive or neutral so no mitigation needed.
Objective UI23 Air Quality Promote the preservation of best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development throughout the Plan Area in accordance with the EU Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFE) Directive (2008/50/EC) by seeking to protect and maintain the regulatory standards contained with the EPA's Air Quality in Ireland 2009: Key Indicators of Ambient Air Quality 2010 (or any updated/superseding document) and by ensuring that all air emissions associated with new developments are within Environmental Quality Standards as out in the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (SI No. 180 of 2011) (or any updated/ superseding documents).	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	0	0	0	
Objective UI24 Air Purification 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 Gort's micro-climate.	0	+	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	
Objective UI25 Radon Have regard, in accordance with Galway County Council's statutory role under the Building Control Act 2007, to the specific guidance on radon prevention measures for new homes as contained within the Building Regulations.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

8. Urban Design and Landscape

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
<p>Policy UD1 Urban Design and Landscape</p> <p>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 town, having regard to the guidance contained in the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines 2009 and the accompanying Urban Design Manual 2009 (or any updated/superseding 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 town and the promotion of the development of a green network and high quality landscaping.</p>	0	+/-	+	+	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	0	0	+	+	+	+	Policy DS3, NH1, Objective NH1-NH12
<p>Objective UD1 High Quality, Context Sensitive Design</p> <p>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. External lighting and light spill will be minimised in general and the use of lighting in areas of ecological sensitivity avoided and/or minimised where possible. Lighting should not be directed at the Cannahowna/Gort River.</p>	0	+/-	+	+	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	0	0	+	+	+	+	
<p>Objective UD2 Public Spaces and Streets</p> <p>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</p>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	All interactions are either positive or neutral so

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
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.																	no mitigation needed.
<p>Objective UD3 Spatial Definition and Animation</p> <p>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, also help to improve spatial definition and legibility and will be encouraged in appropriate locations.</p>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	
<p>Objective UD4 Green Network and the Landscape</p> <p>Support the 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.</p>	0	+	+	+	0	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	+	0	+	0	+	+	Policy DS3, NH1, Objective NH1-NH12
<p>Objective UD5 Street-Oriented Development and Responsive Frontages</p> <p>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.</p>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	All interactions are either positive or neutral so no mitigation needed.

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
<p>Objective UD6 Design Statements</p> <p>Require design statements with all large scale or sensitively located development proposals, such as in close proximity to an Architectural Conservation Area, 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.</p>	0	0	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	0	+	+	
<p>Objective UD7 Landscape, Townscape, Views and Prospects</p> <p>Protect the landscape character, values, sensitivities, focal points and views in the Plan Area, including those identified in the Galway County Development Plan and included in the Landscape and Landscape Character Assessment for County Galway 2002 and as shown on Map 2A/2B – Specific Objectives. This will include, inter alia, the following:</p> <p>a) Ensure that new developments are responsive to the high and special sensitivity of the Cannahowna/Gort River and surrounds, to the elevated and open character of Market Square with its converging narrow lanes entered through carriage arches, surviving military buildings, to the vistas of St Coleman’s Church and former Church of Ireland church and graveyard, and to any other visually vulnerable areas or locally important townscape contexts.</p> <p>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 Cannahowna/Gort River, significant townscapes and historic buildings, as appropriate.</p> <p>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</p>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
such impact and any appropriate mitigation measures that should be incorporated.																	

9. Built and Cultural Heritage

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
<p>Policy BH1 Built Heritage</p> <p>It is the policy of Galway County Council to support the conservation of architectural and archaeological heritage, including the 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):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislative provisions in the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and National Monuments Act 1930 (as amended). Statutory provisions in the 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, the Archaeology and Development: Guidelines for Good Practice for Developers and the National Policy on Town Defences 2008. 	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	All interactions are either positive or neutral so no mitigation needed.
<p>Policy BH2 Cultural Heritage</p> <p>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 the cultural heritage of Gort.</p>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	
<p>Objective BH1 Architectural Heritage</p> <p>Ensure the protection of architectural heritage in the Plan Area, in particular by implementing the legislative provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) in</p>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
relation to architectural heritage and the policy guidance contained in the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines 2004 (and any updated/superseding document).																	
Objective BH2 Protected Structures Ensure the protection and sympathetic enhancement of structures included and proposed for inclusion in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) that are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest, together with the integrity of their character and setting.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	
Objective BH3 Architectural Conservation Area Protect, conserve and enhance the essential character of the Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) through the appropriate management and control of the design, location and layout of new development, alterations or extensions to existing structures and/or modifications to the character or setting of the Architectural Conservation Area.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	
Objective BH4 Development/Works relating to Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Area 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.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
c) Works/development within the ACA shall ensure the conservation of traditional features and building elements that contribute to the character of the area. New proposals shall have appropriate regard to scale, plot, form, mass, design, materials, and colours and function. d) Prohibit development proposals, either in whole or in part, for the demolition of Protected Structures, save in exceptional circumstances, or the demolition of structures within an Architectural Conservation Area that contribute to the special character of the area.																	
Objective BH5 Demolition Prohibit development proposals, either in whole or in part, for the demolition of protected structures or structures within an Architectural Conservation Area, save in exceptional circumstances.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	
Objective BH6 Architectural Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan Prepare and publish an ACA Appraisal and Management Plan for Gort over the lifetime of the Plan, to preserve, protect and enhance the character of this area, including the public realm and implement any recommendations arising from same.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	
Objective BH7 Vernacular Architecture and Structures of Local Interest Recognise the importance of the contribution of vernacular architecture to the character of Gort 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 Gort, and resist the demolition of these vernacular structures.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	
Objective BH8 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 2000 (as amended), the National Monuments	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
Act 1930 (as amended), the National Policy on Town Defences 2008 and the Archaeology and Development: Guidelines for Good Practice for Developers.																	
<p>Objective BH9 Monuments and Places</p> <p>Ensure the protection and sympathetic enhancement of the monuments and places included and proposed for inclusion in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), together with the integrity of their character and setting, in particular by implementing the relevant provisions of the Planning and Development 2000 (as amended), the National Monuments Act 1930 (as amended), the National Policy on Town Defences 2008 and the Archaeology and Development: Guidelines for Good Practice for Developers. This will include the protection of all monuments on the list provided by the National Monument Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, which has statutory responsibility in this area.</p>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	
<p>Objective BH10 Zones of Archaeological Potential</p> <p>Ensure that all planning applications for new developments and all proposed infrastructure projects/ schemes in close proximity (30m) to Recorded Monuments and Places (RMPs) and within Zones of Archaeological Potential (ZAPs) 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 and, where appropriate, mitigation measures.</p>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	
<p>Objective BH11 Local Place Names</p> <p>Protect local place names as an important part of the cultural heritage and unique character of the Plan Area. Support the use of appropriate names for new developments that reflect the character and heritage of the area and that contribute to the local distinctiveness of Gort.</p>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
New developments will be required to consult with CoisteLogainmneacha Chontae na Gaillimhe, the Galway County Council 'Placename Committee', and to identify an appropriate name for new developments that reflect the local heritage and character of the area.																	

10. Natural Heritage and Biodiversity

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
<p>Policy NH1 Natural Heritage and Biodiversity</p> <p>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 European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network, 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):</p> <p>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 Act 2000 (as amended) and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU Directives, including the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (85/337/EEC), the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC). • 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. • Biodiversity plans and guidelines, including Actions for Biodiversity 2011-2016: Ireland's National Biodiversity Plan, the Biodiversity 	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	+		<p>All interactions are either positive or neutral so no mitigation needed.</p>

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments	
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1		
Action Plan for County Galway 2008-2013 and the <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodiversity Guidelines produced by Galway County Council. 																		
<p>Objective NH1 European 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 <i>Environmental Liability Directive</i> the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010, the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011) The Environmental Liability Directive (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:</p> <p>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</p> <p>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</p>	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	+			

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
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 NH2 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 that are protected under the Wildlife Acts, 1976-2000.	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	
Objective NH3 Natural Heritage Areas and Proposed Natural Heritage Areas 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 an Ecological Impact Assessment may be required.																	
Objective NH4 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-	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments	
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1		
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.																		
<p>Objective NH5 Biodiversity and Ecological Networks</p> <p>Support the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and ecological connectivity within the Plan Area, including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, rivers, streams, natural springs, wetlands, stone walls, 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:</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>c) Ensure greater 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.</p> <p>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.</p>	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	+			

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
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.																	
Objective NH6 Water Resources Protect the water resources in the Plan Area, including the Cannahowna/Gort, its tributaries and downstream water bodies, other streams, springs, surface water and groundwater quality, 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 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.	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	0	
Objective NH7 Environmental Management Buffer 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 the Galway Bay SAC and Inner Galway Bay SPA all European Sites which are linked indirectly to the Gort Local Area Plan area via the Cannahowna/Gort River. 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	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	0	

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
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.																	
Objective NH8 Trees, Parkland/Woodland and Hedgerows 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 stonewalls, 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	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	0	
Objective NH9 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 are adequately assessed with regard to their potential geophysical, hydrological or ecological impacts on the environment.	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	0	
Objective NH10 Control of Invasive and Alien Invasive Species Seek to prevent the spread of invasive and alien invasive species and noxious weeds and promote measures to achieve this objective. Raise 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	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	0	

Policies/ Objectives	P	S	W			B				C	M		H		L	N	Comments
	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
<p>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.</p> <p>A landscaping plan will be required for developments near waterbodies and ensure that such plans do not include alien invasive species.</p>																	
<p>Objective NH11 Consultation with Environmental Authorities Ensure that all development proposals are screened to determine whether they are likely to have a significant direct, indirect or cumulative effect on any European site in view of its conservation objectives and, where significant effects are likely or uncertain, there will be a requirement to prepare and submit a Natura Impact Statement, including prior consultation with the relevant environmental authorities.</p>	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	0	
<p>Objective NH12 - Protection of Bats and Bats Habitats Seek to protect bats and their roosts, their feeding areas, flight paths and commuting routes. Ensure that development proposals in areas which are potentially important for bats, including areas of woodland, linear features such as hedgerows, stone walls, watercourses and associated riparian vegetation 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>	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	0		

Annex A

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report Addendum for

Material Alterations to the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2013-2019

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report Addendum for Material Alterations to the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2013-2019

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12 INTRODUCTION

12.1 BACKGROUND

This Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Report Addendum relates to proposed material alterations to the Draft Gort Local Area Plan (LAP) 2013-2019 and changes to the original SEA Report as a result of submissions from the prescribed Environmental Authorities and the general public.

Under section 20, subsection 3 (f) of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2010, Galway County Council determined that Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required to be undertaken on one of the proposed material alterations. All proposed material alterations were screened for the need to undertake both SEA (detailed in **Section 2.6** of this document) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) and it was determined that both SEA and AA were required for one of the material alterations. **Section 2.7** of this document discusses the proposed material alteration which is considered to have the potential for significant adverse environmental effects, and provides a recommendation as to the preferred outcome from an environmental perspective, which may include mitigation as appropriate.

Changes are not made to the original SEA Environmental Report at this stage; this Addendum forms part of the documentation of the ongoing SEA/Plan-making process. It supplements and should be read in conjunction with the Environmental Report. This document will also be amended to take account of any submissions on this Addendum and any modifications made to the proposed amendments by the Elected Members. The final SEA Environmental Report and AA together with an SEA Statement will be made available to the public alongside the adopted Plan.

A Scoping Report was undertaken as the initial stage of the SEA process in January 2013. It presented, in consultation with key stakeholders, initial understandings of key environmental issues within the study area relating to the LAP. Submissions received were incorporated into the next phase of the SEA process - drafting of the Environmental Report (ER). The ER contains the findings of the assessment on the likely significant effects on the environment of the implementation of the LAP. Under the provisions of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC the Draft LAP also underwent an Appropriate Assessment (AA).

The Draft Gort LAP 2013-2019, SEA Environmental Report (ER) and Appropriate Assessment (AA)/Natura Impact Report (NIR) were subsequently placed on public display from 19th February to 2nd April 2013. In total, nine submissions were received and SEA comment was provided on each submission in order to inform the Manager's Report to the Elected Members of Galway County Council.

All of these submissions were outlined in a County Manager's Report (CMR) which was issued to the members of Galway County Council in May 2012. The CMR was prepared as part of the statutory procedure for preparing a Local Area Plan. The CMR includes recommendations on material alterations to the Draft LAP following submissions received. As well as material alterations recommended in the CMR one additional material alteration was made by the Elected Members not recommended in the CMR. Material alterations to the Draft LAP include amendments to the text, amendments to zoning, amendments to objectives and new objectives.

This stage of the SEA process is to assess the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the proposed material alterations to the LAP in light of the public consultation phase. This Addendum therefore describes the likely significant effects on the environment of the proposed material alterations to the draft LAP.

This document should be read in conjunction with the SEA/ER and AA/NIR, produced in February 2013, for the draft LAP and with the Material Alterations as made by the Elected Members in May 2013.

12.2 SEA PROCESS AND PROGRESS TO DATE

SEA is governed by the European Directive 2001/42/EC on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment (commonly known as the SEA Directive). The SEA Directive was transposed into Irish legislation by the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 435/2004), amended in Regulations 2011 (S.I. No 200 of 2011) and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations 2004 (SI 436/2004), amended in Regulations 2011 (S.I. No 201 of 2011).

The SEA process consists of a series of steps or stages that need to be undertaken and which are outlined in **Section 2.1** of the SEA Environmental Report on the Draft Gort LAP 2013-2019 published in February 2013.

As part of the Draft Plan public consultation exercise, submissions were received from a number interested members of the public and from Environmental Authorities, including the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG). These have been incorporated into the proposed material alterations to the Draft Plan, as appropriate, with a view to clarifying and strengthening the environmental objectives of the Plan. In addition to material alterations proposed in the CMR an additional material alteration has been made by the Elected Members.

This Addendum considers the likely significant impacts on the environment as a result of implementing the proposed material alterations to the Draft Plan. The proposed material alterations are assessed against the environmental objectives set out in the Draft Environment Report. Where a likely significant effect is identified, mitigation measures are proposed, where appropriate.

12.3 CONSULTATION AND TIMEFRAME OF THE PLAN SEA AND AA

The SEA Regulations provide for extensive public consultation with respect to the Gort Local Area Plan for which SEA and AA have been undertaken. 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 Addendum to the Environmental Report and AA Addendum to the Natura Impact Report will be put on public display to allow the general public to make submissions. The submissions will be reviewed through the SEA and AA processes and where necessary changes will be made to the proposed Material Alterations to the Draft Plan.

The SEA legislation and guidelines also indicate that there should be complete integration between the preparation of the Plan, the SEA process and 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.

The SEA/ER, LAP and AA/NIR were placed on public display from 19th February to 2nd April 2013 and nine submissions were received from the public and statutory bodies in relation to same. All submissions were assessed for potential significant environmental impacts and an SEA Submissions Report prepared to inform the County Manager's Report (CMR) to the Elected Members. All submissions were outlined in the CMR and issued to the members of Galway County Council in May 2013. The CMR was prepared as part of the statutory procedure for preparing a LAP.

This Environmental Report, the Natura Impact Report and the Material Alterations to the Draft Plan will be placed on public display from 7th June to 5th July 2013 and a CMR will be prepared for the Elected Members meeting due to be held on the 21st July, 2013.

12.4 SUBMISSIONS ON THE DRAFT LAP/ER/NIR

The Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2009-2015 was on public display from 19th February to 2nd April 2013 and 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 summary of the main issues raised in each submission and consideration of each issue in an SEA context are included in **Appendix A**. 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.

13 REVIEW OF PROPOSED MATERIAL ALTERATIONS TO THE DRAFT LAP

13.1 INTRODUCTION

The CMR issued to the Elected Members in May 2013 included a series of recommended material alterations to the Draft LAP, for consideration by the Members of the Local Authority. Following consideration of this report, the Elected Members, by resolution, made material alterations to the Draft Plan. This Addendum therefore considers the proposed material alterations as adopted by the members and represents the next stage in the SEA process. It can be considered as an addendum to the Environmental Report (February 2013). Consistent with the approach in the Environmental Report, this addendum document comprises the environmental assessment of the recommended amendments against a schedule of environmental protection objectives (EPO's).

This environmental assessment of the proposed material alterations is carried out to determine whether the implementation of such alterations would be likely to cause significant impacts on the environment. It also raises awareness of the potential environmental impacts of any amendments to the draft plan. Members therefore have the benefit of an environmental appraisal of proposed material alterations to inform and assist in their decision making.

Where appropriate, mitigation measures are proposed to offset potential impacts on the environment.

13.2 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED MATERIAL ALTERATIONS

The environmental assessment of the proposed material alterations will be carried out in an analytical manner in two phases. The first phase will involve the screening of the proposed material alterations while the second phase will involve an analysis of the proposed material alteration that conflict with Environmental Protection Objectives (EPO's).

The process of setting the EPO's is set out in the LAP Strategic Environmental Assessment / Environmental Report. Briefly the aim of SEA is to determine and then assess the environmental effects of a proposed Plan on the environment. In order to assess the environmental effects of the proposed Plan, environmental protection objectives need to be established (Schedule 2B (e) of SI No 436/2004). The objectives are essentially methodological measures against which the environmental effects of the Plan can be tested or evaluated. If the EPO's are fully compiled with, then the implementation of the Plan would result in an environmentally neutral impact. EPO's are compiled from a range of environmental factors relevant to the plan and are outlined in **Table 2.1** with a full list of indicators, targets and bodies responsible for data outlined in the original Environmental Report.

13.3 EFFECTS OF NOT IMPLEMENTING THE PROPOSED MATERIAL ALTERATIONS

In the absence of the Proposed Material Alterations to the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2013-2019, development would occur as per the proposed Plan (February 2013).

13.4 INFORMATION GAPS/TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES

The most up to date information has been utilised in this report but it is accepted that this may change over the lifetime of the Local Area Plan making process and thus will be updated accordingly.

13.5 METHODOLOGY FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED MATERIAL ALTERATIONS

Following the public consultation period material alterations to the draft LAP included amendments to text, Maps 3A and 1A showing clarifications on the Flood Zones A and B and changes in zoning (included as **Appendix B** to this document) and several objectives. A phased methodology for the screening of these material alterations will be undertaken in this Addendum.

13.5.1 Phase One – Screening of the proposed material alterations

In the first phase the objectives contained in the proposed material alterations are evaluated against the EPO's which were created for the Plan. The first phase is therefore a screening process where new and modified policies, objectives and zonings are formally assessed by identifying whether the change(s) would be likely to have interactions ranging from none to probably conflicting with and unlikely to be mitigated against.

The amendments are listed on one axis and the EPO's on the other with each assessed as to its potential effects.

13.5.2 Phase Two – Analysis of proposed objectives that conflict with Environmental Protection Objectives

The second phase identifies only those proposed amendments that are in conflict with the EPO's, this is undertaken in **Section 2.7**. In relation to each proposed amendment, comments are made as to its potential effects on the EPO's and, if applicable, potential mitigation measures are identified.

13.6 PHASE ONE – SCREENING OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

The public consultation period from 19th February to 2nd April, 2013, resulted in material alterations to the text, the Zoning Map, the Flood Risk Management Map and several objectives of the Draft LAP. The Stage 2 SFRA was also amended accordingly. The assessment of the material alterations for potential impacts on Environmental Protection Objectives (as set on **Table 2.1**) is set out in **Table 2.2**. Within the changes to text section of **Table 2.2**, the following text formatting is used to highlight textual changes to the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2013-2019:

- Existing Draft Gort LAP 2013-2019 Text – Shown in black text
- Proposed Alteration additional text – Shown in **yellow highlighted red text**
- Proposed Alteration deleted text – Shown in **strikethrough yellow highlight text**

Table 2.1: Environmental Protection Objectives

SEA Issue	Environmental Protection Objectives
Population/ Human Health	Pop1 – Ensure only sufficient development is permitted, as required for in the projected increase of population within the Core Strategy targets
Soil/Landuse	Soi1 – Protect and, where appropriate, enhance the function and quality of the soil resource in Gort
Water	Wat1 – 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).
	Wat2 – Prevent pollution and contamination of ground water by adhering to aquifer protection plans.
	Wat3 – Reduce risk of flooding through avoidance of development in Flood Zones A or B
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	Bio1 – Protect, conserve and avoid loss of the diversity and range, area or population of habitats, species and wildlife corridors.
	Bio2 - 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.
	Bio3 - Conserve and protect other nature conservation sites (NHAs, pNHAs, National Parks, Nature Reserves, and Wildfowl Sanctuaries).
	Bio4 – Protect habitats (terrestrial and aquatic) from non-native invasive species and prevent non-native invasive species spread.
Climatic Factors	Cli1 – Contribute to mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change and air quality issues.
Material Assets	Mat1 - To ensure that drinking water supplies are free of contamination.
	Mat2 - To ensure that all development is adequately serviced to EPA standards prior to discharge.
Cultural, Architectural and Archaeological Heritage	H1 – 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.).
	H2 – To ensure the restoration and re-use of existing uninhabited and derelict structures where possible opposed to demolition and new build (to promote sustainability and reduce landfill).
Landscape	Lan1 – Protect designated landscapes and scenic views, routes and landscape features of local value.
Noise	Noi1 -To protect residents from adverse noise levels

Table 2.2 Material Alterations made by the Elected Members and Potential Interactions with EPO's

Material Alterations to the LAP as amended by recommendations made in the CMR. Amendments 1-12 made by the Elected Members as recommended in the Manager's Report. Amendment 13 made by the Elected Members otherwise than as recommended in the Manager's Report.	Likely to Improve Status of EPO's	Probable conflict with EPO's – unlikely to be mitigated	Potential Conflict with EPO's-likely to be mitigated	Uncertain Interactions with EPO's	Neutral Impacts with EPO's	No Likely Interaction with EPO's
Amendment 1 – relating to Submission No. 3 – Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (MA1A and MA1B) Greater clarity on the Draft LAP Flood Maps: 1A. Alteration proposed within the Draft LAP Flood Risk Management Maps 3A/3B to delineate Food Zone A and Flood Zone B with red serrated lines in order to provide greater clarity and delineation of the Flood Zones 1B. Alteration proposed within the Draft LAP Flood Risk Management Maps 3A/3B to remove the OSI Layer in order to improve greater clarity to the Flood Plain Layers.	Wat3				Pop1, Soi1, Wat1, Wat2, Bio1, Bio2, Bio3, Bio4, Cli1, Mat1, Mat2, H1, H2, Lan1, Noi1.	
Amendment 2 – Additional bullet point within Policy RD1- Residential Development to include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, 2013 And reword first word of second last bullet point "Smarter..."	Noi1				Pop1, Soi1, Wat1, Wat2, Wat3, Bio1, Bio2, Bio3, Bio4, Cli1, Mat1, Mat2, H1, H2, and Lan1.	
Amendment 3 – Text changes in Policy TI 1 – Sustainable Transport, Walking and Cycling – '.....A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020 and the National Policy Framework 2009-2020, (and any updated/superseding documents) , 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.	Noi1				Pop1, Soi1, Wat1, Wat2, Wat3, Bio1, Bio2, Bio3, Bio4, Cli1, Mat1, Mat2, H1, H2, and Lan1.	
Amendment 4 – Text changes in Policy TI 2 – Roads, Streets and Parking- '....This policy and its associated objectives will be guided by relevant national policy, including the Design Manual for Urban	Noi1				Pop1, Soi1, Wat1, Wat2, Wat3, Bio1, Bio2, Bio3,	

<p>Material Alterations to the LAP as amended by recommendations made in the CMR. Amendments 1-12 made by the Elected Members as recommended in the Manager’s Report. Amendment 13 made by the Elected Members otherwise than as recommended in the Manager’s Report.</p>	<p>Likely to Improve Status of EPO’s</p>	<p>Probable conflict with EPO’s – unlikely to be mitigated</p>	<p>Potential Conflict with EPO’s-likely to be mitigated</p>	<p>Uncertain Interactions with EPO’s</p>	<p>Neutral Impacts with EPO’s</p>	<p>No Likely Interaction with EPO’s</p>
<p>Roads and Streets 2013, the Spatial Planning and National Road Guidelines 2012,.....’</p>					<p>Bio4, Cli1, Mat1, Mat2, H1, H2, and Lan1.</p>	
<p>Amendment 5 – To include reference to DMURS within the Title of Objective TI 14 and Textual changes to read as follows:</p> <p>Objective TI 14 – Urban Street Network and the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets - 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. Where appropriate, New developments will also be required to facilitate the extension of the urban street network and/or the provision of improved connectivity and permeability, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists, where appropriate.</p>	<p>Noi1</p>				<p>Pop1, Soi1, Wat1, Wat2, Wat3, Bio1, Bio2, Bio3, Bio4, Cli1, Mat1, Mat2, H1, H2, and Lan1.</p>	
<p>Amendment 6 – Text changes in Objective RD 2 – Quality Housing Environments ‘.....Urban Design Manual: A Best Practice Guide for Planning Authorities 2009 and the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets 2013 (or any updated/superseding documents).’</p>	<p>Noi1</p>				<p>Pop1, Soi1, Wat1, Wat2, Wat3, Bio1, Bio2, Bio3, Bio4, Cli1, Mat1, Mat2, H1, H2, and Lan1.</p>	

<p>Material Alterations to the LAP as amended by recommendations made in the CMR. Amendments 1-12 made by the Elected Members as recommended in the Manager's Report. Amendment 13 made by the Elected Members otherwise than as recommended in the Manager's Report.</p>	<p>Likely to Improve Status of EPO's</p>	<p>Probable conflict with EPO's – unlikely to be mitigated</p>	<p>Potential Conflict with EPO's-likely to be mitigated</p>	<p>Uncertain Interactions with EPO's</p>	<p>Neutral Impacts with EPO's</p>	<p>No Likely Interaction with EPO's</p>
<p>Amendment 7 – Relating to Submission No. 1 – National Roads Authority Text change to Objective TI15 – Transport Network Improvements'... normal planning and environmental considerations, in accordance with the DoECLG 'Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines'and including in combination effects under the EU Habitats Directive Assessment as appropriate..... b) Consider the reservation of lands for a new relief/link road/street connecting the north-eastern approach N66 Loughrea road to the N18 Oranmore in the north western portion of the Plan Area, in compliance with the provisions of Section 2.7 of the DoECLG 'Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines'. c) Consider the reservation of lands for a new relief/link road/street connecting the south eastern approach road R458 Ennis Road to the L4514 Tubber Road on the northsouth western portion of the Plan Area.</p>	<p>Noi1</p>				<p>Pop1, Soi1, Wat1, Wat2, Wat3, Bio1, Bio2, Bio3, Bio4, Cli1, Mat1, Mat2, H1, H2, and Lan1.</p>	
<p>Amendment 8 – Signage Insertion of a new objective proposed within Section 3.5 Transportation Infrastructure of the Gort Draft Plan as follows: TI 25 – Signage on or Visible from National Roads Avoid the proliferation of non-road traffic signage on and adjacent to national roads outside of the 50-60kmh 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 and Provision of Tourist and Leisure Signage on National Road March 2011 shall also be considered in the assessment of relevant developments.</p>					<p>Pop1, Soi1, Wat1, Wat2, Wat3, Bio1, Bio2, Bio3, Bio4, Cli1, Mat1, Mat2, H1, H2, Lan1, Noi1.</p>	

<p>Material Alterations to the LAP as amended by recommendations made in the CMR. Amendments 1-12 made by the Elected Members as recommended in the Manager’s Report. Amendment 13 made by the Elected Members otherwise than as recommended in the Manager’s Report.</p>	<p>Likely to Improve Status of EPO’s</p>	<p>Probable conflict with EPO’s – unlikely to be mitigated</p>	<p>Potential Conflict with EPO’s-likely to be mitigated</p>	<p>Uncertain Interactions with EPO’s</p>	<p>Neutral Impacts with EPO’s</p>	<p>No Likely Interaction with EPO’s</p>
<p>Amendment 9 – Relating to Submission No 2 - OPW</p> <p>Amend the text within the Gort Stage 2 SFRA document under Figure 3 -‘Indicative Flood Risk Zone Map’ and to include the associated consequential changes to the Map Legend of the Draft LAP Flood Risk Management Maps 3A/3B. Amended text to read as follows:</p> <p>Indicative Flood Risk Zone A (Site visits, local knowledge and groundtruthing of flood indicators,including Western CFRAMFlood Risk Review, aerial photography and PFRA 100) PFRA Fluvial 100, JBA Extreme, CAAS groundtruthing aerial photos/field observ.</p> <p>Indicative Flood Zone B (Site visits, local knowledge and groundtruthing of flood indicators,including aerial photography and PFRA 1000) PFRA Fluvial 1000</p>						
<p>Amendment10–Relating to Submission No. 7 EPA Flood Risk Management Include additional text to Objective U18 Part d) within Section 3.6.2 Utility and Environmental Infrastructure of the Gort Draft Plan as follows: Objective U18 – Flood Risk Management and Assessment</p>	<p>Wat1, Wat2, Wat3, Bio1, Bio2, Bio3, Bio4, Mat1</p>				<p>Pop1, Soi1, Cli1, Mat2, H1, H2, Lan1, Noi1.</p>	

<p>Material Alterations to the LAP as amended by recommendations made in the CMR. Amendments 1-12 made by the Elected Members as recommended in the Manager's Report. Amendment 13 made by the Elected Members otherwise than as recommended in the Manager's Report.</p>	<p>Likely to Improve Status of EPO's</p>	<p>Probable conflict with EPO's – unlikely to be mitigated</p>	<p>Potential Conflict with EPO's-likely to be mitigated</p>	<p>Uncertain Interactions with EPO's</p>	<p>Neutral Impacts with EPO's</p>	<p>No Likely Interaction with EPO's</p>
<p>(Refer to Maps 3A/3B) d) Galway County Council shall work with other bodies and organisations, as appropriate, to help protect critical infrastructure, including water and wastewater, within the plan area, from risk of flooding. Where certain measures proposed to mitigate or manage the risk of flooding associated with new developments/critical infrastructure are likely to result in significant effects to the environment of European sites that form part of Natura 2000 network downstream, such measures will undergo environmental assessment and Habitats Directive Assessment, as appropriate.</p>						
<p>Amendment 11 Amend/delete wording of Objective UI 8 Flood Risk Management - Part a) as follows: Objective UI8– Flood Risk Management and Assessment '...Flood Risk Management, including fluvial, coastal/tidal, pluvial and groundwater flooding...'</p>					<p>Pop1, Soi1, Wat1, Wat2, Wat3, Bio1, Bio2, Bio3, Bio4, Cli1, Mat1, Mat2, H1, H2, Lan1, Noi1.</p>	
<p>Amendment 12 Amend wording of Policy UI 2 Flood Risk Management as follows: '...Galway County Council will also take account of implement the relevant aspects of the Western Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study (WesternCFRAMs, the output of which will be a Flood Risk Management Plan for the catchment), along with the mitigation measures and recommendations...'</p>	<p>Wat1, Wat2, Wat3</p>				<p>Pop1, Soi1, Bio1, Bio2, Bio3, Bio4, Cli1, Mat1, Mat2, H1, H2, Lan1, Noi1.</p>	
<p>Amendment 13 Insert a new bullet point within Policy NH1 – Natural Heritage and Biodiversity to read as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ireland's Environment 2012 (EPA, 2012), and to make provision where appropriate to address the report's goals and challenges. 	<p>Pop1, Soi1, Wat1, Wat2, Wat3, Bio1, Bio2, Bio3, Bio4, Cli1, Mat1, Mat2, H1, H2, Lan1, Noi1.</p>					

<p>Material Alterations to the LAP as amended by recommendations made in the CMR. Amendments 1-12 made by the Elected Members as recommended in the Manager's Report. Amendment 13 made by the Elected Members otherwise than as recommended in the Manager's Report.</p>	<p>Likely to Improve Status of EPO's</p>	<p>Probable conflict with EPO's – unlikely to be mitigated</p>	<p>Potential Conflict with EPO's-likely to be mitigated</p>	<p>Uncertain Interactions with EPO's</p>	<p>Neutral Impacts with EPO's</p>	<p>No Likely Interaction with EPO's</p>
<p>One material alteration proposed by the Elected Members otherwise than as recommended in the Manager's Report relates to a change in the Land Use zoning for one site located within a flood risk area as identified in the LAP and the Stage 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for the Gort Draft LAP as follows:</p> <p>Amendment 14 Alteration proposed to the Land Use Zoning that allows the present zoning Town Centre/Commercial to be applied to the entirety of the Submission site. Refer to MA 2 on the attached Land Use Zoning Maps 1A/1B.</p> <p>This specific alteration proposed by the Elected Members relates to changes in the Land Use Zoning for lands off Georges Street that are located within a flood risk area (Flood Zone A) as identified in the Gort Draft LAP and attached Stage 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for the Gort Draft LAP.</p> <p>The proposed alteration relates to changes in land use zoning and development potential and also in relation to the methodology set out within the Draft LAP in relation to flood risk management and is accordingly considered to be a Material Alteration.</p>			<p>Wat1, Wat2, Wat3, Bio1, Bio2, Bio3, Bio4</p>		<p>Pop1, Soi1, Cli1, Mat1, Mat2, H1, H2, Lan1, Noi1.</p>	

The SEA Screening Report assesses the potential for likely significant environmental effects arising from Material Alterations to the Gort Local Area Plan (LAP) 2013-2019 proposed by the Elected Members of Galway County Council on 27th May 2013.

All but one of the material alterations are not considered to pose likely significant environmental effects. MA 2 is a proposed Town Centre zoning for an area of land which is located within Flood Zone A. The proposed re-zoning from Open Space to Town Centre is not generally in accordance with the provisions of 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DEHLG, 2009) (henceforth referred to as *The Guidelines*) as it introduces a vulnerable land use onto lands which have clearly been indicated in the Stage 2 SFRA as being within Flood Zone A.

Whilst meeting one of the criteria, MA2 fails a number of criteria of the Justification Test which was carried out on the lands identified within Flood Zone A (and zoned as Open Space, Recreation and Amenity) in order to inform the Manager's Report on submissions received on the Draft Plan, Environmental Report and Natura Impact Report (included as **Appendix C**). Section 3.6 of *The Guidelines* states that:

'Inappropriate development that does not meet the criteria of the Justification Test should not be considered at the plan-making stage or approved within the development management process.'

It is therefore considered that significant adverse environmental effects are not likely as a result of all Material Alterations with the exception of Material Alteration No. 2. Therefore it is considered appropriate that SEA of MA 2 be carried out as required by Section 13 (b) (iv) (f) of the Planning and Development Act 2010.

13.7 PHASE TWO: ANALYSIS OF MATERIAL ALTERATION TO THE PROPOSED LAP THAT CONFLICT WITH ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION OBJECTIVES

13.7.1 Background

Amendment No. 14 is a material alteration (MA2) proposed by the Elected Members that are otherwise than as recommended in the Manager's Report 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.

Alteration proposed to the Land Use Zoning that allows the present zoning Town Centre/Commercial to be applied to the entirety of the Submission site as shown in the Material Alterations Map in **Appendix B**.

This specific alteration proposed by the Elected Members relates to changes in the Land Use Zoning for lands off Georges Street that are located within a flood risk area (Flood Zone A) as identified in the Gort Draft LAP and Stage 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for the Gort Draft LAP.

The proposed alteration relates to changes in land use zoning and development potential and also in relation to the methodology set out within the Draft LAP in relation to flood risk management and is accordingly considered to be a Material Alteration.

This submission is 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 PI. Ref. No. 11/239 thereby remaining effective until April 2016.

Under the Draft Plan part of the lands subject to the above-mentioned permissions are within Flood Zone C and are zoned as Town Centre/Commercial (this area amounts to 0.671ha). The portion of the lands within Flood Zone A (amounting to 1.414ha) was proposed as Open Space, Recreation and Amenity in the Draft Plan. The OS zoning is the portion of the site that the Elected Members now wish to rezone to Town Centre/Commercial (1.414ha See Map Sub 6 in **Appendix B**).

The applicants have provided a Justification Test which it is claimed passes all criteria.

13.7.2 Discussion

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared for County Galway, 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) and *The Guidelines*. 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.

A Stage 2 SFRA augmented by ground-truthing has been carried out by Galway County Council's Flood Risk consultants and the lands proposed to be rezoned from Open Space Recreation and Amenity to Town Centre/Commercial by the Elected Members have been identified as being located within Flood Zone A.

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 of this site as lying within Flood Zone A and has therefore been recommended to be as Open Space/Recreation. This is in line with *The Guidelines* and has been assessed accordingly in the SEA.

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 from Open Space Recreation and Amenity to Town Centre/Commercial is not recommended.

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.

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.

If this portion of the site were to be zoned as Town Centre/Commercial Galway County Council's Flood Risk Consultants shall review any updated Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment as part of submissions received on the proposed Material Alterations in accordance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009 which may include the undertaking of a site specific hydrological impact study.

13.7.3 Recommendation

It is considered that the lands proposed to be rezoned from Open Space, Recreation and Amenity under MA2 as Town Centre/Commercial as outlined on Map 1A in **Appendix B** and classified as vulnerable under *The Guidelines* should currently be considered unsuitable for development and remain zoned as Open Space as proposed within the Managers Report on the Draft Submissions. Although the Flood Justification Test undertaken as part of the SEA assessment for the proposed rezoning has failed on a number of criteria it is considered that if following a more detailed, independently verified, up-to-date Stage 3 Flood Risk Assessment, as outlined in *The Guidelines* it is ascertained that the proposed zoning would not pose any significant environmental threat as a result of flooding issues and the Elected Members decide to zone this land as Town Centre, it is recommended that this zoning and permission be subject to ongoing review with any alteration/extension of the zoning or permission at the end of the lifetime of the Plan or the permission assessed with up-to-date environmental information.

13.8 CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES

13.8.1 Introduction

The consideration of Alternatives is a legal requirement of Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of Galway County Council on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (SEA Directive) which entered into force on 21st July 2001 and implemented by Member States prior to 21st July 2004. In particular the Directive states that:

"... an environmental report shall be prepared in which the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme, are identified, described and evaluated" (Article 5.1).

The issue of alternatives is therefore a critical function of the SEA process and necessary to evaluate the likely environmental consequences of a range of alternative development strategies for the plan area within the constraints imposed by environmental conditions. This section of the SEA on the Material Alterations to the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2013-2019 is restricted by Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act which concentrates on 'Material Alterations' only, not the overall local area plan approach.

There are various options available to the Elected Members in regard to alternative approaches which can be pursued, and it is these alternatives which will be analysed in line with the requirements of the SEA Directive and Regulations.

A 'Do Nothing' approach is not considered a reasonable and realistic approach as Galway County Council has determined a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required to be carried out in respect of the proposed Material Alteration to the Local Area Plan.

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

1. Adopt as per Proposed Material Alteration to Draft Gort LAP 2013-2019 (May 2013),
2. Adopt as per Proposed Material Alterations to Draft Gort LAP 2013-2019 (May 2013) with further modifications,
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.

The examination of the four alternatives considered by the SEA is detailed below.

13.8.2 Alternative 1 - Adopt as per all Proposed Material Alterations (May 2013)

This alternative would not be in compliance with *The Guidelines* or the recommendations of the Stage 2 SFRA, as amended, and it is unclear if it would be likely to result in significant adverse impacts upon flood risk to human health and future residential/business and enterprise/community developments. A Justification Test undertaken as part of the SEA assessment for the proposed rezoning from Open Space Recreation and Amenity to Town Centre/Commercial was undertaken for Material Alteration MA2 which failed.

The Elected Members choose to adopt the Proposed Material Alterations to Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2013-2019, and associated SEA and AA. The Draft Gort Local Area Plan and Material Alterations as proposed at the Elected Members meeting of 27th May 2013 have been subject to SEA Screening. All but one of the Material Alterations, MA 2 which relates to a changed landuse zoning, have been screened out for potential significant effects on the environment.

Proposed MA2 has been assessed against the EPO's which were formulated in the original ER and was also subject to the Justification Test as detailed in *The Guidelines*. These lands were requested in Submission No. 6 on the Draft LAP, to be zoned as Town Centre/Commercial and were duly zoned by the Elected Members as Town Centre/Commercial. It is unclear as to the rationale applied by the Elected Members in making this decision. It is clear however that an environmental-led approach was not central to the decision making process and as a result the potential exists for this zoning to cause significant environmental effects. To adopt the Plan as per the Proposed Material Alterations to the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2013-2019 (May 2013) would contravene *The Guidelines* and therefore contravene compliance with proper planning and sustainable development by not having regard to:

- the current lands within Flood Zone A,
- environmental and ecological designations, sensitivities and constraints, and
- the likely significant impacts on water resources.

13.8.3 Alternative 2 - Adopt as per all Proposed Material Alterations except MA2 (May 2013)

As set out in the SEA Screening detailed in this document, all proposed material alterations except MA2 have been screened out for significant environmental effects.

This alternative would be in compliance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines, the Stage 2 SFRA, as amended and the Habitats Directive.

13.8.4 Alternative 3 - Adopt as per Draft Gort LAP 2013-2019 (February 2013)

As set out in the SEA Environmental Report from February 2013, the Draft Gort LAP 2013-2019 would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

This alternative would be in compliance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines, the Stage 2 SFRA and the Habitats Directive.

13.8.5 Alternative 4 - Adopt as per Proposed Material Alterations with further modifications (May 2013)

Material Alteration MA2 would not be in compliance with *The Guidelines* or the recommendations of the Stage 2 SFRA, as amended, and therefore significant adverse impacts upon flood risk to human health and future residential/business and enterprise/community developments cannot be excluded. A Justification Test was undertaken as part of the SEA assessment for the proposed rezoning from Open Space Recreation and Amenity to Town Centre/Commercial and failed for MA2. It is considered that MA2 proposes an incompatible use.

As future modifications are unknown the effects on the environment cannot be fully assessed.

13.8.6 Technical Difficulties

The use of qualitative and quantitative data in assessing and evaluating alternatives has provided a greater depth of knowledge than using one method alone. A combination of previous knowledge, consultation, GIS, etc. has enabled the SEA team to compile a comprehensive list of reasonable and realistic alternatives worthy of inclusion in Proposed Material Alterations to Draft Gort Local Area Plan. Section 13 (iv) (f) of the Planning and Development Act 2010 states that 'The Planning Authority shall determine if a Strategic Environmental Assessment or an Appropriate Assessment or both such assessments, as the case may be, is or are required to be carried out as respects one or more than one proposed material alteration of the draft local area plan.

It should be noted that there is no other guidance in the Planning and Development Act or the SEA Regulations (as amended) which direct the preparation of an SEA on Proposed Material Alterations to a Local Area Plan. It should also be noted that the 2004 Regulations do not easily align with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act regarding 'modifications' to the Draft Plan.

In conclusion, based on the level of information available, the restrictive scope of the exercise and the timescale encountered it can be concluded that no further technical difficulties were encountered in formulating the alternatives section of the Environmental Report to this level of detail.

13.9 CONCLUSION

As stated at the outset, Section 13 (iv) (f) of the Planning and Development Act 2010 states that "*the planning authority shall determine if a strategic environmental assessment or an appropriate assessment or both such assessments, as the case may be, is or are required to be carried out as respects one or more than one proposed material alteration to the draft local area plan*". The proposed Material Alteration MA2 is subject to SEA in accordance with Section 13 (iv) (f) of the Planning and Development Act 2010 and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations) 2004 (as amended). However, the scope of the report is restricted by reason of Section 13 (iv) (f) as set out above. The Act states that, only an assessment "*as respects one or more than one proposed material alteration is required*". It is therefore considered in order to fully incorporate the proposed Material Alteration which was not screened out, cognisance must be taken of the

original SEA Environmental Report and its Environmental Protection Objectives accompanying the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2013-2019. Accordingly this SEA Environmental Report Addendum is a Strategic Environmental Assessment on the Proposed Material Alterations of May 2013. Considering this restriction and the lack of guidance available on preparing an SEA Environmental Report on a Proposed Material Alteration to a Draft Local Area Plan, the methodology this SEA undertook involved assessing solely the effects of Material Alteration No. 2(MA 2) on the environment. It is the purpose of the SEA to encourage and maximise development where there is adequate and appropriate services, wastewater treatment, water, minimal environmental restrictions and a capacity to accommodate public infrastructure.

In this regard, the SEA process has identified that to facilitate MA2 as per the Proposed Material Alterations to the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2013-2019 would result in a segregated and haphazard approach to sequential planning, and result in the potential for significant adverse environmental effects. These effects include the potential for likely significant environmental effects on local hydrology/hydrogeology, with subsequent impacts on water quality, human health and biodiversity. While there is an existing permission at the site under consideration for proposed MA2, the Flood Impact Assessment informing this planning permission was carried out prior to the issuing of the EU Floods Directive and the publication of *The Guidelines*. Land use in this area is currently restricted to agricultural grassland. It is considered that the proposed location of Town Centre zoned lands within Flood Zone A is contrary to the *The Guidelines* which restrict development within areas that have a high potential flooding. Therefore this option has the potential to cause significant environmental effects. In order to prevent these potential significant adverse effects on the environment as a result of MA 2 it is recommended that proposed rezoning from Open Space Recreation and Amenity to Town Centre/Commercial zoning under MA 2 is not adopted and that the area be remain zoned to Open Space, Recreation and Amenity as per the Draft Plan.

It is understood that a Flood Impact Assessment is currently being prepared on behalf of the developers which hold an existing live permission at this location and which proposed the alteration of zoning of the lands in question to Town Centre/Commercial. Any site specific Flood Impact Assessment should be independently assessed and if it is found that the rezoning of the lands in question will not cause any significant adverse environmental effects and the Elected Members choose to rezone the lands in question as Town Centre/Commercial it is considered that both this permission and rezoning should be reviewed on an on-going basis.

14 AMENDMENTS TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT ARISING FROM PUBLIC CONSULTATION

This section of the Addendum details proposed amendments to the SEA Environmental Report arising from submissions received during the public consultation phase that directly relate to the Environmental Report. The only submission relating to amendments to the Environmental Report is from the EPA. Each recommendation is dealt with in turn below.

Any additional text for the Environmental Report as a result of a submission is in blue while text that has been deleted is shown in strikethrough and highlighted in yellow.

Amendment to ER relating to more detailed Maps

Relating to more detailed Plan area specific maps these are now included as **Appendix D^{††}** to this document. Maps which are considered would benefit from more detail are the Soils Map (**Figure 3.8**), the Bedrock with Areas of Geological Interest Map (**Figure 3.9**), the Vulnerability Map (**Figure 3.13**) and the Aquifer Map (**Figure 3.14**), revised versions of which are all included in **Appendix D**.

Amendment to ER relating to reference to 'Ireland's Environment 2012'

Relating to updated reference to report 'Ireland's Environment 2012' (EPA, 2012) this is now included in Section 3.1 as follows:

CURRENT STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

According to recent EPA publications (EPA, 2008, 2012), Ireland's natural environment, although under increasing pressure, generally remains of good quality and represents one of the country's most essential national assets. In the EPA's 2020 Vision – *Protecting the Irish Environment* document it is noted that pressures on the environment have increased significantly. As Ireland's economy grew in the past ten years, these pressures accelerated at a rate that far exceeds that observed in other EU countries.

The '*Environmental Challenges and Priorities*' for Ireland are set out in Chapter 10 of the recent report Ireland's Environment 2012 (EPA, 2012). These are as follows:

Environmental Goals

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

Environmental Challenges

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

^{††}More Detailed Plan Area Specific Maps have been removed from Appendix D of the Addendum report and are now included within the main body of the Environmental Report.

This document and the aforementioned goals and challenges are recognised by Galway County Council and reference is made through the addition of a bullet point within **Policy NH1 – Natural Heritage and Biodiversity** which will read as follows:

- Ireland’s Environment 2012 (EPA, 2012), and to make provision where appropriate to address the report’s goals and challenges.

The fourth EPA *State of the Environment Report* (2008) identified four priority challenges for the environment, which, if addressed successfully, should benefit the present and future quality of Ireland’s environment. These comprise: limiting and adapting to climate change; reversing environmental degradation; mainstreaming environmental considerations; and complying with environmental legislation and agreements. These challenges are summarised in **Table 3.1** below.

Table 3.1: EPA State of the Environment Report (2008) Key Challenges

Challenges	Components	Relationship to LAP
Limiting and Adapting to Climate Change	Mitigating the causes and effects of climate change; Adapting to climate change impacts; and Improving our understanding of climate change.	The LAP should take account of potential climate change impacts when developing policies and objectives to ensure that the Plan does not contribute to the impact of climate change. In addition Gort LAP should consider the impacts of climate change when applying land use zonings to areas that are vulnerable to these impacts e.g. flooding.
Mainstreaming Environmental Considerations	Incorporating environmental considerations into policies and plans; Ensuring environmental responsible business; and Changing behaviours.	The LAP needs to consider the objectives and precepts of other existing Policies, Plans and Programmes, such as the Habitats Directive, to ensure that the issues addressed by these are brought forward into the overall planning process.
Reversing Environmental Degradation	Preventing eutrophication and other water pollution; Protecting natural habitats and species populations; and Remediation of contaminated land.	The LAP needs to consider these issues to ensure they are brought forward into the overall planning process. Consideration of the objectives of other existing Policies, Plans and Programmes, such as the River Basin Management Plan will aid in addressing the challenge of reversing environmental degradation.
Complying with Environmental Legislation and Agreements	Building a culture of environmental compliance; Enforcement of legislation at national and local level; and Meeting EU and other international obligations.	The LAP needs to consider the requirements of national and local level legislation in developing policies and objectives as well as EU and international obligations. Policies which reinforce a culture of environmental compliance should also be considered for the LAP.

In *2020 Vision – Protecting the Irish Environment* (EPA, 2007) the EPA outlines six environmental goals which reflect on the main challenges identified in the State of the Environment reports as well as key issues at the global and EU level as reflected in the 6th Environmental Action Plan (EAP). These goals are:

- Limiting and adapting to climate change;
- Clean air;
- Protected waters;
- Protected soils and biodiversity;
- Sustainable use of natural resources; and
- Integration and enforcement.

These goals are identified as a means of realising the vision of protecting and improving Ireland's environment. Many of these goals are relevant to the Gort LAP as this local level plan contains the policies and objectives to guide land use and development in the town.

Amendment to ER relating to include a new objective to link to SEA related monitoring

The linking of reporting on SEA related monitoring with reporting obligations on progress in achieving the objectives of the Plan through an objective in the Plan was recommended in the SEA comment on submissions on the Draft Plan. However, it was considered by Galway County Council that the Environmental Report includes provision for monitoring on the implementation of the Plan and no change was required.

Amendment to ER relating additional information in the assessment of policies and objectives

An additional column has been added to the Assessment Matrix in **Appendix C** of the original Environmental Report which details specific policies and objectives that mitigate for any potential negative impacts of each row entry. An updated Assessment Matrix has been included as **Appendix E** to this SEA Environmental Report Addendum.

Appendix A

Description of Submissions on Draft Gort LAP and SEA Consideration

Description of Submissions on Draft Gort LAP and SEA consideration

Submission	Issue	SEA Consideration
<p>1. National Roads Authority</p>	<p>1. Strategic Road Network</p> <p>The Authority outlines the general importance of the road network and in particular the N/M18 and N66. The authority mentions the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (January, 2012) and welcomes reference in the Plan to the Guidelines and protection of the N/M18 and N66.</p> <p>2. Section 3.5 Transportation Infrastructure</p> <p>The Authority welcomes protection afforded the M18/M17 by Objective TI13.</p> <p>3. 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>4. Section 3.4 Economic Development</p> <p>Developments within Industrial zoning to the north of the town with frontage onto the N18 at a 60kph speed limit applies will require a road safety audit and the avoidance of a proliferation of access.</p> <p>The authority considers that Town Centre/Commercial lands zoned to the east of the town should be subject to TTA and RSA as appropriate in order to ensure the safeguarding of the strategic regional role of the N66.</p> <p>5. Signage</p> <p>The Authority would welcome reference to official policy in relation to the requirement to control the proliferation of non-road traffic signage on and adjacent to national roads as set out in Section 3.8 of the D0ECLG Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines.</p>	<p>1. Strategic Road Network</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>2. Section 3.5 Transportation Infrastructure</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>3. Section 3.2 Residential Development</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 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>4. Section 3.4 Economic Development</p> <p>Under Objective TI13 developments within Industrial zoning to the north of the town i.e. 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. TTA and RSA will also be carried out for developments proposed in Town Centre/Commercial zoned land as appropriate in the east of the town.</p> <p>5. Signage</p> <p>This is not considered to be a SEA issue.</p>
<p>2 Office of Public Works</p>	<p>The OPW highlights the existence of the document 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (November 2009), and the application of the Justification Test in order to manage flood risks.</p> <p>The OPW suggest that a Stage 2 FRA is required for the Gort Plan. The OPW recommend illustrating the Western CFRAM flood maps when available and the respective pluvial, and if applicable, groundwater flood risk maps.</p>	<p>Noted. A Stage 2 SFRA has been carried out with ground-truthing for Gort LAP.</p> <p>A Justification Test has been prepared for Town Centre zoning located within Flood Zone A and B. The justification test passed all criterion. The area in question is located within lands which have already been developed.</p>

Submission	Issue	SEA Consideration
	<p>The OPW state that where there is a suspected flood risk to a proposed development, the Authority should apply the appropriate level of assessment recommended in the Guidelines; in certain cases this may mean a Stage 3 FRA investigation to establish its specific exposure and, where appropriate, evidence of application of the Justification Test must be supplied.</p>	
<p>3 Department of Environment Community and Local Government</p>	<p>The DECLG requires further clarification on a number of matters:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The application of the Sequential Approach and Justification Test where there is a suspected flood risk to vulnerable land use is required by the Flood Risk Management Guidelines. Where the planning authority is considering the future development of lands in an urban settlement that are at moderate or high risk of flooding and this includes historically zoned area, the appropriate level of assessment recommended in the Guidelines including use of the Justification Test must be carried out. Details of this assessment including the Justification Test if applied, should be included in the text of the Draft Plan. This is particularly relevant in the context of the Proposed Town Centre/Commercial zoning in the Gort Draft LAP along the Cannahowna River. 2. Greater clarity on the maps to differentiate Flood Zones A and B would be helpful for those using the plan. 3. Regard should be had to the comments of the National Roads Authority on the Draft Plan and also the Council must ensure that all objectives of the Draft Plan which impact on national routes are in compliance with the provisions of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines. 4. The Council should note that Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) was published jointly by the Department of Environment Community and Local Government in conjunction with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport on 25th March 2013. The Manual outlines practical design measures to encourage more sustainable travel patterns in cities and towns and will provide a useful tool for the Council in addressing the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users when preparing new urban roads and streets. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Justification Test has been prepared for Town Centre zoning located within Flood Zone A and B. The justification test passed all criterion. The area in question is located within lands which have already been developed. The Justification Test is included in the Appendix F to this document (The Addendum to the Environmental Report). 2. Noted 3. Noted 4. The Gort LAP should make reference to the mentioned document. In particular in the Roads, Streets and Parking Section on page 30 of the LAP and with any relevant policies or objectives of that section.
<p>4 Sean Ruane</p>	<p>Requests that his lands (approx 4 acres) at Rindifin which are currently zoned</p>	<p>Sufficient lands have been zoned Residential Phase 1 as per the Core</p>

Submission	Issue	SEA Consideration
	Residential Phase 2 be zoned Residential Phase 1 as there are two existing houses adjacent, the site has the benefit of access to the public footpath along with public lighting and main sewers. The submission also states that the site is within easy walking distance of the town centre, schools playgrounds and other amenities.	Strategy and Regional planning Guidelines.
5 Lidl Ireland GmbH	<p>The principal concern in this submission relates to policies within the draft plan which are considered of a restrictive and overly prescriptive nature regarding the potential to demolish buildings as located within the ACA.</p> <p>Lidl Ireland GmbH seek the amendment of the ACA boundary as affecting their lands or the amendment of plan objectives BH4 and BH5 as currently described and as potentially overly prejudicial to development proposals not just within the ownership of Lidl.</p>	<p>This location is at a protected view as shown in Figure 3.26 of the ER, from north of the Crowe Street/Kininch Road looking south towards the town.</p> <p>The streetscape looking south from the junction of Crowe Street/Kininch Road is part of the historical setting of the town. Although the building at the junction is likely to be of more recent construction any development within this location is likely to have the potential to impact on the integrity of the streetscape and ACA. A higher level of planning control, due to its designation as an ACA, at the location in question is considered from an SEA cultural heritage perspective to be appropriate.</p>
6 Gerry, Eilisha, Gearoid and Fergal Lydon	<p>This submission is seeking the reinstatement of the town centre zoning across the entirety of the subject lands of 2.1 hectares at Lavalley 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 a Justification Test which it is claimed passes all criteria.</p>	<p>A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared for County Galway, 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) and 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 augmented by ground-truthing has been carried out by Galway County Council's Flood Risk Consultants for the Plan area and the lands in question have been identified as being located within Flood Zone A.</p> <p>All undeveloped lands identified as Flood Zone A or B have been recommended for Open Space/Recreation and Amenity Zoning. As Map 3A of the Draft LAP shows a portion of this site as lying within Flood Zone A and is therefore recommended to be zoned 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</p>

Submission	Issue	SEA Consideration
		<p>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 from Open Space, Recreation and Amenity to Town Centre/Commercial is not recommended.</p> <p>There have 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 Council's approach to generally zone undeveloped lands within Flood Zones A and B as Open Space/Recreation this zoning should be retained as indicated in the Land Use Zoning Map 1A of the Draft Plan.</p> <p>If the portion of the site (located within Flood Zone A) were to be rezoned from Open Space, Recreation and Amenity to Town Centre/Commercial Galway County Council's Flood Consultants shall review any updated Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment as part of submissions received on the proposed Material Alterations in accordance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009 which may include the undertaking of a site specific hydrological impact study</p>
<p>7 Environmental Protection Agency</p>	<p>General comments from the EPA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where there are amendments these should be screened for SEA • Following adoption an SEA Statement should summarise the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) How environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan; b) How the Environmental Report, submissions, observations and consultations have been taken into account during the preparation of the Plan; c) The reasons for choosing the Plan adopted in the light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and d) The measures decided upon to monitor the significant environmental effects of implementation of the Plan. • A copy of the SEA Statement with the above information should be sent to any environmental authority consulted during the SEA process. 	<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>Specific Comments</p> <p>1. Residential Phase 2 Lands</p> <p>Habitats in Residential Phase 2 lands are discussed in Section 3.3.1.3 of the Natura Impact Report. The following wording was recommended for Objective RD1 - Phased Residential Development:</p> <p><i>'The inclusion of new residential Phase 2 lands within this plan will not in any way infer a prior commitment on the part of the Council regarding their future zoning for residential purposes within any future variation or review of the Gort LAP Any future zoning of the phase II lands would also be subject to appropriate environmental assessment(s) as required under the relevant legislation.'</i></p>

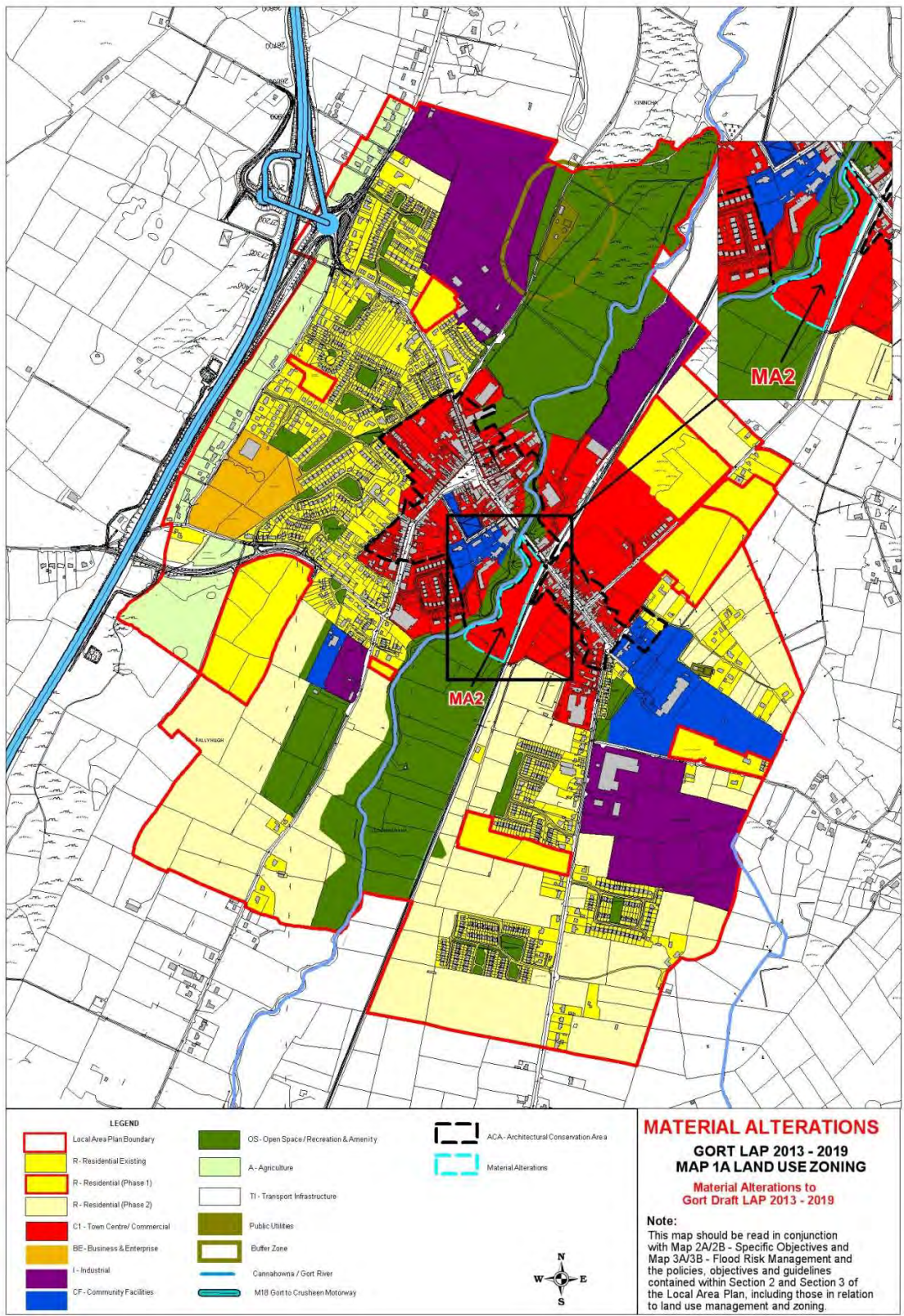
Submission	Issue	SEA Consideration
	<p>Specific Comments</p> <p>1. Residential Phase 2 Lands</p> <p>Stated that an aspect of the Plan which it is considered may merit further examination is the apparent excessive provision of residential zoned lands for Residential Phase 2, amounting to 72 ha.</p> <p>The submission states that in the context of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region and the Core Strategy for Galway County Council where it is considered that Residential Phase 2 lands are determined to be in excess of the requirements for zoned lands in the long-term consideration should be given to rezoning/dezoning the area.</p> <p>In addition it is requested that clarification be provided on the extent to which the zoning of Residential Phase 2 Lands has been assessed within the scope of the SEA/AA and that the zoning of these lands is not in conflict with the outcome of the assessments taking into consideration the relevant mitigation measures/ recommendations reflected in the Draft Plan.</p> <p>2. Water Services Objectives</p> <p>It should be ensured that adequate water supply and waste water treatment services are provided and maintained to ensure the Plan area is adequately serviced to allow development provided for in the Plan, to proceed in an environmentally sustainable manner.</p> <p>3. Flood Risk Management</p> <p>It should be ensured that critical infrastructure within the Plan area including water supply and wastewater are adequately protected from risk of flooding.</p> <p>Flood Risk Management -Policy U12 –Flood Risk Management</p> <p>In the context of the Western CRAM and associated SEA and AA consideration should be given to replacing the term “take account of” with “implement the relevant aspects of”.</p> <p>Flood Risk Management Objective UI8- Flood Risk Management and Assessment</p> <p>The “term coastal/ tidal” in Objective UI8 should be removed as appropriate if not considered relevant in the context of the Plan area.</p> <p>4. Natural Heritage and Biodiversity related Policies</p> <p>There would be merit in consultation with the NPWS in considering including a commitment in the Plan, to supporting the</p>	<p>This wording was not accepted by Galway County Council as it was felt that it was covered under Objectives DS3 and NH1. All draft land use zonings including Residential have been assessed in the context of SEA/AA of the Draft Plan and mitigating objectives have been included within the Draft Plan as appropriate including DS3 and NH1. In addition, Objectives DS5, UI 2, UI 3 and UI 4 ensure that no development can take place unless it is adequately serviced.</p> <p>Residential Phase 2 lands are discussed on page 72 Section 7.2.10 of the Environmental Report. No significant adverse environmental effects of the proposed Residential Phase 2 zoning are predicted and it is considered that any potential for negative effects on biodiversity, water and soils will be offset by through the normal development management process. Only exceptional cases for development on lands zoned Residential Phase 2 will be considered and as stated in Objective RD1:</p> <p><i>‘The above exceptions will be subject to compliance with the Core Strategy in the 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, access and servicing requirements.’</i></p> <p>2. Water Services Objectives</p> <p>Noted, provision is made for adequate water supply and waste water treatment services in Policy UI1, Objectives UI1, UI2, UI3 and UI4.</p> <p>3. Flood Risk Management</p> <p>Noted. Objective UI5 states that 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>As per EPA comment it is SEA recommendation to replace the term “take account of” with “implement the relevant aspects of” in Policy U12.</p> <p>SEA recommendation to remove the term ‘coastal/ tidal’ from Objective UI8</p> <p>4. Natural Heritage and Biodiversity related Policies</p> <p>SEA recommendation to include reference to support the development, as appropriate, of a Management Plan for the Coole Garryland cSAC/ SPA and Lough Cutra cSAC/ SPA.</p> <p>Neither of the Natura sites referred to are located within the Local Area Plan area, in</p>

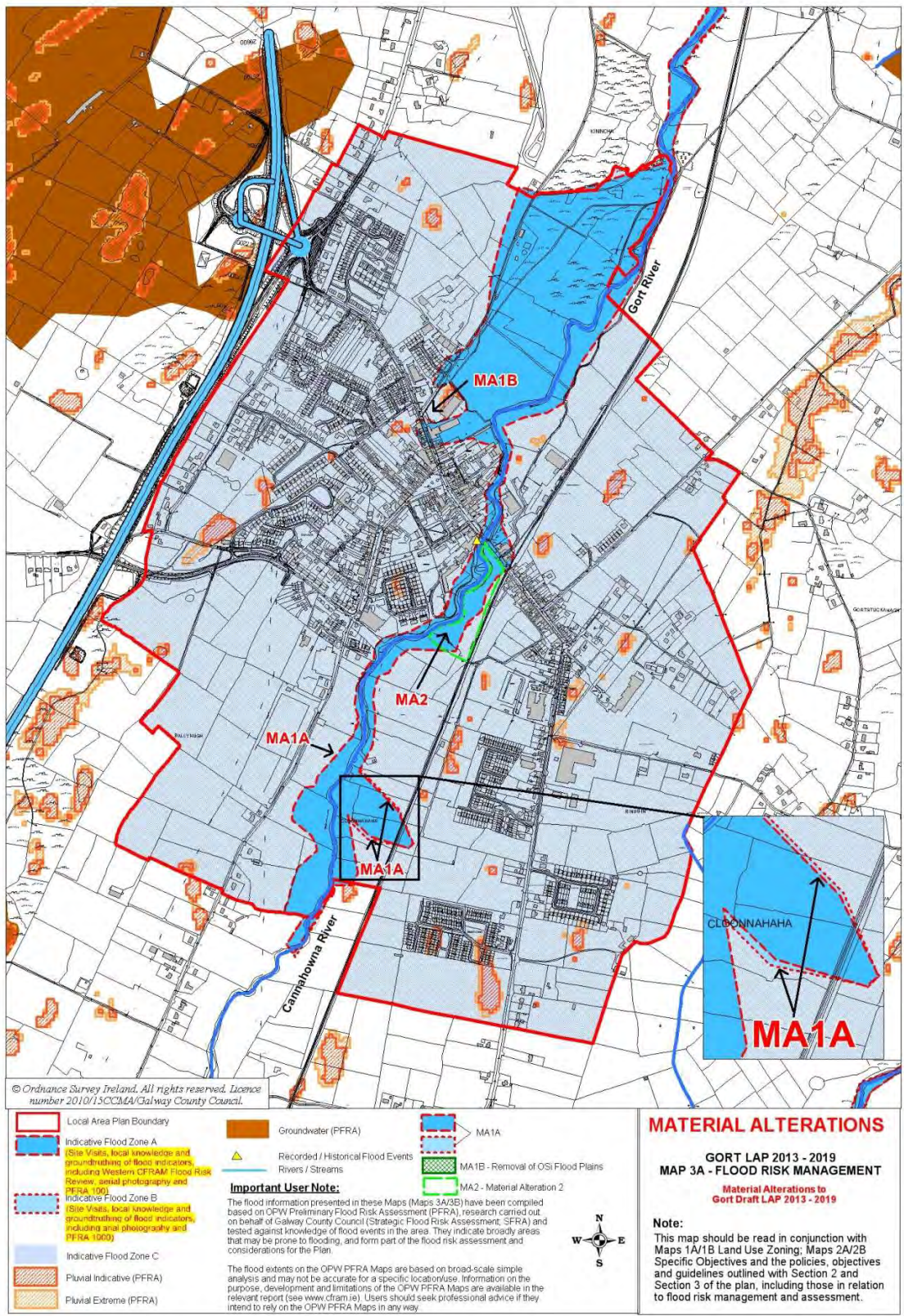
Submission	Issue	SEA Consideration
	<p>development, as appropriate, of a Management Plan for the Coole Garryland cSAC/ SPA and Lough Cutra cSAC/ SPA.</p> <p>5. SEA Environmental Report</p> <p>a) Where relevant, more detailed Plan area specific maps for relevant environmental topics, should be considered for inclusion in the baseline descriptions. In addition, where updated information is available for specific environmental topics e.g. water, this should be referenced in the relevant baselines description.</p> <p>b) The reference in Section 3.2 to the fourth EPA State of the Environment Report should be updated to reflect the most recent Ireland's Environment 2012 (EPA, 2012). The SEA Environmental Report and the relevant Draft Plan Policies and Objectives should, where relevant and appropriate, make provisions to address the Goals and Challenges as laid out in Chapter 10 of this report.</p> <p>c) The linking of reporting on SEA related monitoring with reporting obligations on progress in achieving the objectives of the Plan should also be reflected in an objective in the Plan.</p> <p>It is not clear how the Assessment Matrix entries in Appendix C are linked to and have informed the proposed SEA Mitigation Measures. It is noted that many of the entries seem uncertain in terms of the nature of the effects as indicated by the +/- symbol There would be merit in including a comment columns in Appendix C explaining the relevance of the entries and providing a link where necessary with the relevant SEA/ AA Mitigation Measures/ Recommendations.</p>	<p>this regard the issue is more relevant to the County Development Plan and shall be undertaken in consultation with the NPWS.</p> <p>5. SEA Environmental Report</p> <p>a) Where possible and considered useful more detailed maps will be inserted into the SEA ER.</p> <p>b) Reference to 2012 EPA report will be included in updated ER. SEA recommendation to include reference to the updated EPA report in Policy NH1 – Natural Heritage and Biodiversity.</p> <p>Provisions are made throughout the Environmental Report and Plan policies and objectives to the Environmental Goals and Environmental Challenges as set out in the EPA document 'Ireland's Environment 2012'.</p> <p>c) The linking of reporting on SEA related monitoring with reporting obligations on progress in achieving the objectives of the Plan through an objective in the Plan is recommended. The recommendation was not accepted by Galway County as it was felt that the Environmental Report included provision for monitoring on the implementation of the Plan and no change was required.</p> <p>d) Noted, a comment column will be included in the table in Appendix C for Final ER.</p>
<p>8 Margaret Linnane</p>	<p>This submission requests zoning for two separate parcels of land:</p> <p>1. It is requested that lands to the northwest of the town in the townland of Glenbrack be zoned for Industrial use as it can be accessed by heavy goods vehicles without the need to go through the town.</p> <p>2. It is requested that lands at Crowe Street comprising .75acres should be zoned Residential Phase 1 which would allow for a higher residential density in keeping with the existing developments to the north, south and west of the plot.</p>	<p>1. The lands at Glenbrack are outside the administrative area for Gort.</p> <p>2. This is considered to be a planning issue. Existing Residential lands are free to be developed/redeveloped as Residential Phase 1 lands subject to normal planning requirements.</p>
<p>9 Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine</p>	<p>The DAFM have requested that the following be taken into consideration in relation to Gort LAP:</p> <p>1. The capacity of the Gort sewerage system should be such that it will meet the</p>	<p>As AA comment.</p>

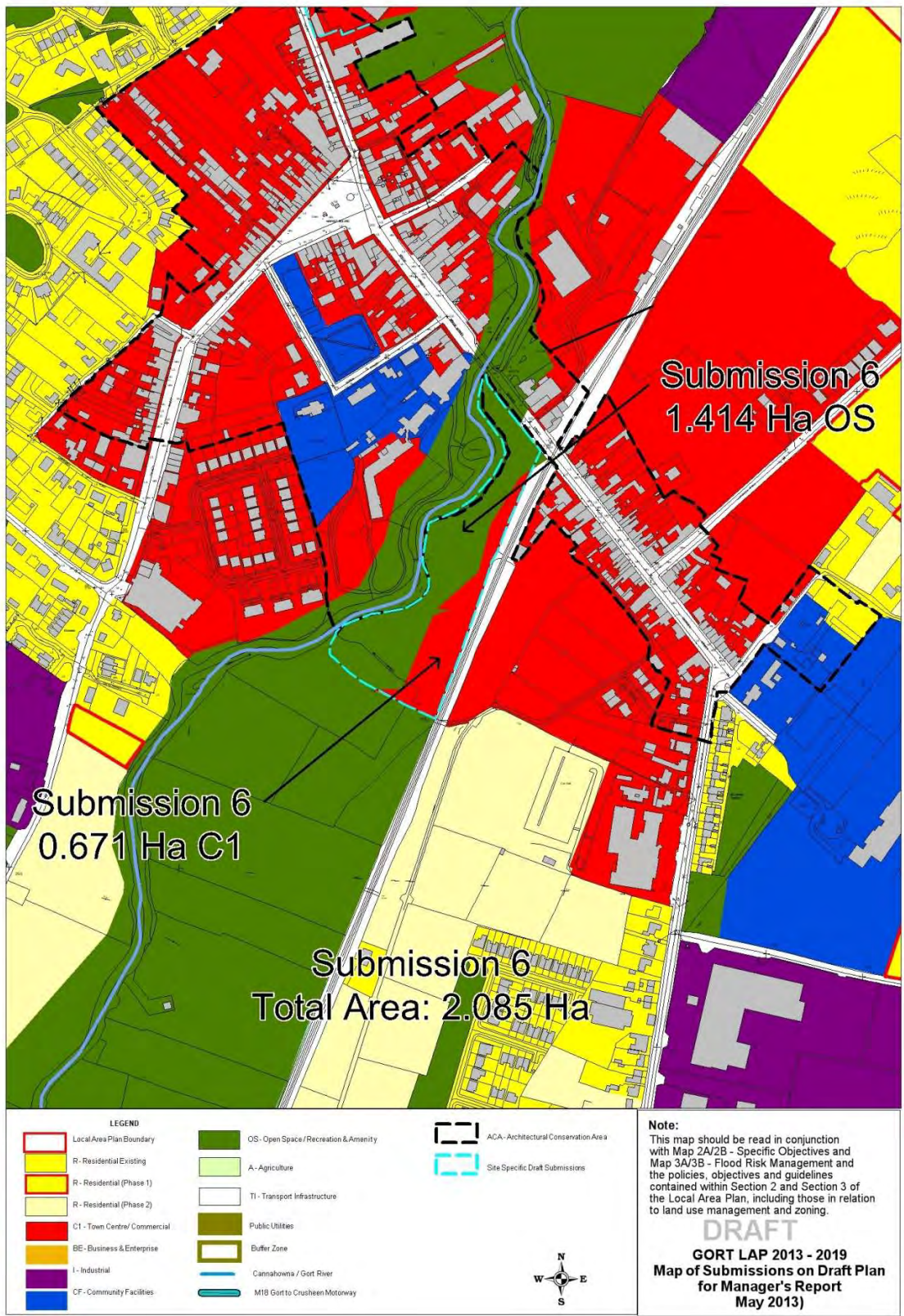
Submission	Issue	SEA Consideration
	<p>demands of the proposed developments as outlined in the Gort LAP.</p> <p>2. The EIS associated with the proposed finfish farm in Galway Bay is under consideration by this Department at present and it will be reported on in due course. The Galway Bay Complex cSAC and the Inner Galway Bay SPA including other designated sites are considered in the EIS for the proposed Deep Sea Fish Farm Development in Galway Bay.</p>	

Appendix B

Material Alterations Maps







Appendix C

Justification Test for Lands Proposed to be rezoned from Open Space, Recreation and Amenity to Town Centre/Commercial in Submission No 6 on the Draft Gort LAP

Justification Test for Lands Proposed Zoned Town Centre/Commercial in Gort LAP Under Draft Submission No 6 – McCarthyKeville and O’ Sullivan on behalf of Gerry, Eilisha, Gearoid and Fergal Lydon

The SFRA carried out for the purposes of the Gort LAP 2013-2019 highlighted that the lands which have been proposed to be zoned as Open Space and Recreation under the Draft Gort LAP 2013-2019 and are further proposed to be rezoned as Town Centre/Commercial under Submissions No. 6 to the Plan are within Indicative Flood Zone A and therefore at high risk of flooding.

As part of Submission No. 6 it is proposed that the area in question be zoned as Town Centre/Commercial which would involve the permission in principle of highly vulnerable/less vulnerable type development. In order to adequately assess the proposed Town Centre/Commercial Zoning which is within Flood Zone A the following matrix is presented in accordance with the requirements of the Justification Test for plans. It should be noted that this area is a greenfield site that has been granted permission for a mixed use development under planning reference Pl. Ref. No. 05/3042 and further extended under Pl. Ref. No. 11/239. As per the ‘*Planning System & Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities*’ (2009) all of the following criteria must be satisfied in order to pass the Justification Test.

Table 1 Justification Test Criteria and Determination

Criterion	Determination
<p>1. The urban settlement is targeted for growth under the National Spatial Strategy, regional planning guidelines, statutory plans or under the Planning Guidelines or Planning Directives provisions of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended.</p>	<p>Gort is identified within the ‘Key Town’ tier of the Core Strategy (Variation No. 1) of the Galway County Development Plan 2009-2015 and the Settlement Strategy of The Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010 - 2022.</p> <p>The Regional Flood Risk Appraisal for the RPGs recognises that although new development should be avoided in areas at risk of flooding it is acknowledged that the key urban settlements are at risk from coastal and fluvial flooding, and their continued growth and expansion can be facilitated through the careful expansion of the urban core and the implementation of appropriate land uses in areas at risk.</p> <p>The Galway County Development Plan 2009-2015 Variation No. 1 Core Strategy under which Gort is designated as a ‘Key Town’ has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, (as amended) the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 and Article 5 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.</p> <p>The subject lands considered here falls within the LAP boundary therefore it is considered that <u>the proposed Town Centre/Commercial zoning is compliant with this criterion.</u></p>
<p>2. The zoning or designation of the lands for the particular use or development type is required to achieve the proper planning and sustainable development of the urban settlement and, in particular:</p>	
<p>i) Is essential to facilitate regeneration and/or expansion of the centre of the urban settlement</p>	<p>The subject lands under consideration are identified within the Stage 2 SFRA as being located within Flood Zone A and are located adjacent to proposed Town Centre/Commercial Zoning to the east and Open Space and Recreation to the south, the Gort/Cannahowna River to the west and upstream of Georges Street bridge.</p> <p>There has been no prior development on this site and has traditionally been used as greenfield land.</p> <p>There is a significant portion of greenfield land zoned for Town Centre/Commercial development to the northeast of the lands in question adjacent to the railway line which are not located within either Flood Zones A or B.</p> <p>Given the availability of lands which are proposed to be zoned Town Centre/Commercial in the Draft Gort LAP 2013-2019 and which are not within Flood Zones A or B, it is considered that this zoning is not essential to</p>

	<p>facilitate regeneration and/or expansion of the centre of the urban settlement and therefore it is considered that <u>the proposed zoning is not compliant with this criterion of the plan Justification Test.</u></p>
<p>ii) Comprises significant previously developed and/or under-utilised lands</p>	<p>The LAP lands in question have not been developed to date but permission has been granted for a mixed use development at this location. Objective CF10 – Linear Park along the Cannahowna/Gort River of the Draft Gort LAP 2013-2019 proposes a linear park along the Cannahowna/Gort River which would utilise these lands.</p> <p>The Submission land does <u>not</u> contain previously developed and/or under-utilised lands. <u>Therefore proposed zoning is not compliant with this criterion of the plan Justification Test.</u></p>
<p>iii) Is within or adjoining the core of an established or designated urban settlement</p>	<p>These lands are within the core of the Gort LAP boundary which is an established urban settlement. Therefore it is considered that <u>the proposed zoning is compliant with this criterion of the plan Justification Test.</u></p>
<p>iv) Will be essential in achieving compact and sustainable urban growth; and</p>	<p>The preferred development option, as outlined in Section 2.2.3 of the Draft Gort LAP, supports the consolidation of the town centre and promotes the infill and sequential development of the town. The consolidation of the town centre is considered achievable through promoting appropriate densities at the right locations and supporting the redevelopment of brownfield, derelict and back land sites including existing laneways within the urban core of Gort. This development option has been preferred in contrast to other options as it will minimise potential significant environmental impacts in relation to identified flood risk areas.</p> <p>It is considered that compact and sustainable growth will be achievable without the zoning of the lands in question as Town Centre/Commercial as lands have been zoned for this purpose immediately north of the lands in question on lands which are not within either Flood Zones A or B.</p> <p>Therefore it is considered that <u>the proposed zoning is not compliant with this criterion of the plan Justification Test.</u></p>
<p>v) There are no suitable alternative lands for the particular use or development type, in areas at lower risk of flooding within or adjoining the core of the urban settlement</p>	<p>As described under Criterion 2i) and 2iv) there are alternative lands zoned Town Centre/Commercial to north of the lands in question. This zoning is considered to provide suitable alternative lands for development permitted in principle under town centre zoning. It is therefore considered that <u>the proposed zoning is not compliant with this criterion of the plan Justification Test.</u></p>
<p>3. A flood risk assessment to an appropriate level of detail has been carried out as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment as part of the local area plan preparation process, which demonstrates that flood risk to the development can be adequately managed and the use or development of the lands will not cause unacceptable adverse impacts elsewhere.</p>	<p>A Flood Risk Assessment has been carried out for Gort to an appropriate level of detail (a Stage 2 Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken for the Gort LAP area) with Flood zones identified and policies and objectives recommended as mitigation.</p> <p>A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared for County Galway, 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) and the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009 issued by the DoEHLG. The Stage 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for Gort 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. The relevant flood risk data, recommendations and mitigation measures from the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment have been incorporated into the Local Area Plan.</p> <p>The flood information presented on the flood risk maps (Maps 3a and 3b of the Gort LAP 2013-2019) are based on the OPW Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment, research carried out for Galway County Council on Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and tested against knowledge of Flood Risk in the area.</p> <p>The SEA, PFRA and the Stage 2 SFRA have been integrated into the plan process. A site-specific flood risk assessment was carried out in 2005 to inform the development which was subsequently granted permission. The flood risk assessment carried out in 2005 was carried out prior to the publication of <i>“The Planning System and Flood Risk Management:</i></p>

	<p><i>Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009</i>” and the EU Floods Directive 2007/60/EC.</p> <p>Therefore, a flood risk assessment to an appropriate level of detail has not been carried out as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment as part of the local area plan preparation process, which demonstrates that flood risk to the development can be adequately managed and the use or development of the lands will not cause unacceptable adverse impacts elsewhere.</p> <p>It is considered therefore that <u>the proposed zoning is not compliant with this criterion of the plan Justification Test.</u></p>
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JUSTIFICATION TEST CONCLUSION

Having regard to the availability of other lands in close proximity which are not located within Flood Zones A or B and that these lands are not essential to the sustainable growth of the town, it is considered that the proposed zoning of the lands in question as outlined in Submission No. 6 on the Draft Gort LAP 2013-2019 do not satisfy the Justification Test as set out in *the Planning System & Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, November 2009. A previous flood risk assessment has been carried out for the site which predates the Flood Risk Management Guidelines and does not provide evidence and mapping of the Flood Zones required by the Guidelines. Therefore no change can be made to the Stage 2 SFRA mapping. In this regard and in relation to its function of zoning of lands in accordance with the Flood Risk Guidelines, the Planning Authority is not satisfied that the Site Justification Test has passed all criteria and that flood risk to the development can be adequately managed and the use or development of the lands will not cause unacceptable adverse impacts elsewhere.

Appendix D

More Detailed Plan Area Specific Maps for the Environmental Report*

*More Detailed Plan Area Specific Maps have now been included within the main body of the Environmental Report

Appendix E

Updated Matrix Assessment of Policies and Objectives^{§§}

^{§§} The Updated Matrix Assessment of Policies and Objectives has been removed from Appendix E of the Addendum Report and is now included as an updated Appendix C table.

Appendix F

Justification Test for Existing Developed Lands within Flood Zones A and B

**Draft Gort Local Area Plan
 2013-2019**
**Justification Test for Town Centre
 Lands Within Flood Zones A and B**

DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

Client:	Galway County Council					
Project Title:	Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2013-2019					
Document Title:	Strategic Environmental Assessment Non-Technical Summary					
Document No:	MGE0346RP0016					
This Document Comprises:	DCS	TOC	Text	List of Tables	List of Figures	No. of Appendices
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Rev.	Status	Author(s)	Reviewed By	Approved By	Office of Origin	Issue Date
F01	Client Approval	D. Madden	W. Madden	W. Madden	Galway	27 th March 2013

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 STAGES IN THE ASSESSMENT OF FLOOD RISK

'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management - Guidelines for Planning Authorities' recommend a staged approach to flood risk assessment that covers both the likelihood of flooding and the potential consequences. The stages of appraisal and assessment are:

Stage 1 Flood risk identification – to identify whether there may be any flooding or surface water management issues related to either the area of regional planning guidelines, development plans and LAP's or a proposed development site that may warrant further investigation at the appropriate lower level plan or planning application levels;

Stage 2 Initial flood risk assessment – to confirm sources of flooding that may affect a plan area or proposed development site, to appraise the adequacy of existing information and to scope the extent of the risk of flooding which may involve preparing indicative flood zone maps. Where hydraulic models exist the potential impact of a development on flooding elsewhere and of the scope of possible mitigation measures can be assessed. In addition, the requirements of the detailed assessment should be scoped; and

Stage 3 Detailed flood risk assessment – to assess flood risk issues in sufficient detail and to provide a quantitative appraisal of potential flood risk to a proposed or existing development or land to be zoned, of its potential impact on flood risk elsewhere and of the effectiveness of any proposed mitigation measures.

1.2 SEQUENTIAL APPROACH

This is the key tool in the decision making process of preparing plans to ensure that development is first and foremost directed towards land that is at low risk of flooding. This approach makes use of existing flood risk assessments, FRAMs and of prior identification of flood zones for rivers, coastal flooding and pluvial flooding, and classification of the vulnerability of flooding of different types of development. The Guidelines set out a decision making tree setting the stages of the sequential approach to be followed Figure 1.

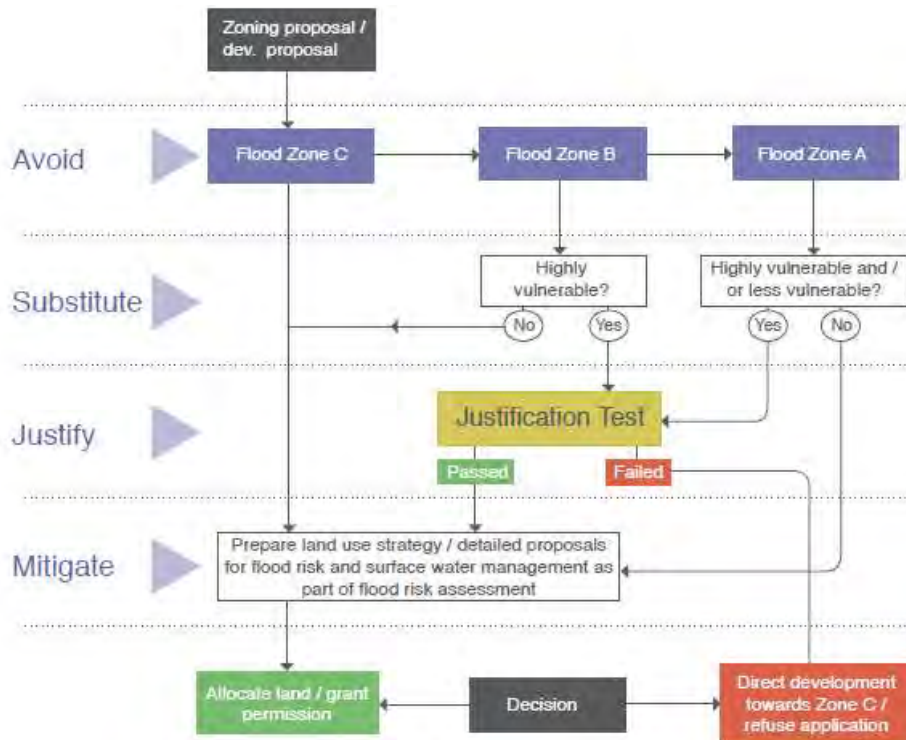


Figure 1 Sequential approach mechanism in the planning process

The sequential approach in terms of flood risk is based on the following principles: The primary objective of the sequential approach is that development is primarily directed towards land that is at low risk of flooding (AVOID). The next stage is to ensure that the type of development proposed is not especially vulnerable to the adverse impacts of flooding (SUBSTITUTION).

The Justification Test is designed to rigorously assess the appropriateness, or otherwise, of particular developments that, for various reasons, are being considered in areas of moderate or high flood risk (JUSTIFICATION).

The test is comprised of two processes, namely The Plan-Making Justification Test and The Development Management Justification Test. Only the former (Plan-Making Justification Test) is relevant to a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for a Development Local area Plan.

1.3 THE PLAN-MAKING JUSTIFICATION TEST

Where, as part of the preparation and adoption of a development / local area plan, a planning authority is considering the future development of areas in an urban settlement that are at moderate or high risk of flooding, for uses or development vulnerable to flooding that would generally be inappropriate as set out in the Guidelines, all of the criteria listed below, as stated in the Guidelines, must be satisfied. This is referred to as the “Justification Test for Development Plans.

MITIGATION is the process where the flood risk is reduced to acceptable levels by means of land use strategies or by means of detailed proposals for the management of flood risk and surface water, all as addressed in the Flood Risk Assessment. The decision to PROCEED should only be taken after the Justification Test has been passed.

2 FLOOD RISK IDENTIFICATION /ASSESSMENT FOR GORT LAP 2013-2019

A Stage 1 and Stage 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) have been prepared in order to inform the Gort Local Area Plan 2013-2019. This SFRA outlines the background, methodology, mitigation, recommendations and conclusions for the LAP and details locations for three types or levels of flood zones defined for the purposes of the Flood Guidelines:

Flood Zone A – where the probability of flooding from rivers and the sea is highest (greater than 1% or 1 in 100 for river flooding or 0.5% or 1 in 200 for coastal flooding);

Flood Zone B – where the probability of flooding from rivers and the sea is moderate (between 0.1% or 1 in 1000 and 1% or 1 in 100 for river flooding and between 0.1% or 1 in 1000 year and 0.5% or 1 in 200 for coastal flooding);and

Flood Zone C – where the probability of flooding from rivers and the sea is low (less than 0.1% or 1 in 1000 for both river and coastal flooding). Flood Zone C covers all areas of the plan which are not in zones A or B.

The Stage 1 Flood risk identification concluded that there was a potential flood risk issue and the SFRA proceeded to Stage 2.

Stage 2 Initial flood risk assessment involved identification of historic flood risk areas,assessment based local knowledge of flood events and site walkovers, consideration of flood risk indicator information and production of Indicative Flood Risk Zone Maps. The Stage 2 SFRA for Gort resulted in the classification of the Gort LAP administrative area into the three flood zones described above (**Figure 2**). The SFRA also resulted in the recommendation that the Council deal with pluvial and groundwater risk through a plan policy or objective.

Recommendations and mitigation made in order contribute towards the avoidance and reduction of flood risk are outlined in Section 3.6 of the Stage 2 SFRA for the Gort LAP 2013-2019.

Undeveloped lands which had been zoned in the previous Gort LAP 2006-2012 as town centre and residential lands and that have been identified as located within flood risk areas (in particular Flood Zone A and B) have generally been rezoned as Open Space in accordance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009 in order to avoid inappropriate development in high to moderate flood risk areas and to address the potential impacts of climate change (**Figure 3**).

However approximately 0.6ha of lands which are proposed to be zoned as Town Centre/Commercial are located within Flood Zone A (approximate area highlighted in pink in **Figure 3**). There are existing residential and commercial developments within this area and land use types which are permitted in principle within this area (owing to the proposed Town Centre/Commercial Zoning) include types which are not classified within the water-compatible development vulnerability class as specified in the Planning System and Flood Risk Management - Guidelines for Planning Authorities. Therefore in accordance with these guidelines a Justification Test is required.

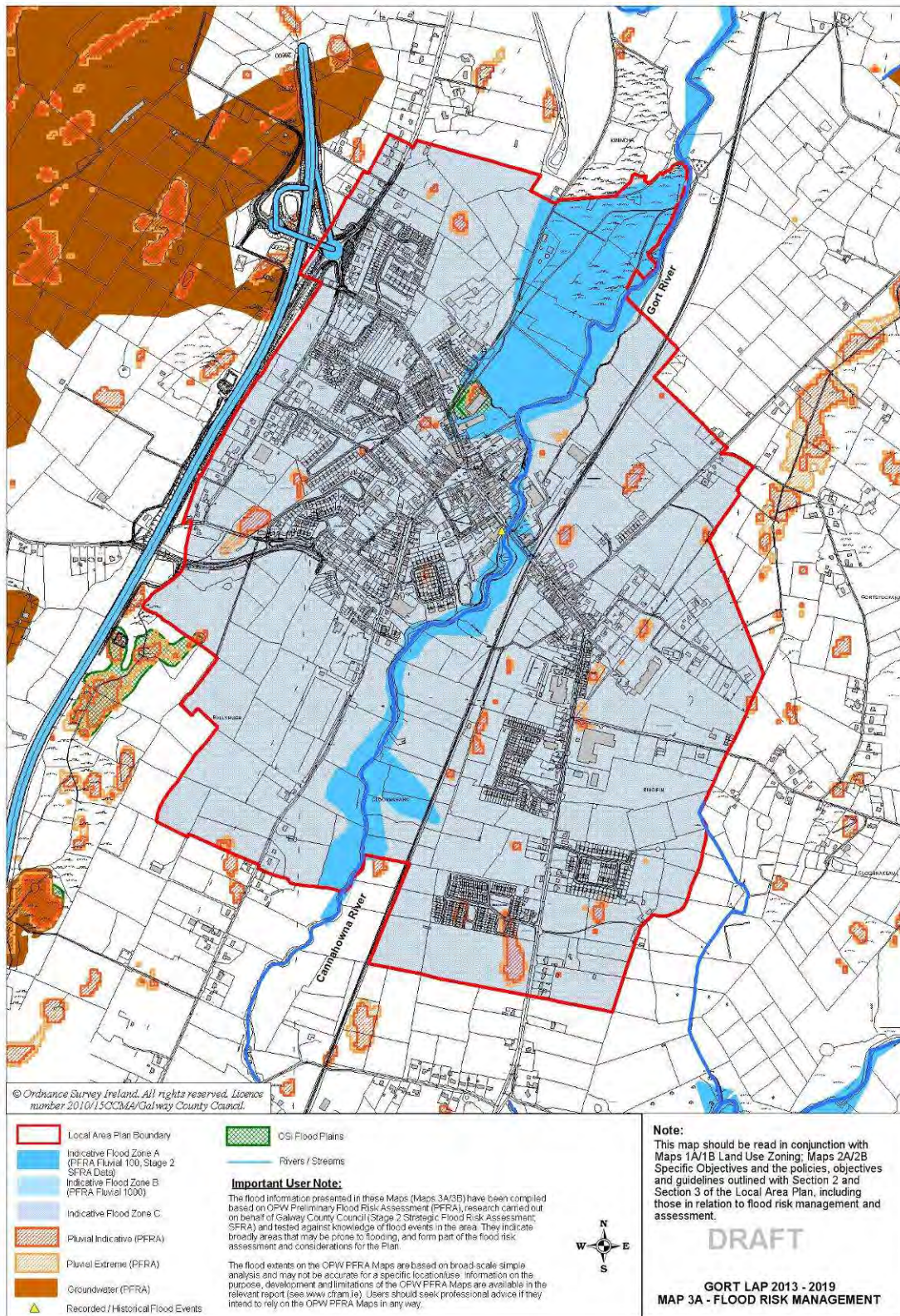


Figure 2 Flood Zones A and B extents within Gort LAP

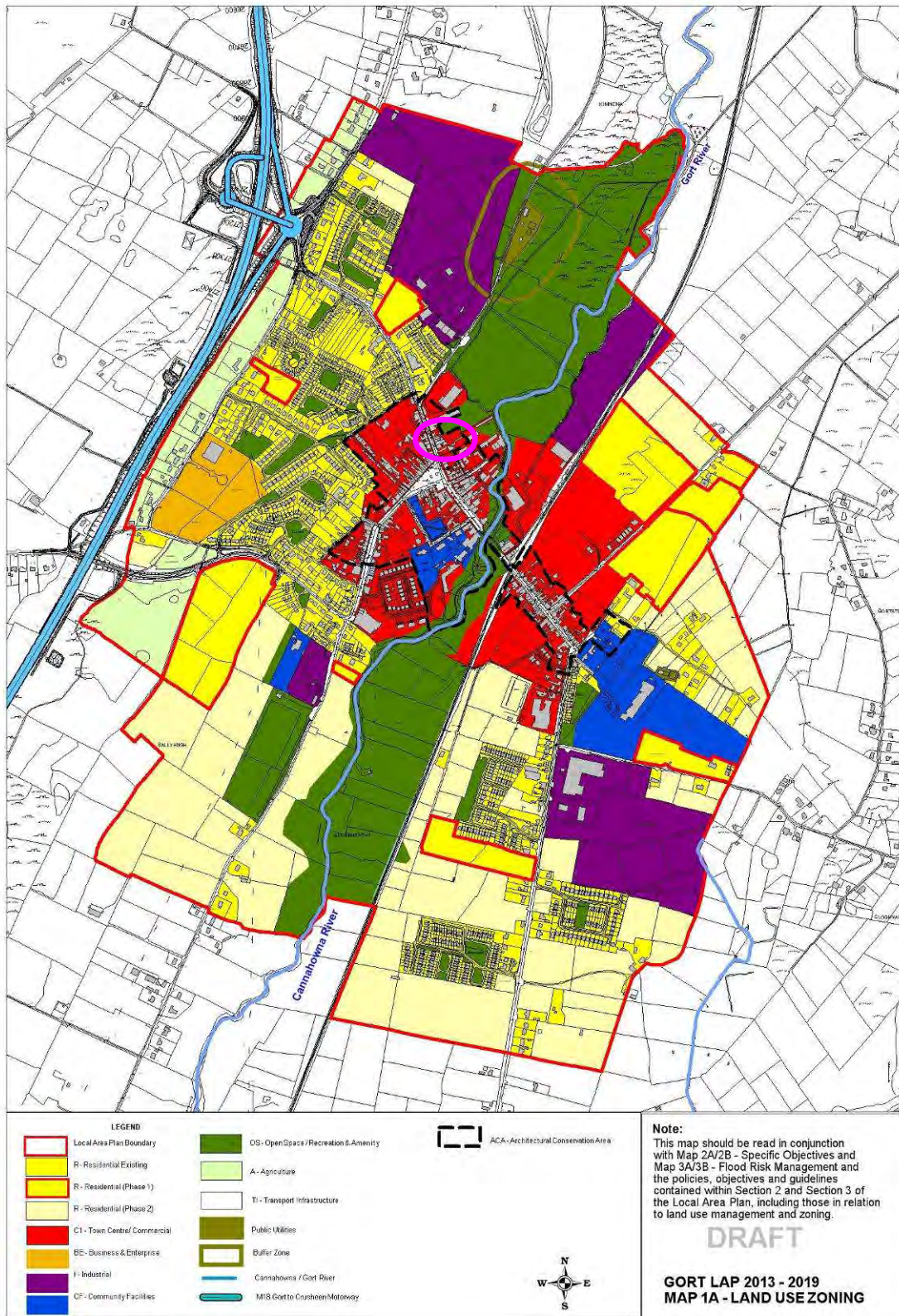


Figure 3 Proposed Land Use Zoning within Gort LAP

3 JUSTIFICATION TEST FOR LANDS PROPOSED ZONED TOWN CENTRE/COMMERCIAL IN GORT LAP

The SFRA carried out for the purposes of the Gort LAP 2013-2019 highlighted that part of the lands within the administrative area is at high/moderate risk of flooding. The following matrix is therefore presented in accordance with the requirements of the Justification Test for plans. It should be noted that this area is within a heavily built up area within the town centre. In this context the all of the below criteria are satisfied therefore the Justification Test is passed, in that each criterion in **Table 1** below is passed.

Table 1 Justification Test Criteria and Determination

Criterion	Determination
<p>1. The urban settlement is targeted for growth under the National Spatial Strategy, regional planning guidelines, statutory plans or under the Planning Guidelines or Planning Directives provisions of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended.</p>	<p>Gort is identified within the 'Key Town' tier of the Core Strategy (Variation No. 1) of the Galway County Development Plan 2009-2015 and the Settlement Strategy of The Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010 - 2022.</p> <p>The Regional Flood Risk Appraisal for the RPGs recognises that although new development should be avoided in areas at risk of flooding it is acknowledged that the key urban settlements are at risk from coastal and fluvial flooding, and their continued growth and expansion can be facilitated through the careful expansion of the urban core and the implementation of appropriate land uses in areas at risk.</p> <p>The Galway County Development Plan 2009-2015 Variation No. 1 Core Strategy under which Gort is designated as a 'Key Town' has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, (as amended) the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 and Article 5 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.</p> <p>The areas considered here are located in Flood Zones A and B fall within the LAP boundary therefore it is considered that <u>the proposed Town Centre/Commercial zoning is compliant with this criterion.</u></p>
<p>2. The zoning or designation of the lands for the particular use or development type is required to achieve the proper planning and sustainable development of the urban settlement and, in particular:</p>	
<p>i) Is essential to facilitate regeneration and/or expansion of the centre of the urban settlement</p>	<p>The area under consideration is located within the core of Gort town centre and has traditionally been used for residential/commercial uses and it is not in doubt that residential/commercial uses will continue to be the main land use in this area.</p> <p>Given the location of the area in question, which is proposed to be zoned as Town Centre/Commercial, it is considered that this zoning is necessary to achieve the proper planning and sustainable development of the urban settlement and will be essential to facilitate regeneration of the town centre. Therefore it is considered that <u>the proposed zoning is compliant with this criterion of the plan Justification Test.</u></p>
<p>ii) Comprises significant previously developed and/or under-utilised lands</p>	<p>The vast majority of the LAP lands in question are developed. Therefore <u>the proposed zoning is compliant with this criterion of the plan Justification Test.</u></p>
<p>iii) Is within or adjoining the</p>	<p>These lands are within the core of the Gort LAP boundary which is</p>

<p>core of an established or designated urban settlement</p>	<p>an established urban settlement. Therefore it is considered that <u>the proposed zoning is compliant with this criterion of the plan Justification Test.</u></p>
<p>iv) Will be essential in achieving compact and sustainable urban growth; and</p>	<p>The preferred development option, as outlined in Section 2.2.3 of the Draft Gort LAP, supports the consolidation of the town centre and promotes the infill and sequential development of the town. The consolidation of the town centre is considered achievable through promoting appropriate densities at the right locations and supporting the redevelopment of brownfield, derelict and back land sites including existing laneways within the urban core of Gort. This development option has been preferred in contrast to other options as it will minimise potential significant environmental impacts in relation to identified flood risk areas. Therefore it is considered that <u>the proposed zoning is compliant with this criterion of the plan Justification Test.</u></p>
<p>v) There are no suitable alternative lands for the particular use or development type, in areas at lower risk of flooding within or adjoining the core of the urban settlement</p>	<p>There are no suitable alternatives lands. This area forms part of the historic town centre and it vital to the long term growth of the town centre therefore it is considered that <u>the proposed zoning is compliant with this criterion of the plan Justification Test.</u></p>
<p>3. A flood risk assessment to an appropriate level of detail has been carried out as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment as part of the local area plan preparation process, which demonstrates that flood risk to the development can be adequately managed and the use or development of the lands will not cause unacceptable adverse impacts elsewhere.</p>	<p>A Flood Risk Assessment has been carried out for Gort to an appropriate level of detail (a Stage 2 Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken for the Gort LAP area) with Flood zones identified and policies and objectives recommended as mitigation.</p> <p>A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared for County Galway, 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) and the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009 issued by the DoEHLG. The Stage 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for Gort 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. The relevant flood risk data, recommendations and mitigation measures from the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment have been incorporated into the Local Area Plan.</p> <p>The flood information presented on the flood risk maps (Maps 3a and 3b of the Gort LAP 2013-2019) are based on the OPW Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment, research carried out for Galway County Council on Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and tested against knowledge of Flood Risk in the area.</p> <p>The SEA, PFRA and the Stage 2 SFRA have been integrated into the plan process at the appropriate level of detail. Therefore it is considered that <u>the proposed zoning is compliant with this criterion of the plan Justification Test.</u></p>

3.1 SETTLEMENT STRATEGY AND FLOOD RISK

Generally the approach to deal with flood protection would involve raising the ground floor levels above the level of high water mark for Flood Zone A. However the lands in question are already largely built up, in a dense urban context and setting high ground floor levels for flood protection could lead to floor levels being much higher than adjacent streets, thus creating a hostile streetscape for pedestrians. This would cause problems for infill development sites if floor levels were required to be significantly higher than those of neighbouring properties. In this regard for the lands in question, it is recognised that ground floor levels below predicted high water mark of Flood Zone A could be allowed, in limited circumstances, on a site by site basis. However, if this is the case then these would be required to be flood resistant construction using water resistant materials, and electrical fittings places at higher levels. For the areas under consideration which are in Flood Zones A& B it may be necessary to impose planning restrictions in these areas, with residential use not being favoured below tide levels.

3.2 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES INCLUDED IN THE DRAFT GORT LAP 2013-2019 FOR DEVELOPMENT IN FLOOD RISK AREAS

In addition to a number of specific flood risk management policies (UI2 and UI3) and flood risk management objectives (UI8-UI12) included within the Draft Gort LAP 2013-2019 there are other development strategy, land use and utilities infrastructure objectives within the Plan including:

Objective DS7 – 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 any updated/superseding document) and the relevant policies, objectives and guidelines in this Plan.

Objective LU10 – Flood Risk Areas and Land Use Zones (refer to Maps 1A/1B)

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 the relevant policies and objectives of this Plan.

Objective UI7 - The Cannahowna/Gort River and Drainage Catchment (refer to Specific Objectives Maps 2A/2B)

Require new development proposals within the catchment of the Cannahowna/Gort River 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.

3.3 JUSTIFICATION TEST CONCLUSION

Having regard to the important status of the lands in question, which are located within the historic town centre of Gort and are essential to the sustainable growth of the town and the existence of an already built up area, it is considered that the development of the lands in Flood Zones A and B satisfies the Justification Test as set out in *the Planning System & Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, November 2009. As per Objectives DS7, UI8, UI9 all planning applications for proposed development within the Town Centre area under consideration should include a site specific flood risk assessment (FRA).