



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

Draft Gort Local Area Plan

2025 - 2031

Material Alterations

Proposed Material Alterations to the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

in accordance with:

Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended

Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended

Planning and Development (Strategic Environment Assessment) Regulations 2004, as amended.

The proposed Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031 was prepared and placed on public display from Thursday 09 January 2025 until 4pm Thursday 20th February 2025. A total of 121 submissions was received within the public consultation period, it is noted that 1 submission was withdrawn. A Chief Executive's report was prepared on the submissions received and submitted to the Municipal District Members of Loughrea for their consideration.

On 6th May 2025 at a Special Municipal District meeting the MD Members considered the Draft Gort Local Area Plan and Chief Executive's Report and proposed a number of changes to the Draft Plan, which were deemed to be Material Alterations. They are listed in the table below and are reflected on maps and appendices as appropriate.

In accordance with Section 20(3) (e) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the proposed Material Alterations are hereby published for public consultation for a period of 4 weeks.

How to Read the Proposed Material Alterations

The proposed Material Alterations are referred to as proposed MA1 – MA45 and are accompanied by maps and appendices as appropriate.

For the purposes of reading this report, please note the following:

- Proposed text is shown with **RED** font and **HIGHLIGHTED** in the document.
- Text with a **STRIKETHROUGH** is proposed for deletion.
- Text in black regular font is existing text from the Draft LAP.

In accordance with Section 20 3(f) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), Galway County Council has screened the Proposed Material Alterations for the need to undertake Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) and has determined that: SEA is required with respect to certain Proposed Material Alterations; and Stage 2 AA is not required for any Proposed Material Alteration.

A copy of the proposed Material Alterations to the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031, the SEA and AA Screening Determinations in accordance with Section 20 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and associated SEA and AA documents (including information on the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the proposed Material Alterations that is included in the SEA Environmental Report on Proposed Material Alterations) will be available on public display and may be inspected from **Thursday 22 May 2025 until 4pm Friday 20th June 2025** during normal opening hours at the following locations:

- <https://consult.galway.ie/>

- **Planning Office, Áras an Chontae, Prospect Hill, Galway, H91 H6KX** (Monday-Friday 9am-4pm)
- **Gort Library, Church Road, Gort H91 F5P8** (Wednesday, Friday & Saturday 11.00pm – 1.00pm & 2.00pm – 5.00 pm; Thursday 2.00pm - 5.00pm & 6.00pm – 8.00pm (closed Sunday, Monday & Tuesday)
- **Gort Area Office, Crowe St, Gort, Co. Galway** (Monday -Friday 9.00am -1.00pm & 2.00 – 5.00 p.m.

Written Submissions or observations with respect to the proposed Material Alterations to the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031, the SEA and AA determinations in accordance with Section 20 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and the associated SEA and AA documents (including information on the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the proposed Material Alterations that is included in the SEA Environmental Report on Proposed Material Alterations) are invited from members of the public and other interested parties. Written submissions or observations must state the full name and address of the person or relevant body or agency making Material Alterations and should be clearly marked “Proposed Material Alterations to the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2035” and should quote the relevant proposed material alteration reference number(s) (which commences with ‘MA’).

Submissions may be made to the Planning Authority within the above period and **before 4.00pm on Friday 20th June 2025**. Written submissions or observations should be clearly marked ‘***Proposed Material Alterations to the Draft Gort LAP 2025-2031***’ and must be submitted either:

Online

Online by visiting <https://consult.galway.ie/>

By Email

Sent by email to forwardplanning@galwaycoco.ie

In Writing

in writing and addressed to:

‘Proposed Material Alterations to the Draft Gort Local Area Plan’ Forward Planning Section, Galway County Council, Prospect Hill, Galway.

The closing date for Submissions/Observations is 4.00pm on Friday 20th June 2025.

Late Submissions will not be accepted

Please send your submission/observation through **one medium only** either in writing or electronically.

In respect of making a submission or observation please note the following:

Children or groups and associations representing the interests of children are entitled to make submissions or observations regarding policy objectives to deliver an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area of the LAP.

Galway County Council is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act (as amended). Please be advised that all submissions received will be published online in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Act.

You should ensure that no vexatious, libellous or confidential information, including confidential information relating to a third party (in respect of which the third party has not, expressly, or impliedly in the circumstances, consented to its disclosure) is included in your submission. The Planning Authority reserves the right to redact any submission or part thereof that does not comply with this requirement. Please be advised that the submission will be published in full.

Galway County Council is subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act (as amended) and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). In order to assist us in complying with Data Protection and GDPR please include your name and contact details (and where relevant, details of any organisation, community group or company etc., which you represent), on a separate sheet to the content of your submission/ observation. This processing of your personal data is lawful under Article 6 (1)(e) of the GDPR regulations. The Council's Data Protection Policy is available on the Council website.

Please note that in accordance with Section 19 of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2018 all valid submissions received by the Council shall be published on the Galway County Council website within 10 working days of its receipt by the Council. The planning process is an open and public process and therefore your submission (in part or in total) will be available to view online at <https://consult.galway.ie/>. All observations or submissions received during the above time period will be taken into consideration before the making of the Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031.

Hard copies of the Material Alterations and associated documentation are available for purchase from the Planning Department.

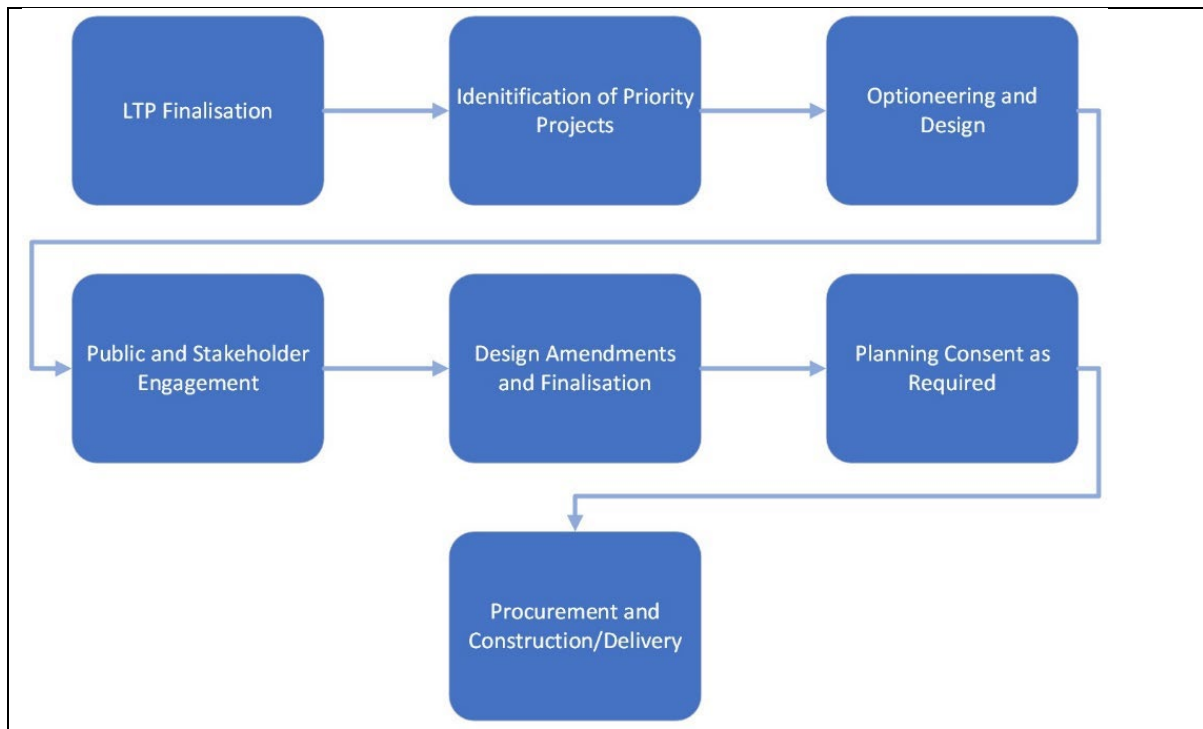
Draft Gort Local Area Plan Material Alterations, Forward Planning Policy Unit

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| Amendment Number | MA1 |
| Submission Number | GLW-136-101 Office of Planning Regulator |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Table 1 of the Written Statement |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| Amend Table 1 below to include Housing Allocation 2022 - 2028 | |

| Settlement Typology | CSO 2016 | Core Strategy Allocation | Housing Allocation 2022 - 2028 | Residential Units to be Delivered on Greenfield Sites | Residential Units to be Delivered on Brownfield/Infill Sites | Density | Quantum of Greenfield Land Required for Residential Development |
|----------------------|----------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|---|--|---------|---|
| Self-Sustaining Town | 2,994 | 800 | 460 | 322 | 138 | 25 | 12.9 |

Table 1: GCDP 2022 – 2028 Core Strategy

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| Amendment Number | MA2 |
| Submission Number | GLW-136-101 Office of Planning Regulator |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Section 1.2.5 Gort Town Centre First Plan |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| <p>(i) Additional text and Chart is proposed to be added to the end of Section 1.2.5 of the Draft LAP</p> <p>Four Opportunity Sites have been identified in the Draft Plan. These seek to complement the aspirations of the TCF Plan. The Opportunity Sites are set out in Section 3 of the LAP. A working group will be set up between the Planning, Active Travel and Town Regeneration Office to maintain consistency between the respective plans and where possible create a synergy and unity in delivery of the projects of the TCF and LTP plans which complement each other. The flow chart further illustrates how the LTP projects in particular will be delivered. This includes stakeholder engagement, which will include collaboration with the TCF Team, other stakeholders and key Local Authority Directorates.</p> | |

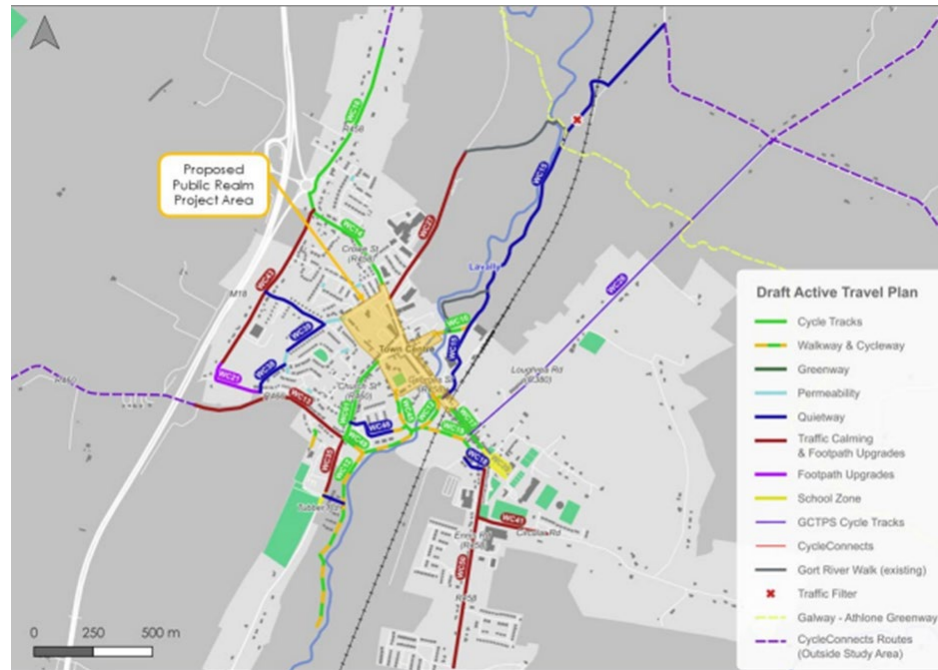


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| Amendment Number | MA3 |
| Submission Number | GLW-136-101 Office of Planning Regulator |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Section 2.8 Transportation and Movement – Local Transport Plan |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| Update Section 2.8 Transportation and Movement – Local Transport Plan to include the following text; | |
| <p>The TCF proposed public realm improvement includes a range of measures that will support the objectives of the LTP. As referenced in the LTP, these measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider Footpaths • Cycle infrastructure • Reduced town centre carparking • Additional pedestrian crossing points • New public open space <p>The TCF Plan and proposed public realm improvements shall complement the objectives of the LTP.</p> | |

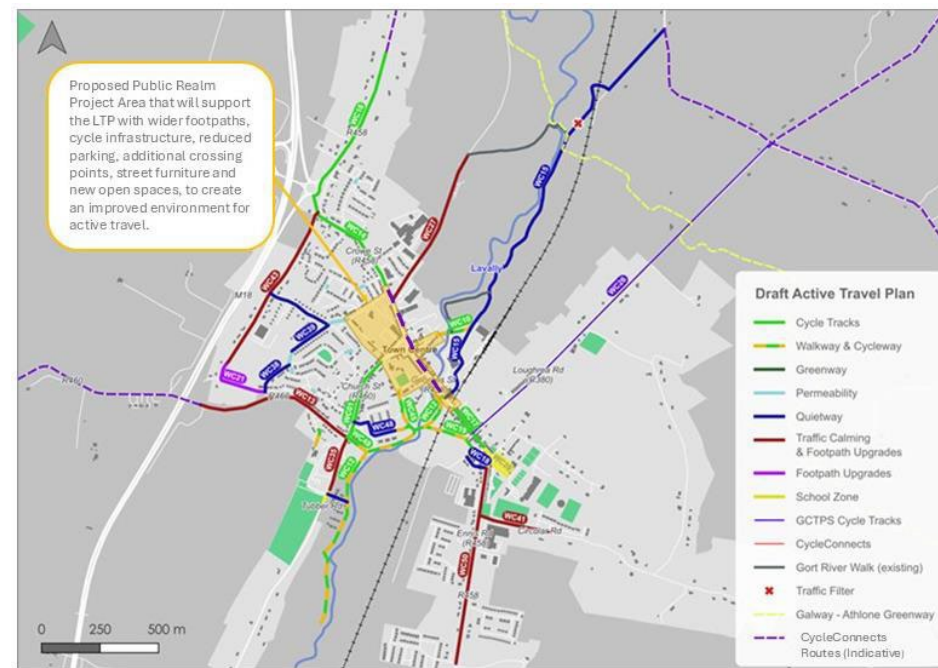
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| Amendment Number | MA4 |
| Submission Number | GLW-136-101Office of Planning Regulator GLW-C136- 19 National Transport Authority |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Replace Figure 5 in Section 2.8 |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |

Replace Figure 5 in Section 2.8

From



To

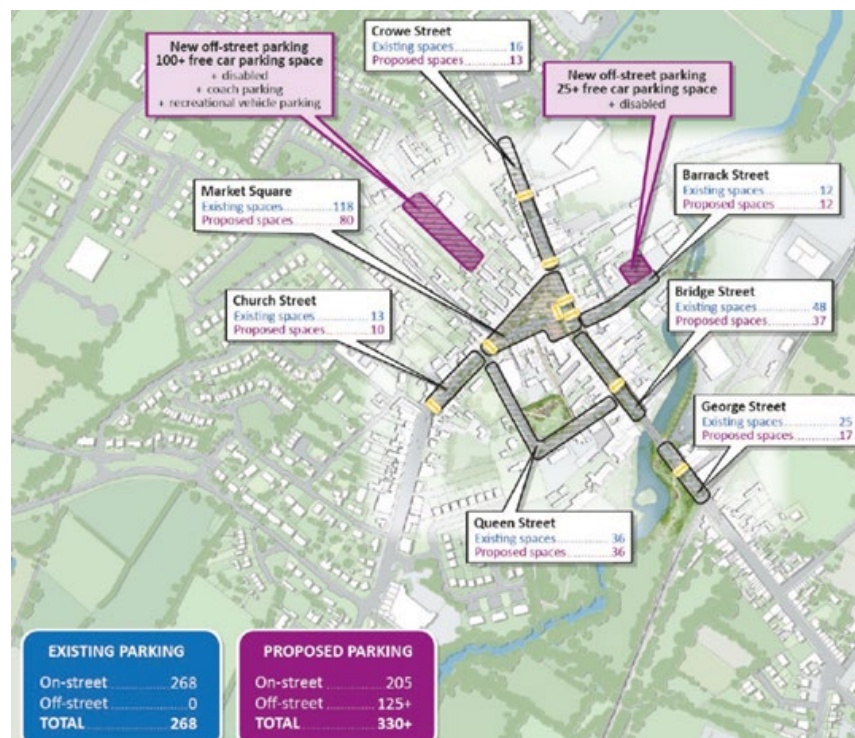


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| Amendment Number | MA5 |
| Submission Number | GLW-136-101 Office of Planning Regulator GLW-C136- 19 National Transport Authority |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Section 2.3.4 of Appendix C - Local Transport Plan |

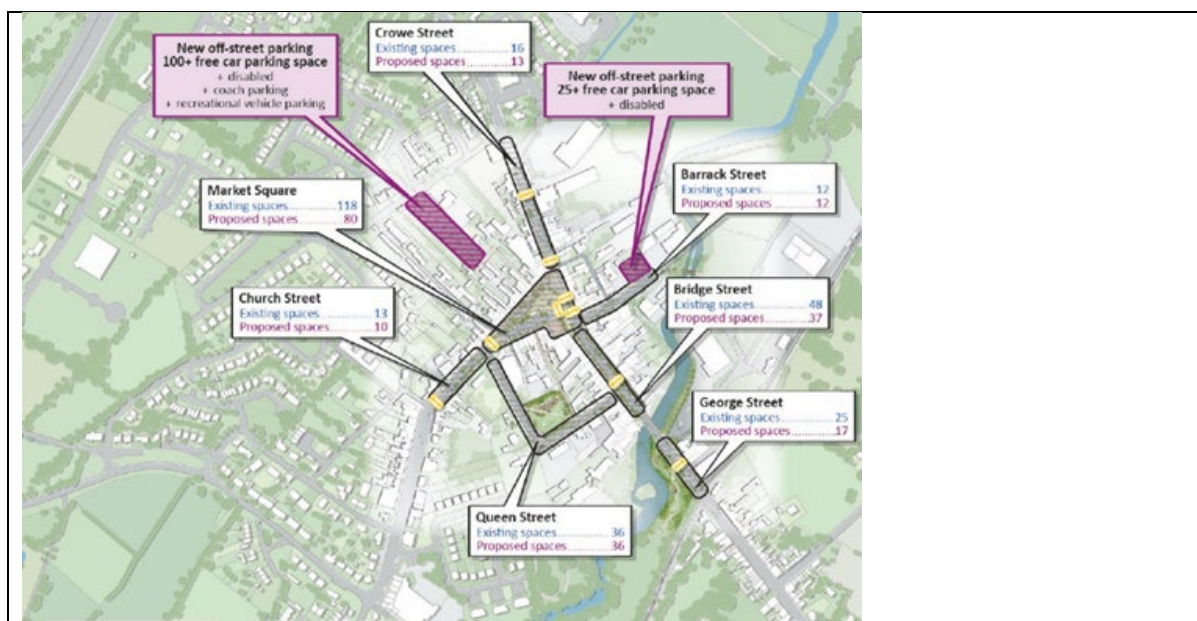
Proposed Material Amendment

Replace figure in Section 2.3.4

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| Amendment Number | MA6 |
| Submission Number | GLW-136-101 Office of Planning Regulator GLW-C136- 19 National Transport Authority |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Section 7 – Appendix C - Local Transport Plan |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| <p>Add additional text to Section 7 of Local Transport Plan in Appendix C (page 82)</p> <p>Delivery of the LTP Strategy Measures will be phased over the plan period, and prioritised as part of the LTP implementation phase. It is envisaged that the Measures that will be implemented in the short term will include upgrades to existing permeability links, development of quietways and school zones along with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WC13 – Traffic Calming and filling in footpath gaps along the R460. • WC27 – Traffic Calming along the L85314 to connect the town to the Gort River Walk. • WC35 - Traffic Calming along Tubber Road to provide safe route to Gort Boys National School. • WC50 – Traffic Calming and footpath upgrades along Ennis Road. ⁹ <p>The Galway County Council Active Travel Team, Forward Planning Team and the Gort Town Centre First Team, along with key stakeholders, will work together on the delivery of relevant projects.</p> | |

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| Amendment Number | MA7 |
| Submission Number | GLW-136-101 Office of Planning Regulator GLW-C136- 19 National Transport Authority |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Appendix C - Local Transport Plan |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
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Add additional text to Section 7 of Local Transport Plan in Appendix C (page 84).

The Galway County Council Active Travel Team, Forward Planning Team and the Gort Town Centre First Team, along with key stakeholders, will work together on the delivery of relevant projects.

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| Amendment Number | MA8 |
| Submission Number | GLW-136-101 Office of Planning Regulator |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Section 2.3.1 – Appendix C - Local Transport Plan |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| Add additional text to Section 2.3.1 of Local Transport Plan in Appendix C (page 12) | |
| The CDP also includes specific policy objectives relating to improving the safety of children at schools, including NNR5: 'Increase the safety of children at school by assessing safe routes to schools for school children and by the installation of traffic management measures. Require School Travel Plans to be submitted with applications by schools or colleges in accordance with actions as set out under Smarter Travel, A Sustainable Transport Future 2009 – 2020'. | |

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| Amendment Number | MA9 |
| Submission Number | GLW-136-94 Office of Public Works |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Section 4 Policy Objectives |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| Amend Policy Objective GSST 60 to; GSST 60A | |

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| Amendment Number | MA10 |
| Submission Number | GLW-136-94 Office of Public Works |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Section 4 Policy Objectives |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| Insert policy objective GSST 60B | |
| GSST 60 B Gort Lowlands Flood Relief Scheme The Council will have full regard to the ongoing design planning and implementation of the Gort Lowlands Flood Relief Scheme, and the maintenance requirements of the Gort River (Bridge Street) drainage scheme to ensure zoning or development proposals do not impede or prevent the progression or maintenance of the schemes. Following the completion of the Gort Lowlands Flood Relief Scheme, the Council will consider the integration of a register of key flood risk infrastructure into the Plan/future land use plans for the town. | |

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| Amendment Number | MA11 |
| Submission Number | GLW-136-94 Office of Public Works |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Table 3 – Appendix B - Strategic Flood Risk Assessment |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| Amend Table 3 of the SFRA to; National Indicative Fluvial Mapping (NIFM) 2021 2020 | |


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| Amendment Number | | | | | | | | | MA12 | | |
| Submission Number | | | | | | | | | GLW-136-94 Office of Public Works | | |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | | | | | | | | | Appendix B - Strategic Flood Risk Assessment | | |
| Proposed Material Amendment | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Agricultural Zoned Land | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Add Agricultural land use zonings to the Justification Test Table in the SFRA report as appended to this report. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| All Agriculture zoned lands | A and B | Yes | No | No | No | No | No | No | No A Stage 1 and 2 Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken as part of the plan preparation process. This level of assessment is considered appropriate and has informed the land use zoning and written provisions contained in the Plan. Section 4 of the SFRA outlines the measures integrated into Plan to adequately manage flood risks. A precautionary approach has been applied to the zoning of lands with undeveloped lands that is liable to flood generally zoned for "Open Space/Recreation & Amenity" or "Agriculture". Future development will: be subject to site-specific flood risk assessments; and comply with the flood risk management provisions of the Local Area Plan and relevant County Development Plan (see Section 4 above), including structural and non-structural risk management measures. This is in order to ensure that flood hazard and risk to the area and to other adjoining locations will not be increased or, if practicable, will be reduced. Overlaps between Land Use Zoning and Flood Zones have been mapped to clearly indicate lands | | Fail, however Policy Objective GSST 25 Constrained Land Use will Limit development at these lands. As detailed under Policy Objective GSST 25, the Limitation provided "shall take primacy over any other provision relating to land use zoning objectives". |

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| | | | | | | | | constrained by flood risk – these are subject to the Constrained Land Use Provisions of the Plan. Development is subject to the provisions of the Local Area Plan and relevant County Development Plan that relate to flood risk and climate change. | | |
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| Amendment Number | MA13 |
| Submission Number | GLW-136-94 Office of Public Works |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Strategic Flood Risk Assessment |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| Supplied Justification Test Amend the Justification Test footnotes to list the potentially applicable flood risk management related provisions including structural and non-structural measures. See Appendix B SFRA. General flood risk management measures would include those from the County Development Plan (FL 4 Flood Relief Schemes, FL 5 Catchment Planning, FL 6 Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems and FL 10 SFRA/FRA and Climate Change) and the Local Area Plan (GSST 59 Flood Risk Management and Assessment, GSST 61 Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems, GSST 63 Flood Risk Assessment for Planning Applications and CFRAMS and GSST 64 Flood Risk Assessment and Climate Change). X from the County Development Plan and Y from the Local Area Plan would apply. FL 14 Flood Vulnerable Zones from the County Development Plan and GSST 66 Flood Vulnerable Zones from the Local Area Plan identify structural and non-structural measures relating to mitigate risks. Measures that could be used at this site to mitigate risk comprise floor levels, internal layout, flood resilient construction, flood resistant construction, emergency response planning and access and egress during flood events. Furthermore, this site would be benefitted by the Gort Flood Relief Scheme, which provides protection from a 1% AEP event as indicated in the map above. | |

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| Amendment Number | MA14 |
| Submission Number | GLW-136-94 Office of Public Works |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Appendix B - Strategic Flood Risk Assessment |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| Amend the narrative for the failed Justification Tests with the following additional text, in the SFRA Report as appended. As detailed under Policy Objective GSST 25, the limitation provided “shall take primacy over any other provision relating to land use zoning objectives”. | |

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| Amendment Number | MA15 |
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| Submission Number | GLW-136-94 Office of Public Works |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Zoning Maps |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| The constrained land use legend on the zoning map will be updated to include reference to GSST 25. Add text See Policy Objective GSST 25 to zoning map legend. | |
|  Constrained Land Use (See Policy Objective GSST 25) | |

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| Amendment Number | MA16 | | |
| Submission Number | GLW-C136- 88 Department of Environment, Climate Change and Communication | | |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Appendix II – SEA Environmental Report Appendix A | | |
| Proposed Material Amendment | | | |
| Amend Table under Appendix II Relationship with Legislation and Other Policies, Plans and Programmes of SEA Environmental Report in Appendix A. | | | |
| Shaping Our Electricity Future - Version 1.1 EirGrid's Grid25 Strategy and associated Grid25 Implementation Programme 2017-2022 | The main objective of the Shaping Our Electricity Future Roadmap Version 1.1 is to outline how EirGrid can make the grid ready so that 80% of Ireland's and Northern Ireland's electricity can come from renewable sources, like the wind and sun, by 2030. <i>EirGrid's mission is to develop, maintain and operate a safe, secure, reliable, economical and efficient transmission system for Ireland; "Our vision is of a grid developed to match future needs, so it can</i> | Shaping Our Electricity Future - Version 1.1 addresses various challenges including those relating to networks, engagement, operations and markets. Grid25, EirGrid's roadmap to uprate the electricity transmission grid by 2025, continues to be implemented so as to increase the capacity of the grid, to satisfy future demand, and to help Ireland meet its target of 40 per cent of electricity from renewable energy by 2020. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential incombination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the |

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| | safely and reliably carry power all over the country to the major towns and cities and onwards to every home, farm and business where the electricity is consumed and so it can meet the needs of consumers and generators in a sustainable way." | | objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
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| mendment Number | MA17 |
| Submission Number | GLW-C136-16 Department of Transport GLW-C136-81 ESB |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Appendix C - Local Transport Plan |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| Add additional text to Table 2 Policy & Plan Review – National in Appendix A of LTP (pages 16 &17); | |
| Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2025 | <p>Zero Emission Vehicles Ireland (ZEVl) is a dedicated office within the Department of Transport charged with supporting consumers, the public sector, and businesses to continue to make the switch to zero emission vehicles.</p> <p>ZEVl published the EV Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2025 which sets a roadmap for the delivery of Ireland's EV charging infrastructure by 2025. It outlines a comprehensive plan to integrate EV infrastructure into a broader sustainable transport network. The strategy emphasises inclusivity, ensuring that the charging infrastructure is accessible to all, regardless of age, health, or income. It acknowledges that home charging will remain the primary solution for most EV users, but also provides options for those unable to charge at home. A key focus is on interoperability and user-friendliness across the charging network.</p> <p>The strategy details various types of charging solutions, including destination charging at leisure and tourism locations, and en-route charging with fast, high-powered stations. It highlights the importance of government support in the form of seed funding to encourage the rollout of these infrastructures. Standards for EV</p> |

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| <p>National EV infrastructure Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Road Network EV Charging Plan 2024 to 2030 Regional and Local EV Charging Network Plan 2024- 2030 | <p>infrastructure are set to ensure ease of payment, accessibility, data sharing, interoperability, smart charging capabilities, and sustainability tracking. The Strategy also outlines existing and new infrastructure supports, such as grants for home and residential charging, and initiatives to promote shared charging solutions. Arising from this Strategy is the National EV infrastructure Plan which is made up of the National Road Network EV Charging Plan 2024 to 2030 and the Regional and Local EV Charging Network Plan 2024- 2030. Both of these plans provide for delivering EV Infrastructure for national roads, at key destinations and neighbourhood locations to provide infrastructure to support the transition to EVs and address user needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Road Network EV Charging Plan is a strategic initiative aimed at enhancing the electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure across the national road network, ensuring comprehensive geographic coverage for light-duty vehicles (LDVs) such as passenger cars. The plan outlines a phased approach to infrastructure delivery and includes provisions for heavy-duty vehicles (HDVs), with specific targets for electric trucks and buses by 2030. It considers factors such as grid connection availability and environmental considerations for optimal site locations. The plan also addresses the need for a robust grid infrastructure to support the development of public EV charging capacity. The Regional and Local EV Charging Network Plan for 2024- 2030 is designed to enhance the accessibility and availability of EV charging infrastructure at a more localised level, focusing on destination and neighbourhood charging. This plan aims to address the diverse needs of EV users by implementing a bottom-up modelling approach, allowing local authorities to estimate infrastructure demand accurately and identify strategic sites for EV charging stations. The plan emphasises flexibility and adaptability to foster widespread EV adoption, ensuring that infrastructure aligns with the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation (AFIR) requirements while also considering potential additional needs. <p>Local Authorities will play a lead role in delivering infrastructure through the Regional and Local EV Charging Network Plan and are currently developing EV Strategies for their Local Authorities to identify Neighbourhood and Destination Charging needs and subsequent implementation plans to ensure delivery of this EV infrastructure.</p> |
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| Amendment Number | MA18 |
| Submission Number | GLW-C136-18 Transport Infrastructure Ireland |

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| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Section 2.3.2 – Appendix C Local Transport Plan (WC16) |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| Add additional text to section 2.3.2 of LTP in Appendix C (page 13) | |
| <p>This is in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the strategic function, capacity and safety of the national roads network, including planning for future capacity enhancements, in the local plan area. • Ensure that the existing transport networks in the local area plan area, which have been greatly enhanced, are maintained to a high level to ensure quality levels of service, safety, accessibility and connectivity to transport users. | |

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| Amendment Number | MA19 |
| Submission Number | GLW-C136- 19 National Transport Authority |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Section 6.2.2 - Appendix C - Local Transport Plan |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| <p>Delete text under Section 6.2.2 of the Local Transport Plan in Appendix C (page 69)</p> <p>In addition, it is proposed to relocate the existing bus stops (used by scheduled services), from their current position along the eastern edge of Market Square, to a new location adjacent to the Station Road junction on Bridge Street to better facilitate inter-modal public transport.</p> | |

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| Amendment Number | MA20 |
| Submission Number | GLW-C136-18 Transport Infrastructure Ireland |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Section 6.2.3 – Appendix C - Local Transport Plan |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| <p>Add additional text to section 6.2.3 of LTP in Appendix C (page 69)</p> <p>The development of such connections to the Cycleway will be undertaken in consultation with Galway County Council’s internal design teams (to ensure integration of projects) and in partnership with TII (with regards to interfaces with the national road network and in the interests of safeguarding the strategic function of the national road network and the safety of all road users).</p> | |

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| Amendment Number | MA21 |
| Submission Number | GLW-C136- 19 National Transport Authority |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Section 2.8 Transportation and Movement – Local Transport Plan |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| Delete text under Section 2.8 of the LAP. The LTP has been prepared in collaboration with the National Transport Authority (NTA) and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII). | |

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| Amendment Number | MA22 |
| Submission Number | GLW-C136- 19 National Transport Authority |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Section 4 - Policy Objective GSST 44 |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| Amend wording of GSST 44; Support the implementation of the Local Transport Plan as set out in Section 3 the accompanying LTP document , in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development. | |

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| Amendment Number | MA23 |
| Submission Number | GLW-C136- 19 National Transport Authority |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Figure 6-1 and 6-2 – Appendix C - Local Transport Plan |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |

From



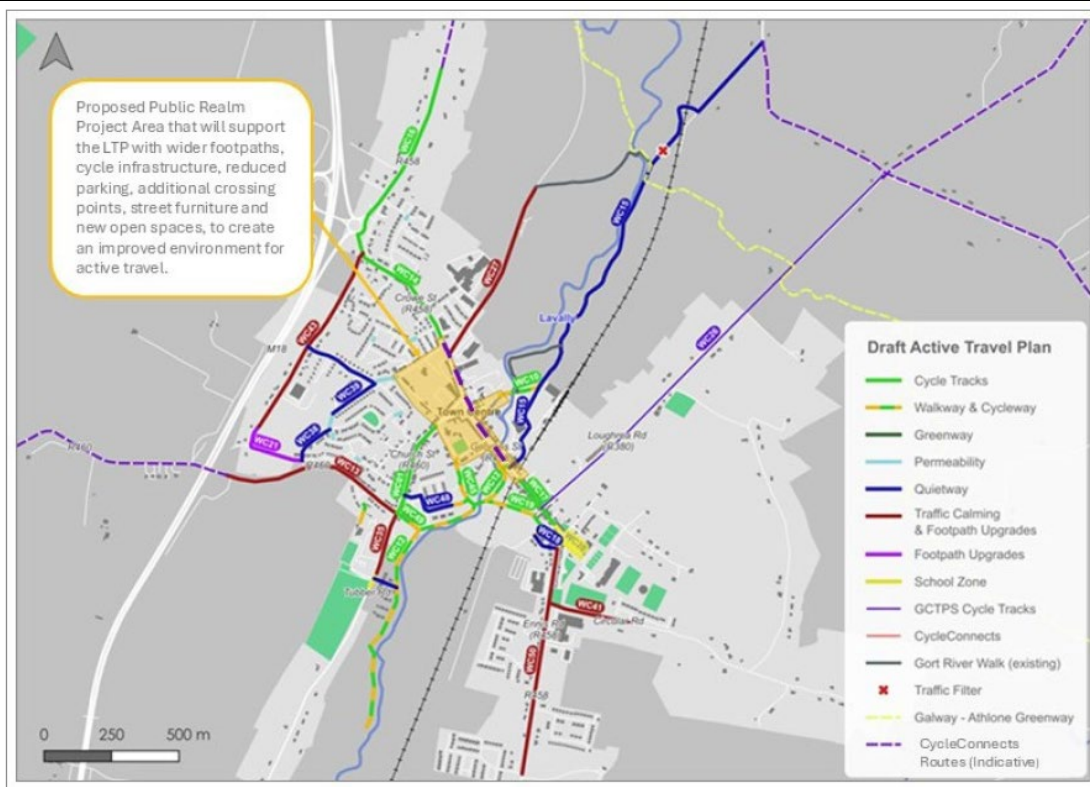
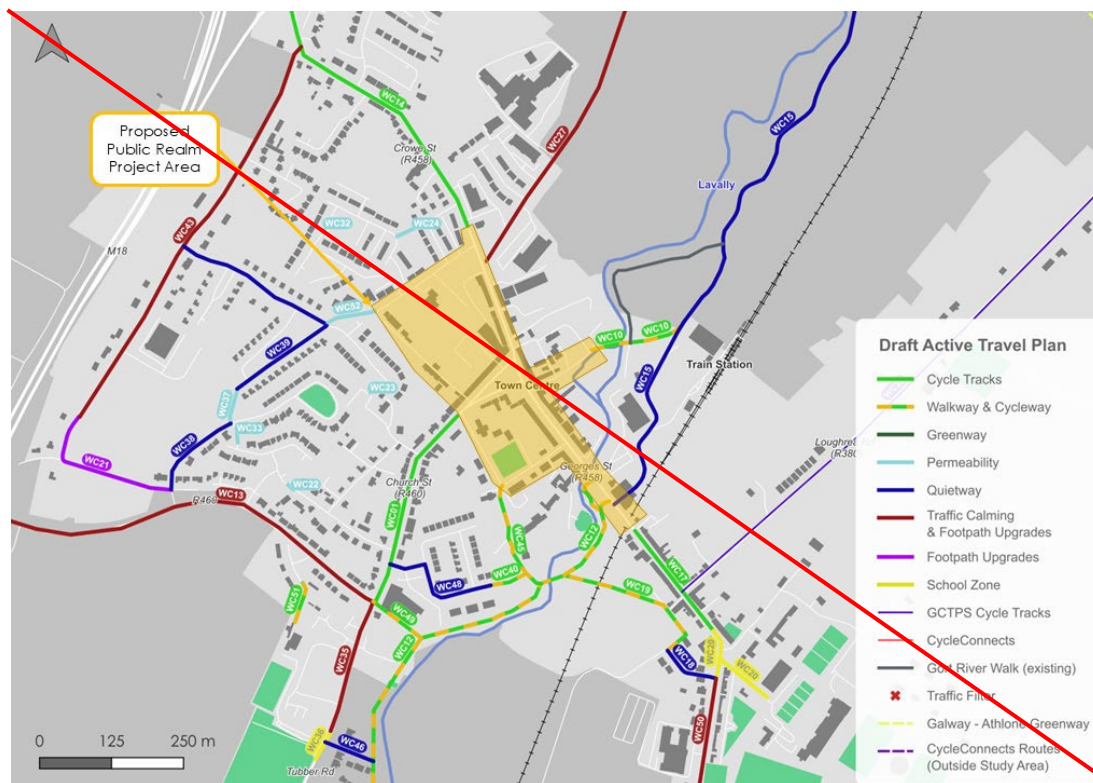
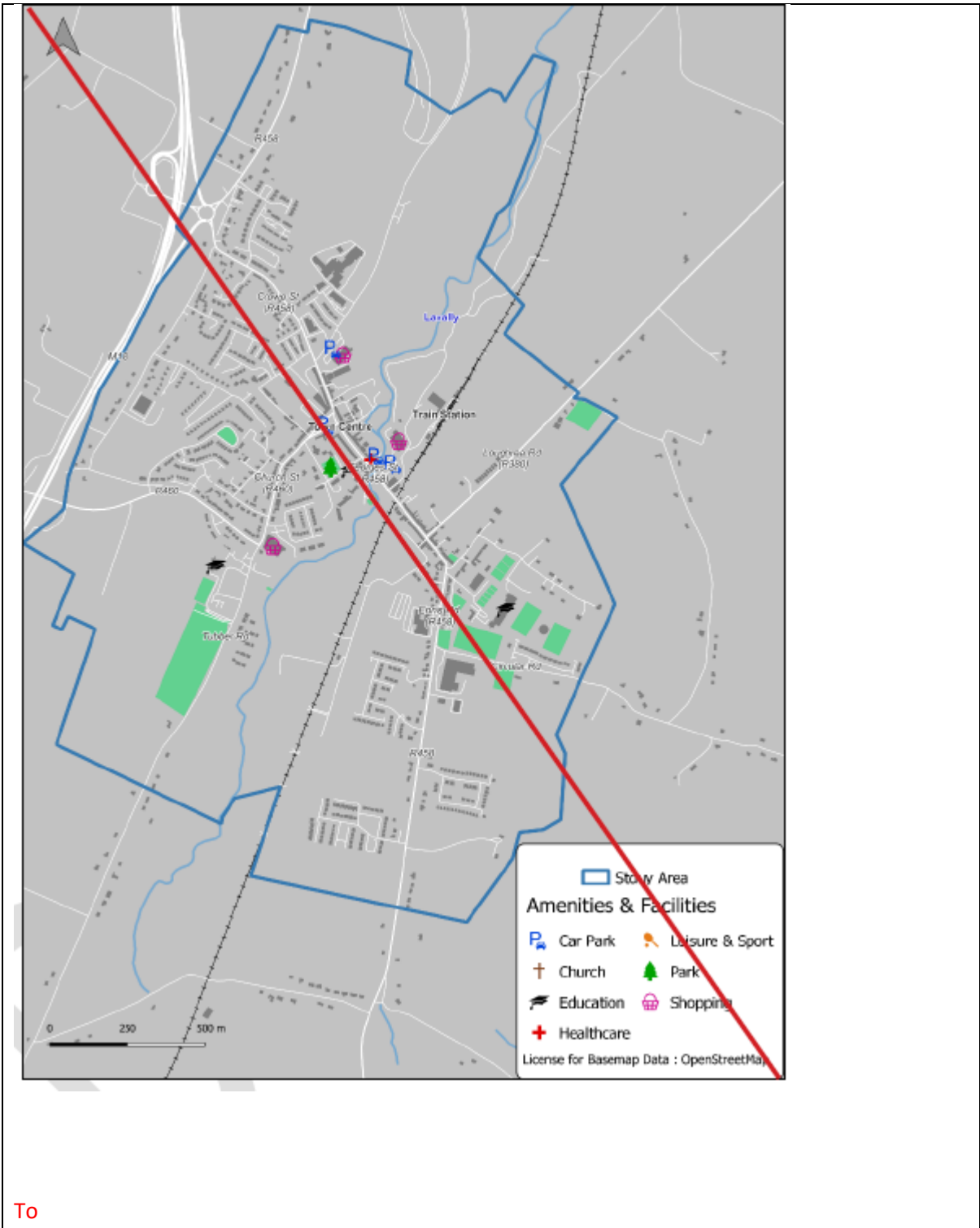


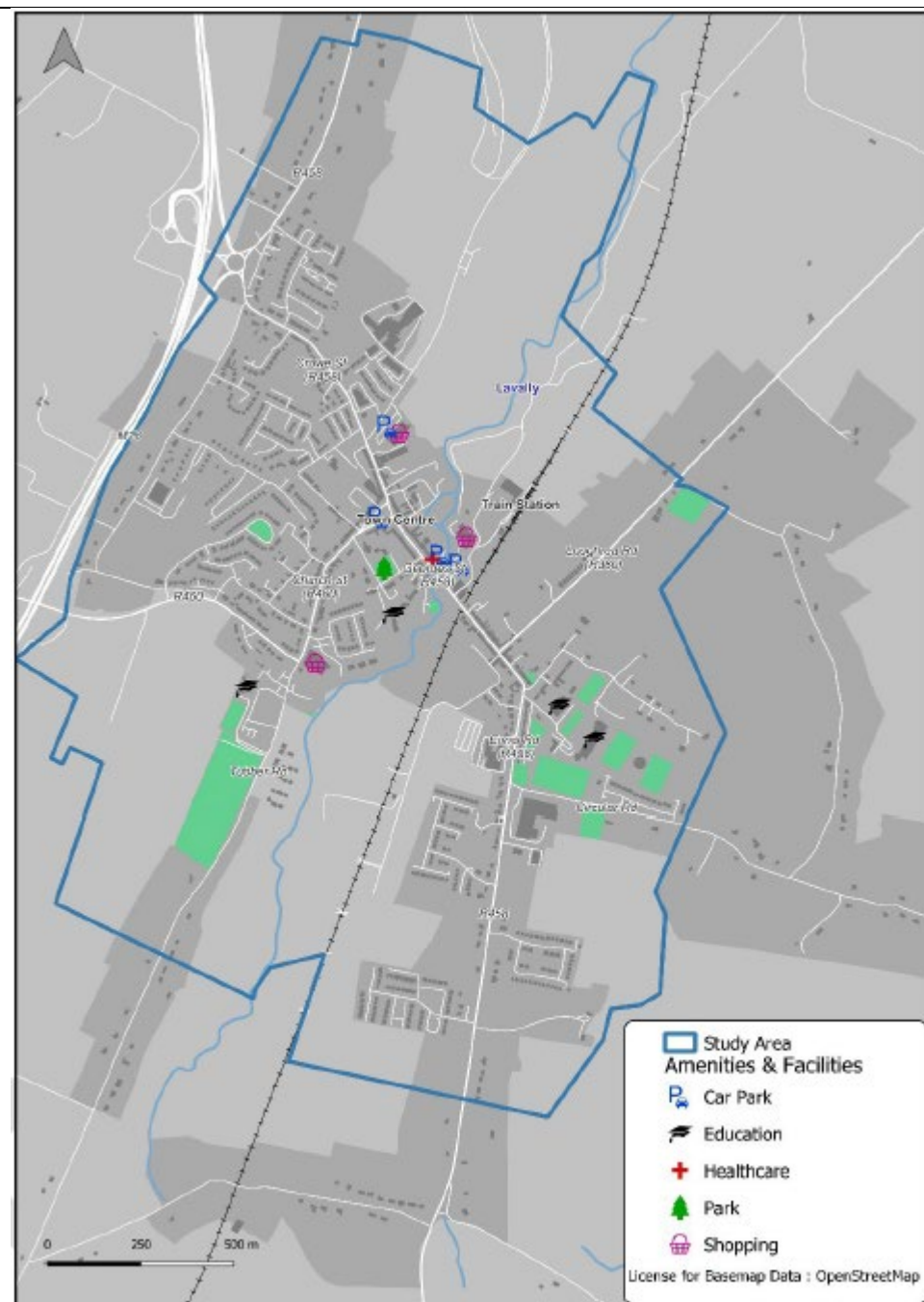
Figure 6-1: Emerging Preferred Strategy: Walking & Cycling Measures – Gort LTP Study Area

And
From



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| Amendment Number | MA25 |
| Submission Number | GLW-C136- 19 National Transport Authority |

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| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Section 3.8.2 – Appendix C – Local Transport Plan |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| <p>Amend text in section 3.8.2 of LTP in Appendix C (page 42).</p> <p>There are limited cycle parking facilities within Gort. Sheffield stands are provided in the station forecourt area, however no with some formal cycle parking facilities were observed in the town centre (near the Weighhouse).</p> | |

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| Amendment Number | MA26 |
| Submission Number | GLW-C136- 19 National Transport Authority |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Section 6.3 – Appendix C – Local Transport Plan |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| <p>Amend text in section 6.3 of LTP in Appendix C (page 75).</p> <p>Within the study area, the proposed relocation of the town centre bus stops as part of the draft public realm enhancement project has been noted. Whether or not this proceeds, It is considered that there is a need to provide additional bus stops on either side of the town centre to ensure accessibility to public transport. This would increase the catchment area of bus services in the town and support a modal shift to sustainable travel. Proposed potential locations (indicative only) of these additional bus stops are shown below. The provision of these additional bus stops and the extension of bus routes (e.g. 434) further south may require a new bus turning facility on the Ennis Road to support this route extension. This will be considered in partnership with the NTA and other stakeholders, along with the potential for future expansion of bus services within the Gort area.</p> | |

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| Amendment Number | MA27 |
| Submission Number | GLW-C136- 19 National Transport Authority |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Appendix C - Local Transport Plan |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |

Amend wording of PYB01 in Table 1-1 of Appendix B of the Local Transport Plan (page 13)

PTB01 Additional Bus Stops Work with the NTA and Bus Éireann to provide additional bus stops in safe locations on Ennis Road and Crowe Street and other stakeholders as appropriate, to review bus stop locations and assess the need for bus infrastructure including turning facilities to support bus usage in Gort.

| | |
|--|--|
| Amendment Number | MA28 |
| Submission Number | GLW-C136-19 National Transport Authority GLW-C136-81 ESB GLW-C136-1 EPA |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Section 6.5 - Local Transport Plan |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| Amend text under section 6.5 of Local Transport Plan in Appendix C (page 78). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The roll out of cycle parking. • Provision of improved bus stop infrastructure and passenger information. • A The development of a town parking management strategy, including consideration of both the quantum and cost of parking within the town in the longer term. • This parking management strategy will also include the development of an EV parking (and pricing) strategy. This will support compliance with the EU Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, which calls for an increase to 20% for the number of parking spaces which should have provision for electric vehicle charging infrastructure. • The development of an integrated Traffic Management Plan. • A range of behavioural change measures including mobility management plans for workplaces, schools and new housing developments, cycle skills and maintenance training, and a range of school based sustainable travel initiatives and events. | |

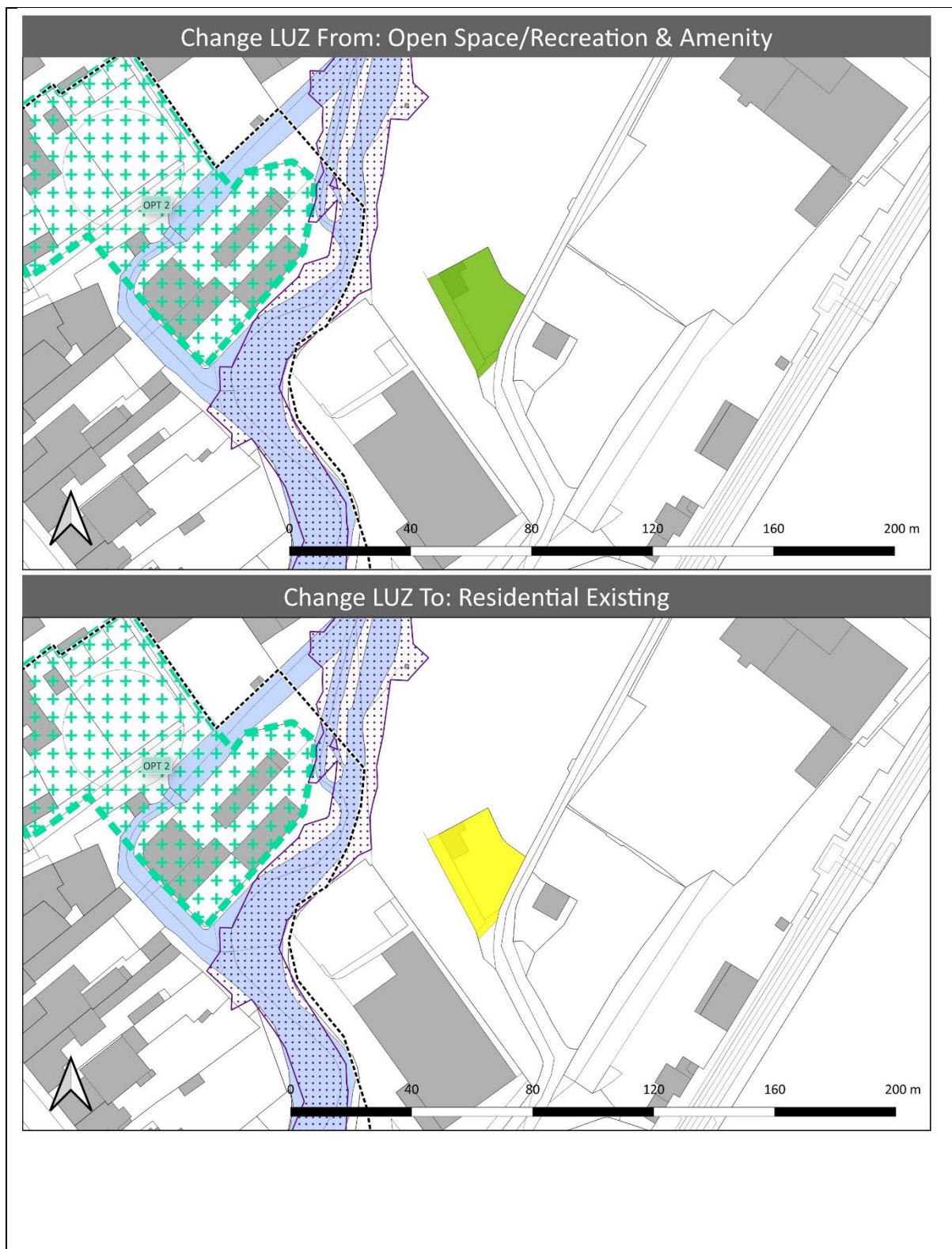
| | |
|---|--|
| Amendment Number | MA29 |
| Submission Number | GLW-C136- 19 National Transport Authority |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Appendix C - Local Transport Plan |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| Add additional text to table under section 1.4 Supporting Measures in Appendix B of LTP (page 17) | |
| DM-P1 – P1 | <p>Town parking management strategy</p> <p>Development of a town parking management strategy, including consideration of both the quantum and cost of parking within the town in the longer term</p> |


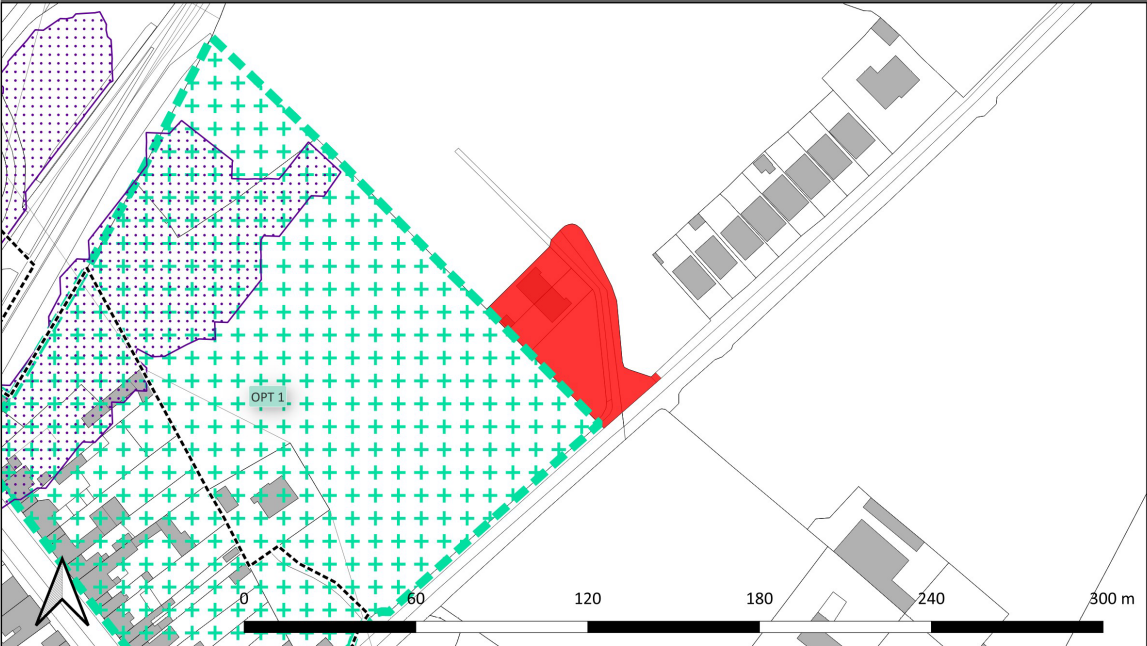
| | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Amendment Number | MA30 |
| Submission Number | GLW-C136-1 EPA |

| | |
|---|--|
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Appendix C – Local Transport Plan |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| Add additional text to table under section 1.4 Supporting Measures in Appendix B of LTP (page 18) | |
| DM-P5-P1 | Integrated Traffic Management Plan Development of an integrated Traffic Management Plan to reduce the potential for traffic congestion and associated vehicular emissions, addressing the short, medium and long-term traffic management requirements within the Plan area. |

| | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Amendment Number | MA31 |
| Submission Number | GLW-C136-4 |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Section 2.4 of Local Area Plan |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| Amend text under section 2.4 of the LAP Gort Rugby Pitches Gort Rugby Football Club/Saint Colmans Park | |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Amendment Number | MA 32 |
| Submission Number | Elected Members Motion |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Rezone lands from Open Space/Recreation and Amenity to Existing Residential. |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| | |

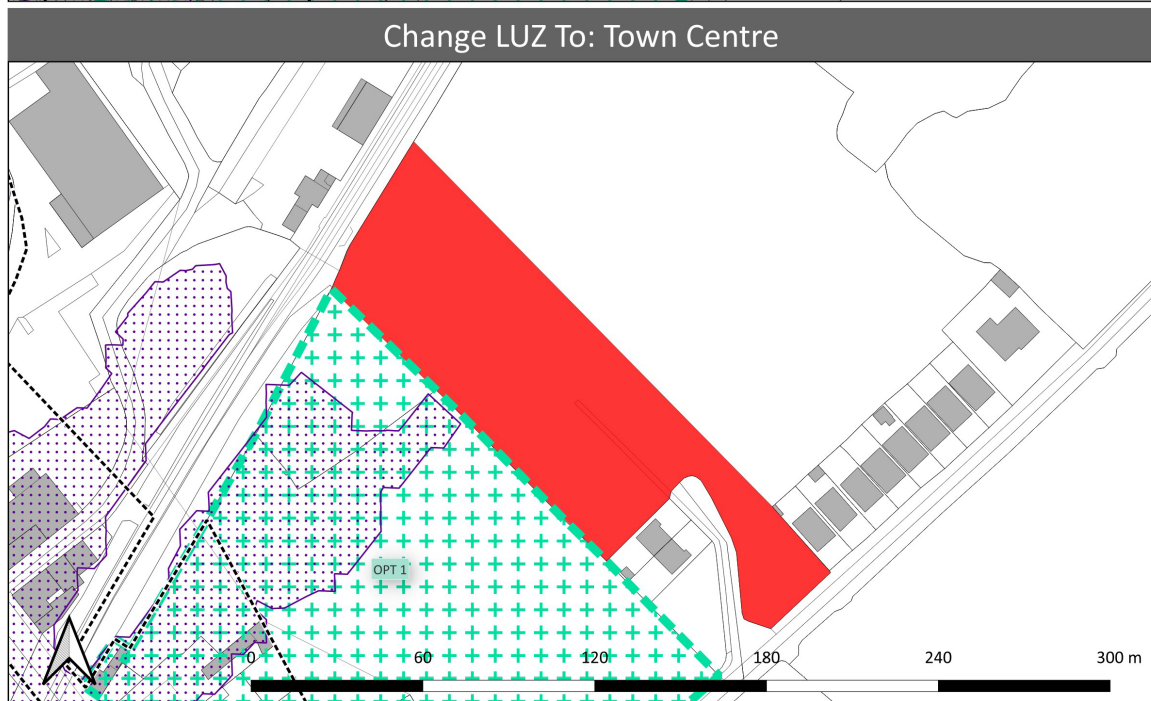
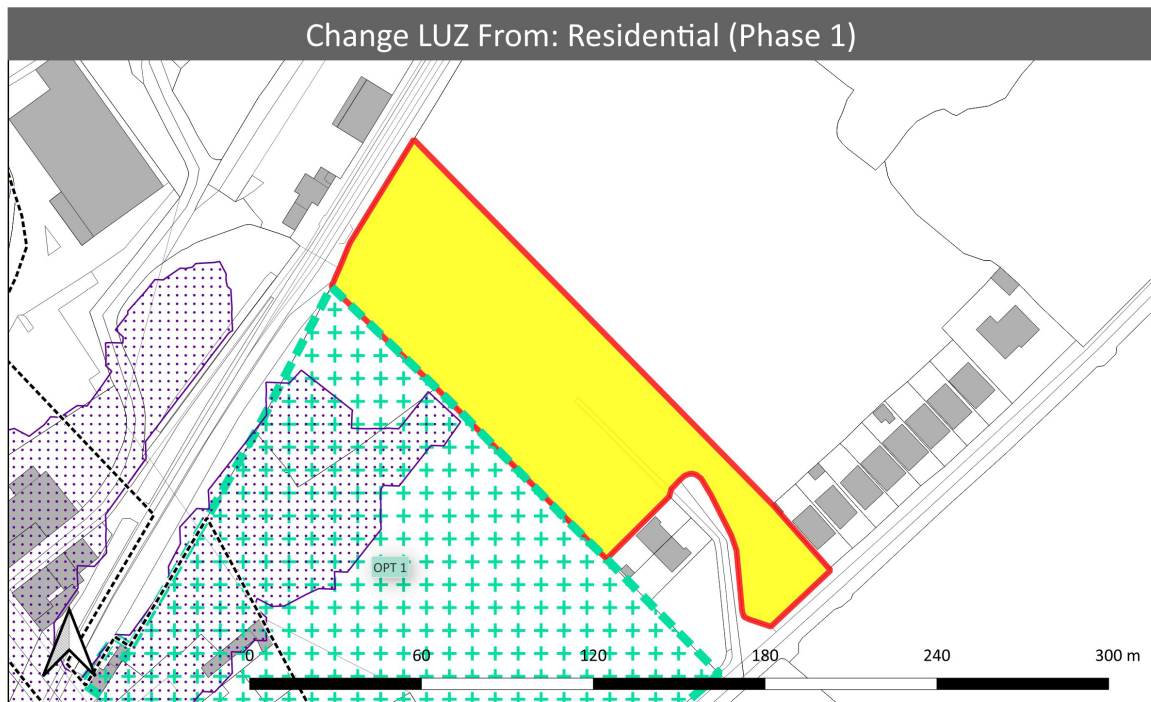


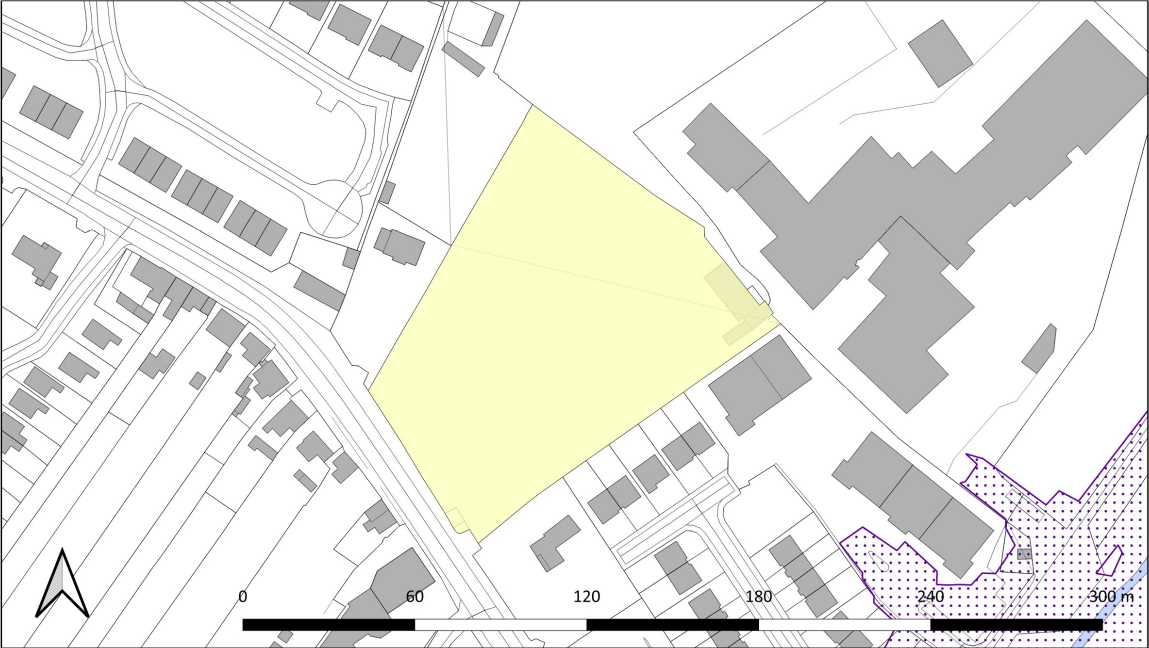
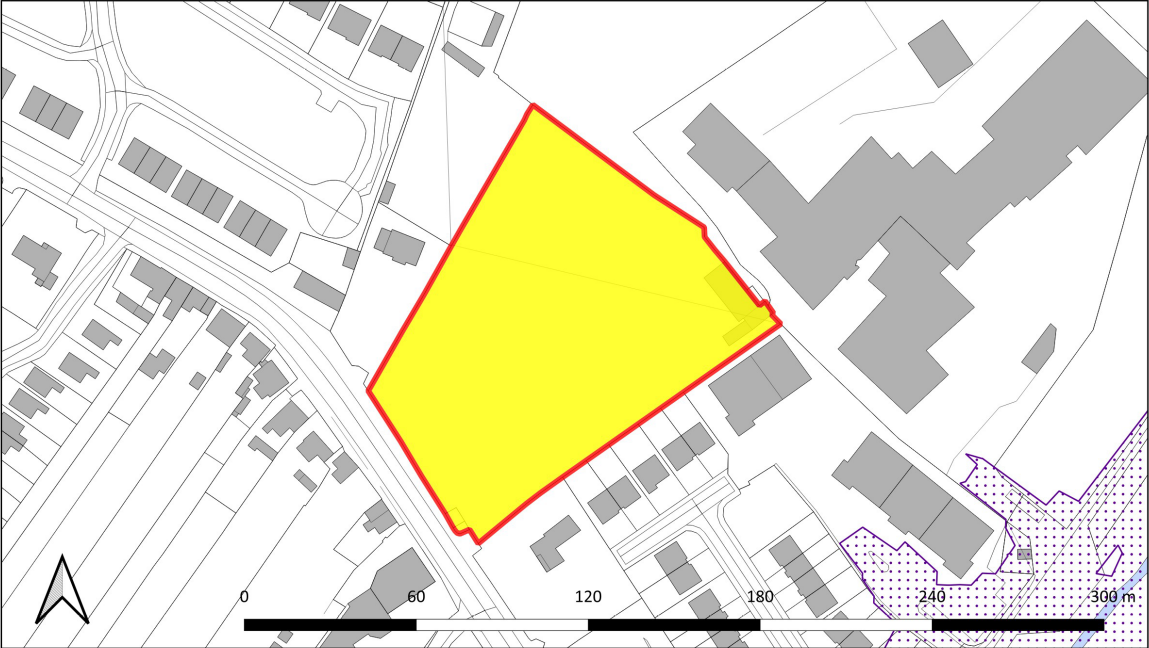
| | |
|--|---|
| Amendment Number | MA 33 |
| Submission Number | Elected Members Motion |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Rezone Land from Existing Residential to Town Centre |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| To rezone the following land from Existing Residential to Town Centre. | |
| <div>Change LUZ From: Residential Existing</div>  | |
| <div>Change LUZ To: Town Centre</div>  | |


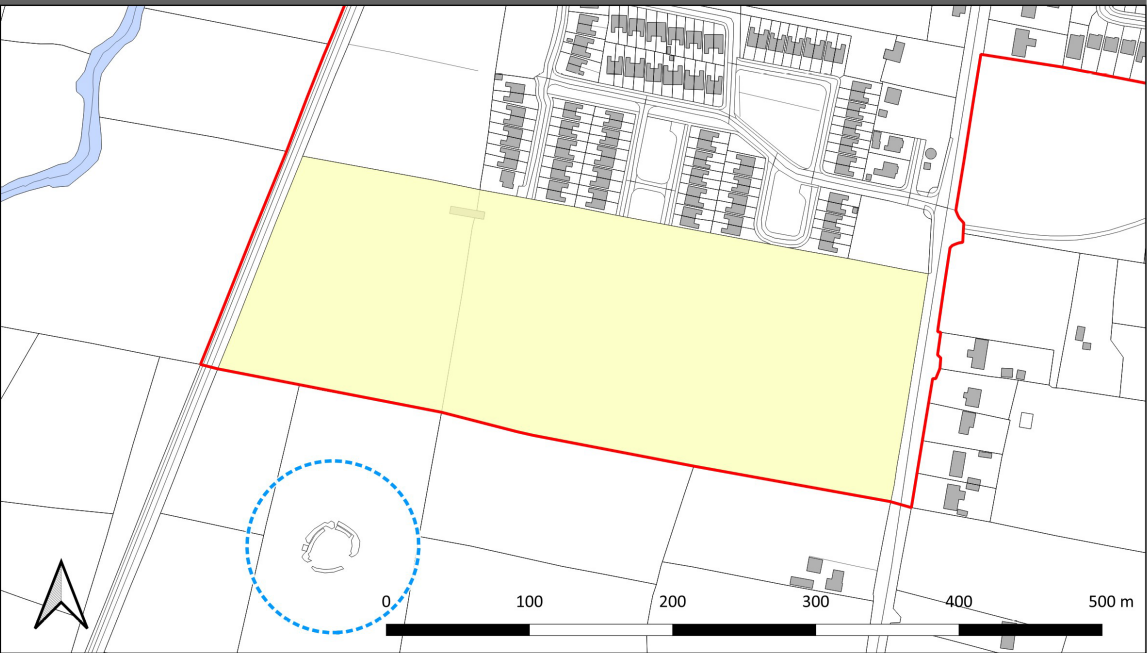
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|-----------------------------------|--|
| Amendment Number | MA 34 |
| Submission Number | Elected Members Motion |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Rezone Lands from Residential Phase 1 to Town Centre |


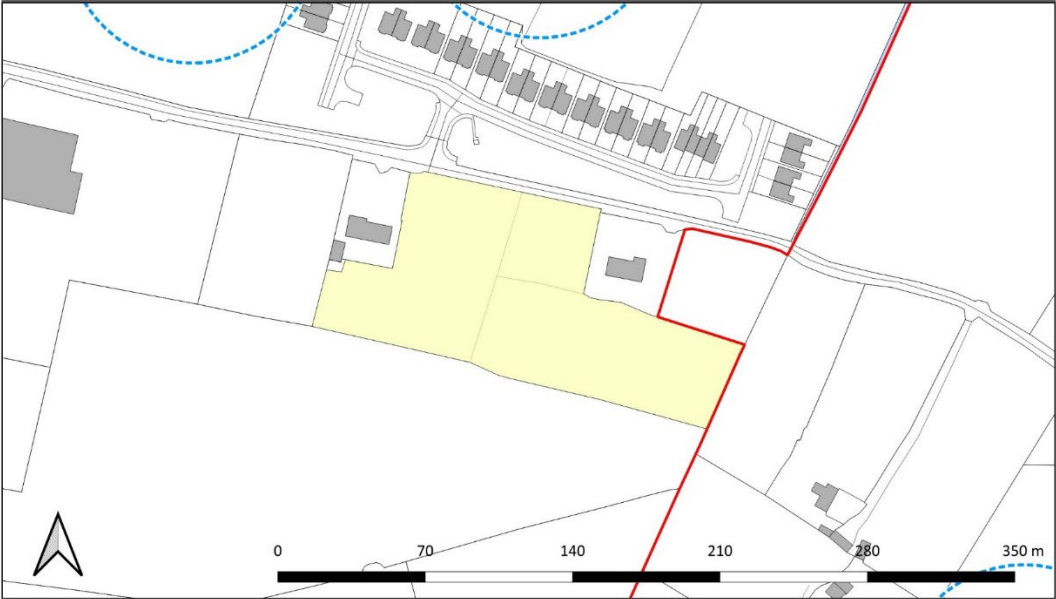
Proposed Material Amendment


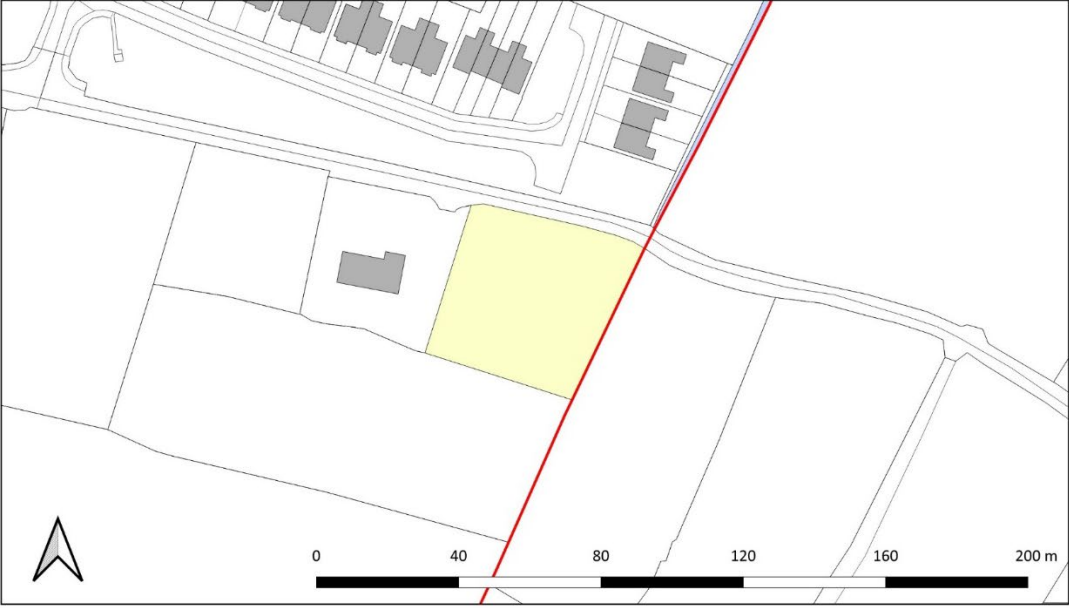
To Rezone lands from Residential Phase 1 to Town Centre



| | |
|---|--|
| Amendment Number | MA 35 |
| Submission Number | Elected Members Motion GLW-C136-15 |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Rezone Lands from Residential Phase 2 to Residential Phase 1 |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| To rezone the following lands from Residential Phase 2 to Residential Phase 1 | |
| <div>Change LUZ From: Residential (Phase 2)</div>  | |
| <div>Change LUZ To: Residential (Phase 1)</div>  | |

| | |
|--|--|
| Amendment Number | MA 36 |
| Submission Number | GLW-C136-89 Elected Members Motion |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Rezone land from outside the plan boundary to Residential Phase 2 |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| To zone the following lands from outside the plan boundary to residential phase 2. | |
| <div> <div>Change LUZ From: Outside Plan Boundary</div>  </div> <div> <div>Change LUZ To: Residential (Phase 2)</div>  </div> | |

| | |
|--|---|
| Amendment Number | MA 37 |
| Submission Number | GLW-C136-90 Elected Members Motion |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Rezone land (1.2HA) to Residential Phase 2 |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| To rezone the following land from Business and Enterprise to Residential Phase 2 | |
| <div>Change LUZ From: Business & Enterprise</div>  <div>Change LUZ To: Residential (Phase 2)</div>  | |

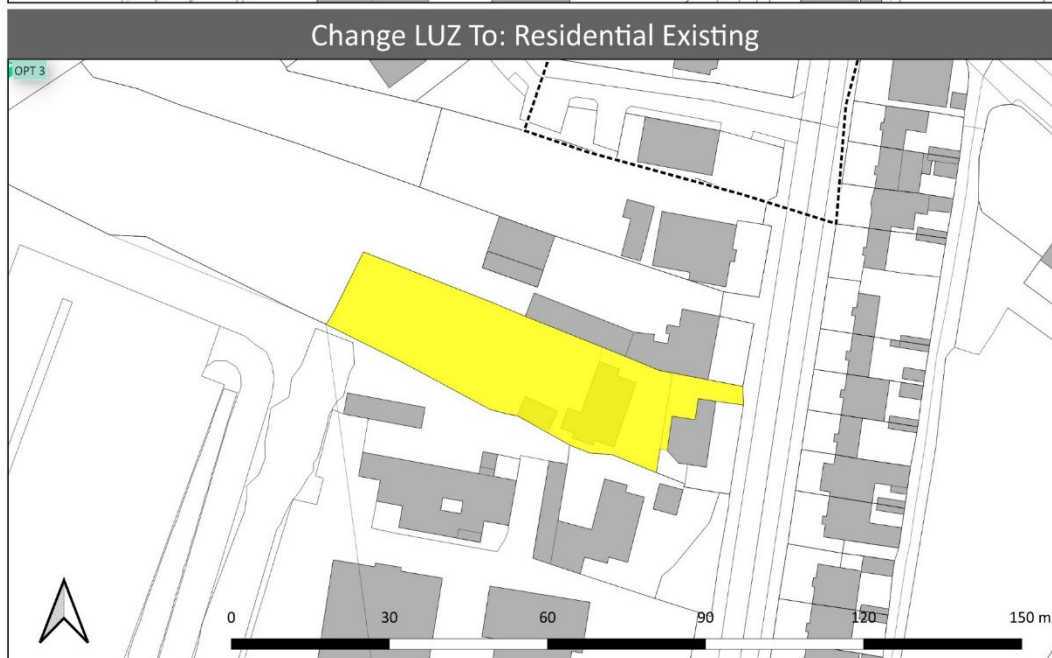
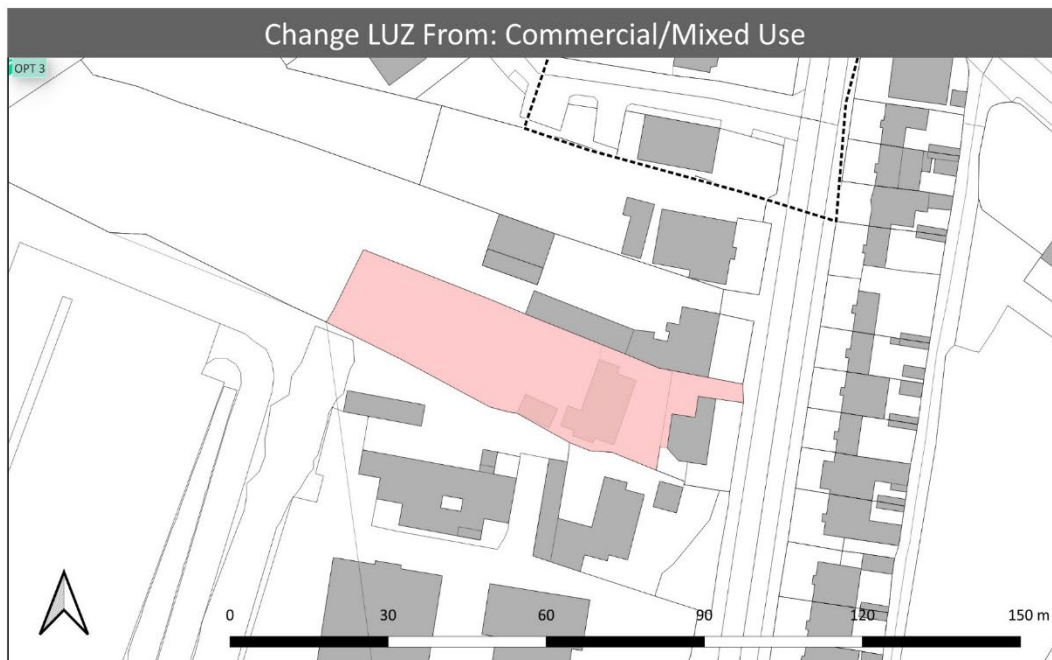
| | |
|---|--|
| Amendment Number | MA 38 |
| Submission Number | GLW-C136-90 Elected Members Motion |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | To extend the plan boundary to provide for R2 zoning on the plot of land indicated on the map |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| To zone the following lands from outside the plan boundary to residential phase 2. | |
| <div>Change LUZ From: Outside Plan Boundary</div>  | |
| <div>Change LUZ To: Residential (Phase 2)</div>  | |


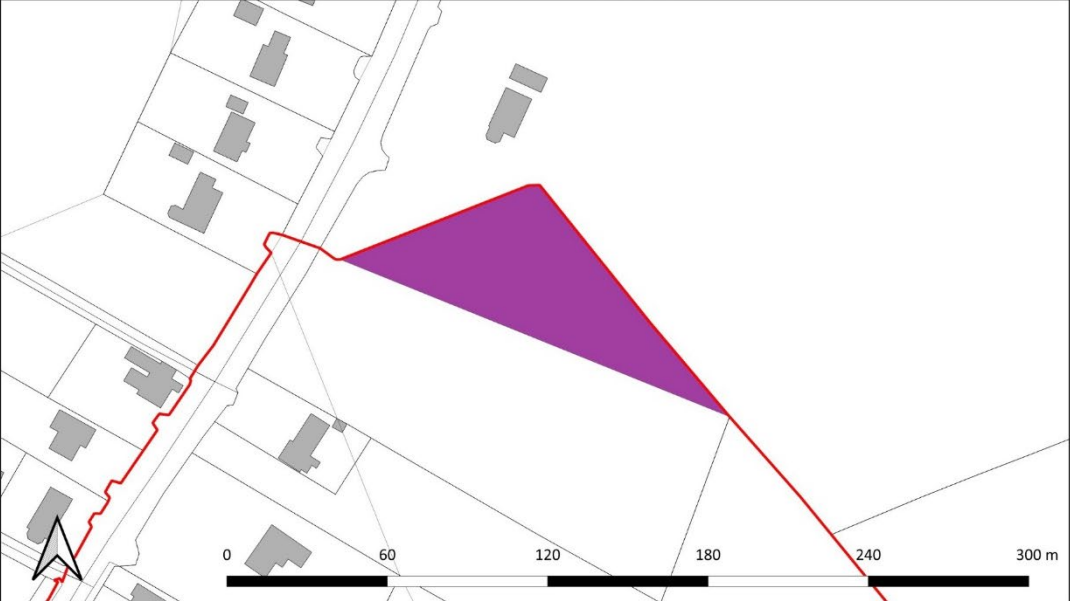
| | |
|---|---|
| Amendment Number | MA 39 |
| Submission Number | GLW-C136-9 |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Rezone lands from Open Space/Recreation and Amenity to Residential Existing. |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| To rezone the following lands from Open Space/Recreation and Amenity to Residential Existing. | |
| <div>Change LUZ From: Open Space/Recreation & Amenity</div>  | |
| <div>Change LUZ To: Residential Existing</div>  | |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Amendment Number | MA 40 |
| Submission Number | GLW-C136-13 |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Rezone lands from Commercial/Mixed Use to Residential Existing. |

Proposed Material Amendment

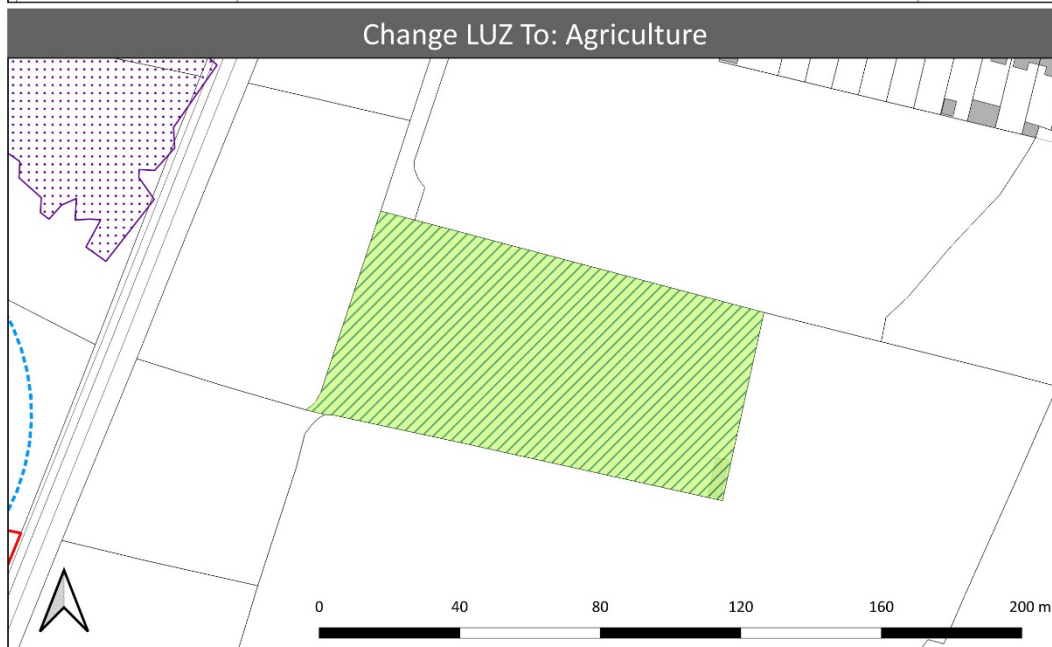
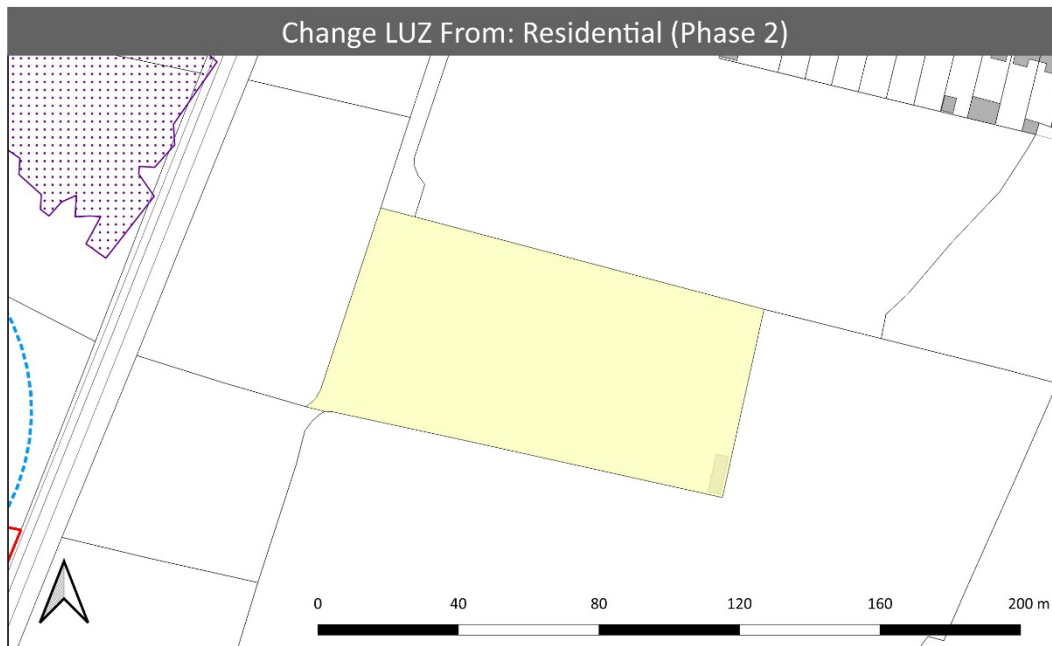
To rezone the following lands from Commercial/Mixed Use to Residential Existing.



| | |
|---|---|
| Amendment Number | MA 41 |
| Submission Number | GLW-C136-73 |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | To extend the plan boundary to provide for Industrial zoning on the plot of land indicated on the map. |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| To zone the following lands from outside the plan boundary to Industrial. | |
| <div>Change LUZ From: Outside Plan Boundary</div>  | |
| <div>Change LUZ To: Industrial</div>  | |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Amendment Number | MA 42 |
| Submission Number | GLW-C136-87 |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Rezone lands from Residential Phase 2 to Agriculture. |

To rezone the following lands from Residential Phase 2 to Agriculture.



| | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| Amendment Number | MA 43 |
| Submission Number | |

| | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| | |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | SEA Environmental Report |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| To update Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report | |

| | |
|--|--|
| Amendment Number | MA44 |
| Submission Number | |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Strategic Flood Risk Assessment |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| To update Strategic Flood Risk Assessment | |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Amendment Number | MA 45 |
| Submission Number | |
| Section / Policy Objective/Policy | Local Transport Plan |
| Proposed Material Amendment | |
| To update Local Transport Plan | |



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

Draft Gort Local Area Plan

2025 - 2031

Appendix A

SEA Environmental Report

SEA ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

FOR THE

DRAFT GORT LOCAL AREA PLAN 2025-2031

FOLLOWING PUBLIC DISPLAY OF THE

DRAFT PLAN AND ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Text added following public display in red "like this"
Text deleted following public display in red strikethrough "like this"

for: Galway County Council



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

by: CAAS Ltd.



~~DECEMBER 2024~~MARCH 2025

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| List of Abbreviations | v |
| Glossary..... | vi |
| Section 1 SEA: Introduction and Benefits | 1 |
| 1.1 Introduction..... | 1 |
| 1.2 Implications for the Planning Authority | 1 |
| 1.3 Why SEA? The Benefits..... | 1 |
| Section 2 The Draft Plan | 3 |
| 2.1 Introduction and Content | 3 |
| 2.2 Draft Plan Format..... | 3 |
| 2.3 Vision and Strategic Aims | 3 |
| 2.4 Strategic work undertaken by the Council to ensure evidence-based planning | 4 |
| 2.5 Relationship with other relevant Plans and Programmes | 4 |
| Section 3 SEA Methodology | 5 |
| 3.1 Introduction to the Iterative Approach | 5 |
| 3.2 Appropriate Assessment and Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment..... | 6 |
| 3.3 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment | 6 |
| 3.4 Scoping | 6 |
| 3.5 Alternatives | 7 |
| 3.6 Environmental Report | 7 |
| 3.7 SEA Statement..... | 7 |
| Section 4 Environmental Baseline | 9 |
| 4.1 Introduction..... | 9 |
| 4.2 National Reporting on the Environment | 9 |
| 4.3 Sustainable Development Goals | 9 |
| 4.4 Likely Evolution of the Environment in the Absence of a new Plan | 9 |
| 4.5 Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services..... | 11 |
| 4.6 Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna | 12 |
| 4.7 Population and Human Health | 23 |
| 4.8 Soil | 24 |
| 4.9 Water..... | 29 |
| 4.10 Air and Climatic Factors | 37 |
| 4.11 Material Assets..... | 41 |
| 4.12 Cultural Heritage | 43 |
| 4.13 Landscape | 47 |
| Section 5 Strategic Environmental Objectives | 49 |
| Section 6 Description of Alternatives | 54 |
| 6.1 Introduction..... | 54 |
| 6.2 Limitations in Available Alternatives | 54 |
| 6.3 Type 1: Alternatives Already Considered..... | 54 |
| 6.4 Type 2: Land Use Zoning Alternatives | 54 |
| 6.5 Type 3: Transport Alternatives | 55 |

| | | |
|---------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Section 7 | Evaluation of Alternatives..... | 56 |
| 7.1 | Introduction..... | 56 |
| 7.2 | Methodology..... | 56 |
| 7.3 | Detailed Assessment of Alternatives..... | 58 |
| 7.4 | Reasons for Choosing the Selected Alternative in light of Other Reasonable Alternatives Considered..... | 63 |
| Section 8 | Evaluation of Draft Plan Provisions | 64 |
| 8.1 | Introduction..... | 64 |
| 8.2 | Cumulative Effects..... | 67 |
| 8.3 | Overall Evaluation | 68 |
| 8.4 | Appropriate Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment..... | 73 |
| 8.5 | Interrelationship between Environmental Components..... | 73 |
| 8.6 | Detailed Evaluation..... | 75 |
| Section 9 | Mitigation Measures..... | 83 |
| 9.1 | Introduction..... | 83 |
| 9.2 | Strategic work undertaken by the Council to ensure evidence-based planning | 83 |
| 9.3 | Consideration of Alternatives..... | 83 |
| 9.4 | Integration of environmental considerations into Zoning of the Draft Plan | 83 |
| 9.5 | Integration of individual provisions into the text of the Draft Plan | 84 |
| 9.6 | Integration of individual provisions into the text of the County Development Plan | 84 |
| Section 10 | Monitoring Measures | 104 |
| 10.1 | Introduction..... | 104 |
| 10.2 | Indicators and Targets..... | 104 |
| 10.3 | Sources | 104 |
| 10.4 | Reporting | 105 |
| Appendix I | Screening for SEA Determination..... | 111 |
| Appendix II | Relationship with Legislation and Other Policies, Plans and Programmes..... | 114 |
| Appendix III | Non-Technical Summary..... | Separately bound |

List of Figures

| | |
|--|----|
| Figure 3.1 Overview of the SEA/AA/SFRA Plan-preparation Processes | 5 |
| Figure 4.1 European sites within a 15 km buffer of the Gort Plan area | 17 |
| Figure 4.2 European sites, pNHAs, Nature Reserves and Ramsar Sites in close proximity and surrounding the Gort Plan area | 18 |
| Figure 4.3 NHAs and pNHAs within a 15 km buffer of the Gort Plan area | 19 |
| Figure 4.4 CORINE Land Cover Mapping 2018 | 20 |
| Figure 4.5 Areas likely to contain Annex 1 Habitats | 21 |
| Figure 4.6 Other Ecological Designations..... | 22 |
| Figure 4.7 Soil Types..... | 26 |
| Figure 4.8 County Geological Sites and Mineral Localities..... | 27 |
| Figure 4.9 Landslide Susceptibility | 28 |
| Figure 4.10 The WFD (2016-2021) Status of Surface Waterbodies and Ground Waterbodies..... | 32 |
| Figure 4.11 Groundwater Vulnerability | 33 |
| Figure 4.12 Groundwater Productivity | 34 |
| Figure 4.13 Entries to the WFD RPA for Drinking Water | 35 |
| Figure 4.14 Flood Zones | 36 |
| Figure 4.15 Archaeological and Architectural Heritage | 46 |
| Figure 4.16 Landscape Character Units and Scenic Route | 48 |

List of Tables

| | |
|--|-----|
| Table 3.1 Checklist of Information included in this Environmental Report | 8 |
| Table 4.1 NHAs and pNHAs within 15 km of the Plan area | 15 |
| Table 5.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs), Indicators and Targets..... | 50 |
| Table 7.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives | 56 |
| Table 7.2 Criteria for appraising the effect of the Alternatives on SEOs | 58 |
| Table 7.3 Effects common to Plans adopting each of the different alternatives | 59 |
| Table 7.4 Assessment of Type 2 Alternatives against Strategic Environmental Objectives | 62 |
| Table 7.5 Assessment of Type 3 Alternatives against Strategic Environmental Objectives | 63 |
| Table 8.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives | 65 |
| Table 8.2 Criteria for appraising the effect of the Plan provisions on SEOs | 66 |
| Table 8.3 Overall Evaluation – Effects arising from the Plan | 69 |
| Table 8.4 Presence of Interrelationships between Environmental Components..... | 74 |
| Table 9.1 Integration of Environmental Considerations into the Plan..... | 85 |
| Table 10.1 Indicators, Targets, Sources and Remedial Action..... | 106 |

List of Abbreviations

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| AA | Appropriate Assessment |
| ACA | Architectural Conservation Area |
| CAFE | Cleaner Air for Europe |
| CFRAM | Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management |
| CGS | County Geological Site |
| CORINE | Co-ORdinated INformation on the Environment |
| CSO | Central Statistics Office |
| DAFM | Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine |
| DCCAE | Department of Communication, Climate Action and Environment |
| DCHG | Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht |
| DEHLG | Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government |
| DHPLG | Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government |
| EIA | Environmental Impact Assessment |
| EPA | Environmental Protection Agency |
| EQS | Environmental Quality Standard |
| ELVs | Emission Discharge Values |
| EU | European Union |
| GFC | Gross Final Consumption |
| GSi | Geological Survey of Ireland |
| LAP | Local Area Plan |
| LCA | Landscape Character Assessment |
| LULUCF | Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry |
| NECP | National Energy and Climate Plan |
| NHA | Natural Heritage Area |
| NIAH | National Inventory of Architectural Heritage |
| NO₂ | Nitrogen dioxide |
| NTA | National Transport Authority |
| OPW | Office of Public Works |
| O₃ | Ozone |
| PM_{2.5} | Fine particulate matter |
| pNHA | proposed Natural Heritage Area |
| PAS | Priority Action Substance |
| RAL | Remedial Action List |
| RED | Renewable Energy Directive |
| RBD | River Basin District |
| RBMP | River Basin Management Plan |
| RMP | Record of Monuments and Places |
| RPA | Register of Protected Areas |
| RPS | Record of Protected Structures |
| RSES | Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy |
| SAC | Special Area of Conservation |
| SEA | Strategic Environmental Assessment |
| SEO | Strategic Environmental Objective |
| SI No. | Statutory Instrument Number |
| SPA | Special Protection Area |
| SuDS | Sustainable urban Drainage systems |
| WHO | World Health Organisation |
| WFD | Water Framework Directive |
| WRZ | Water Resource Zone |
| WSS | Water Supply Scheme |
| WWTP | Wastewater Treatment Plant |

Glossary

Appropriate Assessment

The obligation to undertake Appropriate Assessment (AA) derives from Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. AA is a focused and detailed impact assessment of the implications of a strategic action (such as a plan or programme) or project, alone and in combination with other strategic actions and projects, on the integrity of a European Site in view of its conservation objectives.

Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna

Biodiversity is the variability among living organisms from all sources including inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems' (United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity 1992).

Flora is all the plants found in a given area.

Fauna is all the animals found in a given area.

Environmental Problems

Annex I of Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of Ministers, of 27th June 2001, on the assessment of the effects of certain Plans and programmes on the environment (the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive) requires that information is provided on 'any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme', thus, helping to ensure that the proposed strategic action does not make existing environmental problems worse.

Environmental problems arise where there is a conflict between current environmental conditions and ideal targets. If environmental problems are identified at the outset, they can help focus attention on important issues and geographical areas where environmental effects of the plan or programme may be likely.

Environmental Vectors

Environmental vectors are environmental components, such as air, water or soil, through which contaminants or pollutants, which have the potential to cause harm, can be transported, coming into contact with human beings.

Mitigate

To make or become less severe or harsh.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures are measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and, as fully as possible, offset any significant adverse impacts on the environment of implementing a human action, be it a plan, programme or project. Mitigation involves ameliorating significant negative effects. Where there are significant negative effects, consideration should be given in the first instance to preventing such effects or, where this is not possible, to lessening or offsetting those effects. Mitigation measures can be roughly divided into those that: avoid effects; reduce the magnitude or extent, probability and/or severity of effects; repair effects after they have occurred; and compensate for effects, balancing out negative impacts with other positive ones.

In the context of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, mitigation measures are clearly distinguished from compensatory measures. Compensatory measures are intended to offset the negative effects of the plan or project so that the overall ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 Network is maintained.

Natural Heritage

The Heritage Act (1995) defines natural heritage as including flora, fauna, wildlife habitats, landscapes, seascapes, wrecks, geology, inland waterways, heritage gardens and parks.

Protected Structure

Protected Structure is the term used in the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and associated Regulations (as amended) to define a structure included by a planning authority in its Record of Protected Structures. Such a structure shall not be altered or demolished in whole or part without obtaining planning permission or confirmation from the planning authority that the part of the structure to be altered is not protected.

Recorded Monument

A monument included in the list and marked on the map which comprises the Record of Monuments and Places that is set out county by county under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994 by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland. The definition includes Zones of Archaeological Potential in towns and all other monuments of archaeological interest which have so far been identified. Any works at or in relation to a recorded monument requires two months' notice to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994.

Scoping

Scoping is the process of determining what issues are to be addressed, and setting out a methodology in which to address them in a structured manner appropriate to the plan or programme. Scoping is carried out in consultation with appropriate environmental authorities.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt it.

Strategic Environmental Objective (SEO)

Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) are methodological measures developed from policies which generally govern environmental protection objectives established at International, Community or Member State level and are used as standards against which the provisions of the Plan and the alternatives can be evaluated in order to help identify which provisions would be likely to result in significant environmental effects and where such effects would be likely to occur, if - in the case of adverse effects - unmitigated.

Section 1 SEA: Introduction and Benefits

1.1 Introduction

This is the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report for the Gort Draft Local Area Plan (LAP) 2025-2031. It has been prepared by CAAS Ltd. on behalf of Galway County Council. The purpose of this report is to provide a clear understanding of the likely environmental consequences of decisions regarding the adoption and implementation of the Plan.

Environmental assessment is a procedure that ensures that the environmental implications of decisions are taken into account before such decisions are made. *Environmental Impact Assessment*, or EIA, is generally used for describing the process of environmental assessment for individual projects, while *Strategic Environmental Assessment* or SEA is the term which has been given to the environmental assessment of plans and programmes, which help determine the nature and location of individual projects taking place. SEA is a systematic process of predicting and evaluating the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a proposed plan or programme, in order to ensure that these effects are adequately addressed at the earliest appropriate stages of decision-making in tandem with economic, social and other considerations.

The SEA has been undertaken in order to comply with the European SEA Directive¹, which introduced the requirement that SEA be carried out on plans and programmes that are prepared for a number of sectors, including land use planning. A Screening for SEA Determination is provided at Appendix I.

¹ Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of Ministers, of 27th June 2001, on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, transposed into Irish Law through the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (SI No. 435 of 2004), as amended by the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 200 of 2011), and the Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations 2004 (SI No. 436 of 2004), as amended by the Planning and Development (SEA) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 201 of 2011).

1.2 Implications for the Planning Authority

SEA identifies the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan. The findings of the SEA are expressed in this Environmental Report, which accompanies the Draft Plan on public display and identifies how environmental considerations were integrated into the Plan and how alternatives for the Plan were considered. This report may be updated in order to take account of recommendations contained in submissions and/or in order to take account of any changes which are made to the Draft Plan on foot of submissions.

The planning authority must take into account the findings of this report and other related SEA output during their consideration of the Draft Plan and before it is adopted.

When the Draft Plan is finalised, an SEA Statement must be prepared which will summarise, inter alia, how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan.

1.3 Why SEA? The Benefits

SEA is the planning authority's and the public's guide to what are generally the best areas for development in the Plan area.

SEA enables the planning authority to direct development towards robust, well-served and connected areas in the Plan area – thereby facilitating the general avoidance of incompatible development in the most sensitive, least well-served and least well-connected areas, in the Plan area and beyond.

SEA provides greater certainty to the public and to developers. Plans are more likely to be adopted without delays or challenges and planning applications are more likely to be granted permission. Environmental mitigation is more likely to cost less.

The Plan directs incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the Plan area and focuses on directing compact, sustainable development within the proposed envelope of the Plan area. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation.

Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the Plan area to become a more desirable place to live, work and visit.

Compatible sustainable development in sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.

Section 2 The Draft Plan

2.1 Introduction and Content

The Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031 has been prepared pursuant to Section 20 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

The purpose of the Plan is to put in place a land use framework that will guide the future sustainable development of the Gort area. The Plan, in conjunction with the County Development Plan, will inform and manage the future development of the area.

2.2 Draft Plan Format

The Draft Plan comprises a written statement and a series of maps that provide a graphic representation of the content of the written text. Where there is any discrepancy between the text and maps, the text shall take precedence. A Local Transport Plan forms part of the Draft Plan. The Draft Plan is accompanied by a number of additional supporting documents, including this SEA Environmental Report, which have informed the crafting of the Plan.

2.3 Vision and Strategic Aims

The Draft Plan sets out a Vision as follows: "Gort is a Self-Sustaining, vibrant, and socially inclusive town with a focus on protecting and enhancing its historical core, natural environment, supporting an educated workforce, and providing a range of supporting services/facilities/amenities. This plan will be delivered through a managed and phase development strategy of appropriately zoned and serviced lands to achieve balanced and sustainable growth for Gort and the immediate environment that it serves."

The following strategic aims will assist in delivering the vision for Gort:

- Promote Gort as a Self-Sustaining Town as set out in the GCDP 2022 – 2028 and continue to support a sustainable level of population growth as established in the Core Strategy up to 2028 and beyond.

- Support the delivery of residential units on appropriately zoned land targeted in the Housing Strategy set out in Chapter 2 of the GCDP 2022 – 2028, encouraging sequential and compact growth in the town.
- Promote the reuse of existing buildings for residential use, where appropriate, having regard to the receiving environment, access to services, capacity of public infrastructure, and the delivery of a high quality of residential amenity.
- The strategic location of Gort shall be harnessed to enhance the economic and employment potential of the town, by creating sustainable employment opportunities, supported by investment on appropriately zoned lands.
- Maintain a strong and vibrant town centre that sustains the ability to attract new businesses, which meets the retail and service needs of the town and surrounding areas.
- Support the principle of the Gort Inse Guaire Town Centre First Plan (September 2023) which seeks to deliver holistic sustainable regeneration for the current and future needs of the local community through engagement with local business owners, community representatives, and stakeholders.
- Encourage and foster appropriate tourism opportunities that capitalise on Gort's tourist potential and better promote itself as a traditional Irish market town, with strong links to its natural, cultural and architectural heritage.
- Provide suitable recreation facilities, amenities and support services that shall promote an inclusive and cohesive local environment and serve the needs of the whole community.
- Support the redevelopment of underutilised buildings within the town centre to accommodate multi-functional community and cultural spaces, to facilitate the growth of remote-working, cultural, creative and community sectors in the town centre.
- Protect and enhance the heritage and character of Gort, including the natural assets, environment, built heritage, public realm, local character, and amenity for the benefit of current and future generations.
- Actively encourage sustainable mobility, including walking and cycling, in accordance with the aspirations of the LTP and support the continued provision of investment in public transport and active travel infrastructure.

The Plan addresses topics including:

- Land Use Zoning
- Residential Development
- Residential Infill
- Economic and Enterprise Development
- Community Facilities
- Built and Natural Heritage
- Tourism
- Agricultural
- Transportation and Movement – Local Transport Plan
- Water Supply and Wastewater Treatment
- Flood Risk Management
- Opportunity Sites

2.4 Strategic work undertaken by the Council to ensure evidence-based planning

Far in advance of the placing of the Draft Plan on public display, Galway County Council undertook various works in order to inform the preparation of the Plan. The findings of this strategic work have been integrated into the Plan and will contribute towards both environmental protection and management and sustainable development.

The undertaking of this SEA process was part of this strategic work and contributed towards the integration of environmental considerations into individual Plan provisions as detailed in Section 9 of this report.

2.5 Relationship with other relevant Plans and Programmes

It is important to note that when reading the Plan, the policy objectives of the County Development Plan are relevant and, in this regard, both documents should be read in tandem with each other. As provided for by Policy Objective GSST 1 "Consistency with Core Strategy", "Galway County Council will ensure that developments permitted within the settlement of Gort are consistent with the zoned land allocations in the Core Strategy and associated provisions of the Galway County Development Plan 2022 - 2028."

The Draft Plan sits within a hierarchy of statutory documents setting out public policy for, among other things, land use planning, infrastructure, sustainable development, tourism, environmental protection and environmental management. The Plan must comply with relevant higher-level strategic actions and will, in turn, guide lower-level strategic actions. These documents include plans and programmes such as those detailed in Appendix II² (see also, Section 4

"Environmental Baseline", Section 5 "Strategic Environmental Objectives", Section 6 "Description of Alternatives" and Section 9 "Mitigation Measures"). These documents have been subject to their own environmental assessment processes, as relevant.

The National Planning Framework³ sets out Ireland's planning policy direction for the years 2018-2040. The National Planning Framework is to be implemented through Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and lower tier Development Plans and Local Area Plans. The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region sets out objectives for land use planning, tourism, infrastructure, sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management that have been subject to environmental assessment and must, as relevant and appropriate, be implemented through the Galway County Development Plan, that sets out the overarching development strategy for the County, and the Local Area Plan.

In order to be realised, projects included in the Local Area Plan (in a similar way to other projects from any other sector) will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework.

² Appendix II is not intended to be a full and comprehensive review of EU Directives, the transposing regulations or the regulatory framework for environmental protection and

management. The information is not exhaustive and it is recommended to consult the Directive, Regulation, Plan or Programme to become familiar with the full details of each.

³ At the time of writing this report, a process to provide a First Revision to the National Planning Framework is underway.

Section 3 SEA Methodology

3.1 Introduction to the Iterative Approach

Figure 3.1 provides an overview of the integrated Plan preparation, SEA and Appropriate Assessment (AA) processes. The preparation of the Plan, SEA and AA are taking place concurrently and the findings of the SEA and AA have informed the Draft Plan. The process is currently at a stage where the findings of this report will be placed on public display as part of the required statutory public consultations. An AA Natura Impact Report will also accompany the Draft Plan on public display. Submissions made on the Draft Plan and associated documents, including SEA and

AA documents, will be responded to and updates made to the documents where relevant.

When the Plan is finalised, the SEA and AA documents will be finalised. Final documents will include an SEA Statement, which will include information on how environmental considerations were integrated into the Plan, and an AA Conclusion Statement. The Plan will be implemented and environmental monitoring – as well as planning and project development and associated environmental assessments and administrative consent of projects – will be undertaken.

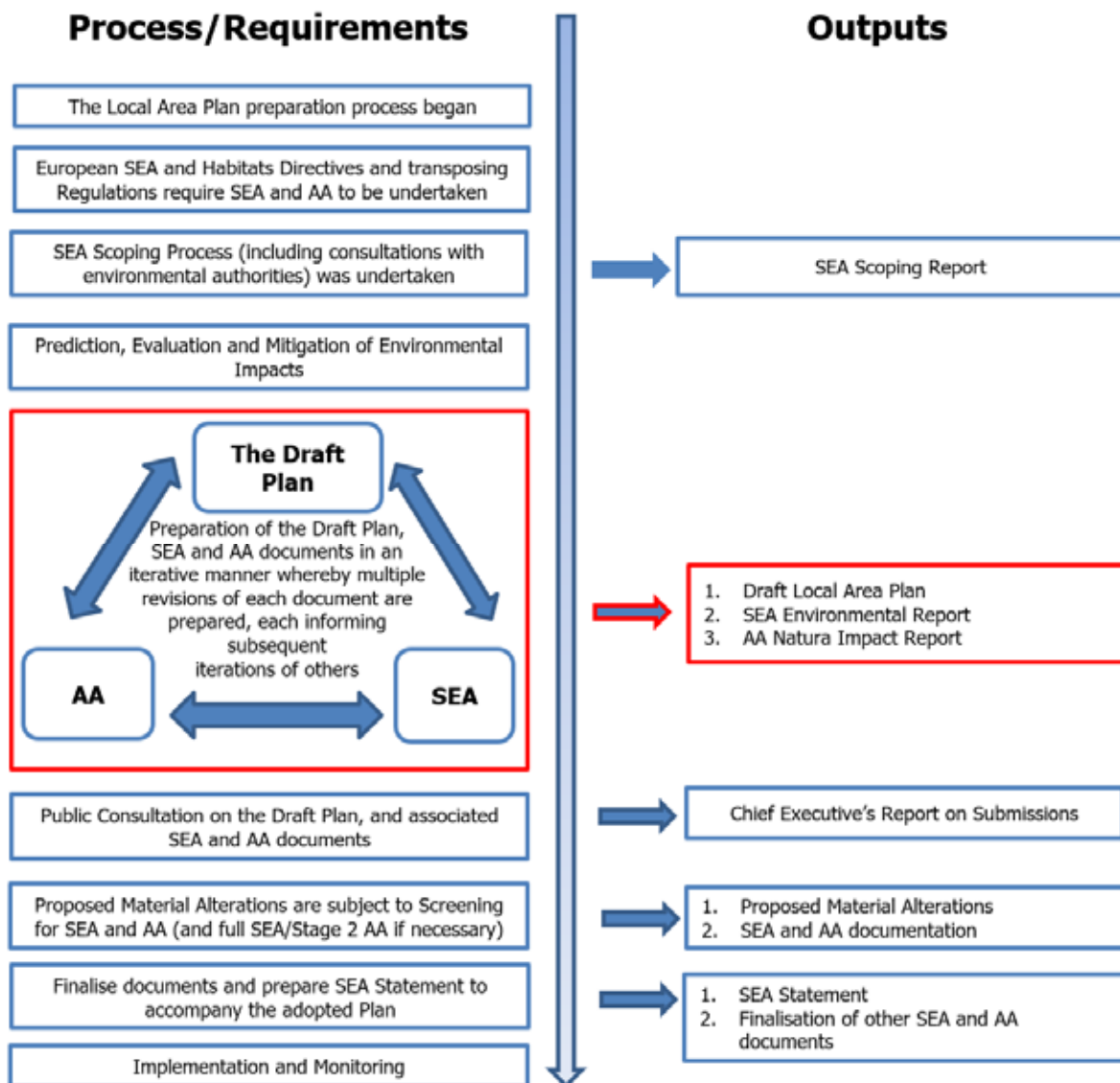


Figure 3.1 Overview of the SEA/AA/SFRA Plan-preparation Processes

3.2 Appropriate Assessment and Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment

3.2.1 Appropriate Assessment

Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening and Stage 2 AA are being undertaken alongside the Plan. The requirement for AA is provided under the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 1992/43/EEC).

The emerging conclusion of the AA is that the Plan will not affect the integrity of the European Sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects.⁴

The preparation of the Plan, SEA and AA has taken place concurrently and the findings of the AA have informed the SEA.

3.2.2 Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment

Many elements of Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment as detailed in the EPA's (2013) Practitioner's Manual have been aligned with in the undertaking of the SEA for the Plan. These include:

Scoping

- Biodiversity-relevant issues were identified for consideration at scoping stage and these are now detailed in Section 4.
- Reference to a zone of influence is provided at Section 4.

Baseline

- Biodiversity data sources relevant for this local level assessment have been identified and datasets collated/gathered.
- The biodiversity baseline addresses designated sites and other habitats and species of ecological value.
- AA information has been incorporated into the SEA baseline.

Alternatives

- Impacts upon biodiversity are considered under each of the alternatives and potential conflicts can be mitigated.

Impact assessment

- Effects on biodiversity are identified and assessed and the AA considers the interrelationship between biodiversity and potential effects on European Sites.

Mitigation and monitoring

- Taking into account all measures contained within the Plan, all the proposed mitigation measures deriving from the various processes were generally consistent and compatible.
- Indicators and associated targets have been included in SEA for monitoring European Sites.

Reporting

- This SEA ER addresses all biodiversity-related considerations relevant for this level of assessment.
- This SEA ER contains all biodiversity-relevant information, data, figures and maps relevant for this level of assessment.
- This SEA ER has been informed by the AA findings.

Communication and consultation

- Submissions received are taken on board.
- The preparation of the Plan, SEA and AA have taken place concurrently and the findings of the AA have informed the SEA.

3.3 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has been undertaken as part of the preparation of the Local Area Plan. Requirements in relation to SFRA are provided under 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of Environment and Office of Public Works, 2009) and associated Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government Circular PL2/2014. The SFRA has informed both the land use zoning and the written provisions of the Local Area Plan.

3.4 Scoping

The scope of environmental issues to be dealt with by the SEA together with the level of detail to which they are addressed was broadly decided upon taking into account the collection of environmental baseline data and input from environmental authorities. Scoping allowed the SEA to become focused upon key issues relevant to the environmental

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

components that are specified under the SEA Directive⁵.

All relevant environmental authorities identified under the SEA Regulations as amended, were sent SEA scoping notices by the Council indicating that submissions or observations in relation to the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the environmental report could be made to the Council⁶.

As the Plan is not likely to have significant effects on the environment in another Member State, transboundary consultations as provided for by Article 7 of the SEA Directive were not undertaken.

3.5 Alternatives

The SEA Directive requires that reasonable alternatives (taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme) are identified, described and evaluated for their likely significant effects on the environment. In accordance with this requirement, alternatives for the Plan are identified and assessed in Sections 6 and 7.

3.6 Environmental Report

This SEA Environmental Report predicts and evaluates the likely environmental effects of implementing the Plan and relevant alternatives. The Environmental Report provides the Council, stakeholders and the public with a clear understanding of the likely environmental consequences of the Plan.

Mitigation measures to prevent or reduce significant adverse effects posed by the Plan are identified in Section 9 - these have been integrated into the Plan.

This Environmental Report may be updated in order to take account of recommendations contained in submissions and in order to take account of changes that are made to the original, Draft Plan that is being placed on public display. Any proposed changes to the Draft Plan will be examined for the need to undertake SEA and AA.

The Environmental Report is required to contain the information specified in Schedule 2B of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (SI No. 436 of 2004), as amended (see Table 3.1).

No significant difficulties have been encountered during the undertaking of the assessment to date.

3.7 SEA Statement

On finalisation of the Plan, an SEA Statement will be prepared that will include information on:

- How environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan, highlighting the main changes to the Plan that resulted from the SEA process;
- How the SEA Environmental Report and consultations have been taken into account, summarising the key issues raised in consultations and in the Environmental Report indicating what action was taken in response;
- The reasons for choosing the Plan in the light of the other alternatives, identifying the other alternatives considered, commenting on their potential effects and explaining why the Plan as adopted was selected; and
- The measures decided upon to monitor the significant environmental effects of implementing of the Plan.

⁵ These components comprise biodiversity, fauna, flora, population, human health, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors.

⁶ The following authorities were notified: Environmental Protection Agency; Department of Environment, Climate and Communications; Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine; Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; Galway City Council; Mayo County Council; Roscommon County Council; Offaly County Council; Tipperary County Council; and Clare County Council.

Table 3.1 Checklist of Information included in this Environmental Report

| Information Required to be included in the Environmental Report | Corresponding Section of this Report |
|--|---|
| (A) Outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan or programme, and of its relationship with other relevant plans and programmes | Sections 2, 5 and 8 |
| (B) Description of relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the evolution of that environment without implementation of the plan or programme | Section 4 |
| (C) Description of the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected | Sections 4, 7 and 8 |
| (D) Identification of any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme, particularly those relating to European protected sites | Section 4 |
| (E) List of environmental protection objectives, established at international, EU or National level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and describe how those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account when preparing the Plan | Sections 5, 7, 8, 9 and Appendix II |
| (F) Describe the likely significant effects on the environment | Sections 7 and 8 |
| (G) Describe any measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse environmental effects of implementing the plan or programme | Section 9 |
| (H) Give an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives considered, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken (including any difficulties) | Sections 3, 6, 7 and 8 |
| (I) A description of proposed monitoring measures | Section 10 |
| (J) A non-technical summary of the above information | Appendix III Non-Technical Summary |
| (K) Interrelationships between each environmental topic | Addressed as it arises within each Section |

Section 4 Environmental Baseline

4.1 Introduction

Reflecting the specifications in the SEA Directive, the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment for the following environmental components are described in this section: biodiversity and flora and fauna; population and human health; soil; water; air and climatic factors; material assets; cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage; landscape; and the interrelationship between the above factors.

This description includes information that is relevant to lower tier planning, environmental assessments and decision-making⁷.

4.2 National Reporting on the Environment

The EPA's *"Ireland's State of the Environment Report 2024"* report provides an integrated assessment of the overall quality of Ireland's environment, the pressures being placed on it and the societal responses to current and emerging environmental issues. This report has informed various parts of the environmental baseline provided below. The five key environmental priorities identified by the report are:

- "Delivering a national policy position on the environment - we urgently need to have a national policy position on the environment to address the complex interactions, synergies and trade-offs across environmental policy areas and to deal with its interactions with other policy domains.
- Driving policy implementation - we must rigorously implement existing environmental plans and programmes to achieve the benefits that they were developed to deliver.
- Transforming our systems - transformation of our energy, transport, food and industrial sectors is critical to achieving a sustainable future.
- Scaling up investment in infrastructure - investment in water, energy, transport and waste management infrastructure is essential to protect the environment now and into the future.

⁷ Article 5 of the SEA Directive, in accordance with the established European principle of subsidiarity, requires that the Environmental Report includes the information that may reasonably be required taking into account, inter alia, the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in that process in order to avoid duplication of the assessment.

- Protecting the environment to protect our health - protecting the environment is key to protecting our health and we must act to reduce the modifiable risks to our health from environmental exposures."

4.3 Sustainable Development Goals

Implementation of the Plan will contribute towards efforts to achieve a number of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which were adopted by world leaders in 2015 at a United Nations Summit and came into force in 2016. These Goals include:

- Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
- Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
- Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
- Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
- Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
- Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
- Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
- Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
- Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

4.4 Likely Evolution of the Environment in the Absence of a new Plan

In the absence of a new Local Area Plan, the framework for development across the Plan area would be provided by the County Development Plan and other related documents. There would be no Local Area Plan to provide additional detail beyond that provided already through the existing planning framework as how to achieve sustainable development and environmental protection and management in the Plan area.

As a result, there would be a decreased likelihood in the extent, magnitude and frequency of the positive environmental effects identified by this assessment occurring, including:

- Contribution towards protection of ecology (Contribution towards protection of ecology (including designated sites, ecological connectivity, habitats) by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to central/core locations within the Plan area) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond.
- Contribution towards the maintenance of existing green infrastructure and associated ecosystem services, listed species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats.
- Contribution towards protection and/or maintenance of biodiversity and flora and fauna by contributing towards the protection of natural capital including the environmental vectors of air, water and soil. Biodiversity and flora and fauna includes biodiversity in designated sites (including European Sites and Wildlife Sites) and Annexed habitats and species (including birds and bats), listed/protected species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats (including terrestrial and aquatic habitats), and disturbance to biodiversity and flora and fauna – including terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity and flora and fauna.
- Sustains existing sustainable rural management practices – and the communities who support them – to ensure the continuation of long-established managed landscapes and the flora and fauna that they contain.
- Promotion of economic growth to encourage retention of working age population and funding of sustainable development and environmental protection and management.
- Contribution towards appropriate provision of infrastructure and services to existing population and planned growth by facilitating compact development of lands (including those within and adjacent to central/core locations within the Plan area) that are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond.
- Contribution towards the protection of human health by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to central/core locations within the Plan area) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond.
- Contributes towards protection of human health as a result of contributing towards the protection of natural capital including environmental vectors, such as air and water.
- Contribution towards the protection of soils and designated sites of geological heritage by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to central/core locations within the Plan area) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond.
- Contribution towards the protection of the environment from contamination.
- Contribution towards the protection of water by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to central/core locations within the Plan area) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond.
- Contributions towards the protection of water resources including the status of surface and groundwaters and water-based designations.
- Contribution towards flood risk management and appropriate drainage.
- Contribution towards compliance with national and regional water services and waste management policies.
- Contribution towards increase in renewable energy use by facilitating renewable energy and electricity transmission infrastructure developments.
- Contribution towards limits in increases in energy demand from the transport sector by facilitating sustainable compact growth.
- Contribution towards reductions in average energy consumption per capita including promoting sustainable compact growth, sustainable mobility, sustainable design and energy efficiency.
- Contribution towards climate mitigation and adaptation by facilitating compact development of lands (including those within and adjacent to central/core locations within the Plan area) that are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond.
- In combination with other plans, programmes etc., contribution towards the objectives of the wide policy framework relating to climate mitigation and adaptation, and associated contribution towards maintaining and improving air quality and managing noise levels, including through measures relating to:
 - Sustainable compact growth;
 - Sustainable mobility, including walking, cycling and public transport;
 - Drainage, flood risk management and resilience;
 - Sectors including agriculture, residential heating and infrastructure;
 - Sustainable design, energy efficiency and green infrastructure.
- Contributes towards protection of cultural heritage elsewhere by facilitating development within the Plan area.
- Contributes towards protection of cultural heritage within the Plan area by facilitating brownfield development and regeneration.

- Contributes towards protection of wider landscape and landscape designations by facilitating development within the Plan area.

Furthermore, and as a result, there would be an increased likelihood in the extent, magnitude and frequency of the adverse environmental effects identified by this assessment occurring, including:

- Arising from both construction and operation of development and associated infrastructure:
 - Loss of/damage to biodiversity in designated sites (including European Sites and Wildlife Sites) and Annexed habitats and species, listed species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats; and disturbance to biodiversity and flora and fauna;
 - Habitat loss, fragmentation and deterioration, including patch size and edge effects; and
 - Disturbance (e.g. due to noise and lighting along transport corridors) and displacement of protected species such as birds and bats.
- Potential interactions if effects arising from environmental vectors.
- Potential adverse effects on the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource, including as a result of development on contaminated lands.
- Potential for riverbank erosion.
- Potential adverse effects upon the status of water bodies and entries to the WFD Register of Protected Areas (ecological and human value), arising from changes in quality, flow and/or morphology.
- Increase in flood risk and associated effects associated with flood events.
- Failure to provide adequate and appropriate waste water treatment (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts).
- Failure to adequately treat surface water run-off that is discharged to water bodies (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts).
- Failure to comply with drinking water regulations and serve new development with adequate drinking water (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts).
- Increases in waste levels.
- Potential impacts upon public assets and infrastructure.
- Interactions between agricultural waste and soil, water, biodiversity and human health – including as a result of emissions of ammonia from agricultural activities (e.g. manure handling, storage and spreading) and the production of secondary inorganic particulate matter.
- Potential conflict between development under the Plan and aiming to reduce carbon emissions in line with local, national and European environmental objectives.
- Potential conflicts between transport emissions, including those from cars, and air quality.
- Potential conflicts between increased frequency of noise emissions and protection of sensitive receptors.

- Potential conflicts with climate adaptation measures including those relating to flood risk management.
- Potential effects on protected and unknown archaeology and protected architecture arising from construction and operation activities.
- Occurrence of adverse visual impacts and conflicts with the appropriate protection of designations relating to the landscape.

4.5 Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services

Natural capital comprises renewable and non-renewable resources (e.g. plants, animals, air, water, soils, minerals) that combine to yield a flow of ecosystem services that provide benefits to people. These benefits can include clean air and water, a stable climate, protection from floods, food, resources for fuel, building materials, clothes and medicines, recreation. Managing natural capital so that it can continue to deliver the ecosystem services that provide these benefits is important in order to ensure sustainable development. Unmanaged natural capital risks the continued degradation and depletion of these assets, and in turn, of their capacity to provide the economy and society with the ecosystem benefits that they depend on. These services also regulate climate, regulate water flows (e.g. through wetlands and forests), sequester and store carbon in peatlands and improve soil quality for crops.

Ecosystems are multifunctional communities of living organisms interacting with each other and their environment. Ecosystems provide a series of services for human well-being (ecosystem services) either directly or indirectly contributing towards human wellbeing. There are four main types; provisioning, regulating, supporting and cultural services. Provisioning services are the products obtained from ecosystems such as food, fresh water, wood, fibre, genetic resources and medicines. Regulating services are defined as the benefits obtained from the regulation of ecosystem processes such as climate regulation, natural hazard regulation, water purification and waste management, pollination or pest control. Support services highlight the importance of ecosystems to provide habitat for migratory species and to maintain the viability of gene-pools. Cultural services include non-material benefits that people obtain from ecosystems such as

spiritual enrichment, intellectual development, recreation and aesthetic values⁸.

Various provisions relating to ecosystem services have been included in the Draft Plan.

The following natural capital and ecosystem services issues are relevant to this SEA and have been taken into account in the provisions of the Local Area Plan and associated higher-tier Galway County Development Plan:

- Air quality;
- Noise pollution;
- Light pollution;
- Water quality and river basin management including interactions with soil;
- Soil and vegetation carbon, which helps to regulate greenhouse gas emissions;
- Soil/geological storage of water, contributing towards flood control;
- Land supporting food production; and
- Natural resources supporting energy production and recreation.

4.6 Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna

4.6.1 Overview

Information on biodiversity and flora and fauna which is relevant to project planning and development and associated environmental assessment and administrative consent of projects includes available information on designated ecological sites and protected species, ecological connectivity (including stepping stones and corridors) and non-designated habitats.

Key ecological sensitivities surrounding the Plan area include:

- **Designated European sites in close proximity to the Plan boundary, comprising the Coole-Garryland Complex Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area located c. 0.3 km to the north-west of the Plan area.** The sensitive features of the Coole-Garryland Complex Special Area of Conservation include: natural eutrophic lakes; turloughs; rivers with muddy banks; *Juniperus communis* formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands; semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies; limestone pavements; *Taxus baccata* woods of the British Isles; lesser horseshoe bat; and whooper swan.
- **Non-statutorily proposed sites comprising:**
 - **The Coole-Garryland Complex proposed Natural Heritage Area** located c. 0.3 km to the Plan area,

- **Pollduagh Cave, Gort proposed Natural Heritage Area** located c. 0.7 km to the south of the Plan area;
- **East Burren Complex proposed Natural Heritage Area**, located c. 2 km to the south-west of the Plan area; and
- **Lough Cutra proposed Natural Heritage Area**, located c. 2.5 km to the south-east of the Plan area.
- Other designated sites surrounding the Plan area, including: **East Burren Complex Special Area of Conservation** located c. 2 km to the south-west of the Plan area; **Lough Cutra Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area** located c. 2.5 km to the south-east of the Plan area; **Coole Lough and Garryland Wood Ramsar Site** and **Coole Garryland Nature Reserve** located c. 0.5 km to the north-west of the plan area;
- **Locally important, non-designated habitats within and surrounding the Plan area**, various woodlands, mature trees, parks, gardens, hedgerows, old buildings/stone walls and lands used for agriculture within and surrounding the Plan area, providing habitats for flora and fauna and facilitating linkages and corridors to the surrounding countryside for the wildlife; and
- **Aquatic and riverine ecology** associated with rivers and streams and their tributaries and riparian buffer zones, including the **Cannahowna River**; **Garryland Turlough** and **Caherglassaun Turlough**⁹.

The following information is relevant to ecological networks and connectivity and non-designated habitats:

- CORINE land cover mapping (including areas likely to contain a habitat listed in Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive)¹⁰;
- Trees, groups of trees and woodlands;
- Watercourses and wetlands;
- Other relevant County Development Plans designations;
- The EPA's Framework National Ecological Network for Ireland¹¹; and

⁹ Turloughs are unique to limestone regions in the west of Ireland. These seasonal lakes are home to a characteristic suite of animals and plants that are adapted to the fluctuating water table and include some rarities such as fen violet, alder buckthorn and dropwort. Turloughs are abundant in the north, east and south of County Galway and there are a number of exceptional turlough sites in the region, including: Coolcam, Croaghilla, Ballinastack, Coole-Garryland and Glenamaddy Turloughs. Rahasane Turlough near Craughwell is the largest in Ireland and is important for over-wintering birds.

¹⁰ The CORINE land cover mapping classifies land cover under various headings. This dataset allows for the identification of lands that are likely to be most valuable to biodiversity including those which are likely to contain a habitat listed in Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive e.g., natural grasslands, peat bogs, salt marshes. CORINE Land Cover is a map of the European environmental landscape based on interpretation of satellite images. Land cover is the observed physical cover, as seen from the ground or through remote sensing, including for example natural or planted vegetation, water and human constructions which cover the earth's surface.

¹¹ The EPA's Framework National Ecological Network provides a classification of the relative importance of areas by virtue of the biodiversity and flora that they contain and the connectivity they provide. Many of the areas identified are corridors.

⁸ <https://biodiversity.europa.eu/topics/ecosystem-services>

- Other sites of high biodiversity value or ecological importance as identified by, for example, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (badger sets) and relevant datasets from the National Biodiversity Data Centre¹².

Ecological networks are important in connecting areas of local biodiversity with each other and with nearby designated sites so as to prevent islands of habitat from being isolated entities. They are composed of linear features, such as treelines, hedgerows and rivers/streams, which provide corridors or stepping stones for wildlife species moving within their normal range. They are important for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species of flora and fauna particularly for mammals, especially for bats and small birds and facilitate linkages both between and within designated ecological sites, the non-designated surrounding countryside and urban areas.

Article 10 of the Habitats Directive recognises the importance of ecological networks as corridors and stepping stones for wildlife, including for migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species of flora and fauna. The Directive requires that ecological connectivity and areas of ecological value outside the Natura 2000 network of designated ecological sites are maintained.

Man-made habitats within the Plan area can also include important biodiversity features. Gardens provide habitats for a range of wildlife including various bird species, invertebrates such as bees and butterflies and mammals such as hedgehogs, mice, rats and foxes. These species move around between gardens using hedgerows and vegetated areas. These urban green spaces are of importance as they form part of a network of green spaces across the Plan area including gardens, parks, graveyards, amenity walks, and patches of woodland and scrub within which animals and plants continue to thrive.

Ecological islands or areas of habitat that are not connected to surrounding ecologically valuable habitats can also be important. The zone of influence of the Plan beyond the Plan area with respect to impacts upon ecology via surface waters – including designated ecology – can be estimated to be areas within 15 km

of the Plan area and all downstream areas of catchments which drain the area.

4.6.2 European Sites

European sites comprise Special Areas of Conservation¹³ (SACs) and Special Protection Areas¹⁴ (SPAs). Such sites within a 15 km buffer around the Plan area are mapped on Figure 4.1 There are a total of 31 European sites (25 SACs and five SPAs) designated within 15 km of the Plan boundary (as listed below and shown on Figure 4.1):

- Coole-Garryland Complex SAC (Site Code: 000252)¹⁵;
- East Burren Complex SAC (Site Code: 001926)¹⁶;
- Lough Cutra SAC (Site Code: 000229)¹⁷;
- Termon Lough SAC (Site Code: 001321)¹⁸;
- Kiltartan Cave (Coole) SAC (Site Code: 000286)¹⁹;
- Carrowbaun, Newhall and Ballylee Turloughs SAC (Site Code: 002293)²⁰;
- Lough Coy SAC (Site Code: 002117)²¹;

¹³ 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) due to their conservation value for habitats and species of importance in the European Union. 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 the SPAs designated under the 1979 Birds Directive, form Natura 2000. The European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 consolidate the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997 to 2005 and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) (Control of Recreational Activities) Regulations 2010. The Regulations have been prepared to address several judgments of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) against Ireland, notably cases C-418/04 and C-183/05, in respect of failure to transpose elements of the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive into Irish law.

¹⁴ SPAs have been selected for protection under the 1979 European Council Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC) - referred to as the Birds Directive - due to their conservation value for birds of importance in the EU.

¹⁵ Sensitive features comprise: rivers with muddy banks with *Chenopodium rubri p.p.* and *Bidenton p.p.* vegetation; turloughs; semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates; *Juniperus communis* formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands; limestone pavements; and *Taxus baccata* woods of the British Isles and natural eutrophic lakes with *Magnopotamion* or *Hydrocharition* - type vegetation.

¹⁶ Sensitive features comprise: *Juniperus communis* formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands; turloughs; marsh fritillary; limestone pavements; lesser horseshoe bat; calamarian grasslands of the *Violetalia calaminariae*; alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior*; lowland hay meadows; calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the *Caricion davallianae*; caves not open to the public; Alpine and Boreal heaths; alkaline fens; otter; hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of *Chara spp.*; semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates; important orchid sites; water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitriche-Batrachion* vegetation; and petrifying springs with tufa formation.

¹⁷ Its sensitive feature comprises lesser horseshoe bat.

¹⁸ Its sensitive feature comprises turloughs.

¹⁹ Sensitive features comprise caves not open to public and lesser horseshoe bat.

²⁰ Its sensitive feature comprises turloughs.

²¹ Its sensitive feature comprises turloughs.

¹² Including: available habitats mapping at a suitable scale; trees; groups of trees and woodlands; and hedgerows.

- Caherglassaun Turlough SAC (000238)²²;
- Ballinduff Turlough SAC (Site Code: 002295)²³;
- Gortacarnaun Wood SAC (Site Code: 002180)²⁴;
- Drummin Wood SAC (Site Code: 002181)²⁵;
- Cahermore Turlough SAC (Site Code: 002294)²⁶;
- Peterswell Turlough SAC (Site Code: 000318)²⁷;
- Cregg House Stables, Crusheen SAC (Site Code: 002317)²⁸;
- Ardahan Grassland SAC (Site Code: 002244)²⁹;
- Ballyogan Lough SAC (Site Code: 000019)³⁰;
- Moyree River Systems SAC (Site Code: 000057)³¹;
- Galway Bay Complex SAC (Site Code: 000268)³²;
- Lough Fingall Complex SAC (Site Code: 000606)³³;
- Sonnagh Bog SAC (Site Code: 001913)³⁴;
- Kiltiernan Turlough SAC (Site Code: 001285)³⁵;
- Castletaylor Complex SAC (Site Code: 000242)³⁶;
- Glendree Bog SAC (Site Code: 001912)³⁷;
- Dromore Woods and Loughs SAC (Site Code: 000032)³⁸;
- Rahasane Turlough SAC (Site Code: 000322)³⁹;
- Coole-Garryland SPA (Site Code: 004107)⁴⁰;

- Lough Cutra SPA (Site Code: 004056)⁴¹;
- Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA (Site Code: 004168)⁴²;
- Inner Galway Bay SPA (Site Code: 004031)⁴³; and
- Rahasane Turlough SPA (Site Code: 004089)⁴⁴.

There are no European sites designated within the Plan area, however, the Coole-Garryland Complex SAC and Coole-Garryland SPA, are located in close proximity to the Plan area, but outside of the Plan boundary (c. 0.3 km to the north-west of the Plan area), as shown on Figure 4.2.

There is no hydrologically connected European site within the wider region beyond 15 km buffer zone (i.e. downstream of the Plan boundary). For more detail on European sites please refer to the AA document that accompanies the Draft Plan and this SEA Environmental Report.

4.6.3 Natural Heritage Areas and Proposed Natural Heritage Areas

Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) are designated due to their national conservation value for ecological and/or geological/geomorphological heritage. They cover nationally important semi-natural and natural habitats, landforms or geomorphological features, wildlife plant and animal species or a diversity of these natural attributes. NHAs are designated under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000. Proposed NHAs (pNHAs) were published on a non-statutory basis in 1995, but have not since been statutorily proposed or designated.

There are no NHAs or pNHAs located within the Plan area, however the Coole-Garryland Complex pNHA and Pollduagh Cave-Gort pNHA are situated in close proximity to the Plan area, but beyond the Plan boundary, as shown on Figure 4.2. There are a total of four NHAs and 21 pNHAs designated within a 15 km buffer of the Plan area (as mapped on Figure 4.3 and listed on Table 4.1).

²² Sensitive features comprise: rivers with muddy banks with *Chenopodium rubri p.p.* and *Bidenton p.p.* vegetation; lesser horseshoe bat; and turloughs.

²³ Its sensitive feature comprises turloughs.

²⁴ Its sensitive feature comprises an old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles.

²⁵ Its sensitive feature comprises an old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles.

²⁶ Its sensitive feature comprises turloughs.

²⁷ Sensitive features comprise: turloughs; and rivers with muddy banks with *Chenopodium rubri p.p.* and *Bidenton p.p.* vegetation.

²⁸ Its sensitive feature comprises lesser horseshoe bat.

²⁹ Sensitive features comprise: limestone pavements; *Juniperus communis* formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands; Alpine and Boreal heaths; and semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates.

³⁰ Sensitive features comprise: calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the *Caricion davallianae*.

³¹ Sensitive features comprise: caves not open to the public; otter; water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitriche-Batrachion* vegetation; lesser horseshoe bat; limestone pavements; and alkaline fens.

³² Sensitive features comprise: turloughs; semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates; *Juniperus communis* formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands; calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the *Caricion davallianae*; harbour seal; coastal lagoons; *Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand; Atlantic salt meadows; reefs; mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide; Mediterranean salt meadows; limestone pavements; vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts; perennial vegetation of stony banks; alkaline fens; large shallow inlets and bays; and otter.

³³ Sensitive features comprise: Alpine and Boreal heaths; *Juniperus communis* formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands; turloughs; limestone pavements; calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the *Caricion davallianae*; lesser horseshoe bat; and semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates.

³⁴ Its sensitive feature comprises blanket bogs.

³⁵ Its sensitive feature comprises turloughs.

³⁶ Sensitive features comprise: *Juniperus communis* formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands; turloughs; limestone pavements; Alpine and Boreal heaths; and semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates.

³⁷ Its sensitive feature comprises blanket bogs.

³⁸ Sensitive features comprise: lesser horseshoe bat; limestone pavements; *Hydrophilous* tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels; natural eutrophic lakes with *Magnopotamion* or *Hydrocharition* - type vegetation; and otter.

³⁹ Its sensitive feature comprises turloughs.

⁴⁰ Its sensitive feature comprises whooper swan.

⁴¹ Its sensitive feature comprises cormorant.

⁴² Sensitive features comprise hen harrier and merlin.

⁴³ Sensitive features comprise: red-breasted merganser; redshank; black-throated diver; great northern diver; golden plover; black-headed gull; lapwing; light-bellied brent goose; bar-tailed godwit; cormorant; teal; sandwich tern; wigeon; ringed plover; common tern; grey heron; dunlin; wetland and waterbirds; common gull; turnstone; and curlew.

⁴⁴ Sensitive features comprise: wigeon; golden plover; black-tailed godwit; Greenland white-fronted goose; wetland and waterbirds; and whooper swan.

Table 4.1 NHAs and pNHAs within 15 km of the Plan area

| Designation | Site Code | Site Name |
|-------------|-----------|----------------------------|
| NHAs | 002442 | Maghera Mountain Bogs |
| | 001229 | Slieve Aughty Bog |
| | 002377 | Lough Atorick District Bog |
| | 002439 | Oysterman's Marsh |
| pNHA | 000252 | Coole-Garryland Complex |
| | 000320 | Pollduagh Cave, Gort |
| | 001926 | East Burren Complex |
| | 000299 | Lough Cutra |
| | 000286 | Kiltartan Cave (Coole) |
| | 000238 | Caherglassaun Turlough |
| | 001321 | Termon Lough |
| | 000318 | Peterswell Turlough |
| | 000019 | Ballyogan Lough |
| | 000057 | Moyree River System |
| | 000268 | Galway Bay Complex |
| | 000606 | Lough Fingall Complex |
| | 001913 | Sonnagh Bog |
| | 001285 | Kiltiernan Turlough |
| | 000242 | Castletaylor Complex |
| | 001912 | Glendree Bog |
| | 000022 | Cahermurphy Wood |
| | 000038 | Inchicronan Lough |
| | 001714 | Lough Graney Woods |
| | 000032 | Dromore Woods and Loughs |
| | 000322 | Rahasane Turlough |

4.6.4 Land Cover

Land cover is the observed physical cover, as seen from the ground or through remote sensing, including for example natural or planted vegetation, water and human constructions which cover the earth's surface. The CORINE 2018⁴⁵ mapping (shown on Figure 4.4) identifies the land cover of central parts of the Plan area as urban fabric with adjacent areas of pastures and land principally

⁴⁵ The CORINE (Co-ordinated Information on the Environment) land cover data series was devised as a means of compiling geo-spatial environmental information in a standardised and comparable manner. CORINE has become a key data source for informing environmental and planning policy on a national and European level. The main land cover type in Ireland is agricultural land including forestry, which accounts for two-thirds of the national landmass. Most of this is permanent grassland pastures. Peatlands and wetlands are the second most widespread land cover type, covering almost one-fifth of the country. While forested areas cover about one-tenth of the country. Despite rapid development in the past two decades, Ireland's landscape is predominantly rural and agricultural.

occupied for agriculture with significant areas of natural vegetation, inland marshes, water bodies and broad-leaved forests.

Categories from CORINE mapping that may indicate areas with the potential for Annex I habitats (Figure 4.5) situated in close proximity to and surrounding the Plan area comprise inland marshes and broad-leaved forests.

4.6.5 Other Ecological Designations

Other ecological designations in close proximity to or surrounding the Plan area, but beyond the Plan boundary (as mapped on Figure 4.2 and Figure 4.6) include:

- **The Coole Park Nature Reserve**, which is located c. 1 km to the north-west of the Plan area. Nature Reserves are areas of importance to wildlife, protected under Ministerial order. There are currently 78 Statutory Nature Reserves in Ireland. Most are owned by the State but some are owned by organisations or private landowners.
- **The Coole Lough and Garryland Woods Ramsar Site**, which is located c. 1 km to the north-west of the Plan area. Ramsar sites are wetlands designated to be of international importance under the Convention of Wetlands of International Importance (especially as Water Fowl Habitat), established at Ramsar in 1971 and ratified by Ireland in 1984. The main aim of the Convention is to secure the designation by each contracting state of wetlands in its territory for inclusion in a list of wetlands of international importance for waterfowl. This entails the commitment of each contracting state to a policy of protection and management of the designated wetlands, and of formulating and implementing planning so as to promote the conservation of designated wetlands and, as far as possible, the wise use of wetlands in its territory. Ireland presently has 45 sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance, with surface areas of 66,994 hectares.
- **The Burren National Park**, which is located c. 7 km to the south-east of the Plan area. There are six National Parks in Ireland, including the Burren National Park. It contains examples of all the major habitats within the Burren: Limestone Pavement, Calcareous grassland, hazel scrub, ash/hazel woodland, turloughs, lakes, petrifying springs, cliffs and fens.
- **The Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark** is located c. 7 km to the west and south-west of the Plan area. The Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark has an area of 530 km², it is bounded by Atlantic coastal cliffs to the west, the Gort lowlands to the East and by low hilly terrain to the south.

UNESCO Global Geoparks are single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development.

4.6.6 Register of Protected Areas

In response to the requirements of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) a number of water bodies or parts of water bodies that must have extra controls on their quality by virtue of how their waters are used by people and by wildlife have been listed on Registers of Protected Areas (RPAs). Entries to the RPAs within and adjacent to the Plan area, designated by virtue of their value to biodiversity include a number of water-dependent habitats within the area that have been listed on RPAs relating to biodiversity – these relate to designated SACs and SPAs (see Section 4.6.2) and associated surface and groundwaters.

RPAs designated by virtue of their value to humans are addressed under Section 4.9.7.

4.6.7 Existing Problems

Ireland's Article 17 report on the Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland (DCHG, 2019) identifies various Irish, EU-protected habitats and species to be of unfavourable status and many to be still declining, although it also identifies that a range of positive actions are underway. Categories for pressures and threats on Ireland's habitats and species identified by the report comprise:

- Agriculture;
- Forestry;
- Extraction of resources (minerals, peat, non-renewable energy resources);
- Energy production processes and related infrastructure development;
- Development and operation of transport systems;
- Development, construction and use of residential, commercial, industrial and recreational infrastructure and areas;
- Extraction and cultivation of biological living resources (other than agriculture and forestry);
- Military action, public safety measures, and other human intrusions;
- Alien and problematic species;
- Mixed source pollution;
- Human-induced changes in water regimes;
- Natural processes (excluding catastrophes and processes induced by human activity or climate change);
- Geological events, natural catastrophes;

- Climate change; and
- Unknown pressures, no pressures and pressures from outside the Member State.

Ireland's Article 12 Birds Directive Reports and the 6th National Report under the Convention of Biological Diversity identify similar issues.

The Plan includes measures to contribute towards the protection of biodiversity and flora and fauna and associated ecosystem services.

Previous changes in land uses arising from human development have resulted in a loss of biodiversity and flora and fauna; however, legislative objectives governing biodiversity and fauna were not identified as being conflicted with.

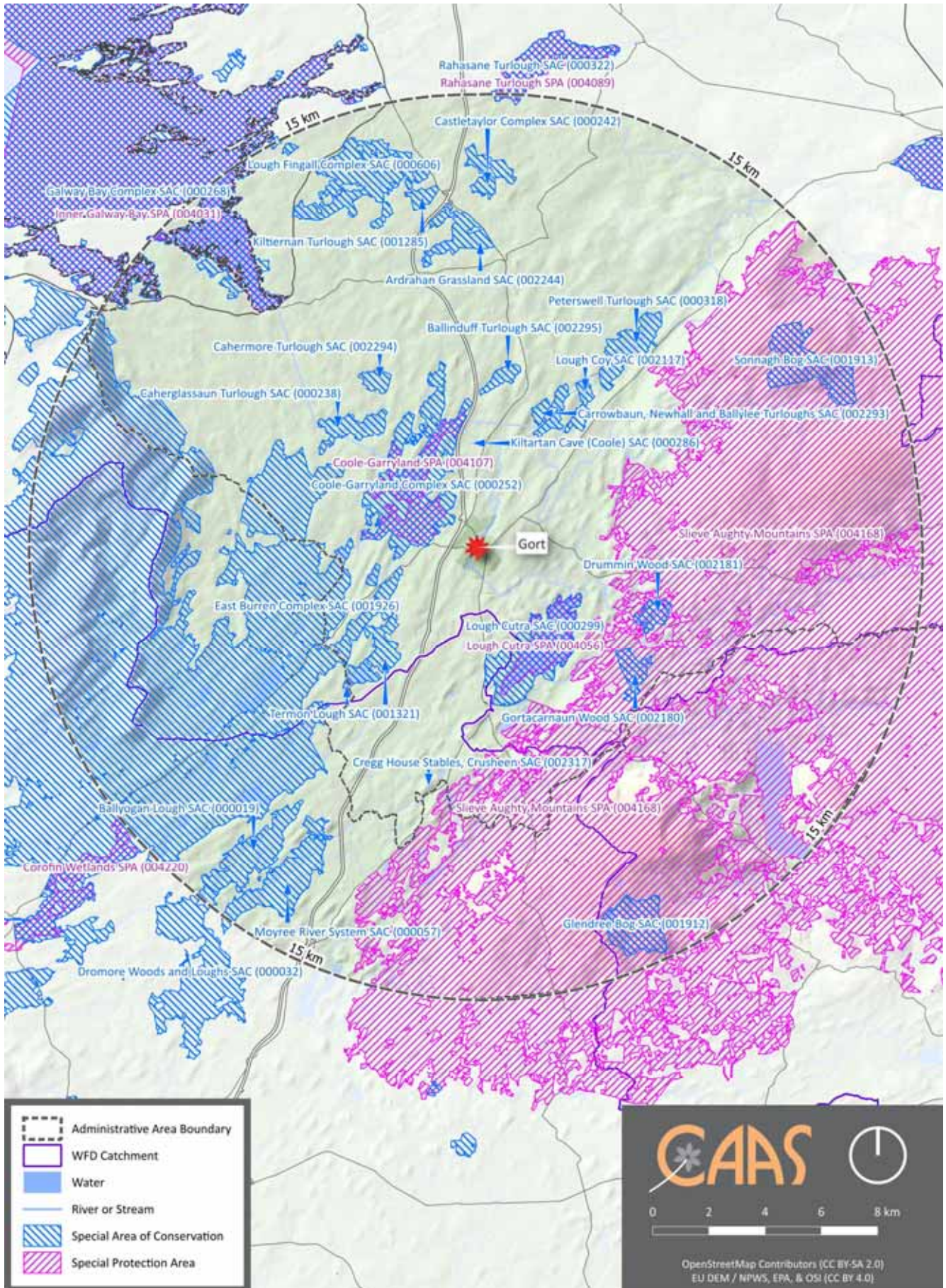


Figure 4.1 European sites within a 15 km buffer of the Gort Plan area



Figure 4.2 European sites, pNHAs, Nature Reserves and Ramsar Sites in close proximity and surrounding the Gort Plan area

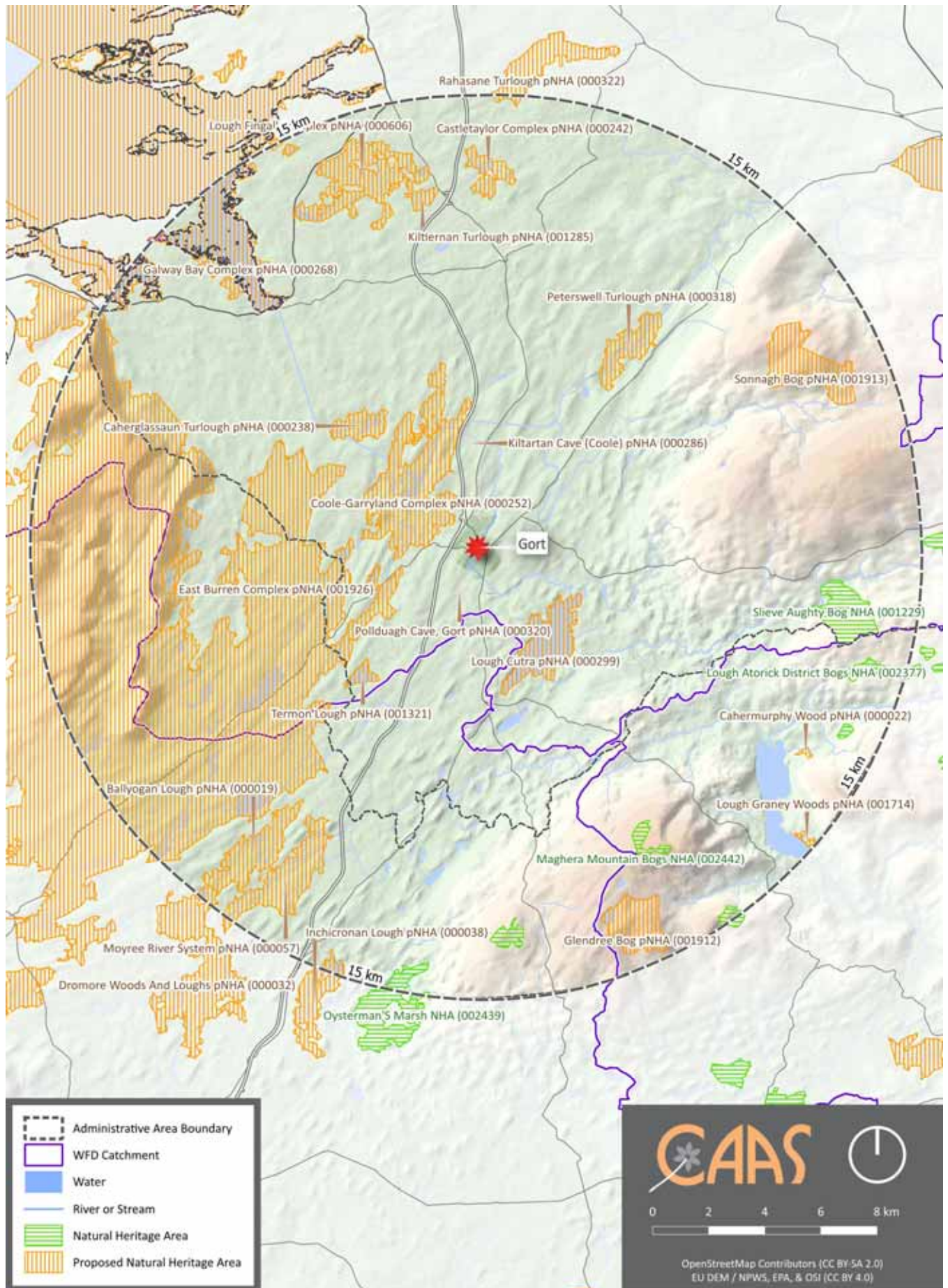


Figure 4.3 NHAs and pNHAs within a 15 km buffer of the Gort Plan area

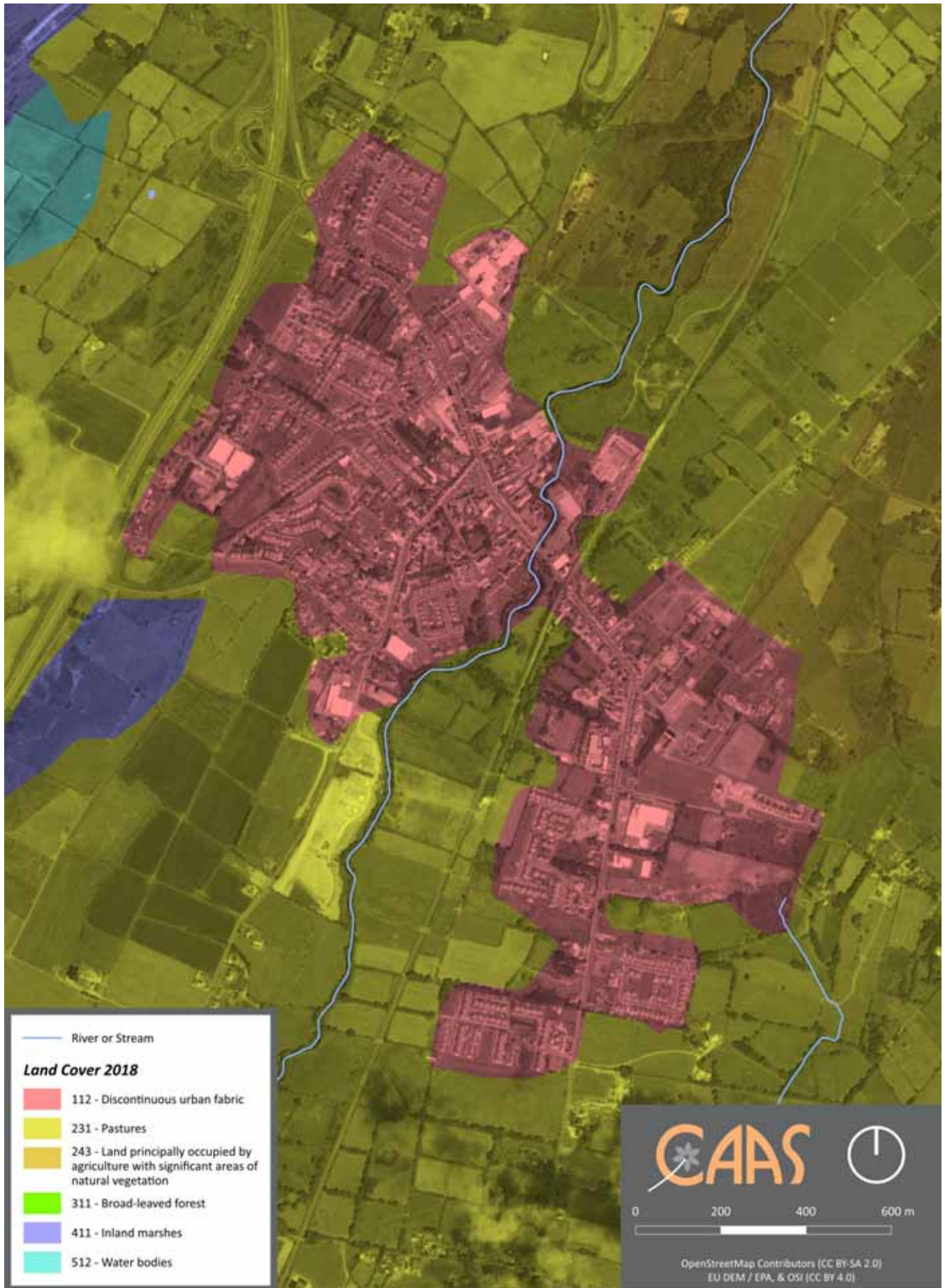


Figure 4.4 CORINE Land Cover Mapping 2018

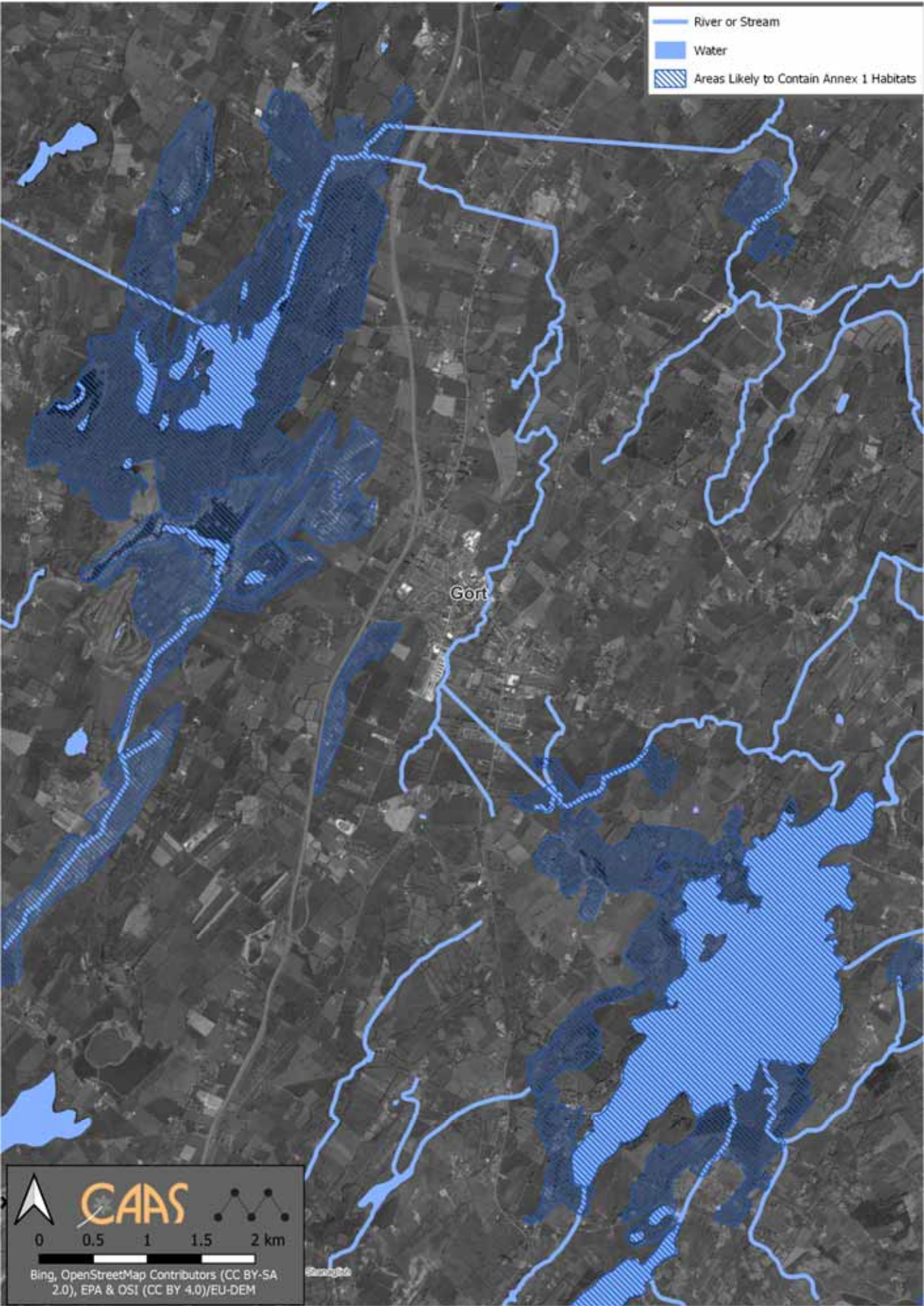


Figure 4.5 Areas likely to contain Annex 1 Habitats

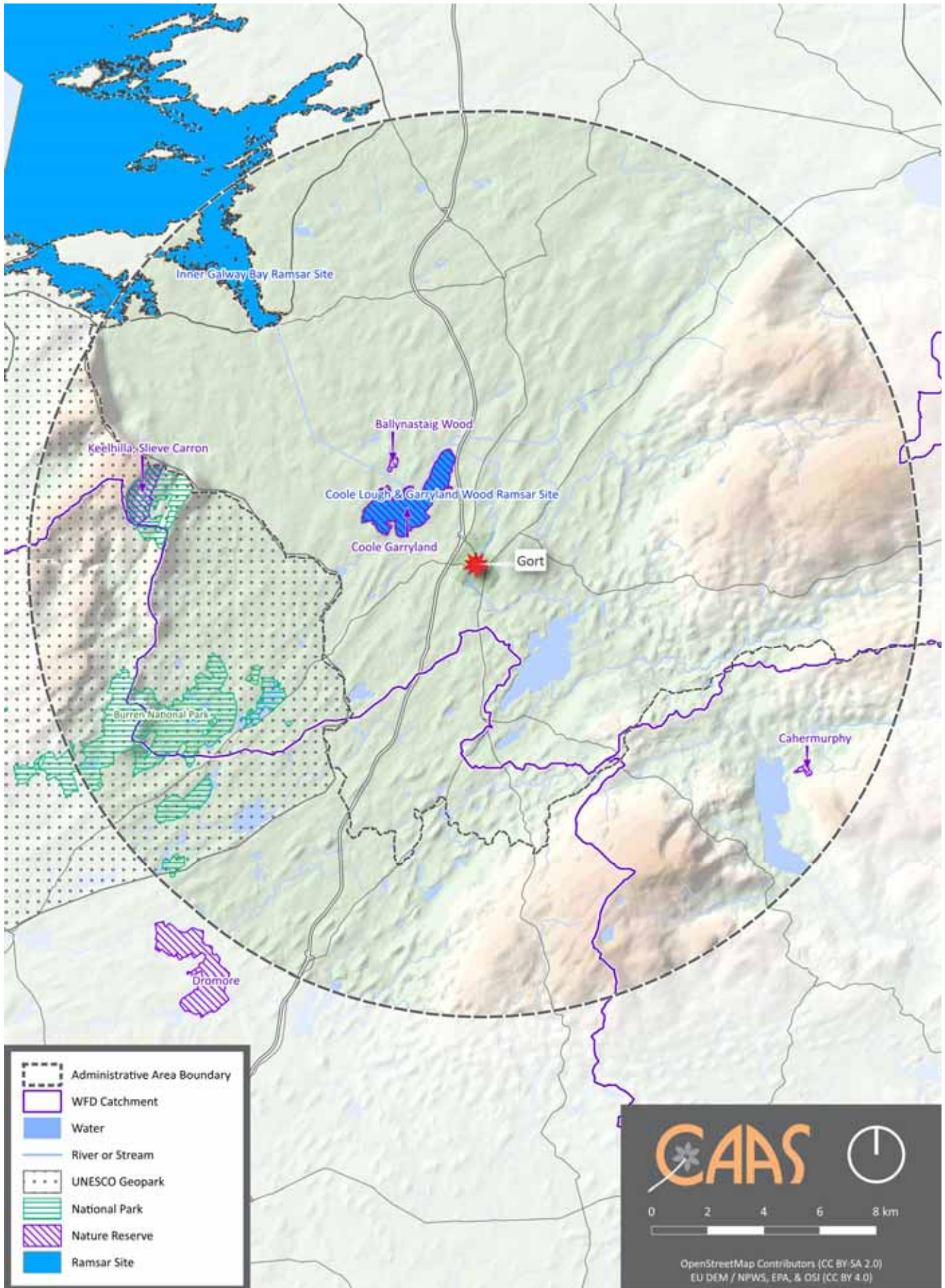


Figure 4.6 Other Ecological Designations

4.7 Population and Human Health

4.7.1 Population

The results of Census 2022 recorded a population of 2,870 persons within the new CSO boundary of Gort⁴⁶.

The Core Strategy in the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 provides for a population growth in Gort up to 800 persons over the Plan period and projects that an additional 460 residential units will be required to support this growth.

Gort has been designated as a Self-Sustaining Town in the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028. Self-Sustaining Towns are identified as having high-levels of population growth and a weak employment base and are reliant on other areas for employment and/or services requiring targeted 'catch up' investment to become more self-sustaining.⁴⁷

The population provided for in the Plan will interact with various environmental components. Potential interactions include:

- Recreational and development pressure on habitats and landscapes;
- Contribution towards increase in demand for waste water treatment at the municipal level;
- Contribution towards increase in demand for water supply and associated potential impact of water abstraction;
- Potential interactions in flood-sensitive areas; and
- Potential effects on water quality.

4.7.2 Human Health

With regard to human health, impacts relevant to the SEA are those which arise as a result of interactions with environmental vectors (i.e. environmental components such as air, water or soil through which contaminants or pollutants, which have the potential to cause harm, can be transported so that they come into contact with human beings). Hazards or nuisances to human health can arise as a

result of exposure to these vectors e.g. interactions with human health that could occur in urban locations that experience high-levels of traffic congestion and associated particulate matter and noise emissions to air.

Emission limits for discharges to air, soil and water are set with regards to internationally recognised exposure limit values. These are generally set to be many times under the safe exposure limit - in order to provide protection. In the event that a plan or programme began to have adverse health effects on surrounding populations it is likely that it would have been identified as being in breach of such emission standards at a very early stage - and long before the manifestation of any adverse health effects in the population.

These factors have been considered with regard to the description of: the baseline of each environmental component; and the identification and evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan.

4.7.3 Soil

In the absence of mitigation, contaminated materials have the potential to adversely impact upon human health, water quality and habitats and species.

As is the case with other historically developed areas across the country, there is potential for contamination at local sites within the Plan area, especially where land uses occurred in the past in the absence of the high standards of today's environmental protection legislation.

4.7.4 Existing Problems

The number of homes within the Plan area with radon levels above the reference level is within the normal range experienced in other locations across the country⁴⁸.

Parts of the Plan area are vulnerable to adverse effects from changes in the occurrence of severe rainfall events and

⁴⁶ It is noted that the current population figures and population projections in the new Gort Local Area Plan are based on the 2016 Census. The 2022 Census created new urban geography called Built Up Areas (BUAs) for urban areas. Due to definition of BUAs it is not possible to directly compare the 2016 Census (Draft Gort LAP 2025).

⁴⁷ Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028

⁴⁸ The greatest health risk from radiation in Ireland is caused by radon. The presence of radon gas, a naturally occurring radioactive gas that originates from the decay of uranium in rocks and soils, occurs across the country. It accounts for more than half of the total radiation dose received by the Irish population. As a known carcinogen, in the same category as tobacco smoke and asbestos it is a cause of lung cancer. Exposure to radon for long periods or at high concentrations can lead to lung cancer. Mapping available at <http://www.epa.ie/radiation/radonmap>

associated flooding from surface water. Flooding in certain circumstances could pose a risk to human health. There is historic and predictive evidence of flooding within the Plan area (see subsection 4.9.8).

Also refer to the other sections of this report referred to above with respect to interactions with other environmental components.

4.8 Soil

Soil is the top layer of the earth's crust. It is formed by mineral particles, organic matter, water, air and living organisms. Soil can be considered as a non-renewable natural resource because it develops over very long timescales. It is an extremely complex, variable and living medium and performs many vital functions including: food and other biomass production, storage, filtration and transformation of many substances including water, carbon, and nitrogen. Soil has a role as a habitat and gene pool, serves as a platform for human activities, landscape and heritage and acts as a provider of raw materials. Such functions of soil are worthy of protection because of their socio-economic as well as environmental importance. Soils in any area are the result of the interaction of various factors, such as parent material, climate, vegetation and human action.

To date, there is no legislation which is specific to the protection of soil resources. However, the EU Soil Strategy for 2030 sets out a framework and concrete measures to protect and restore soils, and ensure that they are used sustainably. It sets a vision and objectives to achieve healthy soils by 2050, with concrete actions by 2030. In 2023, the EU proposed a new Soil Monitoring Law to protect and restore soils and ensure that they are used sustainably.

4.8.1 Soil Types

Main soil types⁴⁹ (Figure 4.7) surrounding the built-up areas⁵⁰ of Gort are: brown earths

⁴⁹ All soil types belong to a Sub-Group and so in turn to one of the 11 soil Great Groups. Great Groups and Sub-Groups are a hierarchical arrangement of soils used for taxonomical classification (<http://gis.teagasc.ie/soils/soilguide.php>).

⁵⁰ The built-up areas are mainly made up of urban soils. Urban soils are soils, which have been disturbed, transported or manipulated by human activity in the urban environment and are often overlain by a non-agricultural, man-made surface layer that

(well-drained mineral soils, associated with high levels of natural fertility); and alluvial soils (associated with alluvial clay, silt or sand river deposits).

Other soils surrounding the Plan area include peat soils (also mapped on Figure 4.7). Peat soils are often indicative of areas that are the most sensitive to development due to ecological sensitivities and impeded drainage issues.

The GSI (Geological Survey Ireland) have a suite of data sources available that would be useful in planning and assessing individual projects with regard to the environmental topic(s) of soil and/or material assets. These include:

- Aggregate Potential Mapping;
- Bedrock mapping;
- Quaternary and Physiographic mapping; and
- National Aquifer and Recharge mapping.

4.8.2 County Geological Sites

Geological Survey Ireland coordinate the Irish Geological Heritage Programme, whereby an objective has been set to identify and select sites of geological interest within each county across the country. County Geological Sites (CGSs) do not receive statutory protection like Natural Heritage Areas but receive an effective protection from their inclusion in the planning system. The audit of CGSs in County Galway was completed in 2019, which identified 134 CGSs. There are no designated County Geological Sites occurring within the Plan area. The closest CGSs to the Plan area are: Coole-Garryland Complex CGS (Site Code: GY038), located c. 1 km to the north-west and west of the Plan area; and Beagh Sink-Pollduagh System CGS, located c. 1 km to the south of the Plan area (mapped Figure 4.8).

4.8.3 Landslides

The term "landslide" describes a wide variety of processes that result in the downward and outward movement of materials such as rock, debris, earth, mud and peat under the force of gravity. Issues such as existing ground conditions, slope stability and storage of excavated material have the potential to influence susceptibility to landslides/bog

has been produced by mixing, filling or by contamination of land surfaces in urban and suburban areas.

bursts. The potential impacts of landslides include loss of human life/injury, flooding, pollution of watercourses and impacts upon aquatic biodiversity.

The GSI have identified⁵¹ the Plan area as having mainly low levels of landslide susceptibility (mapped on Figure 4.9).

4.8.4 Potentially Contaminated Lands and Landfill Sites

In the absence of mitigation, contaminated materials have the potential to adversely impact upon human health, water quality and habitats and species. As is the case with other urban and semi-urban areas across the country, there is potential for contamination at sites within the Plan area, especially where land uses occurred in the past, in the absence of environmental protection legislation.

4.8.5 Existing Problems

Legislative objectives governing soil were not identified as being conflicted with.

⁵¹ <https://www.gsi.ie/en-ie/programmes-and-projects/geohazards/projects/Pages/Landslide-Susceptibility-Mapping.aspx>

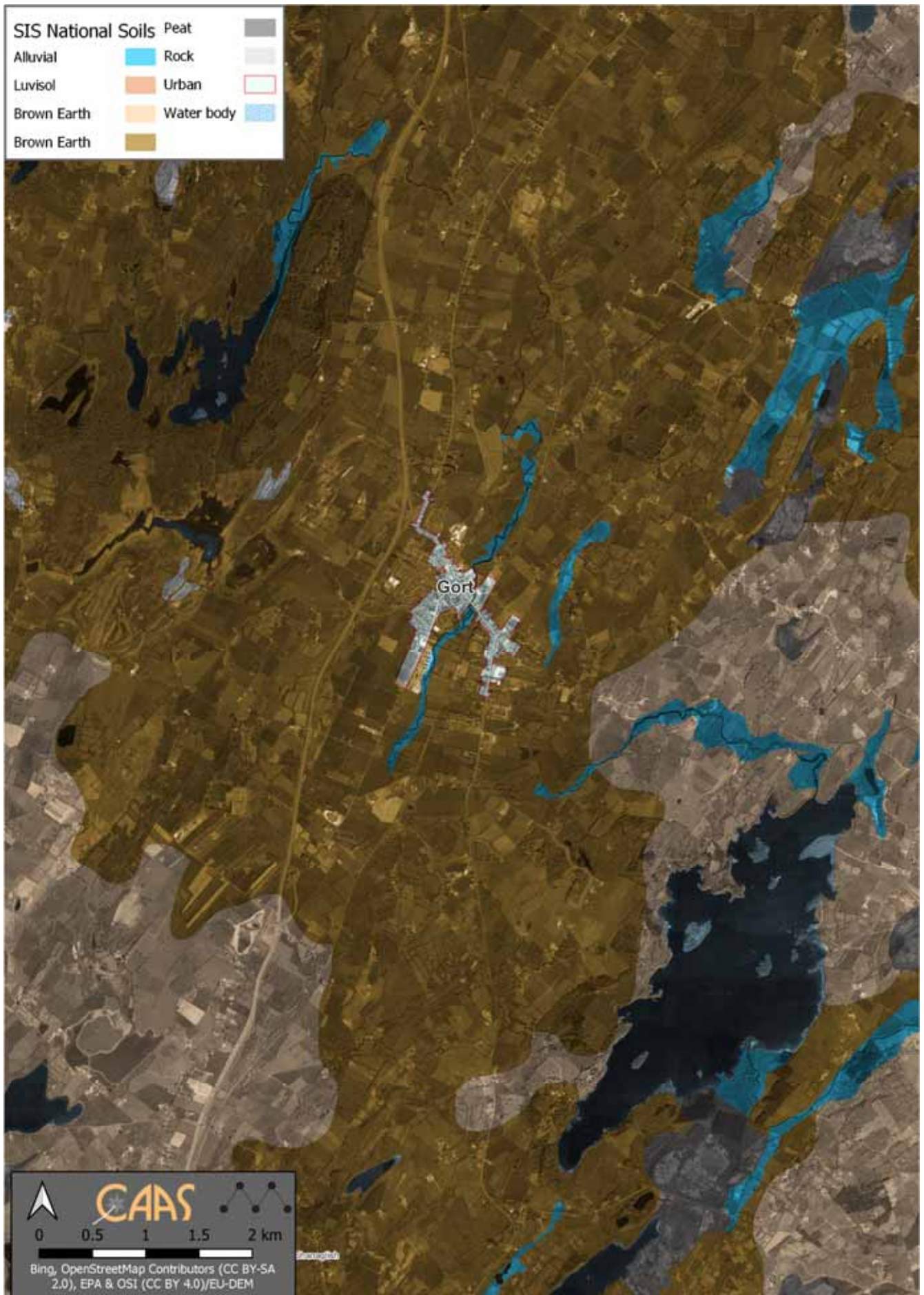


Figure 4.7 Soil Types

CAAS for Galway County Council

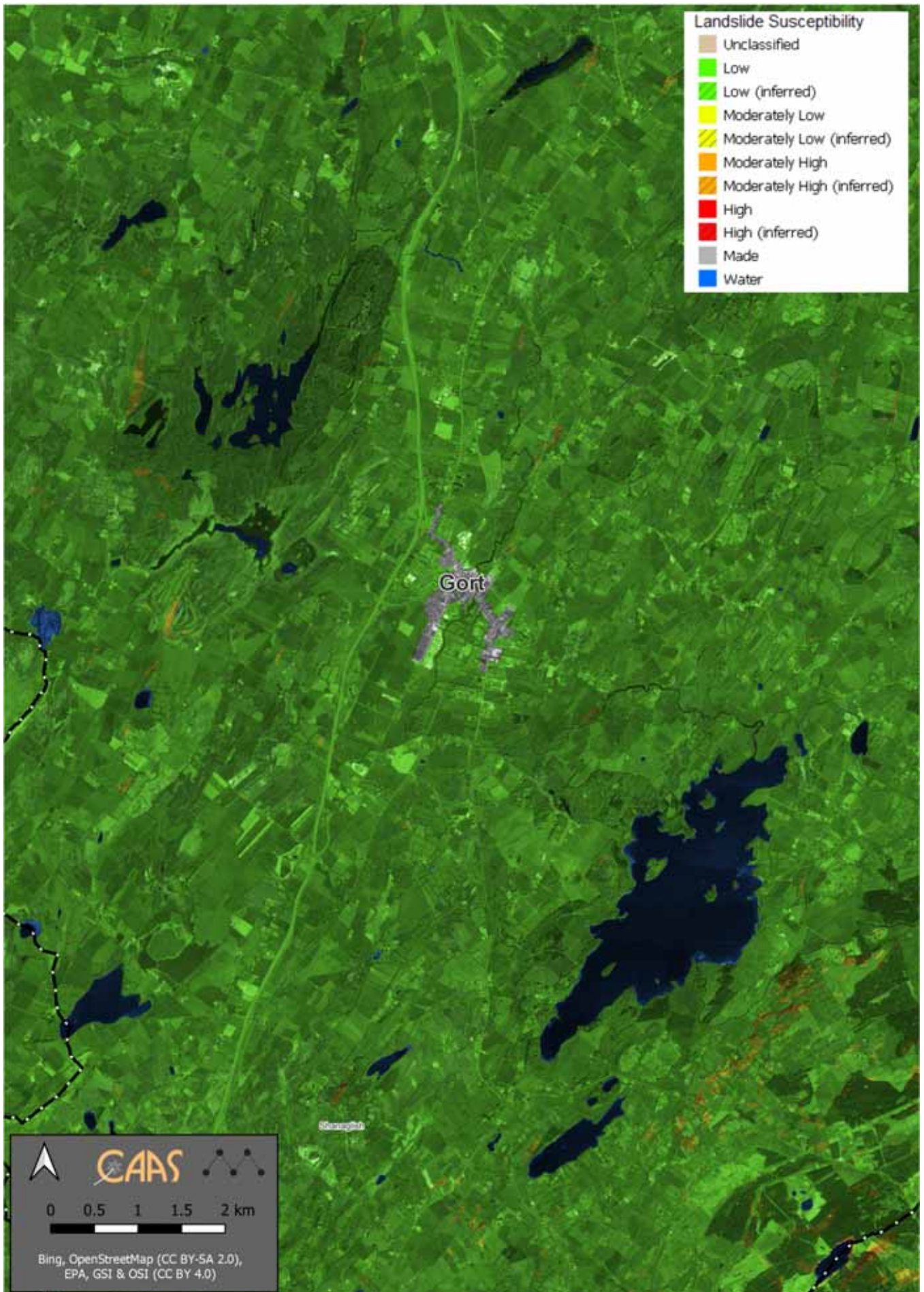


Figure 4.9 Landslide Susceptibility

4.9 Water

4.9.1 The Water Framework Directive

Since 2000, Water Management in the EU has been directed by the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC (WFD). 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 *good status*. All public bodies are required to coordinate their policies and operations so as to maintain the *good status* of water bodies that are currently unpolluted and improve polluted water bodies to *good status*.

Article 4 of the WFD sets out various exemptions for deterioration in status caused as a result of certain physical modifications to water bodies. This is provided: all practicable mitigation measures are taken; there are reasons of overriding public interest or the benefits to human health, safety or sustainable development outweigh the benefits in achieving the WFD objective; there are no better alternatives; and the reasons for the physical modification are explained in the River Basin Management Plan.

The EU's Common Implementation Strategy Guidance Documents No. 20 and 36 provide guidance on exemptions to the environmental objectives of the WFD.

For the purpose of assessment, reporting and management, water is divided into groundwater, rivers, lakes, estuarine waters and coastal waters which are in turn divided into specific, clearly defined water bodies.

4.9.2 Zone of Influence

The Zone of Influence of the Plan beyond the Gort Plan area with respect to impacts upon waters can be estimated to be all groundwater and surface water bodies that are downstream of catchments which drain the Plan area.

4.9.3 Surface Water Drainage

A catchment is an area of land contributing to a waterbody, with all the water ultimately

running off to a single outlet. The WFD requires water quality management to be based on natural river catchments i.e. by reference to the natural, environmental unit rather than by reference to administrative or legal boundaries, which often fragment river catchments.

Surface water in and around the Plan area is channelled by rivers and streams and their tributaries forming part of the Galway Bay South East River Catchment. The Cannahowna (Ballyhugh) River and its tributaries flows from south to north through the centre of the Plan area.

4.9.4 Surface Water Status

The WFD defines 'overall surface water status' as the general expression of the status of a body of surface water, determined by the poorer of its ecological status and its chemical status. Thus, in order to achieve 'good surface water status' both the ecological status and the chemical status of a surface water body need to be at least 'good'.

The ecological status is an expression of the structure and functioning of aquatic ecosystems associated with surface waters. Such waters are classified as of 'good ecological status' when they meet Directive requirements.

Chemical Status is a pass/fail assignment with a failure defined by a face-value exceedance of an Environmental Quality Standards (EQS) for one or more Priority Action Substances (PAS) listed in Annex X of the Water Framework Directive (WFD). The EQS values for individual PAS substances are set at European level. Good surface water chemical status means that concentrations of pollutants in the water body do not exceed the environmental limit values specified in the Directive.

The current WFD (2016-2021) status⁵² of the rivers and streams draining the Plan area are *good* (identified by the EPA as 'Kilchreest_010') and *moderate* (identified by the EPA as 'Cannahowna_010'). The WFD (2016-2021) status of the Lough Cutra, c. 2 km to the south-east of the Plan area, is identified as *good*. Figure 4.10 illustrates the

⁵² As per EPA's WFD Status 2016-2021 classification (<https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>).

WFD surface water status within and surrounding the Plan area. The Cannahowna River is currently identified in the combined 2016-2021 data as being at risk of not meeting the WFD objectives by 2027 due to the damage being caused by significant pressures⁵³ related to:

- **Hydromorphological and anthropogenic pressures** are identified together in many instances. Hydromorphological pressures may include: modifications to the physical habitat conditions or the natural functioning of a waterbody which can impact on ecology, caused by dredging and straightening of rivers (channelisation), land drainage or hard infrastructure such as dams, weirs, culverts or other obstructions. Anthropogenic pressures may include: water abstractions; invasive species; agriculture; use of fertilizers, manures and pesticides; animal husbandry activities; inefficient irrigation practices; deforestation of woods; aquaculture; pollution due to industrial effluents and domestic sewage; and recreational activities; and
- **Urban wastewater pressures**, which may include direct discharge of nutrients from urban wastewater treatment plants and discharge from combined storm overflows or storm water overflows. Discharges of elevated concentrations of phosphorus, ammonium and nitrogen impact on the ecology of surface waters.

4.9.5 Groundwater Status

Groundwater is stored in the void spaces in underground layers of rock, or aquifers. These aquifers are permeable, allowing both the infiltration of water from the soils above them and the yielding of water to surface and coastal waters. Groundwater is the part of the subsurface water that is in the saturated zone - the zone below the water table, the uppermost level of saturation in an aquifer at which the pressure is atmospheric, in which all pores and fissures are full of water.

For groundwater bodies, the approach to classification is different from that for surface water. For each body of groundwater, both the chemical status and the quantitative must be determined. Both have to be classed as either *good* or *poor*. The WFD sets out a series of criteria that must be met for a body to be classed as good chemical and quantitative status.

The WFD status (2016-2021) of all groundwater underlying the Plan area

(mapped on Figure 4.10) is currently identified as being of *poor* status throughout the centre of the Plan area, associated with Caherglassaun Turlough⁵⁴.

4.9.6 Aquifer Vulnerability and Productivity

The GSI rates groundwaters according to both their productivity and vulnerability to pollution.

Aquifer vulnerability refers to the ease with which pollutants of various kinds can enter into groundwater. The aquifers underlying most of the Plan area (mapped on Figure 4.11) are classified mainly as being of "extreme", "extreme (rock at or near surface or karst)", "high" and "moderate" vulnerability.

The GSI also rates aquifers based on the hydrogeological characteristics and on the value of the groundwater resource. This is referred to as aquifer productivity and is mapped on Figure 4.12. Aquifers in the vicinity of the Plan area are classified as: 'Regionally Important Aquifer – Karstified (conduit)'; 'Locally Important Aquifer – bedrock which is moderately productive only in local zones'; and 'Poor Aquifer – Bedrock which is generally unproductive except for local zones'.

4.9.7 WFD Registers of Protected Areas

The WFD requires that Registers of Protected Areas (RPAs) are compiled for a number of water bodies or part of water bodies which 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: 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 fertilizers, animal and human wastes - these areas are

⁵³ <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/Water>

⁵⁴ The area underlying Caherglassaun Turlough Ground Water Body – as per EPA Classification: "Ground Water Dependent Terrestrial Environment (GWDTE) Caherglassaun Turlough SAC 000238". Caherglassaun Turlough (Site Code: 000238) is a large lake located 6 km north-west of Gort and 5 km south-east of Kinvarra. Situated in a natural depression just to the north-west of Coole Nature Reserve, this site comprises a permanent lake at its core, while the rest of the basin functions as a turlough.

considered nutrient sensitive; areas designated for the protection of habitats or species e.g. Salmonid areas; Special Areas of Conservation (SACs); and, Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Also refer to Section 4.6.6.

The groundwater underlying the Plan and surrounding areas is used for drinking water abstraction in accordance with European Communities (Drinking Water) (No. 2) Regulations 2007 (S.I. No. 278/2007) and the associated groundwater bodies are identified on the RPA for Groundwater for Drinking Water Protected Area and the RPA for Rivers for Drinking Water, as mapped on Figure 4.13.

4.9.8 Flooding

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) document accompanies this SEA Environmental Report and the Draft Plan. Requirements in relation to SFRA are provided under 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of Environment and Office of Public Works, 2009) and associated Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government Circular PL2/2014.

Flood risk management and drainage provisions are already in force through the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and related provisions have been integrated into the Draft Plan. The land use zoning contained within the Plan has been informed by the SFRA process and associated delineation of flood risk zones, mapped on Figure 4.14. There are three types of flood zones defined for the purposes of the SFRA undertaken:

- Flood Zone A – where the probability of flooding from rivers is highest (greater than 1% or 1 in 100 for river flooding);
- Flood Zone B – where the probability of flooding from rivers is moderate (between 0.1% or 1 in 1000 and 1% or 1 in 100 for river flooding); and
- Flood Zone C – where the probability of flooding from rivers sea is low (less than 0.1% or 1 in 1000 for river flooding). Flood Zone C covers all other areas that are not in zones A or B.

Historical flooding is documented by the Office of Public Works. Predictive flood risk mapping is also available from the Office of Public Works and is included in the SFRA document that accompanies the Plan.

The most significant sources of flood risk within the Plan area are from groundwater and

fluvial sources (from rivers and streams). There are other sources of flooding present including from pluvial (rainwater) and from surface drainage systems sources.

4.9.9 Existing Problems

Subject to exemptions provided for by Article 4 of the WFD, based on available water data, the recorded status of certain surface water bodies will need improvement in order to comply with the objectives of the WFD. The Plan includes provisions that will contribute towards improvements in the status of waters.

There is elevated levels of flood risk from groundwater and fluvial sources at various locations across the Plan area. The preparation of the Plan, SEA and SFRA has taken place concurrently and the findings of the SFRA have informed both the Plan and the SEA.

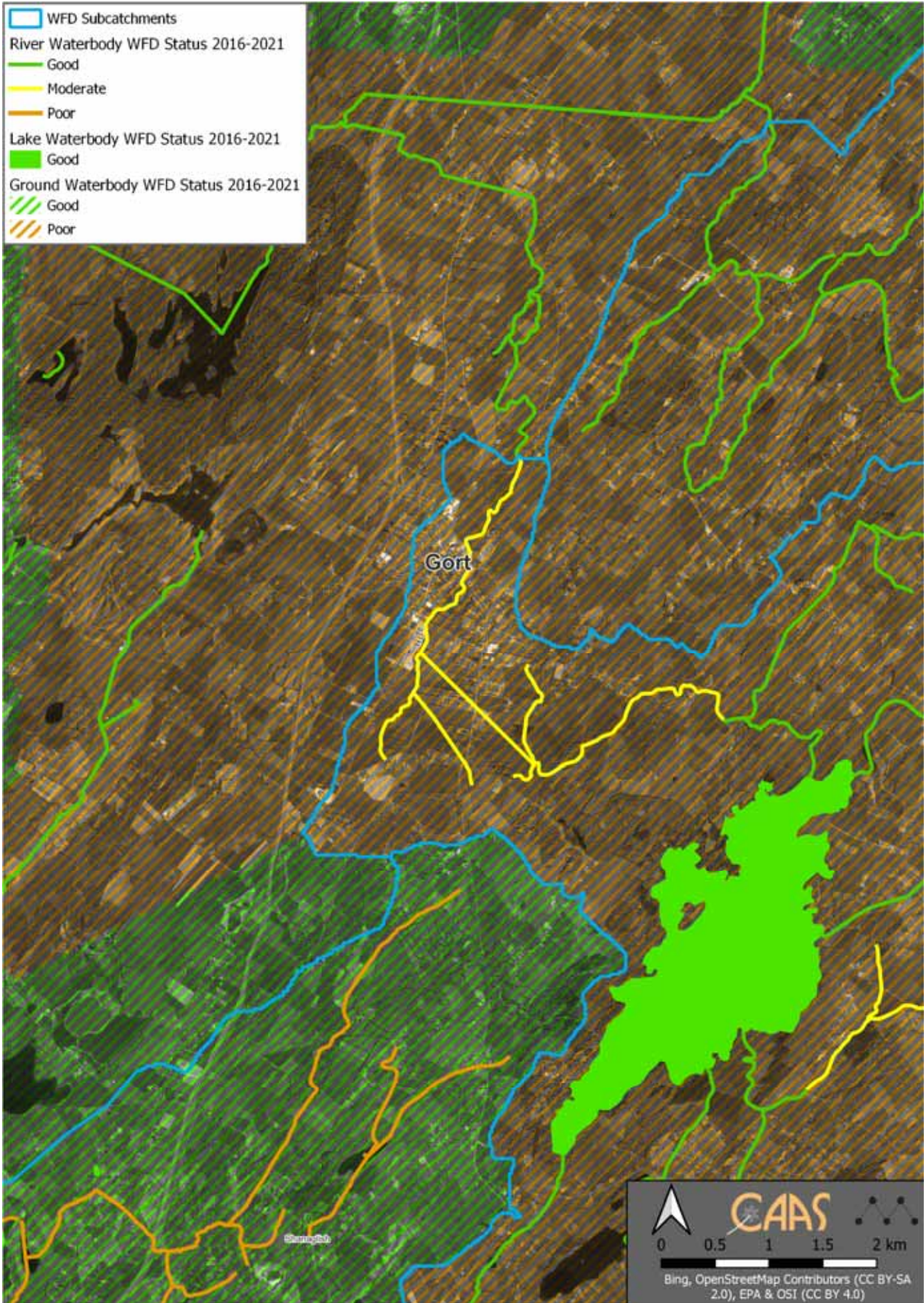


Figure 4.10 The WFD (2016-2021) Status of Surface Waterbodies and Ground Waterbodies

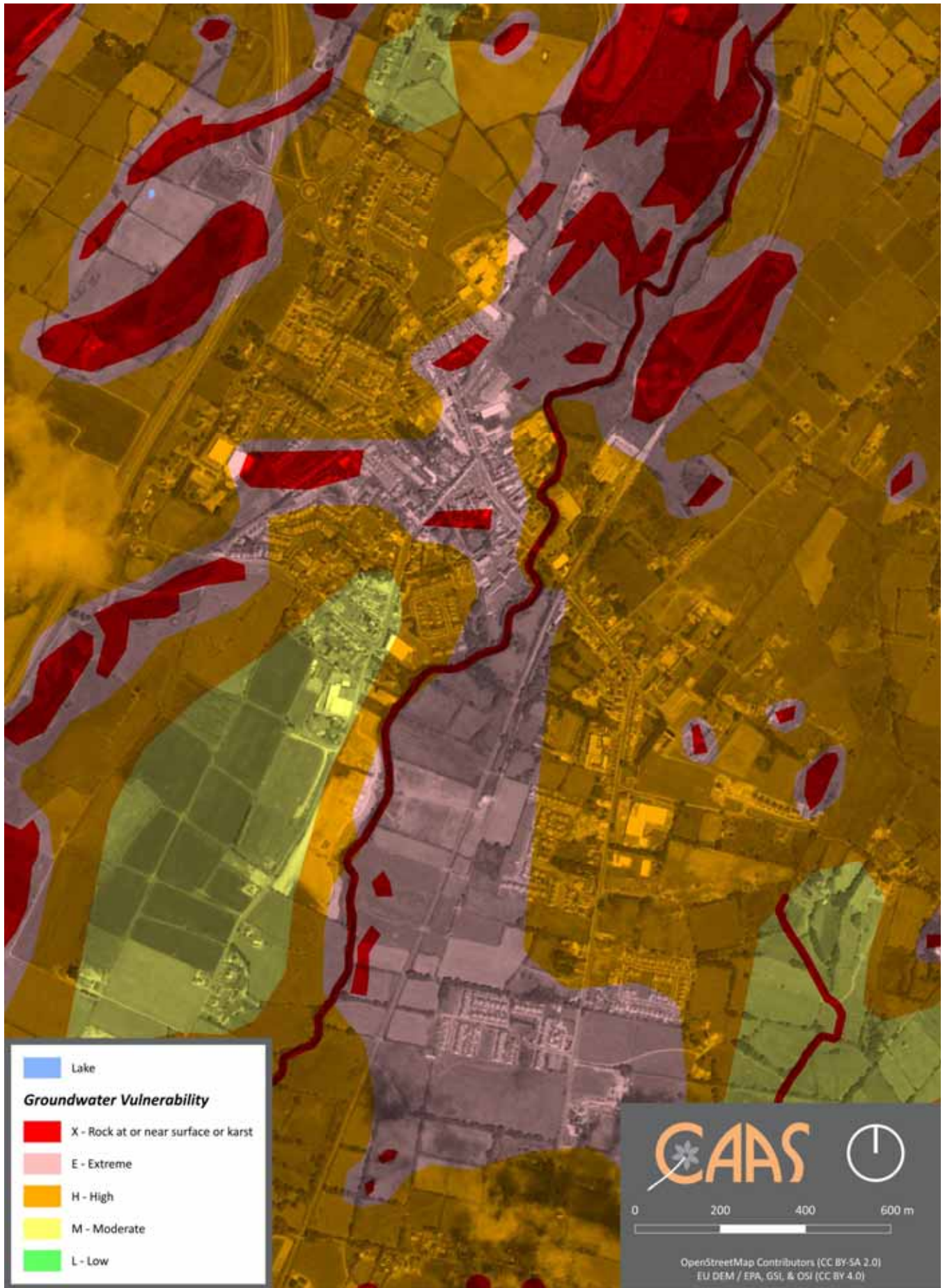


Figure 4.11 Groundwater Vulnerability

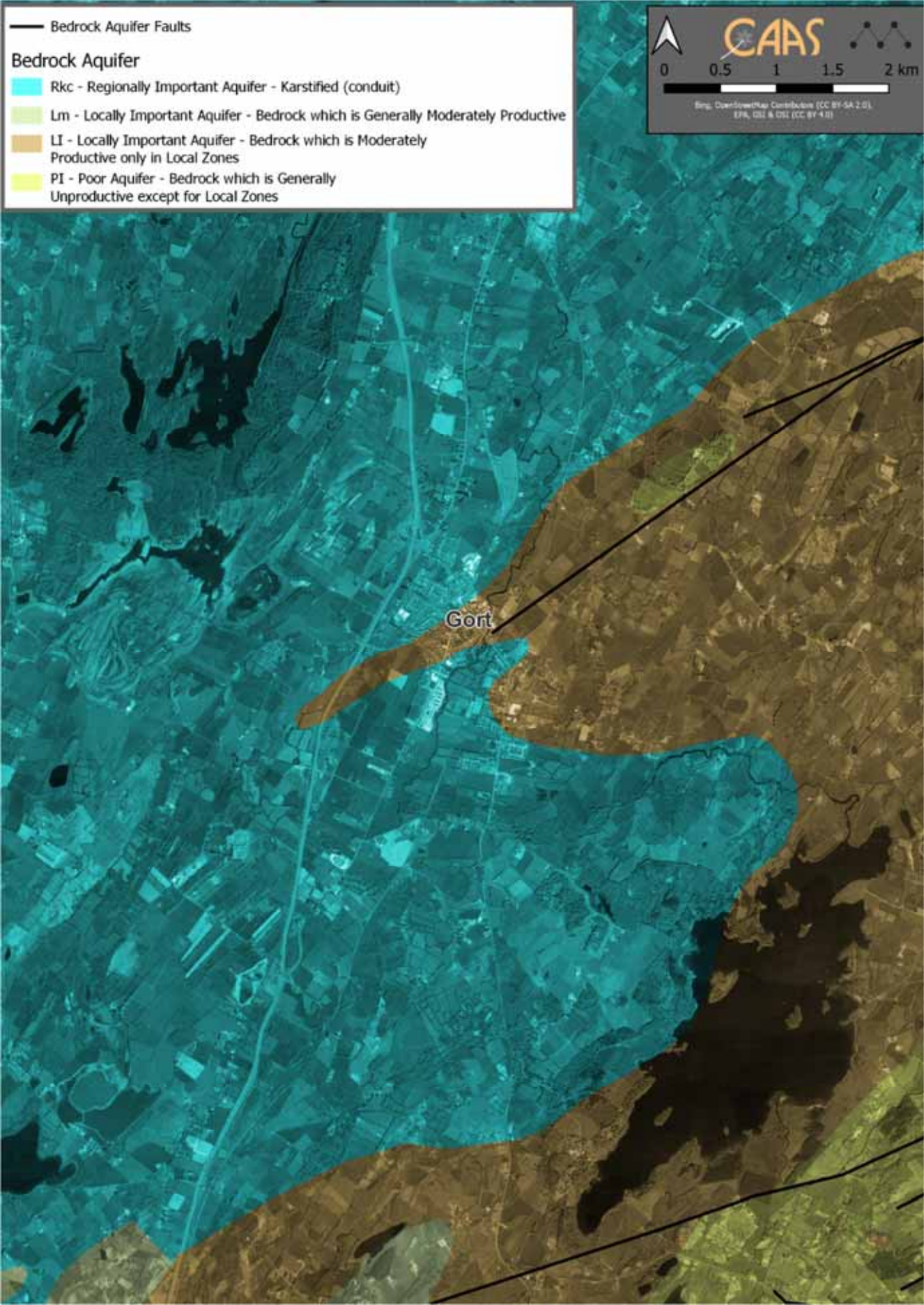


Figure 4.12 Groundwater Productivity



Figure 4.13 Entries to the WFD RPA for Drinking Water

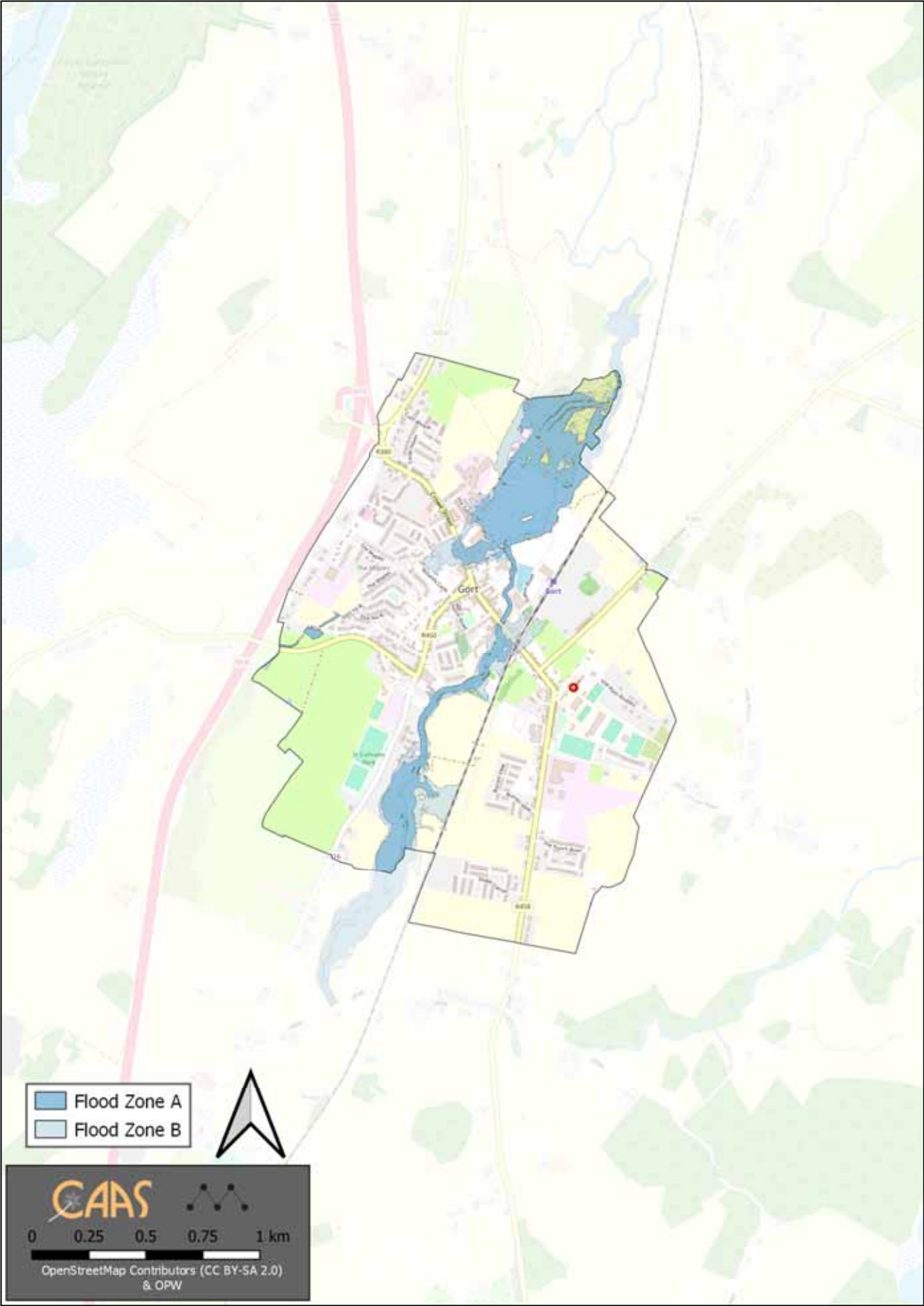


Figure 4.14 Flood Zones

4.10 Air and Climatic Factors

4.10.1 Climatic Factors⁵⁵

Interactions with climatic factors are also present with other environmental components including water/flooding (see Section 4.9.8).

Total emissions of greenhouse gases by humans come from various sectors including transport, agriculture, energy industries, manufacturing combustion, industrial processes, residential developments, commercial services developments, waste management processes and fluorinated gases equipment (such as refrigeration and fire protection systems).

In 2023, Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions are estimated to be 55.01 million tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent (Mt CO₂ eq), which is 6.8% lower (or 4.00 Mt CO₂ eq) than emissions in 2022 (59.00 Mt CO₂ eq) and follows a 2.0% decrease in emissions reported for 2022. Emissions are 1.2% below the historical 1990 baseline for the first time in 33 years.

In 2023, emissions in the stationary ETS¹ emissions (covering emissions from sectors including Agriculture, Transport, Energy, Industries, Residential, Manufacturing Combustion and Industrial Processes) decreased by 17%. When land use, land-use change and forestry is included, total national emissions decreased by 3.8%.

Emissions under the Effort Sharing Regulation (covering emissions from the electricity and heat generation, industrial manufacturing and aviation sectors) decreased by 3.4%.

Decreased emissions in 2023 compared to 2022 were observed in the largest sectors except for transport which showed an increase of 0.3%.

The EPA's 2024 publication *Ireland's Greenhouse Gas Emission Projections 2023-2040* provides an updated assessment of

Ireland's total projected greenhouse gas emissions to 2040, using the latest Inventory data for 2021 as the starting point. The report provides an assessment of Ireland's progress towards achieving its national ambitions under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 and EU emission reduction targets for 2030 as set out under the Effort Sharing Regulation⁵⁶. Key findings identified as part of the report are that:

- Ireland is not on track to meet the 51% emissions reduction target (by 2030 compared to 2018) based on these projections, which include most 2024 Climate Action Plan measures.
- The first two carbon budgets (2021-2030), which aim to support the achievement of the 51% emissions reduction goal, are projected to be exceeded by a significant margin of between 17% and 27%.
- Sectoral emissions ceilings for 2025 and 2030 are projected to be exceeded in almost all cases, including agriculture, electricity, industry, and transport.
- Ireland will not meet its non-ETS⁵⁷ EU targets of a 42 per cent emissions reduction by 2030 under the With Additional Measures Scenario.
- Emissions in the 'Planned Additional Measures' scenario are projected to be 29% lower in 2030 (compared with 2018) whereas in the 'Implemented Existing Measures' scenario the emissions reduction is projected to be 11%. There has been no improvement in these figures since EPA projections published in 2023.
- Faster implementation of measures is necessary to meet both National and EU targets. The pace at which planned policies and measures are implemented needs to be accelerated.
- Total emissions from the agriculture sector are projected to decrease by between 1% and 18% over the period 2022 to 2030. Savings are projected from a variety of measures including limiting usage and switching to different fertilisers, methane reductions measures and water table management.
- Transport emissions are projected to decrease by 5% to 26% over the period 2022-2030. Measures that are projected to contribute to greater emissions reductions include 945,000 EVs by 2030, a 20 per cent biodiesel blend rate by 2030 and avoid/shift measures such as 50% increase in daily active travel journeys and a 130% increase in daily public transport journeys.

⁵⁶ Regulation (EU) 2018/842 of on binding annual greenhouse gas emission reductions by Member States from 2021 to 2030 contributing to climate action to meet commitments under the Paris Agreement.

⁵⁷ Any company or body within the EU that emits a large amount of greenhouse gas emissions is included in the Emissions Trading System, commonly known as the ETS for short. This includes large industries, electricity generators, and the aviation industry. All greenhouse gas emissions that are not from companies in the ETS are called non-ETS emissions. Non-ETS emissions include greenhouse gas emissions from homes, cars, small businesses and agriculture. These are often collectively called the non-ETS sector.

⁵⁵ This section uses information from the provisional 1990-2023 inventory data (updated July 2024), available at epa.ie

- Emissions from the Energy Industries sector are projected to decrease by between 57% to 62% over the period 2022 and 2030. Renewable energy generation at the end of the decade is projected to range from 69% to 80% of electricity generation as a result of a projected rapid expansion in wind energy and other renewables.
- Emissions from the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) sector have been revised significantly to reflect new science. Total emissions from the LULUCF sector are projected to increase over the period 2022 to 2030. It is unlikely with the currently planned measures that the target set under the EU LULUCF Regulation and included in the Climate Action Plan 2024 will be met.

4.10.2 Climate Mitigation and Adaptation

Climate mitigation describes the action to reduce the likelihood of climate change occurring or reduce the impact if it does occur. This can include reducing the causes of climate change (e.g. emissions of greenhouse gases) as well as reducing future risks associated with climate change.

The National Climate Action Plan 2024 is the second statutory update to the plan since the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 was signed into law, committing Ireland to 2030 and 2050 targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It builds on Climate Action Plan 2023, outlining how Ireland will accelerate the actions required to respond to the climate crisis, putting climate solutions at the centre of Ireland's social and economic development.

Climate adaptation is a change in natural or human systems in response to the impacts of climate change. These changes moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities and can be in response to actual or expected impacts.

The National Adaptation Framework (2024) aims to create a unified approach involving both government and society to adapt to climate change. It outlines how various sectors and local authorities can implement adaptation measures to minimise Ireland's vulnerability to climate change's adverse effects while taking advantage of any beneficial impacts. The Framework emphasises the importance of integrating adaptation strategies into all levels of policy making, infrastructure development, and local planning.

In 2018, four Climate Action Regional Offices were established for the purpose of coordinating climate action at regional and local levels. As specified in its Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, the Northern and Western Regional Assembly supports the work of the Climate Action Regional Offices.

The Galway Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 will contribute towards addressing the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions, climate change adaptation, and strengthening the alignment between national climate policy and the delivery of local climate action. The local objectives of Galway County Council's Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 are grouped under the following themes:

Governance and Leadership

- Establish effective governance and leadership practices that facilitate the successful implementation of the Plan.
- Implement effective energy management and projects across Galway County Council assets aligned with 2030 targets and net zero trajectory.
- Integrate climate action into the local authority's policies, plans, strategies and functions. Ensure prioritisation of the decarbonisation zone.
- Facilitate climate action throughout the county, by engaging and collaborating with stakeholders and citizens in the development, implementation and review of the Local Authority Climate Action Plan, and provide them with information and support.

Energy and Built Environment

- Support the development of renewable energy sources, such as offshore wind only, solar, tidal, and biomass in suitable locations.
- Ensure the integration of climate action in spatial planning to enable the County of Galway to transition to a low carbon and resilient society.
- Reduce urban sprawl and encourage compact and transit-oriented development that maximises the use of green infrastructure.

Transport

- Support active travel and modal shift to advance sustainable, accessible, and safe mobility.
- Support the development and use of low-carbon technologies such as electric vehicles and low-carbon fuels.

Communities and Partnership

- Support communities, enterprises, and individuals to access the capacity, skills, and investment necessary to accelerate climate action.
- Foster social inclusion and cohesion by engaging diverse stakeholders and

promoting a just transition to a low-carbon economy.

Circular Economy

- Support communities, businesses and individuals to reduce the generation of waste and increase the quantity of waste reused and recycled.
- Ensure waste is properly managed and reduce the quantity of waste that is sent to landfill or incinerated.

Land Use and Green Infrastructure

- Support food security and sustainable local food production and ensure a safe and healthy environment that is resilient to the effects of climate change.
- Protect, conserve and enhance County Galway's biodiversity and heritage
- Support nature-based solutions to mitigate against and adapt to climate change and provide additional co-benefits

Adaptation to Climate Risk

- Increase the resilience and adaptive capacity of the local authority and the local community to the current and projected impacts of climate change.
- Ensure an appropriate, coordinated and resourced Emergency Response during climate-related emergencies and events.

4.10.3 Alternative Fuels and Renewable Electricity Generation Targets

The use of alternative fuels, including electricity, forms a significant part of government policy to reduce transport emissions. The Draft Plan facilitates a mode shift away from the private car to public transport, walking and cycling and provisions relating to electric vehicles. This will contribute towards reductions in the consumption of non-renewable energy sources and achievement of legally binding renewable energy targets.

The first Renewable Energy Directive (RED)⁵⁸ was the most important legislation influencing the growth of renewable energy in the EU and Ireland for the decade ending in 2020. From 2021, RED was replaced by the second Renewable Energy Directive (REDII)⁵⁹, which continues to promote the growth of renewable energy out to 2030. RED set out two mandatory targets for renewable energy in Ireland to be met by 2020, while REDII sets

new targets and criteria to be met by Ireland in 2030 and the interim.

The overall renewable energy share is referred to as the overall RES target. REDII introduced a binding EU-wide target for overall RES of 32% in 2030 and requires Member States to set their national contributions to the EU-wide target. As per the National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) 2021-2030, Ireland's overall RES target is 34.1% in 2030. The sectoral targets are referred to as RES-E (electricity), RES-T (transport) and RES-H (heat). Ireland's NECP 2021-2030 set targets for RES-E of 70%, RES-H of 24% and RES-T of 14%, by 2030.⁶⁰

Greater use of alternative fuels, including renewable energy, has the potential to contribute towards energy security.

4.10.4 Ambient Air Quality

In order to protect human health, vegetation and ecosystems, EU Directives set down air quality standards in Ireland and the other Member States for a wide variety of pollutants. These pollutants are generated through fuel combustion, in space heating, traffic, electricity generation and industry and, in sufficient amounts, could affect the well-being of the areas inhabitants. The EU Directives include details regarding how ambient air quality should be monitored, assessed and managed.

The principles to this European approach are set out in the Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFE) Directive (2008/50/EC) (which replaces the earlier Air Quality Framework Directive 1996 and the first, second and third *Daughter Directives*; the fourth *Daughter Directive* will be included in CAFE at a later stage).

In order to comply with the directives mentioned above, the EPA measures the levels of a number of atmospheric pollutants. For the purposes of monitoring in Ireland, four zones are defined in the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2002 (S.I. No. 271 of 2002).

⁵⁸ Directive 2009/28/EC on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources.

⁵⁹ Directive (EU) 2018/2001 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable resources (recast).

⁶⁰ SEAI (2022): *Energy in Ireland 2022 Report*. Available at: <https://www.seai.ie/publications/Energy-in-Ireland-2022.pdf>

The EPA's (2024) *Air Quality in Ireland 2023 Report* identifies that:

- Ireland's latest monitoring shows we are in compliance with current EU standards.
- Ireland is not on track to achieve its ambition, set out in the National Clean Air Strategy, to meet the health-based WHO air quality guideline limits in 2026.
- Main pollutants of concern are fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) from solid fuel combustion and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) from vehicle emissions/traffic.
- Air pollution can be a major environmental risk to people's health, with approximately 1,600 premature deaths annually in Ireland due to poor air quality.

The report further identifies the critical role of local authorities in the enforcement and implementation of existing plans and investment in infrastructure to encourage cleaner and healthier air quality choices, including:

- Local authorities must provide more resources to implement the new solid fuel regulations and full implementation of air quality plans.
- Local authorities must prioritise resource allocation of resources to advance enforcement.
- Investment in clean public transport infrastructure across the country must be maintained and increased.
- More safe footpaths and cycle lanes must be created to continue to increase active travel as a viable and safe alternative to car use and associated NO₂ emissions.

In order to apply with European Directives relating to air quality, the EPA manages the National Ambient Air Quality Network and measures the levels of a number of atmospheric pollutants at monitoring stations across the country.⁶¹ There is no such station within the Plan area and the closest stations are: in Ennis, County Clare, 26 km to the south-west of the Plan area; and in Briarhill, County Galway, 27 km to the north-west of the Plan area.

4.10.5 Noise

Noise is unwanted sound. The Noise Directive - Directive 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise - is part of an EU strategy setting out to reduce the number of people affected by noise in the longer term and to provide a framework for developing existing

EU policy on noise reduction from source. The Directive requires competent authorities in Member States to:

- Draw up *strategic noise maps* for major roads, railways, airports and agglomerations, using harmonised noise indicators and use these maps to assess the number of people who may be impacted upon as a result of excessive noise levels;
- Draw up action plans to reduce noise where necessary and maintain environmental noise quality where it is good; and,
- Inform and consult the public about noise exposure, its effects, and the measures considered to address noise.

Under the EU Environmental Noise Directive, which was transposed into Irish law through the European Communities (Environmental Noise) Regulations 2018 (as amended), Strategic Noise Maps and Noise Action Plans are required to be made or revised every five years. Noise Action Plans have been prepared for each local authority area within the country, including for the Council (Galway County Council Noise Action Plan 2024-2028). The purpose of the Noise Action Plan is to avoid, prevent and reduce, on a prioritised basis the harmful effects, including annoyance due to the long-term exposure to environmental noise.

4.10.6 Existing Problems

Significant progress is being made in the reductions of greenhouse gas emissions and the EPA's 2024 publication *Ireland's Greenhouse Gas Emission Projections 2023-2040* identifies that Ireland's emissions, under the Emissions in the 'Planned Additional Measures' scenario that includes most 2024 Climate Action Plan measures, are projected to be 29% lower in 2030 (compared with 2018). However, this would not meet the 51% emissions reduction target (by 2030 compared to 2018) based on these projections.

In the Climate Change Advisory Council's *Annual Review 2024* the findings of an assessment of the degree to which progress is being made solely in the implementation of adaptation policy and increasing resilience during the period April 2023 to March 2024 is provided. The Review details that four sectors (Transport, Flood Risk Management, Built and Archaeological Heritage and Local Government) demonstrated good overall progress, six showed moderate progress

⁶¹ For more detail on current daily air quality data for the Plan refer to: <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>.

(Agriculture, Forestry and Seafood, National Adaptation Framework, Communications Networks, Water Quality and Water Services Infrastructure, Health and Electricity and Gas Networks) and one (Biodiversity) showed no progress and supplied insufficient evidence. This was a slight improvement compared with the results in 2023.

Air quality and noise can present challenges, especially in urban areas, as detailed under the relevant sub-sections above. With regard to air quality, air pollution from transport is dominated by NO_x emissions. Of these, NO₂ is particularly impactful from a health perspective. The Draft Plan will help to facilitate reductions in emissions and a transition from dependence on fossil fuel combustion powered transport.

4.11 Material Assets

Other material assets, in addition to those detailed below, covered by the SEA include archaeological and architectural heritage (see Section 4.12) and natural resources of economic value, such as water and air (see Sections 4.9 and 4.10).

4.11.1 Public Assets and Infrastructure

Public assets and infrastructure that have the potential to be impacted upon by the Plan, if unmitigated, include: resources such as public open spaces, parks and recreational areas; public buildings and services; transport and utility infrastructure (electricity, gas, telecommunications, water supply, waste water infrastructure etc.); and natural resources that are covered under other topics such as water and soil.

4.11.2 Land

The Plan has the potential to assist with the reuse and regeneration of brownfield sites thereby contributing towards sustainable mobility and reducing the need to develop greenfield lands and associated potential adverse environmental effects. Brownfield lands are generally located within urban/suburban areas.

4.11.3 Green Infrastructure

Parks and open space promote health and well-being, provide recreational facilities and range of habitats for various species. Green infrastructure is also a crucial component in building resilient communities capable of adapting to the consequences of climate change with trees, woodlands and wetlands providing carbon capture and slowing water flows while improving air quality.

4.11.4 Woodland

Woodlands provide recreational opportunities in addition to their heritage and economic benefits. They are a valuable resource in terms of biodiversity, recreation and tourism, and also important as links in the green infrastructure network. The largest areas of woodland occur in the north of the Plan area, on the flood plain of the Cannahowna River.

4.11.5 Transport

Gort is located on a number of well served transport links, including the Galway-Limerick InterCity train line. The M18 also bypasses the town, which provides links to Ennis, Shannon and Limerick, and also joins the M6 and M17, which provides links to Galway, Athenry, Dublin and the rest of the Country. In addition, bus services are provided by Bus Éireann with daily services to Galway. National, regional and local roads provide vital links between the towns and villages to retail, service and employment centres throughout the County and to adjoining counties.

A Local Transport Plan forms part of the Draft Plan and will help to ensure a shift towards more sustainable modes of transport.

4.11.6 Minerals and Aggregates

The GSI have a suite of data sources available that would be useful in planning and assessing individual projects with regard to the environmental topic(s) of soil and/or material assets. These include:

- Aggregate Potential Mapping;
- Bedrock mapping;
- Quaternary and Physiographic mapping; and
- National Aquifer and Recharge mapping.

Mineral localities can be identified on Figure 4.8.

4.11.7 Water Services

4.11.7.1 Wastewater

The EPA's 2024 report '*Urban Waste Water Treatment in 2023*' identified that:

- 10 large urban areas that did not meet European Union treatment standards in 2023 require improvements to comply with these standards and protect the environment;
- 16 towns and villages discharging raw sewage into the environment every day must be connected to wastewater treatment plants;
- 6 collecting systems (sewers) were subject to a judgement from the Court of Justice of the European Union and must be prioritised;
- 34 priority areas require improvements to protect rivers, lakes, estuaries and coastal waters that are adversely impacted by wastewater;
- 3 collecting systems must be upgraded to prevent sewage pollution at bathing waters that were classified as having poor water quality; and
- 12 areas need improvements in wastewater treatment to protect endangered freshwater pearl mussels.

Based on the EPA's assessment of monitoring information provided by Uisce Éireann and the enforcement activities carried out by the EPA, this report identifies urban areas with the most important environmental issues that must be addressed.

From January 2014, Irish Water, now Uisce Éireann, became responsible for all public water services, involving the supply of drinking water and the collection, treatment and disposal of wastewater. Uisce Éireann is also responsible for the treatment and disposal of the sludge that is generated from both its water and waste water treatment plants. The Council is an agent of Uisce Éireann for operations and remains the designated Water Authority for the assessment and approval of on-site wastewater treatment systems and is responsible for surface water drainage in the town.

The provision of well-maintained quality wastewater treatment infrastructure is essential to facilitate sustainable development of the town while also protecting the environment and public health. Uisce Éireann is now responsible for the collection, treatment and disposal of waste water where public

wastewater facilities exist in towns and villages.

Uisce Éireann, working in partnership with Galway County Council, is making investments to undertake essential upgrade works to waste water treatment plants in towns and villages across the County. The upgrading of infrastructure will contribute towards compliance with the Water Framework Directive, EU Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive and Drinking Water Regulations and will help to protect human health and maintain the quality of surface and ground waters.

4.11.7.2 Wastewater Infrastructure

The Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) serving the Plan area is currently not listed as a priority area⁶² (such areas are those where improvements are required to resolve urgent environmental issues).

The Gort WWTP has a design capacity of 4,310 Population Equivalent (PE), with current load of 3,696 PE.⁶³ As indicated by Uisce Éireann, this plant has spare capacity available.⁶⁴

The Gort WWTP (Registration No. D00195-01) is currently non-compliant with the Emission Limit Values (ELVs) set in the Wastewater Discharge Licence in the most recent available Annual Environmental Report 2023 (published in April 2024), due to exceedance of Ammonia Total (as N) mg/l.⁶⁵

4.11.7.3 Water Supply

Uisce Éireann is responsible for providing and maintaining adequate public water supply infrastructure throughout County Galway.

⁶² <https://www.epa.ie/publications/compliance--enforcement/waste-water/Priority-areas-for-website-April-2024.pdf>

⁶³ https://www.water.ie/sites/default/files/docs/aers/2023/D0195-01_2023_AER.pdf

⁶⁴ Uisce Éireann: Settlements with Waste Water Discharge Authorisations - *Wastewater Treatment Capacity Register*. The register provides an indication of available wastewater treatment capacity based on loads received in 2021 and available treatment plan capacity now or by completion of a project by 2024 (where relevant). Available at: <https://www.water.ie/connections/developer-services/capacity-registers/wastewater-treatment-capacity-register/galway> (Published in June 2022).

⁶⁵ https://www.water.ie/sites/default/files/docs/aers/2023/D0195-01_2023_AER.pdf

Gort is located within the Gort Water Resource Zone⁶⁶ and, as identified by Uisce Éireann, has potential capacity available to meet targeted population growth by 2032, although an improvement in level of service is required.⁶⁷

Drinking water in the Plan area is supplied by the Gort Public Water Supply via the Gort Water Treatment Plant, which serves a population of 2,638 people. Water is abstracted mainly from the Gort or Cannahowna River, supplemented with water from two boreholes⁶⁸.

Under Section 58 of the Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992, the EPA is required to collect and verify monitoring results for all water supplies in Ireland covered by the European Communities (Drinking Water) Regulations, 2000. The EPA publishes their results in annual reports that are supported by Remedial Action Lists (RALs). The RAL identifies water supplies that are not in compliance with the Regulations mentioned above. The most recent EPA Remedial Action List (Q2 of 2024, published in February 2024)⁶⁹ does not include any water scheme that supplies the Plan area.

4.11.7.4 Surface Water Drainage

Galway County Council is responsible for surface water drainage in the Plan area. Sustainable urban Drainage systems (SuDS) is a method to minimise the quantity and increase the quality of surface water runoff and to mitigate adverse impacts of climate change. SuDS can also provide amenity and biodiversity benefits. The Council seeks to ensure the sustainable management of surface water discharges in urban areas through the use of SuDS.

⁶⁶ A Water Resource Zone (WRZ) is an independent water supply system serving a region, city, town or village and is governed by topography or the extent of the water distribution network in an area. A WRZ may include multiple Water Treatment Plants and/or sources.

⁶⁷This may take the form of leakage reduction and/or capital investment to maintain/improve levels of service as the demand increases. Proposed solutions will be developed and prioritised through the National Water Resources Plan and investment planning process. Source: <https://www.water.ie/connections/developer-services/capacity-registers/water-supply-capacity-register/galway> (Published in June 2023).

⁶⁸ <https://www.epa.ie/publications/compliance--enforcement/drinking-water/audit-reports/galway/Audit-Gort-PWS-04032022.pdf>

⁶⁹ Available at: <https://www.epa.ie/publications/compliance--enforcement/drinking-water/annual-drinking-water-reports/Q2-2024-RAL-for-public-drinking-water-supplies-FINAL.pdf>

4.11.8 Waste Management

The National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy (Regional Waste Management Planning Offices, 2024) sets out a framework for the prevention and management of waste in Ireland for the period 2024 to 2030. The Plan seeks to influence sustainable consumption and prevent the generation of waste, improve the capture of materials to optimise circularity and enable compliance with policy and legislation.

4.11.9 Existing Problems

The provisions of the Plan will contribute towards protection of the environment with regard to impacts arising from material assets.

The provisions of infrastructure and supporting services for development, particularly water and wastewater services, is critical.

4.12 Cultural Heritage

4.12.1 Archaeological Heritage

Archaeology is the study of past societies through the material remains left by those societies and the evidence of their environment. Archaeological sites and monuments vary greatly in form and date; examples include earthworks of different types and periods, (e.g. early historic ringforts and prehistoric burial mounds), megalithic tombs from the Prehistoric period, medieval buildings, urban archaeological deposits and underwater features.

Archaeological heritage is protected under the National Monuments Acts (1930-2004), Natural Cultural Institutions Act 1997 and the Planning Acts.

The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) is an inventory, put on a statutory basis by amendment to the National Monuments Act 1994, of sites and areas of archaeological significance, numbered and mapped. It is available from the National Monuments Service and at archaeology.ie.

The term 'monument' includes all man-made structures of whatever form or date except buildings habitually used for ecclesiastical purposes. All monuments in existence before

1700 A.D. are automatically considered to be historic monuments within the meaning of the Acts. Monuments of architectural and historical interest also come within the scope of the Acts. Monuments include: any artificial or partly artificial building, structure or erection or group of such buildings, structures or erections; any cave, stone or other natural product, whether or not forming part of the ground, that has been artificially carved, sculptured or worked upon or which (where it does not form part of the place where it is) appears to have been purposely put or arranged in position; any, or any part of any, prehistoric or ancient tomb, grave or burial deposit, or, ritual, industrial or habitation site; and any place comprising the remains or traces of any such building, structure or erection, any such cave, stone or natural product or any such tomb, grave, burial deposit or ritual, industrial or habitation site, situated on land or in the territorial waters of the State', but excludes 'any building or part of any building, that is habitually used for ecclesiastical purposes' (National Monuments Acts 1930-2004). A recorded monument is a monument included in the list and marked on the map which comprises the RMP set out county by county under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994 by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland. The definition includes Zones of Notification within which requirements for notifications of proposed works apply.

There are various entries to RMP within and surrounding the Plan area including: castles; churches; graveyards; holy wells; ringforts; enclosures; ponds; and ecclesiastical remains. Figure 4.15 shows the spatial distribution of Recorded Monuments within and beyond the Plan area, their associated Zones of Notification. There are several Zones of Notification within the boundary of the Plan area, as shown on Figure 4.15.

The Underwater Archaeology Unit was established within the National Monuments Service to manage and protect Ireland's underwater cultural heritage, including the quantification of the underwater resource and assessing development impacts in order to manage and protect this aspect of Ireland's heritage. The Shipwreck Inventory is principally a desktop survey with information gathered from a broad range of cartographic, archaeological and historical sources, both

documentary and pictorial. Wrecks over 100 years old and archaeological objects found underwater are protected under the National Monuments (Amendment) Acts 1987 and 1994. Significant wrecks less than 100 years old can be designated by Underwater Heritage Order on account of their historical, archaeological or artistic importance. Such Orders can also be used to designate areas of seabed or land covered by water to more clearly define and protect wreck sites and archaeological objects. Under the legislation all diving on known protected wreck sites or with the intention of searching for underwater cultural heritage is subject to licensing requirements.

4.12.2 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 technical, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social, or technical interest.

Records of Protected Structures are legislated for under Section 12 and Section 51 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended. Protected structures are defined in the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended as structures, or parts of structures that are of special interest from an architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical point of view.

In relation to a protected structure or proposed protected structure, the following are encompassed:

- The interior of the structure;
- The land lying within the curtilage⁷⁰ of the structure;

⁷⁰ Curtilage is normally taken to be the parcel of ground immediately associated with the Protected Structure, or in use for the purposes of the structure. Protection extends to the buildings and land lying within the curtilage. While the curtilage sometimes coincides with the present property boundary, it can originally have included lands, features or even buildings now in separate ownership, e.g. the lodge of a former country house, or the garden features located in land subsequently sold off. Such lands are described as being attendant grounds, and the protection extends to them just as if they were still within the curtilage of the Protected Structure.

- Any other structures lying within that curtilage and their interiors; and,
- All fixtures and features that form part of the interior or exterior of any structure or structures referred to in subparagraph (i) or (iii).

There are a number of entries in the RPS within the Plan area, as set out in Appendix 6 of Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028, examples of which include: railway stations; religious buildings; courthouses; barracks; terraced houses; and schools. Clusters of architectural heritage are indicated within the town's centre, as shown on Figure 4.15. Notable Protected Structures include: a well-preserved Georgian period market town; St. Colman's Catholic Church; Gort Crane House; Gort Library; Gort Bridge; and St. Colman's Hall Heritage Centre. Many of these Protected Structures are located within central parts of Gort and within the Architectural Conservation Area (ACA).

An ACA is a place, area, group of structures or townscape, which is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or contributes to the appreciation of a Protected Structure. An ACA may or may not include Protected Structures. In an ACA, protection is placed on the external appearance of such areas or structures. There is currently one ACA designated within the Plan area - Gort Town Centre ACA (shown on Figure 4.15).

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) is a State initiative under the administration of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and was established on a statutory basis under the provisions of the Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1999. The purpose of the NIAH is to identify, record, and evaluate the post-1700 architectural heritage of Ireland, uniformly and consistently as an aid in the protection and conservation of the built heritage. NIAH surveys provide the basis for the recommendations of the Minister of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to the local authorities for the inclusion of particular structures in their Record of Protected Structures. The NIAH includes historic gardens and designed landscapes. Figure 4.15 shows entries to NIAH in the Plan area.

4.12.3 Existing Problems

The context of archaeological and architectural heritage has changed over time however no existing conflicts with legislative objectives governing archaeological and architectural heritage have been identified.

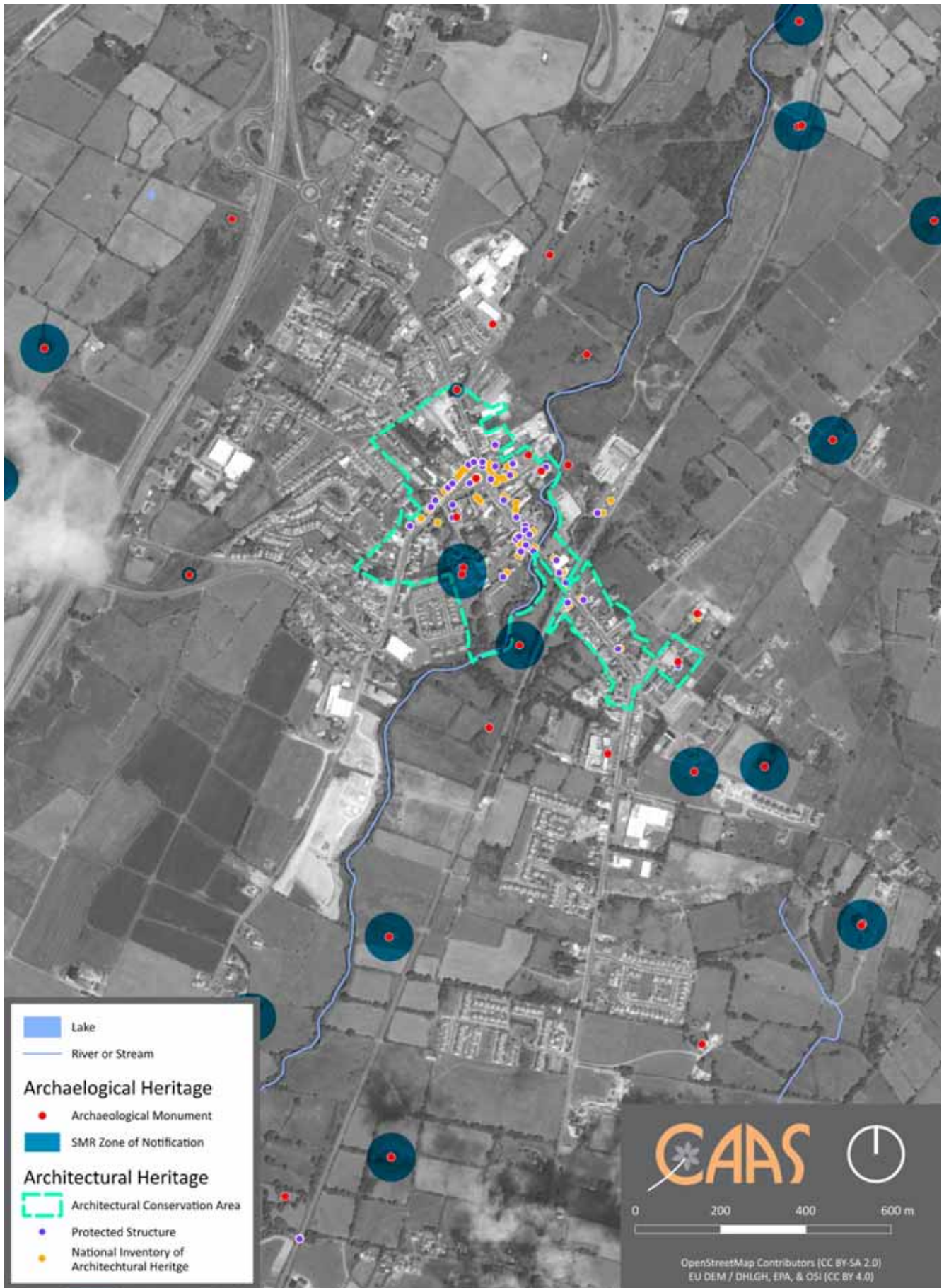


Figure 4.15 Archaeological and Architectural Heritage

4.13 Landscape

4.13.1 Introduction

Article 1 (a) of the European Landscape Convention provides a definition of landscape as follows; "Landscape means an area, as perceived by people whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural/or human factors". The Convention was ratified in Ireland in 2002, requiring the adoption of national measures to promote landscape, planning, protection and management. The importance of landscape and visual amenity and the role of its protection are recognised in the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended, which requires that Development Plans include objectives for the preservation of the landscape, views and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty.

Gort is located in a generally flat area towards the south of the County of Galway. The Cannahowna River runs from south to north through the centre of the Plan area and provides a recreational amenity for the town (3 km looped Gort River Walk). The land surrounding Gort is predominantly made up of agricultural lands with woodlands associated with the Coole-Garryland Nature Reserve to the north-west and Lough Cutra to the south-west of the Plan area.

The town centre is largely arranged along two wide intersecting roads which intersect at Market Square. The river and its banks, surviving military buildings, traditional shopfronts and narrow lanes entered through carriage arches are distinctive and important features. Stone walls are another significant feature of the area, particularly those around Slipper Street and Barrack Street. The retention of the character of the historic core in Gort is recognised as being a major attraction to the town.⁷¹

4.13.2 Landscape Character Assessment

The purpose of landscape character assessment is to provide the foundation for policy formulation and decision making for landscape management.

There are a range of different landscapes found in the Plan area, each with varying visual and amenity values, topography, exposure levels and each containing a variety of habitats. Each landscape type has varying capacity to absorb development related to its overall sensitivity.

The existing Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 identifies three Landscape Regions, which include ten Landscape Character Types (subdivided into smaller Landscape Character Units) and 52 Viewing Points and seven Scenic Routes within the Council's administrative area. Landscape Character Units in County Galway are arranged in a hierarchy according to the level of their sensitivity.

The Plan area is located within the 'Urban Environs' and 'Kilchreest Basin Unit' Landscape Character Units. There is one scenic route designated within the Plan area, 'Slieve Aughty Scenic Route', also shown on Figure 4.16. There are no Protected Views designated within the Plan area.

A landscape's capacity to absorb new development, without exhibiting a significant alteration of character or change of appearance is referred to as its 'sensitivity'. The Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and associated LCA 2022 outlined four separate sensitivity classes for County Galway (low, high, special and iconic). According to this classification the area surrounding Gort falls under "Class 1 – low: unlikely to be adversely affected by change".

4.13.3 Existing Environmental Problems

New developments have resulted in changes to the visual appearance of lands within the Plan area however legislative objectives governing landscape and visual appearance were not identified as being conflicted with.

⁷¹ Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

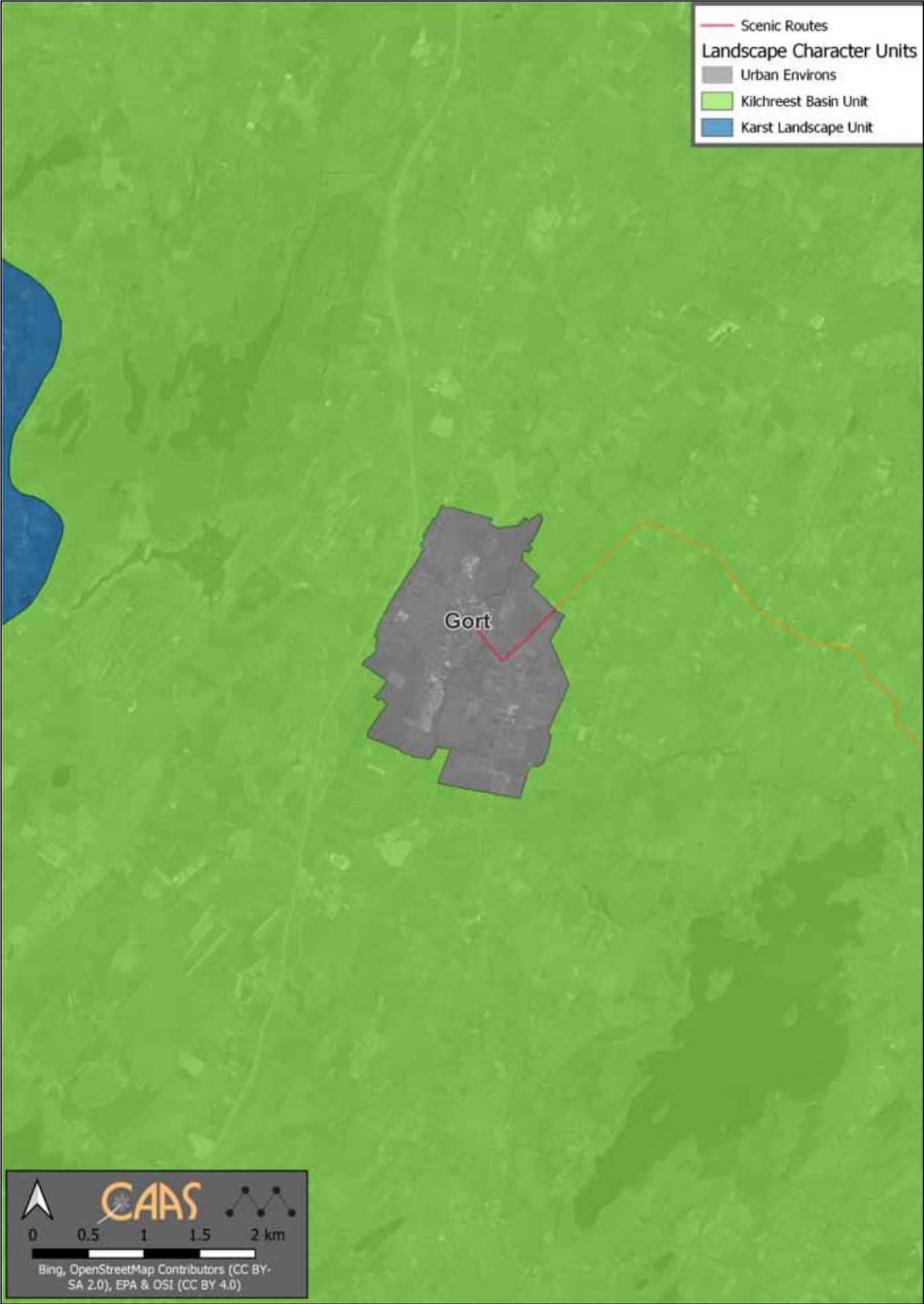


Figure 4.16 Landscape Character Units and Scenic Route

Section 5 Strategic Environmental Objectives

Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) are methodological measures developed from policies that generally govern environmental protection objectives established at international, Community or Member State level e.g. the environmental protection objectives of various European Directives that have been transposed into Irish law and which are required to be implemented.

The SEOs are set out under a range of topics and are used as standards against which the provisions of the Plan and the alternatives are evaluated in order to help identify which provisions would be likely to result in significant environmental effects and where such effects would be likely to occur, if – in the case of adverse effects – unmitigated.

The SEOs are linked to indicators which can facilitate monitoring the environmental effects of the Plan as well as identifying targets which the Plan can help work towards.

All SEOs, indicators and targets are provided on Table 5.1 overleaf.

Further detail on legislation, plans and programmes are provided under Section 2 (and associated Appendix II “Relationship with Legislation and Other Policies, Plans, and Programmes”) and Section 4.

The monitoring measures identified below as part of the Gort Local Area Plan SEA are consistent with the measures that were identified by the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 SEA. This consistency across the hierarchy of land use plans will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of future monitoring.

Table 5.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs), Indicators and Targets

| Environmental Component | SEO Code | Guiding Principle | Strategic Environmental Objectives | Indicators | Targets |
|--------------------------------------|------------|--|---|---|---|
| Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna | BFF | No net contribution to biodiversity losses or deterioration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To preserve, protect, maintain and, where appropriate, enhance the terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, particularly EU designated sites and protected species Ensure no adverse effects on the integrity of any European site, with regard to its qualifying interests, associated conservation status, structure and function Safeguard national, regional and local designated sites and supporting features which function as stepping stones for migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species Enhance biodiversity in line with the National Biodiversity Strategy and its targets To protect, maintain and conserve natural capital | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Condition of European sites | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all local level land use plans to include ecosystem services and green/blue infrastructure provisions and to have regard to the required targets in relation to the conservation of European sites, other nature conservation sites, ecological networks, and protected species Confirmation of compliance with Plan provisions relating to the protection of European Sites and sustaining resources Implement and review, as relevant, the Galway County Heritage and Biodiversity Plan 2024-2030 |
| | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of spatial plans that have included ecosystem services content, mapping and policy to protect ecosystem services when their relevant plans are either revised or drafted | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all local level land use plans to include ecosystem services and green/blue infrastructure provisions and to have regard to the required targets in relation to the conservation of European sites, other nature conservation sites, ecological networks, and protected species Implement and review, as relevant, the Galway County Heritage and Biodiversity Plan 2024-2030 |
| | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEAs and AAs as relevant for new Council policies, plans, programmes etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screen for and undertake SEA and AA as relevant for new Council policies, plans, programmes etc. |
| | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status of water bodies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included under Water below |
| | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance of planning permissions with Plan measures providing for the protection of Biodiversity and flora and fauna – see County Development Plan Chapter 10 “Natural Heritage, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For planning permission to be only granted when applications demonstrate that they comply with all Plan measures providing for the protection of biodiversity and flora and fauna – see County Development Plan Chapter 10 “Natural Heritage, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure” |
| Population and Human Health | PHH | Improve quality of life for all ages and abilities based on high-quality, serviced, well connected and sustainable residential, working, educational and recreational environments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote economic growth to encourage retention of working age population and funding of sustainable development and environmental protection and management Ensure that existing population and planned growth is matched with the required public infrastructure and the required services Safeguard citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and well-being | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Plan measures relating to the promotion of economic growth as provided for by County Development Plan Chapter 9 “Economic, Enterprise and Retail” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to the promotion of economic growth as provided for by County Development Plan Chapter 9 “Economic, Enterprise and Retail” |
| | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors resulting from development permitted under the Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of implementing the Plan |
| | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to active travel |
| | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of spatial plans that include specific green infrastructure mapping | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all local level land use plans to include specific green infrastructure mapping |
| Soil (and Land) | S | Ensure the long-term sustainable management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect soils against pollution, and prevent degradation of the soil resource Promote the sustainable use of infill and brownfield sites over the use of greenfield | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of population growth occurring on infill and brownfield lands compared to greenfield (also relevant to Material Assets) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain built surface cover nationally to below the EU average of 4% as per the NPF In accordance with National Policy Objectives 3c of the National Planning Framework, a minimum of 30% of the |

| Environmental Component | SEO Code | Guiding Principle | Strategic Environmental Objectives | Indicators | Targets |
|-------------------------|-----------|--|--|--|---|
| | | of land | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguard areas of prime agricultural land and designated geological sites | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instances where contaminated material generated from brownfield and infill must be disposed of Environmental assessments and AAs as relevant for applications for brownfield and infill development prior to planning permission | <p>housing growth targeted in any settlement is to be delivered within the existing built-up footprint of the settlement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To map brownfield and infill land parcels Dispose of contaminated material in compliance with EPA guidance and waste management requirements Screen for and undertake environmental assessments and AA as relevant for applications for brownfield and infill development prior to planning permission |
| Water | W | Protection, improvement and sustainable management of the water resource | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the status of water bodies is protected, maintained and improved in line with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive Ensure water resources are sustainably managed to deliver proposed regional and County growth targets in the context of existing and projected water supply and wastewater capacity constraints ensuring the protection of receiving environments Avoid inappropriate zoning and development in areas at risk of flooding and areas that are vulnerable to current and future erosion Integrate sustainable water management solutions (such as SuDS, porous surfacing and green roofs) into development proposals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status of water bodies as reported by the EPA Water Monitoring Programme for the WFD Number of incompatible developments permitted within flood risk areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to exemptions provided for by Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive, not to cause deterioration in the status of any surface water or affect the ability of any surface water to achieve 'good status' Implementation of the objectives of the River Basin Management Plan Minimise developments granted permission on lands which pose - or are likely to pose in the future - a significant flood risk |
| Material Assets | MA | Sustainable and efficient use of natural resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimise existing infrastructure and provide new infrastructure to match population distribution proposals - this includes transport infrastructure Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all which encourages a broad energy generation mix to ensure security of supply – wind, solar, hydro, biomass, energy from waste and traditional fossil fuels Promote the circular economy, reduce waste, and increase energy efficiencies Ensure there is adequate sewerage and drainage infrastructure in place to support new development Reduce the energy demand from the transport sector and support moves to electrification of road and rail transport modes Encourage the transition to a zero-carbon economy by facilitating the development of a grid infrastructure to support renewables and | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programmed delivery of Uisce Éireann infrastructure for all key growth towns in line with Uisce Éireann Investment Plan and prioritisation programme to ensure sustainable growth can be accommodated Number of new developments granted permission which can be adequately and appropriately served with waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new developments granted permission to be connected to and adequately and appropriately served by waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan Where septic tanks are proposed, for planning permission to be only granted when applications demonstrate that the outfall from the septic tank will not – in-combination with other septic tanks – contribute towards any surface or ground water body not meeting the objective of good status under the Water Framework Directive Facilitate, as appropriate, Uisce Éireann in developing water and wastewater infrastructure See also targets relating to greenfield and brownfield development of land under Soil and broadband under Population and Human Health |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

| Environmental Component | SEO Code | Guiding Principle | Strategic Environmental Objectives | Indicators | Targets |
|--------------------------------------|----------|---|---|--|--|
| | | | international connectivity. Reduce the average energy consumption per capita including promoting energy efficient buildings, retrofitting, smart- buildings, cities and grids | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to active travel |
| Air | A | Support clean air policies that reduce the impact of air pollution on the environment and public health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole resulting from emissions to air from all sectors with particular reference to emissions from transport, residential heating, industry and agriculture Maintain and promote continuing improvement in air quality through the reduction of emissions and promotion of renewable energy and energy efficiency Promote continuing improvement in air quality Reduction of emissions of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, ammonia and fine particulate matter which are responsible for acidification, eutrophication and ground-level ozone pollution Meet Air Quality Directive standards for the protection of human health — Air Quality Directive Significantly decrease noise pollution and move closer to WHO recommended levels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels NO₂ (Nitrogen Dioxide), PM₁₀ (particulate matter with diameter of 10 microns or less) and O₃ (Ozone) as part of Ambient Air Quality Monitoring | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease in proportion of journeys made by car compared to previous levels Improvement in Air Quality trends, particularly in relation to transport related emissions Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to sustainable mobility and travel |
| Climatic Factors⁷² | C | Achieving transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient economy that is cognisant of environmental impacts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To minimise emissions of greenhouse gasses Integrate sustainable design solutions into infrastructure (e.g. energy efficient buildings; green infrastructure) Contribute towards the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with national targets Promote development resilient to the effects of climate change Promote the use of renewable energy, energy efficient development and increased use of public transport | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Plan measures relating to climate reduction targets A competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy Share of renewable energy in transport Greenhouse gas emissions Energy consumption, the uptake of renewable options and solid fuels for residential heating | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For review of progress on implementing Plan objectives to demonstrate successful implementation of measures relating to climate reduction targets Contribute towards transition to a competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050 Contribute towards the National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030 sectoral target for transport (RES-T) of 14%, by 2030 (this may be increased following a provisional European agreement on 30 March 2023 for a binding overall RES target of at least 42.5% by 2030) Contribute towards the target of aggregate reduction in carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions of at least 51% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2030 (helping to set Ireland on a path to reach net-zero emissions by 2050) To promote reduced energy consumption and support the uptake of renewable options and a move away from solid fuels for residential heating |

⁷² Please also refer to relevant legislation and requirements under Section 4.10, Section 8 and Appendix II. Targets under the national Climate Action Plan are reviewed and updated periodically.

| Environmental Component | SEO Code | Guiding Principle | Strategic Environmental Objectives | Indicators | Targets |
|-------------------------|----------|---|--|---|---|
| | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease in the proportion of journeys made by residents of the settlement using private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to sustainable mobility and travel |
| | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to active travel |
| Cultural Heritage | CH | Safeguard cultural heritage features and their settings through responsible design and positioning of development | Protect places, features, buildings and landscapes of cultural, archaeological or architectural heritage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, and the context these entries within the surrounding landscape where relevant, protected from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, and the context of these entries within the surrounding landscape where relevant, from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan |
| | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission under the Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission under the Plan |
| Landscape | L | Protect and enhance the landscape character | To implement the Plan's framework for identification, assessment, protection, management and planning of landscapes having regard to the European Landscape Convention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of developments permitted that result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, especially with regard to landscape and amenity designations included in Land Use Plans, resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No developments permitted which result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, especially with regard to landscape and amenity designations included in Land Use Plans, resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan |

Section 6 Description of Alternatives

6.1 Introduction

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

Alternatives for the Plan are identified under a number of types below and assessed in Section 7.

6.2 Limitations in Available Alternatives

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

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

6.3 Type 1: Alternatives Already Considered

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

6.4 Type 2: Land Use Zoning Alternatives

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

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

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

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

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

6.5 Type 3: Transport Alternatives

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

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

Section 7 Evaluation of Alternatives

7.1 Introduction

This section provides a comparative evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing available alternatives that are described in Section 6. This determination sought to understand whether each alternative was likely to improve conflict with or have a neutral interaction with the receiving environment.

7.2 Methodology

The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment (see Section 4) and the Strategic Environmental Objectives (see Section 5 and Table 7.1) are used in the assessment of alternatives.

The alternatives are evaluated using compatibility criteria (see Table 7.2 below) in order to determine how they would be likely to affect the status of the existing environment and the SEOs. The SEOs and the alternatives are arrayed against each other in order to demonstrate which interactions would cause effects on specific components of the environment. Where the appraisal identifies an interaction with the status of an SEO the relevant SEO code is entered into the relevant column.

The interactions identified are reflective of likely significant environmental effects:

- Interactions that would be *likely to improve the status* of a particular SEO would be likely to contribute towards a significant positive effect on the environmental component to which the SEO relates, including in-combination with the existing statutory planning/decision-making and consent-granting framework.
- Interactions that would *potentially conflict with the status of an SEO and would be likely to be mitigated* would be likely to result in potential significant negative effects; however, these effects could be mitigated by integrating measures into the Plan.
- Interactions that would probably *conflict with the status of an SEO and would be unlikely to be mitigated* would be likely to result in a significant residual negative effect on the environmental component to which the SEO relates.

Effects considered include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects.

The degree of significance of effects occurring cannot be fully determined at this level of decision making due to the lack of exact detail available with regard to the type or scale of development that will be permitted under the Plan. However, a strategic assessment can be undertaken.

Table 7.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives⁷³

| Environmental Component | SEO Code | Guiding Principle | Strategic Environmental Objectives |
|-------------------------------|----------|---|---|
| Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna | BFF | No net contribution to biodiversity losses or deterioration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To preserve, protect, maintain and, where appropriate, enhance the terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, particularly EU designated sites and protected species • Ensure no adverse effects on the integrity of any European site, with regard to its qualifying interests, associated conservation status, structure and function • Safeguard national, regional and local designated sites and supporting features which function as stepping stones for migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species • Enhance biodiversity in line with the National Biodiversity Strategy and its targets • To protect, maintain and conserve natural capital |

⁷³ See also Section 5.

| Environmental Component | SEO Code | Guiding Principle | Strategic Environmental Objectives |
|-----------------------------|----------|--|---|
| Population and Human Health | PHH | Improve quality of life for all ages and abilities based on high-quality, serviced, well connected and sustainable residential, working, educational and recreational environments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote economic growth to encourage retention of working age population and funding of sustainable development and environmental protection and management Ensure that existing population and planned growth is matched with the required public infrastructure and the required services Safeguard citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and well-being |
| Soil (and Land) | S | Ensure the long-term sustainable management of land | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect soils against pollution, and prevent degradation of the soil resource Promote the sustainable use of infill and brownfield sites over the use of greenfield Safeguard areas of prime agricultural land and designated geological sites |
| Water | W | Protection, improvement and sustainable management of the water resource | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the status of water bodies is protected, maintained and improved in line with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive Ensure water resources are sustainably managed to deliver proposed regional and County growth targets in the context of existing and projected water supply and wastewater capacity constraints ensuring the protection of receiving environments Avoid inappropriate zoning and development in areas at risk of flooding and areas that are vulnerable to current and future erosion Integrate sustainable water management solutions (such as SuDS, porous surfacing and green roofs) into development proposals |
| Material Assets | MA | Sustainable and efficient use of natural resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimise existing infrastructure and provide new infrastructure to match population distribution proposals - this includes transport infrastructure Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all which encourages a broad energy generation mix to ensure security of supply – wind, solar, hydro, biomass, energy from waste and traditional fossil fuels Promote the circular economy, reduce waste, and increase energy efficiencies Ensure there is adequate sewerage and drainage infrastructure in place to support new development Reduce the energy demand from the transport sector and support moves to electrification of road and rail transport modes Encourage the transition to a zero-carbon economy by facilitating the development of a grid infrastructure to support renewables and international connectivity. Reduce the average energy consumption per capita including promoting energy efficient buildings, retrofitting, smart-buildings, cities and grids |
| Air | A | Support clean air policies that reduce the impact of air pollution on the environment and public health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole resulting from emissions to air from all sectors with particular reference to emissions from transport, residential heating, industry and agriculture Maintain and promote continuing improvement in air quality through the reduction of emissions and promotion of renewable energy and energy efficiency Promote continuing improvement in air quality Reduction of emissions of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, ammonia and fine particulate matter which are responsible for acidification, eutrophication and ground-level ozone pollution Meet Air Quality Directive standards for the protection of human health – Air Quality Directive Significantly decrease noise pollution and move closer to WHO recommended levels |

| Environmental Component | SEO Code | Guiding Principle | Strategic Environmental Objectives |
|---------------------------------------|----------|---|---|
| Climatic Factors ⁷⁴ | C | Achieving transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient economy that is cognisant of environmental impacts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To minimise emissions of greenhouse gasses • Integrate sustainable design solutions into infrastructure (e.g. energy efficient buildings; green infrastructure) • Contribute towards the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with national targets • Promote development resilient to the effects of climate change • Promote the use of renewable energy, energy efficient development and increased use of public transport |
| Cultural Heritage | CH | Safeguard cultural heritage features and their settings through responsible design and positioning of development | Protect places, features, buildings and landscapes of cultural, archaeological or architectural heritage |
| Landscape | L | Protect and enhance the landscape character | To implement the Plan's framework for identification, assessment, protection, management and planning of landscapes having regard to the European Landscape Convention |

Table 7.2 Criteria for appraising the effect of the Alternatives on SEOs

| | |
|---|--|
| Likely to Improve status of SEOs + | Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated - |
|---|--|

7.3 Detailed Assessment of Alternatives

7.3.1 Effects Common to all Alternatives

Each of the alternatives would be part of a wider Plan envisaging – in compliance with the robust policy framework in place at national, regional and local level – sustainable development and compact growth in County Galway generally. As such, common environmental effects (as detailed on Table 7.3) would be present under Plans adopting each of the different alternatives, albeit often to varying degrees.

⁷⁴ Please also refer to relevant legislation and requirements under Section 4.10, Section 8 and Appendix II. Targets under the national Climate Action Plan are reviewed and updated periodically.

Table 7.3 Effects common to Plans adopting each of the different alternatives

| Environmental Component | Significant Positive Environmental Effects, likely to occur | Potentially Significant Adverse Environmental Effects, if unmitigated |
|---|---|--|
| Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution towards protection of ecology (including designated sites, ecological connectivity and habitats) by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to central/core locations within the Plan area) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. • Sustains existing sustainable rural management practices – and the communities who support them – to ensure the continuation of long-established managed landscapes and the flora and fauna that they contain. • Sustains existing sustainable rural management practices – and the communities who support them – to ensure the continuation of long-established managed landscapes and the flora and fauna that they contain. | <p>Arising from both construction and operation of development and associated infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of/damage to biodiversity in designated sites (including European Sites and Wildlife Sites) and Annexed habitats and species, listed species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats; and disturbance to biodiversity and flora and fauna; • Habitat loss, fragmentation and deterioration, including patch size and edge effects; and • Disturbance (e.g. due to noise and lighting along transport corridors) and displacement of protected species such as birds (e.g. wetland birds, swifts) and bats. |
| Population and Human Health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of economic growth to encourage retention of working age population and funding of sustainable development and environmental protection and management. • Contribution towards appropriate provision of infrastructure and services to existing population and planned growth by facilitating compact development of lands (including those within and adjacent to central/core locations within the Plan area) that are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. • Contribution towards the protection of human health by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to central/core locations within the Plan area) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential adverse effects arising from flood events. • Potential interactions if effects arising from environmental vectors. |
| Soil | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution towards the protection of soils (including those used for agriculture) and designated sites of geological heritage by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to central/core locations within the Plan area) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential adverse effects on the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource, including as a result of development on contaminated lands. • Potential for riverbank erosion. |

| Environmental Component | Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur | Potentially Significant Adverse Environmental Effects, if unmitigated |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| Water | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution towards the protection of water by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to central/core locations within the Plan area) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential adverse effects upon the status of water bodies and entries to the WFD Register of Protected Areas (ecological and human value), arising from changes in quality, flow and/or morphology. Increase in flood risk and associated effects associated with flood events. |
| Material Assets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution towards appropriate provision of infrastructure and services to existing population and planned growth by facilitating compact development of lands (including those within and adjacent to central/core locations within the Plan area) that are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. Contribution towards limits in increases in energy demand from the transport sector by facilitating sustainable compact growth. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to provide adequate and appropriate waste water treatment (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). Failure to adequately treat surface water run-off that is discharged to water bodies (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). Failure to comply with drinking water regulations and serve new development with adequate drinking water (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). Increases in waste levels. Potential impacts upon public assets and infrastructure. Interactions between agricultural waste and soil, water, biodiversity and human health – including as a result of emissions of ammonia from agricultural activities (e.g. manure handling, storage and spreading) and the production of secondary inorganic particulate matter. |
| Air and Climatic Factors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution towards climate mitigation and adaptation and reduction of overall emissions to air by facilitating compact development of lands (including those within and adjacent to central/core locations within the Plan area) that are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential conflict between development under the Plan and aiming to reduce carbon emissions in line with local, national and European environmental objectives. Potential conflicts between transport emissions, including those from cars, and air quality. Potential conflicts between increased frequency of noise emissions and protection of sensitive receptors. Potential conflicts with climate adaptation measures including those relating to flood risk management. |
| Cultural Heritage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributes towards protection of cultural heritage elsewhere by facilitating development within the Plan area. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential effects on protected and unknown archaeology and protected architecture arising from construction and operation activities. |
| Landscape | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributes towards protection of wider landscape and landscape designations by facilitating development within the Plan area. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occurrence of adverse visual impacts and conflicts with the appropriate protection of designations relating to the landscape. |

7.3.2 Assessment of Type 2: Alternatives for Land Use Zoning

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Type 2 alternatives are assessed against Strategic Environmental Objectives on Table 7.4.

Table 7.4 Assessment of Type 2 Alternatives against Strategic Environmental Objectives

| Alternative (selected alternative for the Draft Plan Type 2 (i) "More Compact Development") | Likely to Improve status of SEOs + | | Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated - | | Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated - | No Likely interaction with status of SEOs 0 |
|--|---|--|--|---|---|--|
| | to ^a Greater degree | to ^a Lesser degree | to ^a Lesser degree | to ^a Greater degree | | |
| Type 2 (i): "More Consolidated, More Compact" | BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L | | BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L | | | |
| Type 2 (ii): "Less Compact Development" | | BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L | | BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L | | |

7.3.3 Assessment of Type 3: Alternatives for Transport

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

Transport Alternative 2i would:

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

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

Not informing the Plan with a Local Transport Plan, which focuses on delivering travel solutions that support moving people from the private car to more sustainable modes, (**Transport Alternative Type 3ii**) would provide a less coordinated and less orderly provision of transport infrastructure and services, with delivery of projects, and associated benefit with respect to sustainable mobility and compact development, less likely. This approach would be less likely to improve the potential for meeting important objectives relating to emissions and energy use. Potentially adverse impacts

arising from more coherently planned transport developments on environmental components, including ecology and water, could be mitigated at both Plan and project level.

Transport Alternative 3ii would:

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

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

Selected Alternative: Alternative Type 3i

Type 3 alternatives are assessed against Strategic Environmental Objectives on Table 7.5.

Table 7.5 Assessment of Type 3 Alternatives against Strategic Environmental Objectives

| Transport Alternatives (selected alternative indicated in bold) | Likely to Improve status of SEOs | | Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated | | Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated | No Likely interaction with status of SEOs |
|--|--|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|--|---|
| | + | | - | | - | 0 |
| | to Greater degree | to Lesser degree | to Lesser degree | to Greater degree | | |
| 3i. Inform the Plan with a Local Transport Plan | BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L | | BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L | | | |
| 3ii. Do not inform the Plan with a Local Transport Plan | | BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L | | BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L | | |

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

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

Alternatives were selected for the Plan having regard to both:

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

Section 8 Evaluation of Draft Plan Provisions

8.1 Introduction

This section provides an assessment of environmental effects using the information on the current state of the environment (provided in Section 4) and the Strategic Environmental Objectives (see Table 8.1) from implementation of the Plan.

The Draft Plan provisions (and, in Section 7, the alternatives) are evaluated using compatibility criteria (see Table 8.2 below) in order to determine how they would be likely to affect the status of the existing environment and the SEOs. The SEOs and the Plan provisions (and, in Section 7, the alternatives) are arrayed against each other in order to demonstrate which interactions would cause effects on specific components of the environment. Where the appraisal identifies an interaction with the status of an SEO the relevant SEO code is entered into the relevant column.

The interactions identified are reflective of likely significant environmental effects:

- Interactions that would be *likely to improve the status* of a particular SEO would be likely to contribute towards a significant positive effect on the environmental component to which the SEO relates, including in-combination with the existing statutory planning/decision-making and consent-granting framework.
- Interactions that would *potentially conflict with the status of an SEO and would be likely to be mitigated* would be likely to result in potential significant negative effects; however, these effects will be mitigated by measures which have been integrated into the Plan, or associated County Development Plan, and residual effects would not be significant (see Table 8.3 of this report).
- Interactions that would probably *conflict with the status of an SEO and would be unlikely to be mitigated* would be likely to result in a significant residual negative effect on the environmental component to which the SEO relates.

Effects considered include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects.

The degree of significance of effects occurring cannot be fully determined at this level of decision making due to the lack of exact detail available with regard to the type or scale of development that will be permitted under the Plan. However, a strategic assessment can be undertaken.

Table 8.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives⁷⁵

| Environmental Component | SEO Code | Guiding Principle | Strategic Environmental Objectives |
|--------------------------------------|------------|--|---|
| Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna | BFF | No net contribution to biodiversity losses or deterioration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To preserve, protect, maintain and, where appropriate, enhance the terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, particularly EU designated sites and protected species Ensure no adverse effects on the integrity of any European site, with regard to its qualifying interests, associated conservation status, structure and function Safeguard national, regional and local designated sites and supporting features which function as stepping stones for migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species Enhance biodiversity in line with the National Biodiversity Strategy and its targets To protect, maintain and conserve natural capital |
| Population and Human Health | PHH | Improve quality of life for all ages and abilities based on high-quality, serviced, well connected and sustainable residential, working, educational and recreational environments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote economic growth to encourage retention of working age population and funding of sustainable development and environmental protection and management Ensure that existing population and planned growth is matched with the required public infrastructure and the required services Safeguard citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and well-being |
| Soil (and Land) | S | Ensure the long-term sustainable management of land | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect soils against pollution, and prevent degradation of the soil resource Promote the sustainable use of infill and brownfield sites over the use of greenfield Safeguard areas of prime agricultural land and designated geological sites |
| Water | W | Protection, improvement and sustainable management of the water resource | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the status of water bodies is protected, maintained and improved in line with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive Ensure water resources are sustainably managed to deliver proposed regional and County growth targets in the context of existing and projected water supply and wastewater capacity constraints ensuring the protection of receiving environments Avoid inappropriate zoning and development in areas at risk of flooding and areas that are vulnerable to current and future erosion Integrate sustainable water management solutions (such as SuDS, porous surfacing and green roofs) into development proposals |
| Material Assets | MA | Sustainable and efficient use of natural resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimise existing infrastructure and provide new infrastructure to match population distribution proposals - this includes transport infrastructure Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all which encourages a broad energy generation mix to ensure security of supply – wind, solar, hydro, biomass, energy from waste and traditional fossil fuels Promote the circular economy, reduce waste, and increase energy efficiencies Ensure there is adequate sewerage and drainage infrastructure in place to support new development Reduce the energy demand from the transport sector and support moves to electrification of road and rail transport modes Encourage the transition to a zero-carbon economy by facilitating the development of a grid infrastructure to support renewables and international connectivity. Reduce the average energy consumption per capita including promoting energy efficient buildings, retrofitting, smart-buildings, cities and grids |

⁷⁵ See also Section 5

| Environmental Component | SEO Code | Guiding Principle | Strategic Environmental Objectives |
|--------------------------------|----------|---|--|
| Air | A | Support clean air policies that reduce the impact of air pollution on the environment and public health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole resulting from emissions to air from all sectors with particular reference to emissions from transport, residential heating, industry and agriculture Maintain and promote continuing improvement in air quality through the reduction of emissions and promotion of renewable energy and energy efficiency Promote continuing improvement in air quality Reduction of emissions of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, ammonia and fine particulate matter which are responsible for acidification, eutrophication and ground-level ozone pollution Meet Air Quality Directive standards for the protection of human health — Air Quality Directive Significantly decrease noise pollution and move closer to WHO recommended level |
| Climatic Factors ⁷⁶ | C | Achieving transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient economy that is cognisant of environmental impacts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To minimise emissions of greenhouse gasses Integrate sustainable design solutions into infrastructure (e.g. energy efficient buildings; green infrastructure) Contribute towards the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with national targets Promote development resilient to the effects of climate change Promote the use of renewable energy, energy efficient development and increased use of public transport |
| Cultural Heritage | CH | Safeguard cultural heritage features and their settings through responsible design and positioning of development | Protect places, features, buildings and landscapes of cultural, archaeological or architectural heritage |
| Landscape | L | Protect and enhance the landscape character | To implement the Plan's framework for identification, assessment, protection, management and planning of landscapes having regard to the European Landscape Convention |

Table 8.2 Criteria for appraising the effect of the Plan provisions on SEOs

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| Likely to Improve status of SEOs + | Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated - | Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated - | No Likely interaction with status of SEOs 0 |
|---|--|---|---|

⁷⁶ Please also refer to relevant legislation and requirements under Section 4.10 and Appendix II. Targets under the national Climate Action Plan are reviewed and updated periodically.

8.2 Cumulative Effects⁷⁷

Cumulative effects are one of the types of effects which have been considered by the assessment of the alternatives. Cumulative effects can be described as the addition of many small impacts to create one larger, more significant, impact.

There are two types of potential cumulative effects that have been considered, namely:

- Potential *intra-Plan* cumulative effects - these arise from the interactions between different types of potential environmental effects resulting from a plan, programme, etc. Where there are elevated levels of environmental sensitivities (such as those identified under Section 4), future development could result in environmental conflicts and lead to a deterioration in environmental integrity. The interrelationships between environmental components that help determine these potential effects are identified on Table 8.4 e.g. interrelationships between: human health and water quality; human health and air quality; human health and flood risk; and ecology and water quality.
- Potential *inter-Plan* cumulative effects - these arise when the effects of the implementation of one plan occur in combination with those of other plans, programmes, developments, etc.

Effects that may arise as a result of implementing the Plan have been mitigated to the extent that the only residual adverse effects likely to occur as a result of implementation of the Plan are those which are identified under Table 8.3.

Other policies, plans and programmes that have been considered by the assessment of effects include those which are detailed under Section 2.5 (and associated Appendix II "Relationship with Legislation, Plans and Programmes"), Section 4 and Section 5. Plans and programmes from various sectors will interact with the Plan, including those relating to land use planning. These plans and programmes are subject to their own environmental assessment requirements as relevant. Examples include:

- Land use policy, plans and programmes (e.g. the National Planning Framework, the Northern and Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, the Galway County Development Plan and adjoining County Development Plans and Local Area Plans)
- Galway Local Economic and Community Plan and the Local Economic and Community Plans of adjoining counties;
- Energy policy, plans and programmes (e.g. [Shaping Our Electricity Future Version 1.1 Grid25 and associated Implementation Programme](#) and the National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030);
- Climate related policy, plans and programmes (e.g. Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended, Climate Action Plan 2024, the National Adaptation Framework 2024 and the Galway Climate Action Plan 2024-2029);
- Water services, waste management and transport infrastructure plans (e.g. Uisce Éireann's Water Services Strategic Plan and associated Capital Investment Plan and National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy 2024); and
- Environmental protection and management plans (e.g. River Basin Management Plan and Flood Risk Management Plans).

Potential cumulative/in combination effects include:

- Contributions towards reductions in travel related greenhouse gas and other emissions to air, reductions in consumption from non-renewables and associated achievement of legally binding targets (in combination with plans and programmes from all sectors, including energy, transport and land use planning) as a result of facilitating:
 - Sustainable compact growth;
 - Sustainable mobility, including walking, cycling and public transport;
 - Drainage, flood risk management and resilience;

⁷⁷ The EPA's guidance note 'Good Practice Guidance note on cumulative effects assessment in SEA' has been considered in the assessment.

- Sectors including agriculture, residential heating and infrastructure;
- Sustainable design, energy efficiency and green infrastructure.
- Contributions towards travel related greenhouse gas and other emissions to air (in combination with plans and programmes from all sectors, including transport and land use planning) as a result of facilitating development which must be accompanied by road capacity;
- Facilitation of new development that is accompanied by appropriate levels of water services thereby contributing towards environmental protection;
- Need for and use of water and waste water treatment capacity arising from new developments and associated potential adverse effects;
- Potential cumulative effects upon surface and ground water status as a result of uses, within the Plan area and wider catchment, including housing, employment, agricultural and forestry – loadings and abstractions;
- Potential cumulative effects (habitat damage, enhancing ecological connectivity, contributing towards sustainable mobility) arising from linear developments, such as those relating to green infrastructure, including beyond the Plan boundary;
- Potential cumulative effects on flood risk by, for example, development of greenfield lands or obstruction of flood paths; and
- In combination with plans and programmes from all sectors potential adverse effects on all environmental components arising from all development in greenfield and brownfield areas (e.g. infrastructural, residential, economic, agricultural etc.). The type of these effects are consistent with those described on Table 8.3. These plans and programmes are required to comply with environmental legislation and undergo SEA and AA as relevant comply with environmental legislation while projects are subject to EIA and AA, as relevant.

These effects would have the potential, if unmitigated, if they occurred, to result in changes in the environment within and beyond the Plan area.

A variety of the issues covered by the Plan provisions are regional and county issues which are considered: at Regional Assembly level, in the Northern and Western RSES and by planning authorities across the Region; and at County level, including through the Galway County Development Plan. The solutions to these issues are often regional solutions which are subject to their own consenting procedures. Works arising outside of the Plan area as a result of providing for new development within the Plan area, including works arising as a result of the cumulative provision of development in the wider County and region, would potentially conflict with a number of environmental components, across the wider County and region and beyond, including: ecology, soil function, the status of water bodies and the landscape. Some of these conflicts would be mitigated by measures which will be integrated into the Plan while some will be mitigated by measures arising out of separate consent procedures.

8.3 Overall Evaluation

Galway County Council has integrated various recommendations arising from the SEA process into the Plan (see Section 9). Table 8.3 provides a detailed overall evaluation of the environmental effects arising from the Plan. The effects encompass all in-combination/cumulative effects arising from implementation of the Plan. The Plan would contribute towards the proper planning and sustainable development of the Plan area and the wider County and the effects are consistent with those identified by the SEA for the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028.

The potentially significant adverse environmental effects (if unmitigated) arising from implementation of the Plan are detailed as are residual effects, taking into account mitigation integrated into both the Draft Plan and the Galway County Development Plan – see Section 9.

Environmental impacts which occur will be determined by the nature and extent of multiple or individual projects and site-specific environmental factors. Strategic Environmental Objective (SEO) codes are taken from Table 8.1.

Table 8.3 Overall Evaluation – Effects arising from the Plan

| Environmental Component | Environmental Effects, in combination with the wider planning framework | | | SEO Codes |
|----------------------------------|--|---|--|-----------|
| | Effects include in-combination effects that are planned for through the wider planning framework including the NPF and associated NDP, the Northern and Western RSES, the Galway County Development Plan and adjacent Development Plans and lower-tier land use plans. | | | |
| | Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur | Potentially Significant Adverse Environmental Effects, if unmitigated | Likely Residual Adverse Non-Significant Effects | |
| Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contribution towards protection of ecology (including designated sites, ecological connectivity, habitats) by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to central/core locations within the Plan area) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond.• Contribution towards the maintenance of existing green infrastructure and associated ecosystem services, listed species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats.• Contribution towards protection and/or maintenance of biodiversity and flora and fauna by contributing towards the protection of natural capital including the environmental vectors of air, water and soil. Biodiversity and flora and fauna includes biodiversity in designated sites (including European Sites and Wildlife Sites) and Annexed habitats and species (including birds and bats), listed/protected species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats (including terrestrial and aquatic habitats), and disturbance to biodiversity and flora and fauna – including terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity and flora and fauna.• Sustains existing sustainable rural management practices – and the communities who support them – to ensure the continuation of long-established managed landscapes and the flora and fauna that they contain. | <p>Arising from both construction and operation of development and associated infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loss of/damage to biodiversity in designated sites (including European Sites and Wildlife Sites) and Annexed habitats and species, listed species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats; and disturbance to biodiversity and flora and fauna;• Habitat loss, fragmentation and deterioration, including patch size and edge effects; and• Disturbance (e.g. due to noise and lighting along transport corridors) and displacement of protected species such as birds and bats. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loss of an extent of non-protected habitats and species arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces.• Losses or damage to ecology (these would be in compliance with relevant legislation). | BFF |

| Environmental Component | Environmental Effects, in combination with the wider planning framework Effects include in-combination effects that are planned for through the wider planning framework including the NPF and associated NDP, the Northern and Western RSES, the Galway County Development Plan and adjacent Development Plans and lower-tier land use plans. | | | SEO Codes |
|------------------------------------|--|--|---|------------|
| | Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur | Potentially Significant Adverse Environmental Effects, if unmitigated | Likely Residual Adverse Non-Significant Effects | |
| Population and Human Health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of economic growth to encourage retention of working age population and funding of sustainable development and environmental protection and management. • Contribution towards appropriate provision of infrastructure and services to existing population and planned growth by facilitating compact development of lands (including those within and adjacent to central/core locations within the Plan area) that are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond • Contribution towards the protection of human health by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to central/core locations within the Plan area) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. • Contributes towards protection of human health as a result of contributing towards the protection of natural capital including environmental vectors, such as air and water. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential adverse effects arising from flood events. • Potential interactions if effects arising from environmental vectors. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential interactions with residual effects on environmental vectors – please refer to residual adverse effects under “Soil”, “Water” and “Air and Climatic Factors” below. | PHH |
| Soil | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution towards the protection of soils and designated sites of geological heritage by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to central/core locations within the Plan area) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. • Contribution towards the protection of the environment from contamination. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential adverse effects on the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource, including as a result of development on contaminated lands. • Potential for riverbank erosion. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of an extent of soil function arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces. • Coastal and riverbank erosion will continue to occur naturally over time and is likely to be enhanced by climate change. | S |

| Environmental Component | Environmental Effects, in combination with the wider planning framework Effects include in-combination effects that are planned for through the wider planning framework including the NPF and associated NDP, the Northern and Western RSES, the Galway County Development Plan and adjacent Development Plans and lower-tier land use plans. | | | SEO Codes |
|-------------------------|--|--|---|-----------|
| | Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur | Potentially Significant Adverse Environmental Effects, if unmitigated | Likely Residual Adverse Non-Significant Effects | |
| Water | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution towards the protection of water by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to central/core locations within the Plan area) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. • Contributions towards the protection of water resources including the status of surface and groundwaters and water-based designations. • Contribution towards flood risk management and appropriate drainage. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential adverse effects upon the status of water bodies and entries to the WFD Register of Protected Areas (ecological and human value), arising from changes in quality, flow and/or morphology. • Increase in flood risk and associated effects associated with flood events. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any increased loadings as a result of development to comply with the River Basin Management Plan. • Flood related risks remain due to uncertainty with regard to extreme weather events – however such risks will be mitigated by measures that have been integrated into the Plan. | W |
| Material Assets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution towards appropriate provision of infrastructure and services to existing population and planned growth by facilitating compact development of lands (including those within and adjacent to central/core locations within the Plan area) that are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. • Contribution towards compliance with national and regional water services and waste management policies. • Contribution towards increase in renewable energy use by facilitating renewable energy and electricity transmission infrastructure developments. • Contribution towards limits in increases in energy demand from the transport sector by facilitating sustainable compact growth. • Contribution towards reductions in average energy consumption per capita including promoting sustainable compact growth, sustainable mobility, sustainable design and energy efficiency. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to provide adequate and appropriate waste water treatment (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). • Failure to adequately treat surface water run-off that is discharged to water bodies (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). • Failure to comply with drinking water regulations and serve new development with adequate drinking water (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). • Increases in waste levels. • Potential impacts upon public assets and infrastructure. • Interactions between agricultural waste and soil, water, biodiversity and human health – including as a result of emissions of ammonia from agricultural activities (e.g. manure handling, storage and spreading) and the production of secondary inorganic particulate matter. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceedance of capacity in critical infrastructure risks remain, including due to uncertainty with regard to climate – however, such risks will be mitigated by: measures, including those requiring the timely provision of critical infrastructure, and compliance with the Water Framework Directive and associated River Basin Management Plan. • Residual wastes to be disposed of in line with higher-level waste management policies. • Any impacts upon public assets and infrastructure to comply with statutory planning/consent-granting framework. | MA |

| Environmental Component | Environmental Effects, in combination with the wider planning framework Effects include in-combination effects that are planned for through the wider planning framework including the NPF and associated NDP, the Northern and Western RSES, the Galway County Development Plan and adjacent Development Plans and lower-tier land use plans. | | | SEO Codes |
|---------------------------------|---|---|--|-----------|
| | Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur | Potentially Significant Adverse Environmental Effects, if unmitigated | Likely Residual Adverse Non-Significant Effects | |
| Air and Climatic Factors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution towards climate mitigation and adaptation by facilitating compact development of lands (including those within and adjacent to central/core locations within the Plan area) that are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. • In combination with other plans, programmes etc., contribution towards the objectives of the wide policy framework relating to climate mitigation and adaptation, and associated contribution towards maintaining and improving air quality and managing noise levels, including through measures relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sustainable compact growth; ○ Sustainable mobility, including walking, cycling and public transport; ○ Drainage, flood risk management and resilience; ○ Sectors including agriculture, residential heating and infrastructure; ○ Sustainable design, energy efficiency and green infrastructure. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential conflict between development under the Plan and aiming to reduce carbon emissions in line with local, national and European environmental objectives. • Potential conflicts between transport emissions, including those from cars, and air quality⁷⁸. • Potential conflicts between increased frequency of noise emissions and protection of sensitive receptors⁷⁹. • Potential conflicts with climate adaptation measures including those relating to flood risk management. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An extent of travel related greenhouse gas and other emissions to air. This has been mitigated by provisions which have been integrated into the Plan, including those relating to sustainable compact growth and sustainable mobility. • Interactions between noise emissions and sensitive receptors. Various provisions have been integrated into the Plan to ensure that noise levels at sensitive receptors will be minimised. | AC |
| Cultural Heritage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes towards protection of cultural heritage elsewhere by facilitating development within the Plan area. • Contributes towards protection of cultural heritage within the Plan area by facilitating brownfield development and regeneration. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential effects on protected and unknown archaeology and protected architecture arising from construction and operation activities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential effects on known architectural and archaeological heritage and unknown archaeology however, these will occur in compliance with legislation. | CH |
| Landscape | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes towards protection of wider landscape and landscape designations by facilitating development within the Plan area. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occurrence of adverse visual impacts and conflicts with the appropriate protection of designations relating to the landscape. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscapes will change overtime as a result of natural changes in vegetation cover combined with new developments that will occur in compliance with the Plan's landscape protection measures. | L |

⁷⁸ Although road transport interventions would be likely to result in an overall reduction in traffic flows and associated interactions with air, noise and human health, there would be potential for displacement of traffic to lead to localised increases traffic flows and associated localised potential impacts in terms of increased population exposure to air pollutants and/or elevated noise levels, both within the Plan area and beyond.

⁷⁹ Although road transport interventions would be likely to result in an overall reduction in traffic flows and associated interactions with air, noise and human health, there would be potential for displacement of traffic to lead to localised increases traffic flows and associated localised potential impacts in terms of increased population exposure to air pollutants and/or elevated noise levels, both within the Plan area and beyond.

8.4 Appropriate Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (AA) is being undertaken alongside the preparation of the Plan. The requirement for AA is provided under the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 1992/43/EEC). The AA assesses the effects of the Plan on European Sites designated for certain habitats and species. The emerging conclusion of the AA is that the Draft Plan will not affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 network⁸⁰.

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has been undertaken as part of the preparation of the Local Area Plan. Requirements in relation to SFRA are provided under 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of Environment and Office of Public Works, 2009) and associated Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government Circular PL2/2014. The SFRA has informed both the land use zoning and the written provisions of the Local Area Plan.

8.5 Interrelationship between Environmental Components

The SEA Directive requires the Environmental Report to include information on the likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, fauna, flora, population, human health, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors.

Likely significant effects on environmental components which are identified include those which are interrelated; implementation of the Plan will not affect the interrelationships between these components. The presence of significant interrelationships between environmental components is identified on Table 8.4.

⁸⁰ Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be:
 (a) no alternative solution available;
 (b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the plan/programme/project to proceed; and
 (c) adequate compensatory measures in place.

Table 8.4 Presence of Interrelationships between Environmental Components

| Component | Biodiversity, flora and fauna | Population and human health | Soil | Water | Air and Climatic factors | Material assets | Cultural heritage | Landscape |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|------|-------|--------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------|
| Biodiversity, flora and fauna | | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes |
| Population and Human Health | | | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| Soil | | | | Yes | No | Yes | No | No |
| Water | | | | | No | Yes | No | No |
| Air and Climatic Factors | | | | | | Yes | No | No |
| Material Assets | | | | | | | Yes | Yes |
| Cultural Heritage | | | | | | | | Yes |
| Landscape | | | | | | | | |

8.6 Detailed Evaluation

For an explanation of SEO codes e.g. **BFF**, **PHH**, **S**, **W**, etc. refer to Table 8.1 on page 65.

The following applies to each of the sub-sections 8.6.1 to 8.6.3 below:

The Plan is situated in a hierarchy of documents setting out public policy setting out public policy for, among other things, land use planning, infrastructure, sustainable development, tourism, environmental protection and environmental management, such as the National Planning Framework, the National Development Plan, the National Climate Action Plan 2024, the National Adaptation Framework 2024, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region, the Galway County Development Plan, the Galway Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 and the Galway Local Economic and Community Plan 2024 (for additional detail please refer to Section 2.5 "Relationship with other relevant Plans and Programmes" in this report).

These other existing policies, plans etc. have been subject to their own environmental assessment processes, as relevant, and already provide for various measures that have been compiled into the Plan. The Plan aligns with these documents and will be incorporated into the review and preparation of these documents.

Lower tier plans and projects must be consistent and comply with the provisions of the Plan and of these other policies, plans etc. and will be subject to their own project level EIA and AA requirements as relevant. An assessment of cumulative effects is provided at Section 8.2 of this report.

8.6.1 Vision and Strategic Aims

| | Likely to Improve status of SEOs | Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated | Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated | No Likely interaction with status of SEOs |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| | + | - | - | 0 |
| <p>The Draft Plan sets out a Vision as follows: "Gort is a Self-Sustaining, vibrant, and socially inclusive town with a focus on protecting and enhancing its historical core, natural environment, supporting an educated workforce, and providing a range of supporting services/facilities/amenities. This plan will be delivered through a managed and phase development strategy of appropriately zoned and serviced lands to achieve balanced and sustainable growth for Gort and the immediate environment that it serves."</p> <p>The following strategic aims will assist in delivering the vision for Gort:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Gort as a Self-Sustaining Town as set out in the GCDP 2022 – 2028 and continue to support a sustainable level of population growth as established in the Core Strategy up to 2028 and beyond. Support the delivery of residential units on appropriately zoned land targeted in the Housing Strategy set out in Chapter 2 of the GCDP 2022 – 2028, encouraging sequential and compact growth in the town. Promote the reuse of existing buildings for residential use, where appropriate, having regard to the receiving environment, access to services, capacity of public infrastructure, and the delivery of a high quality of residential amenity. The strategic location of Gort shall be harnessed to enhance the economic and employment potential of the town, by creating sustainable employment opportunities, supported by investment on appropriately zoned lands. Maintain a strong and vibrant town centre that sustains the ability to attract new businesses, which meets the retail and service needs of the town and surrounding areas. Support the principle of the Gort Inse Guaire Town Centre First Plan (September 2023) which seeks to deliver holistic sustainable regeneration | BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L | BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L | | |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| <p>for the current and future needs of the local community through engagement with local business owners, community representatives, and stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and foster appropriate tourism opportunities that capitalise on Gort's tourist potential and better promote itself as a traditional Irish market town, with strong links to its natural, cultural and architectural heritage. • Provide suitable recreation facilities, amenities and support services that shall promote an inclusive and cohesive local environment and serve the needs of the whole community. • Support the redevelopment of underutilised buildings within the town centre to accommodate multi-functional community and cultural spaces, to facilitate the growth of remote-working, cultural, creative and community sectors in the town centre. • Protect and enhance the heritage and character of Gort, including the natural assets, environment, built heritage, public realm, local character, and amenity for the benefit of current and future generations. • Actively encourage sustainable mobility, including walking and cycling, in accordance with the aspirations of the LTP and support the continued provision of investment in public transport and active travel infrastructure. | | | | |
| <p>Commentary</p> <p>The assessment of the Plan's Strategic Aims against Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs BFF, PHH, S, W, MA, A, C, CH and L) is consistent with the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental effects detailed under subsections 8.2 to 8.7 of this report; and • Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report. <p>Implementing the Plan will help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the town and focus on directing compact, sustainable development within the existing envelope of the Plan area. Development of these generally more robust, well-served and well-connected areas of the town will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the town to become a more desirable place to live – so that it maintains populations and services. Compatible sustainable development in the town's sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>The Vision and Strategic Aims would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities and sustainable development of the Plan area, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc. Potential adverse environmental effects arising from land use development and activities include in-combination effects arising from services and infrastructure to service development, for example those relating to water services, transport and energy.</p> <p>The SEA process that is being undertaken alongside the preparation of the Plan has brought about various changes to the emerging Plan through an iterative process. Some of these measures are reproduced under Section 9 "Mitigation Measures" of this report. By integrating SEA recommendations into the Plan, Galway County Council is helping to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The potential significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are avoided, reduced or offset; and • The beneficial environmental effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are maximised. <p>The Vision and Strategic Aims will contribute towards the sustainable development of the Plan area and the protection and management of the environment.</p> | | | | |

8.6.2 Land Use Zoning, Development Management Guidelines and Opportunity Sites

| | Likely to Improve status of SEOs | Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated | Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated | No Likely interaction with status of SEOs |
|---|----------------------------------|---|--|---|
| | + | - | - | 0 |
| <p>The Local Area Plan provides for land use zoning across the Plan area and guidance on relating to land use developments and activities, including development management guidelines and standards relating to flood risk.</p> <p>Opportunity Sites identified comprise Opportunity Site 1 – Town Centre Georges Street & Loughrea Road, Opportunity Site 2 – The Barracks, Opportunity Site 3 – Courtney's Lane and Opportunity Site 4 – Community Lands.</p> | BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L | BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L | | |
| <p>Commentary</p> <p>The assessment of the Plan's land use zoning and associated provisions against Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs BFF, PHH, S, W, MA, A, C, CH and L) is consistent with the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental effects detailed under subsections 8.2 to 8.7 of this report; and Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report. <p>Implementing the Plan will help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the town and focus on directing compact, sustainable development within the existing envelope of the Plan area. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas of the town will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the town to become a more desirable place to live – so that it maintains populations and services. Compatible sustainable development in the town's sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>These provisions would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities and sustainable development of the Plan area, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc. Potential adverse environmental effects arising from land use development and activities include in-combination effects arising from services and infrastructure to service development, for example those relating to water services, transport and energy.</p> <p>The SEA process that is being undertaken alongside the preparation of the Plan has brought about various changes to the emerging Plan through an iterative process. Some of these measures are reproduced under Section 9 "Mitigation Measures" of this report. By integrating SEA recommendations into the Plan, Galway County Council is helping to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The potential significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are avoided, reduced or offset; and The beneficial environmental effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are maximised. <p>Environmental considerations were integrated into the Local Area Plan's zoning through an interdisciplinary approach, which was informed by the environmental considerations identified by the SEA, AA and SFRA processes.</p> <p>Zoning has been applied in a way that primarily seeks to achieve sustainable and compact growth, taking into account the various requirements set out in the higher-level NPF, Western and Northern RSES and Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028.</p> <p>The detailed Plan preparation process undertaken by the Planning Department combined with specialist input from the SFRA process facilitated zoning that helps to avoid inappropriate development being permitted in areas of high flood risk. Also taken into account were environmental sensitivities relating to ecology, cultural heritage, landscape and water.</p> <p>Opportunity Sites are identified by the Plan, which would, if developed, contribute to the enhancement of the public realm, streetscape, vibrancy, vitality, and the retail/services offer in the town.</p> | | | | |

8.6.3 Policy Objectives

| | Likely to Improve status of SEOs | Potential Conflict with status of SEOs - likely to be mitigated | Probable Conflict with status of SEOs - unlikely to be mitigated | No Likely interaction with status of SEOs |
|--|----------------------------------|---|--|---|
| | + | - | - | 0 |
| <p>The Local Area Plan provides for various provisions, including the following policy objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GSST 1 Consistency with Core Strategy GSST 2 Service - Led Development GSST 3 Environmental Assessment GSST 4 Compact Growth GSST 5 Opportunity Sites GSST 6 Residential Development Phasing GSST 7 Residential Infill Development GSST 8 Sequential Development GSST 9 Town Centre GSST 10 Proliferation of Individual Uses GSST 11 Gort Inse Guaire Town Centre First Plan GSST 12 Shop Front Design GSST 13 Social Inclusion and Universal Design and Access GSST 14 Community Facilities GSST 15 Educational Facilities in Gort GSST 16 Business and Technology GSST 17 Business and Enterprise GSST 18 Industrial GSST 19 Open Space, Recreation and Amenity GSST 20 New Playground/Recreational Area GSST 21 Tourism GSST 22 The River Walk GSST 23 Agriculture GSST 24 Public Utilities GSST 25 Constrained Land Use GSST 26 Active Land Management in Gort GSST 27 Social and Affordable Housing GSST 28 Housing for Older persons - Housing for People with Special Needs GSST 29 Other Residential Development GSST 30 Traveller Accommodation GSST 31 Water Supply and Water Conservation GSST 32 High Quality and Contextually Sensitive Design GSST 33 Public Spaces and Streets GSST 34 Spatial Definition and Animation GSST 35 Green Infrastructure GSST 36 Street-Oriented Development and Responsive Frontages GSST 37 Views and Prospects GSST 38 Design Statements | BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L | BFF PHH S W MA A C CH L | | |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| GSST 39 Architectural Heritage GSST 40 Architectural Conservation Areas GSST 41 Development/Works relating to Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Area GSST 42 Zones of Archaeological Notification GSST 43 Archaeology and Infrastructure Schemes GSST 44 Local Transport Plan GSST 45 Transportation Infrastructure GSST 46 Sustainable Transportation GSST 47 Pedestrian and Cycle Network GSST 48 Pedestrian Crossings GSST 49 Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) and Road Safety Audits (RSA) GSST 50 Preservation of Routes, Road Upgrades and Infrastructure Provision GSST 51 Reservation of Access Points GSST 52 Road Junction Improvements GSST 53 Climate Change GSST 54 Climate Change and Local Renewable Energy Sources GSST 55 European Sites GSST 56 Trees, Parkland/Woodland and Hedgerows GSST 57 Biodiversity & Ecological Networks GSST 58 Flood Risk Management Guidelines GSST 59 Flood Risk Management and Assessment GSST 60 Principles of Flood Risk Management Guidelines GSST 61 Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) GSST 62 Protection of Waterbodies and Watercourses GSST 63 Flood Risk Assessment for Planning Applications and CFRAMS GSST 64 Flood Risk Assessment and Climate Change GSST 65 River Basin Management Plan and Protection of Waters GSST 66 Flood Vulnerable Zones GSST 67 Flood Risk Management GSST 68 Waste Prevention, Reduction and Recycling GSST 69 Broadband & Telecommunications GSST 70 Open Access Fibre Ducting GSST 71 Electricity Supply GSST 72 Renewable Energy GSST 73 Development Management Standards, Guidelines and Other Provisions GSST 74 Implementation and Monitoring | | | | |
| Commentary <p>The assessment of the Plan's Policy Objectives against Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs BFF, PHH, S, W, MA, A, C, CH and L) is consistent with the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental effects detailed under subsections 8.2 to 8.7 of this report; and • Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report. <p>Implementing the Plan will help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the town and focus on directing compact, sustainable development within the existing envelope of the Plan area. Development of these generally more robust, well-served and well-connected areas of the town will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the town to become a more desirable place to live – so that it maintains populations and services. Compatible sustainable development in the town's sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.</p> <p>The Policy Objectives would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities and sustainable development of the Plan area, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc. Potential adverse environmental effects arising from land use development and activities include in-combination effects arising from services and infrastructure to service development, for example those relating to water services, transport and energy.</p> | | | | |

Policy Objectives relating to town centre and residential development and regeneration would contribute towards the vibrancy, diversity, vitality, attractiveness, safety, liveability and compact growth of Gort.

Opportunity Sites are identified by the Plan, which would, if developed, contribute to the enhancement of the public realm, streetscape, vibrancy, vitality, and the retail/services offer in the town.

Tourism development would have the potential to contribute towards an increase in the number and dwell time of visitors and associated potential adverse effects. Such effects would include in-combination effects arising from services and infrastructure to service development, including tourism. Examples may include developments/operation of developments relating to water services, transport, energy, access or accommodation. The mitigation of potential adverse effects arising would be contributed towards by Plan/wider planning framework provisions including those relating to infrastructure capacity, visitor management, green infrastructure and ecosystem services.

The development of new and existing walking and cycling networks has the potential to contribute towards sustainable mobility and a better management of mobility and tourism in sensitive areas, thereby benefitting various environmental components including habitats at certain locations. The development of these projects, however, presents a variety of potentially adverse environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure are often constructed in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams. Potential adverse effects would be mitigated both by measures which have been integrated into the Plan which provide for and contribute towards environmental protection, environmental management and sustainable development (including those identified at Section 9 of this report) and by measures arising from lower tier assessments (including those for the preparation of lower tier plans and projects).

Various Policy Objectives would contribute towards the Statutory consent granting and decision-making framework for land use developments and activities, and sustainable development of the Plan area, in combination with other Plan provisions and other plans, programmes, strategies, etc. These include:

- The National Climate Action Plan 2024;
- Galway County Council's Climate Action Plan 2024-2029;
- The National Planning Framework, which has identified National Strategic Outcome Objectives 8 "Build Climate Resilience" and 9 "Support the transition to low carbon and clean energy" under National Strategic Outcome 8 "Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society"; and
- The Western and Northern Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy that has identified various Regional Policy Objectives relating to climate action, including:
 - RPO 4.16 The NWRA shall co-ordinate the identification of potential renewable energy sites of scale in collaboration with Local Authorities and other stakeholders within 3 years of the adoption of the RSES. The identification of such sites (which may extend to include energy storage solutions) will be based on numerous site selection criteria including environmental matters, and potential grid connections.
 - RPO 4.17 To position the region to avail of the emerging global market in renewable energy by: Stimulating the development and deployment of the most advantageous renewable energy systems; Supporting research and innovation; Encouraging skills development and transferability; Raising awareness and public understanding of renewable energy and encourage market opportunities for the renewable energy industry to promote the development and growth of renewable energy businesses; Encourage the development of the transmission and distribution grids to facilitate the development of renewable energy projects and the effective utilisation of the energy generated from renewable sources having regard to the future potential of the region over the lifetime of the Strategy and beyond.
 - RPO 4.18 Support the development of secure, reliable and safe supplies of renewable energy, to maximise their value, maintain the inward investment, support indigenous industry and create jobs.
 - RPO 4.20 Support and encourage the development of the bio-economy sector, and facilitate its development for energy production, heat, and storage distribution, in particular advocating Combined Heat and Power Units integrated into District Heating networks, in combination with Pyrogenic Carbon Capture and Storage (PyCCS) or Bio-Energy Carbon capture and storage (BECCS) all to be done in collaboration with EPA and other regulators.
 - RPO 4.21 Promote innovative new building design and retrofitting of existing buildings, both private properties, and publicly owned, to improve building energy efficiency, energy conservation and the use of renewable energy sources following National Regulations, and Policy.
 - RPO 5.1 The Assembly will support through CARO and Local Authorities the preparation and implementation of Local Climate Strategies which will, inter alia, address vulnerability to climate risks and provide prioritised actions in accordance with the guiding principles of the National Adaptation Framework.
 - PO 6.51 Promote values and policies that make it easy to commute between home, work and school across the region in a way that contributes to a healthy, attractive and climate-friendly region.

Policy Objectives relating to energy, would contribute towards achieving various government objectives and targets including those relating to energy security, climate mitigation and reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing the amount of energy to be consumed from renewable sources. Further general commentary on the types of potential effects arising from certain renewable energy types is provided below.

Bio-Energy

Positive Effects: Contribution towards renewable energy and minimisation of greenhouse gases targets. Can provide for the use of agricultural and other wastes

Potential Negative Effects, if unmitigated:

- Potential impact upon designated and non-designated biodiversity and flora and fauna arising from changes in vegetation. Soil structure may also be impacted upon.
- Changes in farming practices may lead to changes in drainage and runoff which could impact upon biological and chemical status of waters - this could interact with drinking water sources and biodiversity
- Potential human health impact: odour and noise from operation of plants

- Potential impacts upon traffic during operation due to transportation of fuel to plants
- Fuels derived from bio-mass still produce emissions however these are less than those derived from fossil fuels
- Changes to the land cover of areas could occur however visual impacts would depend on perception of the relevant area;
- Biomass plants may have visual impacts - these would depend on perception of the relevant area

Geothermal Energy

Positive Effects: Contribution towards renewable energy and minimisation of greenhouse gases targets

Potential Negative Effects, if unmitigated:

- Potential impacts upon the status of waters and ecology contained within, especially arising from changes in the temperature of groundwater which can impact upon the structure and ecology of the aquifer and any dependent surface waters - this could interact with drinking water sources
- Potential interactions leading to change in structure of soil and geology
- Potential impacts upon archaeology, including unknown underground archaeology
- Potential impacts upon on site water services
- Potential impacts upon context of archaeological and architectural heritage arising from surface installation
- Large scale installations may have visual impacts – these would depend on perception of the relevant area

Hydro-Energy

Positive Effects: Contribution towards renewable energy and minimisation of greenhouse gases targets

Potential Negative Effects, if unmitigated:

- Depending on the scale and location of the development there is potential for impacts to occur on biodiversity, in particular aquatic biodiversity
- Potential to impact upon the morphological, biological and chemical status of waters - this could interact with drinking water sources (in freshwater) and biodiversity
- Potential interactions leading to change in structure of soil and geology
- Operation could impact upon flood risk elsewhere
- Potential impacts upon archaeological heritage or nearby architectural heritage, including context
- Changes to the character of locations may occur however visual impacts would depend upon, inter alia, the size of the installation, ancillary facilities and the perception and visibility of the relevant area

Solar Energy and Solar Thermal Energy

Positive Effects: Contribution towards renewable energy and minimisation of greenhouse gases targets

Potential Negative Effects, if unmitigated:

- Potential impacts on architectural heritage – including the context of this heritage – at micro scale
- Potential impacts on habitats and species and micro scale
- Large scale installations may have visual impacts – these would depend on perception of the relevant area -, however these are unlikely to be provided for

Waste to Energy

Positive Effects: Contribution towards renewable energy and minimisation of greenhouse gases targets. Meets waste management objectives

Potential Negative Effects, if unmitigated:

- Potential odour issues
- Construction of facilities can result in impacts similar to other built development – potential visual impact, impact on ecology, waters
- Design needs to ensure that emissions comply with relevant standards

Wind Energy

Positive Effects: Contribution towards renewable energy and minimisation of greenhouse gases targets

Potential Negative Effects, if unmitigated:

- Potential impacts include those associated with construction and operation of the turbines and ancillary facilities and infrastructure (including roads and electrical infrastructure)
- Potential human health impact: shadow flicker, noise, and impacts arising from bog bursts and landslides
- Potential impact upon designated and non-designated biodiversity and flora and fauna including birdlife
- Potential interactions leading to change in structure of soil and geology and changes to drainage
- Potential impacts on water status during construction – this could interact with drinking water sources and biodiversity
- Potential impacts upon the context of protected archaeological and architectural heritage – including the context of this heritage – as well as unknown archaeological heritage
- Potential impacts upon traffic during construction due to transportation of turbine components
- Changes to the character of areas would be likely to occur however visual impacts would depend on various factors including the size, number and spacing of the turbines, perception of the relevant areas and any cumulative effect arising from multiple wind farms

Policy Objectives relating to the management of flood risk and surface water drainage would benefit the protection of human health, biodiversity, flora and fauna, cultural heritage, water status and existing infrastructure and services. Flood risk management infrastructure (if required) has the potential to result in significant adverse environmental effects during construction and operation on most environmental components. These types of infrastructure are often constructed in ecologically and visually sensitive areas and adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams. Potential adverse effects will be mitigated both by measures which have been integrated into the Plan (including those identified at Section 9 of this report) and by measures arising from lower tier assessments.

As identified under Section 1.2.4 "Gort Local Transport Plan": "The detail associated with new transport or green infrastructure projects referred to in this Plan, including locations and associated mapping, that are not already permitted or provided for by existing plans / programmes / etc. is non-binding and indicative. Such new projects shall be subject to feasibility assessment, taking into account the environmental constraints and the objectives of the Plan relating to sustainable mobility. A Corridor and Route Selection Process will be undertaken for such projects where appropriate (as outlined in the Galway County Development Plan Policy Objective PRP 2). Proposed interventions will be required to demonstrate that they are consistent with all relevant legislative requirements." Transport related provisions, including those of the Local Transport Plan, would contribute towards the planning framework for the future development of sustainable transport and movement within and beyond the Plan area (including relating to delivery of the infrastructure and services proposed in the Local Transport Plan), in combination with the implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans and programmes. Many of these

provisions would primarily contribute towards maximising sustainable mobility and associated interactions with emissions to air (including noise and greenhouse gas emissions), energy usage, air quality and human health. The facilitation of journeys by car, in particular, would give rise to emissions to air. PRP 2 "Corridor & Route Selection Process"⁸¹ of the County Development Plan 2022-2028 would need to be complied with by new projects as relevant.

Provisions relating to water resources and services would, by protecting water resources, appropriately treating waste water and providing safe drinking water, contribute towards the protection of various environmental components including: human health, biodiversity and flora and fauna, the status of waters, flood risk management and soil. There would be potential for significant adverse environmental effects upon various environmental components to arise during construction of water services infrastructure. Such potential significant adverse effects could also arise during operation: the protection of human health, biodiversity and flora and fauna and the status of waters, could all be conflicted with by outflows and abstractions.

The SEA process that is being undertaken alongside the preparation of the Plan has brought about various changes to the emerging Plan through an iterative process. Some of these measures are reproduced under Section 9 "Mitigation Measures" of this report. By integrating SEA recommendations into the Plan, Galway County Council is helping to ensure that:

- The potential significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are avoided, reduced or offset; and
- The beneficial environmental effects of implementing the Plan, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Plan and other plans, programmes, etc., are maximised.

Further to these provisions there are various other provisions in the County Development Plan 2022-2028 with which new development under the Local Area Plan would have to comply with as relevant.

The focus of various Policy Objectives is the protection and management of the environment, such as those relating to environmental assessment, architectural heritage, European sites, flood risk management and appropriate and adequate infrastructure provision.

The Policy Objectives would contribute towards the sustainable development and the protection and management of the environment.

⁸¹ PRP 2 Corridor and Route Selection Process. Policy objectives relating to new roads and other transport infrastructure projects that are not already provided for by existing plans/ programmes or are not already permitted, are subject to the undertaking of feasibility assessment, taking into account planning need, environmental sensitivities as identified in the SEA Environmental Report and the policy objectives of the Plan relating to sustainable mobility. Where feasibility is established, a Corridor and Route Selection Process will be undertaken where appropriate, for relevant new road infrastructure in two stages: Stage 1 – Route Corridor Identification, Evaluation and Selection; and Stage 2 – Route Identification, Evaluation and Selection.

Section 9 Mitigation Measures

9.1 Introduction

Mitigation measures are measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and, as fully as possible, offset any significant adverse impacts on the environment of implementing the Plan. Various environmental sensitivities and issues have been communicated to the Council through the SEA, Appropriate Assessment (AA) and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) processes. By integrating related recommendations into the Draft Plan, the Council has ensured that both the beneficial environmental effects of implementing the Plan have been and will be maximised and that potential adverse effects have been and will be avoided, reduced or offset.

Mitigation was achieved through:

- Strategic work undertaken by the Council to ensure evidence-based planning;
- Considering alternatives for the Plan;
- The integration of environmental considerations into zoning provisions of the Draft Local Area Plan;
- The integration of individual SEA, AA and SFRA provisions into the text of the Draft Local Area Plan; and
- The integration of individual provisions into the text of the existing, already in force, County Development Plan.

9.2 Strategic work undertaken by the Council to ensure evidence-based planning

Far in advance of the placing of the Draft Plan on public display, Galway County Council undertook various works in order to inform the preparation of the Plan.

The findings of this strategic work have been integrated into the Plan and will contribute towards both environmental protection and management and sustainable development.

The undertaking of this SEA process was part of this strategic work and contributed towards the integration of environmental considerations into individual Plan provisions.

9.3 Consideration of Alternatives

Although strategic alternatives in relation to the content of the Plan were significantly limited for the Plan (see Section 6), as part of the Plan preparation/SEA process alternatives for the Plan were considered.

These alternatives were assessed by the SEA process (see Section 7) and the findings of this assessment informed the selection of alternatives for the Plan, facilitating an informed choice with respect to the type of Plan that was prepared and placed on public display.

9.4 Integration of environmental considerations into Zoning of the Draft Plan

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

Zoning has been applied in a way that primarily seeks to achieve sustainable and compact growth, taking into account the various requirements set out in the higher-level NPF, Western and Northern RSES and Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028.

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

9.5 Integration of individual provisions into the text of the Draft Plan

Various provisions have been integrated into the text of the Draft Plan through the Plan-preparation and SEA, SFRA and AA processes. Both the Planning and the assessment teams contributed towards the mitigation which was developed over multiple iterations and was informed by, inter alia, various communications through the SEA, AA and SFRA processes.

Table 9.1 links key mitigation measure(s) to the likely significant effects of implementing the Plan, if unmitigated. The effects are consistent with those identified by the SEA for the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028. The measures generally benefit multiple environmental components i.e. a measure providing for the protection of biodiversity, flora and fauna could beneficially impact upon the minimisation of flood risk and the protection of human health, for example.

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

In addition to the individual provisions integrated into the text of the Draft Local Area Plan, individual provisions relating to environmental protection and management have been integrated into the existing, already in force, Galway County Development Plan. These measures, which must be complied with by development under the Local Area Plan, are identified alongside the Local Area Plan measures on Table 9.1.

Table 9.1 Integration of Environmental Considerations into the Plan

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

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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| | | <p>core and/or sequential extensions to the existing residential fabric of suitably serviced Residential Phase 1 lands within the LAP boundary, subject to the principles of proper planning and sustainable development and the current County Development Plan.</p> <p>GSST 9 Town Centre</p> <p>1) It is a policy objective of Galway County Council that Gort Town Centre will remain the primary focus for the location of new retail and commercial development. The Planning Authority will ensure that the location of future retail development is consistent with the key policy principles and order of priority as set out in the Guidelines for Planning Authorities: Retail Planning 2012 (and any updated/superseded document) and will require Retail Impact Assessments, including details of the sequential approach and Design Statements for retail developments in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines.</p> <p>2) This plan will also promote the development of commercial and complementary mixed uses, on suitable lands that can provide a focal point for the provision of services to the town and opportunities for commercial enterprises, retail developments and employment creation</p> <p>3) The plan will protect and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre by ensuring that it remains the primary retail, commercial and mixed use centre of Gort and prohibit a proliferation of any individual use or other uses, which in the opinion of the Planning Authority do not contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centre.</p> <p>GSST 21 Tourism</p> <p>Galway County Council shall encourage and foster appropriate tourism opportunities that capitalise on Gort's tourist potential and better promote itself as a traditional Irish market town, with strong links to its natural, cultural and architectural heritage.</p> <p>Any proposals shall be required to comply with environmental considerations and the relevant DM Standards.</p> <p>GSST 73 Development Management Standards, Guidelines and Other Provisions</p> <p>Ensure that all of the provisions and general development management standards and guidelines set out in this LAP and the current Galway County Development Plan 2022 - 2028, or any subsequent variation or review shall apply as appropriate in the plan area. Provisions from the County Development Plan identified as mitigation in the SEA Environmental Report and Natura Impact Report shall apply regardless of whether the County Development Plan expires and/or is reviewed.</p> | |
| Biodiversity and flora and fauna | <p>Arising from both construction and operation of development and associated infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of/damage to biodiversity in designated sites (including European Sites and Wildlife Sites) and Annexed habitats and species, listed species, ecological connectivity and non-designated | <p>GSST 19 Open Space, Recreation and Amenity</p> <p>Promote the sustainable management, use and/or development, as appropriate, of open space/recreation and amenity lands. This will include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of open spaces and recreational activities, in accordance with best practice and on suitable lands with adequate access to the local community; Existing open space, sport and recreational facilities should be retained unless it can be clearly demonstrated to the satisfaction of Galway County Council that these uses are surplus to requirements of the local community or are to be replaced by an equivalent or better provision; Appropriate management and use of any flood risk areas within the OS zone to avoid, reduce and/or mitigate, as appropriate, the risk and potential impact of flooding; Support the protection of habitats and species listed in the annexes to | <p>Also refer to detailed measures for settlements contained in Volume 2 of the Plan.</p> <p>LP 1 Lighting Schemes. To require that all developments shall ensure lighting schemes are designed so that excessive light spillage is minimised to ensure light pollution in the surrounding environment including residential amenity, wildlife and near public roads is limited. Such lighting schemes shall be submitted and agreed with the Planning Authority.</p> <p>LP 2 Lighting and Climate Action. To require the use of low energy LED (or equivalent) lighting in support of Climate Action.</p> <p>LP 3 Dark Skies. To encourage the maintenance of dark skies in rural areas and to limit light pollution in urban and rural areas.</p> <p>F2 Sustainable Development. To encourage the development of a well-managed sustainable forestry sector, which is compatible with the protection of the environment including the avoidance of likely significant effects on European sites (SACs and SPAs) and is planted, managed and harvested in accordance with the Forest Service Guidelines for Landscape, Forest Harvesting and Environmental, Archaeology, Biodiversity and Water Quality.</p> <p>F3 Native Woodlands. To ensure that existing native woodlands are protected and enhanced and, where appropriate, encourage the conversion of coniferous forest to native woodlands with a focus on opportunities for habitat linkage and wider eco-services.</p> <p>F4 Forestry Development. To encourage forestry and forestry related development, as a means of diversifying from traditional agriculture activity with a preference for native species.</p> <p>F5 Deforestation. To promote the avoidance of deforestation or commercial afforestation within European sites unless directly</p> |

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| | <p>habitats; and disturbance to biodiversity and flora and fauna;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Habitat loss, fragmentation and deterioration, including patch size and edge effects; and Disturbance (e.g. due to noise and lighting along transport corridors) and displacement of protected species such as birds and bats. | <p>and/or covered by the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC, as amended) and Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), and species that are protected under the Wildlife Acts, 1976-2000, and stepping stones or ecological corridors in the context of Article 10 of the Habitats Directive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism Encourage and assist the development of the tourist potential within Gort in a manner that protects the architectural, archaeological and cultural significance of the town and its environs in a sustainable manner. <p>GSST 21 Tourism Galway County Council shall encourage and foster appropriate tourism opportunities that capitalise on Gort's tourist potential and better promote itself as a traditional Irish market town, with strong links to its natural, cultural and architectural heritage.</p> <p>Any proposals shall be required to comply with environmental considerations and the relevant DM Standards.</p> <p>GSST 22 The River Walk Protect and enhance walkways along the Cannahowna/Gort River including the Kinincha and Pound Road in a sustainable manner where possible. Regard should be had to the protection of Otters and Otter breeding sites and resting places along the river walk.</p> <p>Any proposals shall be required to comply with environmental considerations and the relevant DM Standards.</p> <p>GSST 23 Agriculture To promote the development of agriculture and agriculture-related uses in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development. There will be a general presumption against residential development on Agricultural zoned lands, located within the plan boundary except for single house developments for family members on farm family-owned lands.</p> <p>GSST 35 Green Infrastructure Galway County Council shall promote the benefit of open spaces and implement the integration of green infrastructure/networks (e.g., interconnected network of green spaces (including aquatic ecosystems) and other physical features on land) into new development and regeneration proposals in order to mitigate and adapt to climate change.</p> <p>GSST 55 European Sites Protect European Sites including Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) that form part of the Natura 2000 network. In accordance with the requirements in the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010, the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011) (and any subsequent amendments or updated legislation) and having due regard to the guidance in the Appropriate Assessment Guidelines 2010 (and any updated/superseding guidance). A plan or project (e.g., proposed development) within the plan area will only be authorised after the competent authority (Galway County Council) has ascertained, based on scientific evidence and an Appropriate Assessment where necessary, that:</p> <p>1.The plan or project will not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of any European Sites (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects);</p> <p>Or</p> | <p>relating to the management of the site for its qualifying interests.</p> <p>MEQ2 "Protection of the Environment. The Council shall require the following in relation to the management of authorised aggregate extraction</p> <p>(a) All quarries shall comply with the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive, the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 and by the guidance as contained within the DoEHLG Quarries and Ancillary Facilities Guidelines 2004, the EPA Guidelines 'Environmental Management in the Extractive Industry: Non Scheduled Minerals 2006 (including any updated/superseding documents) and to DM Standard 21 of this Development Plan;</p> <p>(b) Require development proposals on or in the proximity of quarry sites, to carry out appropriate investigations into the nature and extent of old quarries (where applicable). Such proposals shall also investigate the nature and extent of soil and groundwater contamination and the risks associated with site development works together with appropriate mitigation;</p> <p>(c) Require Development Proposals to assess the potential impact of extraction in areas where geo-morphological interest, groundwater and important aquifers, important archaeological features and Natural Heritage Areas are located;</p> <p>d) Have regard to the Landscape Character Assessment of the County and its recommendations;</p> <p>(e) Ensure that any quarry activity has minimal adverse impact on the road network and that the full cost of road improvements, including during operations and at time of closure, which are necessary to facilitate those industries are borne by the industry itself.</p> <p>(f) Ensure that the extraction of minerals or aggregates does not adversely impact on residential or environmental amenity;</p> <p>(g) Protect all known un-worked deposits from development that might limit their scope for extraction."</p> <p>NHB 1 Natural Heritage and Biodiversity of Designated Sites, Habitats and Species. Protect and where possible enhance the natural heritage sites designated under EU Legislation and National Legislation (Habitats Directive, Birds Directive, European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 and Wildlife Acts) and extend to any additions or alterations to sites that may occur during the lifetime of this plan. Protect and, where possible, enhance the plant and animal species and their habitats that have been identified under European legislation (Habitats and Birds Directive) and protected under national Legislation (European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI 477 of 2011), Wildlife Acts 1976-2010 and the Flora Protection Order (SI 94 of 1999). Support the protection, conservation and enhancement of natural heritage and biodiversity, including the protection of the integrity of European sites, that form part of the Natura 2000 network, the protection of Natural Heritage Areas, proposed Natural Heritage Areas, Ramsar Sites, Nature Reserves, Wild Fowl Sanctuaries (and other designated sites including any future designations) and the promotion of the development of a green/ ecological network."</p> <p>NHB 2 European Sites and Appropriate Assessment. To implement Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and to ensure that Appropriate Assessment is carried out in relation to works, plans and projects likely to impact on European sites (SACs and SPAs), whether directly or indirectly or in combination with any other plan(s) or project(s). All assessments must be in compliance with the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011. All such projects and plans will also be required to comply with statutory Environmental Impact Assessment requirements where relevant.</p> <p>NHB 3 Protection of European Sites. No plans, programmes, or projects etc. giving rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on European sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans, programmes, etc. or projects.*</p> <p>NHB 4 Ecological Appraisal of Biodiversity. Ensure, where appropriate, the protection and conservation of areas, sites, species and ecological/networks of biodiversity value outside designated sites. Where appropriate require an ecological appraisal, for development not directly connected with or necessary to the management of European Sites, or a proposed European Site and which are likely to have significant effects on that site either individually or cumulatively.</p> <p>NHB 5 Ecological Connectivity and Corridors. Support the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and ecological connectivity in non-designated sites, including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, semi-natural grasslands, rivers, streams, natural springs, wetlands, stonewalls, geological and geo-morphological systems, other landscape features and associated wildlife areas where these form part of the ecological network and/or may be considered as ecological corridors in the context of Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.</p> <p>NHB 6 Implementation of Plans and Strategies. Support the implementation of any relevant recommendations contained in the National Heritage Plan 2030, the National Biodiversity Plan, the All Ireland Pollinator Plan and the National Peatlands Strategy and any such plans and strategies during the lifetime of this plan.</p> <p>NHB 7 Mitigation Measures. Require mitigating measures in certain cases where it is evident that biodiversity is likely to be affected. These measures may, in association with other specified requirements, include establishment of wildlife areas/corridors/parks, hedgerow, tree planting, wildflower meadows/marshes and other areas. With regard to residential development, in certain cases, these measures may be carried out in conjunction with the provision of open space and/or play</p> |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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| | | <p>2.The plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of any European Sites (that does not host a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions, and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of European Sites;</p> <p>Or</p> <p>3.The plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of any European Sites (that hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, restricted to reasons of human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of European Sites.</p> <p>GSST 56 Trees, Parkland/Woodland and Hedgerows</p> <p>a) Protect important trees, tree clusters and hedgerows in the plan area and ensure that development proposals take cognisance of significant trees/tree stands. Ensure that all planting schemes use suitable native variety of trees.</p> <p>b) Seek to retain natural boundaries, including stone walls, hedgerows and tree boundaries, wherever possible and replace with a boundary type similar to the existing boundary where removal is unavoidable. Discourage the felling of mature trees where possible. All works to be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Forestry Act, 1946 (as amended);</p> <p>c) Carry out a tree survey on important tree stands within the plan area by suitably qualified personnel (excluding Ash).</p> <p>GSST 57 Biodiversity & Ecological Networks</p> <p>Support the protection of biodiversity and ecological connectivity within the Plan Area including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, rivers, streams, natural springs, peatlands, wetlands, stonewalls, and other landscape features, where these form part of the ecological network. Seek to retain and/or incorporate these natural features into developments, to avoid ecological fragmentation and maintain ecological corridors.</p> <p>GSST 65 River Basin Management Plan and Protection of Waters</p> <p>Support the implementation of the relevant recommendations and measures as outlined in the National River Basin Management Plan or any other plan that may supersede same during the lifetime of this Local Area Plan. Development shall only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on the water environment, including surface water, groundwater quality and quantity, river corridors and associated wetlands. Galway County Council will support the protection and, where appropriate, the restoration of all water bodies in order to reach good status and will seek to prevent deterioration in the status of all water bodies.</p> | <p>areas.</p> <p>NHB 8 Increased Awareness of the County's Biodiversity and Natural Heritage. Facilitate increased awareness of the County's biodiversity and natural heritage through the provision of information to landowners and the community generally, in cooperation with statutory and other partners.</p> <p>NHB 9 Protection of Bats and Bats Habitats. Seek to protect bats and their roosts, their feeding areas, flight paths and commuting routes. Ensure that development proposals in areas which are potentially important for bats, including areas of woodland, linear features such as hedgerows, stonewalls, watercourses and associated riparian vegetation which may provide migratory/foraging uses shall be subject to suitable assessment for potential impacts on bats. This will include an assessment of the cumulative loss of habitat or the impact on bat populations and activity in the area and may include a specific bat survey. Assessments shall be carried out by a suitably qualified professional and where development is likely to result in significant adverse effects on bat populations or activity in the area, development will be prohibited or require mitigation and/or compensatory measures, as appropriate. The impact of lighting on bats and their roosts and the lighting up of objects of cultural heritage must be adequately assessed in relation to new developments and the upgrading of existing lighting systems.</p> <p>NHB 10 NPWS & Integrated Management Plans. Article 6(1) of the Habitats Directive requires that Member States establish the necessary conservation measures for European sites involving, if need be, appropriate management plans specifically designed for the sites or integrated into other development plans. The NPWS's current priority is to identify site specific conservation objectives; management plans may be considered after this is done. Where Integrated Management Plans are being prepared by the NPWS for European sites (or parts thereof), the NPWS shall be engaged with in order to ensure that plans are fully integrated with the Plan and other plans and programmes, with the intention that such plans are practical, achievable and sustainable and have regard to all relevant ecological, cultural, social and economic considerations, including those of local communities.</p> <p>NHB 11 Increases in Visitor Numbers to Semi-Natural Areas, Visitor and Habitat Management. Seek to manage any increase in visitor numbers in order to avoid significant effects including loss of habitat and disturbance, including ensuring that any new projects, such as greenways, are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities, such as riparian zones. Where relevant, the Planning Authority and those receiving permission for development under the Plan shall seek to manage any increase in visitor numbers and/or any change in visitor behaviour in order to avoid significant effects, including loss of habitat and disturbance. Management measures may include ensuring that new projects and activities are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities. Visitor/Habitat Management Plans will be required for proposed projects as relevant and appropriate.</p> <p>WTWF 1 Wetland Sites Protect and conserve the ecological and biodiversity heritage of the wetland sites in the County. Ensure that an appropriate level of assessment is completed in relation to wetland habitats that are subject to proposals which would involve drainage or reclamation that might destroy, fragment or degrade any wetland in the county. This includes lakes and ponds, turloughs, watercourses, springs and swamps, marshes, fens, heath, peatlands, some woodlands as well as some coastal and marine habitats. Protect Ramsar sites under The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (especially as Waterfowl Habitat).</p> <p>P 1 Protection of Peatlands. Ensure that peatland areas which are designated (or proposed for designation) as NHAs, SACs or SPAs are conserved for their ecological, climate regulation, education and culture, archaeological potential including any ancient walkways (toghers) through bogs.</p> <p>P 2 Best Practice in Peatland conservation and management. Work in partnership with relevant stakeholders on all suitable peatland sites to demonstrate best practice in sustainable peatland conservation, management and restoration techniques and to promote their heritage and educational value subject to Ecological Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment Screening, as appropriate.</p> <p>P3 Framework Plans. Seek to support relevant agencies such as Bord na Mona in advancing rehabilitation works for the peatlands and related infrastructure, to provide for the future sustainable and environmentally sensitive use of peatlands sites including for amenity purposes.</p> <p>IS 1 Control of Invasive and Alien Invasive Species. It is a policy objective of the Planning Authority to support measures for the prevention and eradication of invasive species.</p> <p>IS 2 Invasive Species Management Plan. Ensure that proposals for development do not lead to the spread or introduction of invasive species. If developments are proposed on sites where invasive species are currently or were previously present, an invasive species management plan will be required. A landscaping plan will be required for developments near water bodies and such plans must not include alien invasive species.</p> <p>PO 1 Delivery of All Ireland Pollinator Plan</p> <p>To facilitate the delivery of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan where possible. In the interest of preserving and enhancing biodiversity and working in conjunction with the All Ireland Pollinator Plan, it shall be the policy objective of the Planning Authority to ensure that at least 20% of the green space on all housing estates being built will have to be dedicated, developed and maintained as a pollinator zone. The area dedicated can be confined to one single lot or various lots around the</p> |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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| Population and human health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential adverse effects arising from flood events. Potential interactions if effects arising from environmental vectors. | <p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Soil, Water and Air and Climatic Factors.</p> <p>Strategic Aims</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Gort as a Self-Sustaining Town as set out in the GCDP 2022 – 2028 and continue to support a sustainable level of population growth as established in the Core Strategy up to 2028 and beyond. Support the delivery of residential units on appropriately zoned land targeted in the Housing Strategy set out in Chapter 2 of the GCDP 2022 – 2028, encouraging sequential and compact growth in the town. Promote the reuse of existing buildings for residential use, where appropriate, having regard to the receiving environment, access to services, capacity of public infrastructure, and the delivery of a high quality of residential amenity. The strategic location of Gort shall be harnessed to enhance the economic and employment potential of the town, by creating sustainable employment opportunities, supported by investment on appropriately zoned lands. Maintain a strong and vibrant town centre that sustains the ability to attract new businesses, which meets the retail and service needs of the town and surrounding areas. Support the principle of the Gort Inse Guaire Town Centre First Plan (September 2023) which seeks to deliver holistic sustainable regeneration for the current and future needs of the local community through engagement with local business owners, community representatives, and stakeholders. Encourage and foster appropriate tourism opportunities that capitalise on Gort's tourist potential and better promote itself as a traditional Irish market town, with strong links to its natural, cultural and architectural heritage. Provide suitable recreation facilities, amenities and support services that shall promote an inclusive and cohesive local environment and serve the needs of the whole community. Support the redevelopment of underutilised buildings within the town centre to accommodate multi-functional community and cultural spaces, to facilitate the growth of remote-working, cultural, creative and community sectors in the town centre. Protect and enhance the heritage and character of Gort, including the natural assets, environment, built heritage, public realm, local character, and amenity for the benefit of current and future generations. Actively encourage sustainable mobility, including walking and cycling, in accordance with the aspirations of the LTP and support the continued provision of investment in public transport and active travel infrastructure. | <p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Soil, Water and Air and Climatic Factors.</p> <p>AQ 1 Ambient Air Quality To promote the preservation of best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development in accordance with the EU Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFÉ) Directive (2008/50/EC) and ensure that all air emissions associated with new developments are within Environmental Quality Standards as set out in the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (SI No. 180 of 2011) (or any updated/superseding documents).</p> <p>AQ 2 Assessment of Air Quality To require developments which would have the potential to have adverse impacts on air quality to carry out assessments of the impact of the development on air quality.</p> <p>AQ 3 Air Quality Mitigation Measures To require the use of appropriate mitigation measures such as dust dampeners to minimise the potential impacts of developments on air quality.</p> <p>AQ 4 Air Purification Galway County Council shall encourage landscaping and deciduous tree planting in an environmentally sensitive manner within towns and villages as a means of air purification, the filtering of suspended particles and the improvement of their micro-climate.</p> <p>AQ 5 Radon Galway County Council shall have regard, to the specific guidance on radon prevention measures for new homes as contained within the existing Building Regulations (including any updated/superseding Regulations that may be published within the lifetime of this Development Plan).</p> <p>NP 1 Galway County Council Noise Action Plan 2019-2023 To implement the Galway County Council Noise Action Plan 2019-2023 (and any subsequent Plan) in order to avoid, prevent and reduce the harmful effects, including annoyance, due to environmental noise exposure.</p> <p>NP 2 Developments within Noise Maps (Noise Action Plan 2019-2023) To require that where new developments are proposed within the noise limits of the noise maps for the designated sections of roads in the County, appropriate mitigation measures are undertaken so as to prevent harmful effects from environmental noise.</p> <p>NP3 Noise Impact Assessments To require an assessment of impact of the development on noise levels, having regard to the provisions of the Environmental Protection Agency Acts 1992 and 2003 and the EPA Noise Regulations 1994 when assessing planning application.</p> <p>NP 4 Noise Pollution and Regulation Restrict development proposals causing noise pollution in excess of best practice standards and regulate and control activities likely to give rise to excessive noise, other than those activities which are regulated by the EPA</p> <p>NP 5 Noise Mitigation Measures Require activities likely to give rise to excessive noise to install noise mitigation measures and monitors. The provision of a noise audit may be required where appropriate.</p> <p>SQ 3 Soil Protection, Contamination and Remediation Adequate and appropriate investigations shall be carried out into the nature and extent of any soil and groundwater contamination and the risks associated with site development work, where brownfield development is proposed. All undeveloped, contaminated sites shall be remediated to internationally accepted standards prior to redevelopment. All applications shall be accompanied by a report from a qualified, expert consultant remediation incorporating international best practice and expertise on innovative ecological restoration techniques including specialist planting and green initiatives that create aesthetically improved sites, healthy environments and contribute to the provision of new green open spaces as integral parts of newly created areas. Treatment/management of any contaminated material shall comply as appropriate with the Waste Management Act 1996 (waste licence, waste facility permit), as amended, and under the EPA Act 1992 (Industrial Emissions licensing, in particular the First Schedule, Class 11 Waste), as amended. These measures will ensure that contaminated material will be managed in a manner that removes any risk to human health and ensures that the end use will be compatible with any risk.</p> <p>MAS 1 Separation Distances from SEVESO Sites To ensure that appropriate distances are maintained between any proposed development and any existing Seveso II establishment, in the interest of the health and safety of the occupiers of the proposed development.</p> <p>MAS 2 Soil Protection Measures To require that, the siting of new establishments, or modification of existing establishments classified under the Seveso II Directive, and new development in the vicinity of existing establishments shall take into account the need to prevent major accidents involving hazardous substances and safeguard both the public and the environment.</p> |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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| | <p>quality, flow and/or morphology.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in flood risk and associated effects associated with flood events. | <p>GSST 25 Constrained Land Use To facilitate the appropriate management and sustainable use of land within Flood Zones A and B. New development in these areas will generally be limited (apart from where the Plan-level Justification Test outlined in the accompanying SFRA has been passed or where the uses comprise minor developments in existing developed areas, as outlined in Section 5.28 of the Guidelines as amended by Circular PL 2/2014) to water-compatible uses in Flood Zone A, and less vulnerable or water compatible uses in Flood Zone B, and a detailed site-specific Flood Risk Assessment will be required in these areas. This limitation shall take primacy over any other provision relating to land use zoning objectives. The Plan-level Justification Test has been passed for all lands zoned Town Centre overlapping within Flood Zone A or B.</p> <p>GSST 35 Green Infrastructure Galway County Council shall promote the benefit of open spaces and implement the integration of green infrastructure/networks (e.g., interconnected network of green spaces (including aquatic ecosystems) and other physical features on land) into new development and regeneration proposals in order to mitigate and adapt to climate change.</p> <p>GSST 57 Biodiversity & Ecological Networks Support the protection of biodiversity and ecological connectivity within the Plan Area including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, rivers, streams, natural springs, peatlands, wetlands, stone walls, and other landscape features, where these form part of the ecological network. Seek to retain and/or incorporate these natural features into developments, to avoid ecological fragmentation and maintain ecological corridors.</p> <p>GSST 58 Flood Risk Management Guidelines It is the policy objective of Galway County Council to support, in co-operation with the OPW, the implementation of the EU Flood Risk Directive (2007/60/EC), the Flood Risk Regulations (SI No. 122 of 2010) and the DEHLG/OPW publication The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines (2009) (and any updated/superseding legislation or policy guidance) and Department Circular PL2/2014 or any updated / superseding version.</p> <p>GSST 59 Flood Risk Management and Assessment It is a Policy Objective of the Council to comply with the requirements of the DoEHLG/OPW The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities and its accompanying Technical Appendices Document 2009 (including any updated/superseding documents). This will include the following: a) Avoid, reduce and/or mitigate, as appropriate in accordance with the Guidelines; b) Development proposals in areas where there is an identified or potential risk of flooding or that could give rise to a risk of flooding elsewhere will be required to carry out a Site- Specific Flood Risk Assessment, and justification test where appropriate, in accordance with the provisions of The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009 (or any superseding document); Any flood risk assessment should include an assessment of the potential impacts of climate change, such as an increase in the extent or probability of flooding, and any associated measures necessary to address these impacts;</p> | <p>Liaise with Irish Water, to maximise the potential of existing capacity and to facilitate the timely delivery of new water services infrastructure, to facilitate existing and future growth.</p> <p>WS 2 Protection of Water Supplies Collaborate with Irish Water and the Group Water Federation Scheme to protect, conserve and enhance all existing and potential water resources in the County to ensure compliance with the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014 (as amended) and compliance of water supplies with the parameters identified in these Regulations.</p> <p>WS 3 River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021 Support the implementation of the relevant recommendations and measures as outlined in the relevant River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021, and associated Programme of Measures, or any such plan that may supersede same during the lifetime of this plan.</p> <p>WS 4 Requirement to Liaise with Irish Water – Water Supply Ensure that new developments are adequately serviced with a suitable quantity and quality of drinking water supply and require that all new developments intending to connect to a public water supply liaise with Irish Water with regard to the water (and wastewater) infrastructure required.</p> <p>WS 5 Private Water Supply Support the provision of a private water supply in instances where there is no public water supply or where the existing supply does not have sufficient capacity to serve the proposed development. This will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that the proposed water supply meets the standards set out in the EU and national legislation and guidance including adherence to Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive, and would not be prejudicial to public health or would not significantly impact negatively on the source or yield of an existing supply."</p> <p>WS 6 Water Framework Directive Support the preparation of Drinking Water Safety Plans and Source Protection Plans to protect sources of public water supply, in accordance with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.</p> <p>WS 7 Water Quality Require that new development proposals would ensure that there would not be an unacceptable impact on water quality and quantity including surface water, ground water, designated source protection areas, river corridors and associated wetlands.</p> <p>WS 8 Proliferation of Septic Tanks Encourage the use of high standard treatment plants to minimise the risk of groundwater pollution.</p> <p>CWS 1 Water Conservation with all Developments To ensure all developments incorporate water conservation measures such as rainwater harvesting to minimise wastage of water supply.</p> <p>CWS 2 Water Mains Rehabilitation To assist Irish Water in their commitment to water conservation and support efforts to tackle leakage through find and fix (active leakage control) and water mains rehabilitation.</p> <p>CWS 3 Promotion of Water Conservation To support Irish Water in promoting public awareness and involvement in water conservation measures by households, business and industry.</p> <p>WW 1 Enhancement of Wastewater Supply Infrastructure Work in conjunction with Irish Water to maximise the potential of existing capacity and to facilitate the delivery of new wastewater services infrastructure, to facilitate future growth in the county.</p> <p>WW 2 Delivery of Wastewater Infrastructure Liaise and co-operate with Irish Water in the implementation and delivery of the Water Services Strategic Plan (2015) and the Irish Water Investment Plan 2020-2024 and other relevant investment works programmes of Irish Water in the delivery of infrastructure within the county.</p> <p>WW 3 The Greater Galway Area Strategic Drainage Study To seek to accelerate and support the delivery of the Greater Galway Area Strategic Drainage Study and the associated solutions as identified in the RSES as an essential infrastructure requirement in conjunction with the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, Irish Water and Galway City Council.</p> <p>WW 4 Requirement to Liaise with Irish Water – Wastewater Ensure that new developments will only be permitted which are adequately serviced with sufficient capacity for appropriate collection, treatment and disposal (in compliance with the Water Framework Directive and River Basin Management Plan) to the public sewer unless provided for otherwise by the plan. Developers shall liaise with Irish Water with regard to the wastewater (and water) infrastructure to ensure sufficient capacity is available prior to the submission of a planning application. "</p> <p>WW 5 Serviced Sites Support the servicing of small towns and villages including initiatives to provide an alternative to one-off housing in the</p> |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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| | | <p>c) Development that would be subject to an inappropriate risk of flooding or that would cause or exacerbate such a risk at other locations shall not normally be permitted;</p> <p>d) Galway County Council shall work with other bodies and organisations, as appropriate, to help protect critical infrastructure, including water and wastewater, within the County, from risk of flooding.</p> <p>GSST 60 Principles of Flood Risk Management Guidelines The Council shall implement the key principles of flood risk management set out in the Flood Risk Management Guidelines as follows:</p> <p>a) Avoid development that will be at risk of flooding or that will increase the flooding risk elsewhere, where possible;</p> <p>b) Substitute less vulnerable uses, where avoidance is not possible; and,</p> <p>c) Mitigate and manage the risk, where avoidance and substitution are not possible.</p> <p>Development should only be permitted in areas at risk of flooding when there are no alternative reasonable sites available in areas at lower risk that also meet the objectives of proper planning and sustainable development. Vulnerable development in areas which have the highest flood risk should be avoided and/or only considered in exceptional circumstances (through a prescribed Justification Test) if adequate land or sites are not available in areas which have lower flood risk.</p> <p>GSST 61 Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) Maintain and enhance, as appropriate, the existing surface water drainage system in Gort. Ensure that new developments are adequately serviced with surface water drainage infrastructure and promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems in all new developments. Surface water runoff from development sites will be limited to pre-development levels and planning applications for new developments will be required to provide details of surface water drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems proposals. To maximise the capacity of existing collection systems for foul water, the discharge of additional surface water to combined (foul and surface water) sewers is not permitted. Refer also to Section 3.5 of the accompanying SFRA, "Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and Surface Water Guidance and Strategy".</p> <p>GSST 62 Protection of Waterbodies and Watercourses Protect waterbodies and watercourses within the County from inappropriate development, including rivers, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains. This will include protection buffers in the riverine, wetland and coastal areas as appropriate.</p> <p>To contribute towards protection and improvement of the status of surface and ground waters in accordance with the Water Framework Directive.</p> <p>Applications for development under the Plan must demonstrate that the proposed development would not adversely affect a water body's ability to meet its objectives under the Water Framework Directive, individually as a result of the proposed development or cumulatively, in combination with other developments.</p> <p>GSST 63 Flood Risk Assessment for Planning Applications and CFRAMS Protect Flood Zone A and Flood Zone B from inappropriate development and direct developments/land uses into the appropriate Flood Zone in</p> | <p>countryside, in accordance with the National Planning Framework.</p> <p>WW 6 Private Wastewater Treatment Plants Ensure that private wastewater treatment plants, where permitted, are operated in compliance with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Code of Practice for Domestic Waste Water Treatment System 2021 (Population Equivalent ≤10).</p> <p>WW 7 Sustainable Drainage Systems To require the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems to minimise and limit the extent of hard surfacing and paving and require the use of SuDS measures be incorporated in all new development (including extensions to existing developments). All development proposals shall be accompanied by a comprehensive SuDS assessment including run-off quantity, run off quality and impacts on habitat and water quality.</p> <p>WW 8 Storm Water Infrastructure To support the improvement of storm water infrastructure and to increase the use of sustainable drainage and reduce the risk of flooding in urban environments.</p> <p>WW 9 Integrated Wetland Wastewater Treatment Systems Galway County Council will encourage the use of integrated wetland wastewater treatment systems for both one off and multi-unit housing developments that accord with the prevailing regulations and standards including the relevant EPA Code of Practice.</p> <p>WW10 Surface Water Drainage To require all new developments to provide a separate foul and surface water drainage system and to incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems where appropriate in new development and the public realm.</p> <p>WW11 Protection of Irish Water Collection Systems To prohibit the discharge of additional surface water to combined (foul and surface water) sewers in order to maximise the capacity of existing collection systems for foul water.</p> <p>AF 1 Marine Aquaculture To support the sustainable development of marine aquaculture and fishing industries, so as to maximise their contribution to jobs and growth in coastal communities where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment.</p> <p>SF 1 Shellfish Waters Directive To continue to work with local communities, relevant stakeholders and with the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine to ensure the proper and successful implementation of the Shellfish Waters Directive along County Galway's coastline.</p> <p>SF 2 Protection of Shellfish Waters To seek to protect the quality of designated shellfish waters off the County Galway coast.</p> <p>WR 1 Water Resources Protect the water resources in the plan area, including rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, springs, turloughs, surface water and groundwater quality, as well as surface waters, aquatic and wetland habitats and freshwater and water dependant species in accordance with the requirements and guidance in the EU Water Framework Directive 2000 (2000/60/EC), the European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (as amended), the River Basin District Management Plan 2018 – 2021 and other relevant EU Directives, including associated national legislation and policy guidance (including any superseding versions of same) and also have regard to the Freshwater Pearl Mussel Sub-Basin Management Plans.</p> <p>WR 2 River Basin Management Plans It is a policy objective of the Planning Authority to implement the programme of measures developed by the River Basin District Projects under the Water Framework Directive in relation to: Surface and groundwater interaction, Dangerous substances, Hydro-morphology, Forestry, On site wastewater treatment systems, Municipal and industrial discharges, Urban pressures, Abstractions.</p> <p>WTWF 1 Wetland Sites Protect and conserve the ecological and biodiversity heritage of the wetland sites in the County. Ensure that an appropriate level of assessment is completed in relation to wetland habitats that are subject to proposals which would involve drainage or reclamation that might destroy, fragment or degrade any wetland in the county. This includes lakes and ponds, turloughs, watercourses, springs and swamps, marshes, fens, heath, peatlands, some woodlands as well as some coastal and marine habitats. Protect Ramsar sites under The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (especially as Waterfowl Habitat).</p> <p>IW 1 Inland Waterways (a) Protect and conserve the quality, character and features of inland waterways by controlling developments close to navigable and non-navigable waterways in accordance with best practice guidelines. (b) Preserve, protect and enhance Galway's inland lakes and waterways for their amenity and recreational resource amenity. (c) Protect the riparian zones of watercourse systems throughout the County, recognising the benefits they provide in relation to flood risk management and their protection of the ecological integrity of watercourse systems and ensure they are</p> |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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| | | <p>accordance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009 (or any superseding document) and the guidance contained in Development Management Standards 2 and 3. Site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is required for all planning applications in areas at elevated risk of flooding, even for developments appropriate to the particular flood zone. The detail of these site-specific FRAs will depend on the level of risk and scale of development. A detailed site-specific FRA should quantify the risks, the effects of selected mitigation and the management of any residual risks. The Council shall have regard to the results of any CFRAM Studies in the assessment of planning applications. Where a development/land use is proposed that is inappropriate within the Flood Zone, then the development proposal will need to be accompanied by a Development Management Justification Test in addition to the site-specific Flood Risk Assessment. In Flood Zone C, where the probability of flooding is low (less than 0.1%, Flood Zone C), site-specific Flood Risk Assessment may be required, and the developer should satisfy themselves that the probability of flooding is appropriate to the development being proposed.</p> <p>GSST 64 Flood Risk Assessment and Climate Change Flood Risk Assessment in Gort shall provide information on the implications of climate change with regards to flood risk in relevant locations. The Flood Risk Management – Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan 2019 (or any superseding document) shall be consulted with to this effect.</p> <p>GSST 65 River Basin Management Plan and Protection of Waters Support the implementation of the relevant recommendations and measures as outlined in the National River Basin Management Plan or any other plan that may supersede same during the lifetime of this Local Area Plan. Development shall only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on the water environment, including surface water, groundwater quality and quantity, river corridors and associated wetlands. Galway County Council will support the protection and, where appropriate, the restoration of all water bodies in order to reach good status and will seek to prevent deterioration in the status of all water bodies.</p> <p>GSST 66 Flood Vulnerable Zones It is a policy objective of the Council to ensure that applications pertaining to existing developments in flood vulnerable zones provide details of structural and non-structural risk management measures to include, but not be limited to specifications of the following – floor levels, internal layout, flood resilient construction, flood resistant construction, emergency response planning, access and egress during flood events.</p> <p>GSST 67 Flood Risk Management Ensure each flood risk management activity is examined to determine actions required to embed and provide for effective climate change adaptation as set out in the OPW Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan for Flood Risk Management applicable at the time.</p> | <p>considered in the land use zoning in Local Area Plans.</p> <p>(d) The Planning Authority will support in principle the development and upgrading of the Inland Waterways and their associated facilities in accordance with legislation, best practice and relevant management strategies, key stakeholders and bodies including Waterways Ireland.</p> <p>(e) Ensure all abstractions of water will be subject to assessment for compliance with the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.</p> <p>(f) Seek to provide additional accesses to lake shores and rivers for public rights of way, parking and layby facilities, where appropriate.</p> <p>(g) Developments shall ensure that adequate soil protection measures are undertaken, where appropriate, including investigations into the nature and extent of any soil/groundwater contamination.</p> <p>FL 1 Flood Risk Management Guidelines It is the policy objective of Galway County Council to support, in co-operation with the OPW, the implementation of the EU Flood Risk Directive (2007/60/EC), the Flood Risk Regulations (SI No. 122 of 2010) and the DEHLG/OPW publication The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines (2009) (and any updated/superseding legislation or policy guidance) and Department Circular PL2/2014 or any updated / superseding version.</p> <p>FL 2 Flood Risk Management and Assessment Comply with the requirements of the DoEHLG/OPW The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities and its accompanying Technical Appendices Document 2009 (including any updated/superseding documents). This will include the following:</p> <p>(a) Avoid, reduce and/or mitigate, as appropriate in accordance with the Guidelines;</p> <p>(b) Development proposals in areas where there is an identified or potential risk of flooding or that could give rise to a risk of flooding elsewhere will be required to carry out a Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment, and justification test where appropriate, in accordance with the provisions of The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009 (or any superseding document); Any flood risk assessment should include an assessment of the potential impacts of climate change, such as an increase in the extent or probability of flooding, and any associated measures necessary to address these impacts;</p> <p>(c) Development that would be subject to an inappropriate risk of flooding or that would cause or exacerbate such a risk at other locations shall not normally be permitted;</p> <p>(d) Galway County Council shall work with other bodies and organisations, as appropriate, to help protect critical infrastructure, including water and wastewater, within the County, from risk of flooding.</p> <p>FL 3 Principles of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines The Planning Authority shall implement the key principles of flood risk management set out in the Flood Risk Management Guidelines as follows:</p> <p>(a) Avoid development that will be at risk of flooding or that will increase the flooding risk elsewhere, where possible;</p> <p>(b) Substitute less vulnerable uses, where avoidance is not possible; and</p> <p>(c) Mitigate and manage the risk, where avoidance and substitution are not possible.</p> <p>Development should only be permitted in areas at risk of flooding when there are no alternative, reasonable sites available in areas at lower risk that also meet the objectives of proper planning and sustainable development. Vulnerable development in areas which have the highest flood risk should be avoided and/or only considered in exceptional circumstances (through a prescribed Justification Test) if adequate land or sites are not available in areas which have lower flood risk</p> <p>FL 4 Flood Relief Schemes The Planning Authority shall support and co-operate with the Office of Public Works (OPW) in the delivery of Flood Relief Schemes.</p> <p>FL 5 Catchment Planning The Planning Authority will support the OPW'S CFRAM Programme and catchment-based Flood Planning Groups, especially where catchments go beyond the Council's administrative boundary, in the development and implementation of catchment-based strategies for the management of flood risk - including those relating to storage and conveyance.</p> <p>FL 6 Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) Maintain and enhance, as appropriate, the existing surface water drainage system in the County. Ensure that new developments are adequately serviced with surface water drainage infrastructure and promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems in all new developments. Surface water run-off from development sites will be limited to pre-development levels and planning applications for new developments will be required to provide details of surface water drainage and sustainable drainage systems proposals.</p> <p>FL 7 Protection of Waterbodies and Watercourses Protect waterbodies and watercourses within the County from inappropriate development, including rivers, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains. This will include protection buffers in riverine, wetland and coastal areas as appropriate.</p> |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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|---------------------------------|---|--|--|
| | | | <p>FL 18 Inappropriate Development on Flood Zones</p> <p>Where a development/land use is proposed within any area subject to this objective the development proposal will need to be accompanied by a detailed hydrological assessment and robust SUDS design which demonstrates the capacity to withstand potential flood events to maintain water quality and avoid potential effects to ecological features.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any development proposals should be considered with caution and will be required to comply with The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities/Circular PL2/2014 & the associated Development Management Justification Test. Climate Change should be duly considered in any development proposal. Protect the riparian zones of watercourse systems throughout the plan area through a general 10 metre protection buffer from rivers within the plan area as measured from the near riverbank, (this distance may be increased and decreased on a site by site basis, as appropriate). Any development proposals submitted for this site will require a detailed ecological report (s), carried out by suitably qualified personnel for the purposes of informing Appropriate Assessment Screening by Galway County Council, the competent authority. The relevant lands will be outlined and flagged with a symbol on the land use zoning map and on the GIS system of Galway County Council so that staff and the public are aware of the special conditions/constraints attached. A briefing will be provided to relevant staff within Galway County Council on the special conditions and constraints on relevant lands. <p>DM Standard 67 DM Standard 68</p> |
| Air and Climatic Factors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential conflict between development under the Plan and aiming to reduce carbon emissions in line with local, national and European environmental objectives. Potential conflicts between transport emissions, including those from cars, and air quality. Potential conflicts between increased frequency of noise emissions and protection of sensitive receptors. Potential conflicts with climate adaptation measures including those relating to flood risk management. | <p>GSST 44 Local Transport Plan Support the implementation of the Local Transport Plan as set out in Section 3 in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.</p> <p>GSST 45 Transportation Infrastructure Facilitate the provision and maintenance of essential transportation infrastructure. This shall include the reservation of lands to facilitate public roads, footpaths, cycle ways, bus stops and landscaping together with any necessary associated works, as appropriate.</p> <p>GSST 46 Sustainable Transportation Facilitate any Smarter Travel initiatives that will improve sustainable transportation within the plan area and facilitate sustainable transportation options including public transportation, rail freight, electric vehicles rentals, car clubs, public bike schemes, cycle parking as appropriate.</p> <p>GSST 47 Pedestrian and Cycle Network Facilitate the improvement of the pedestrian and cycling environment and network so that it is safe and accessible to all, through the provision of the necessary infrastructure. New development shall promote and prioritise walking and cycling, shall be permeable, adequately linked and connected to neighbouring areas, the town centre, recreational, educational, residential and employment destinations and shall adhere to the principles contained within the national policy document Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future 2009 – 2020, the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) and NTA document Permeability: Best Practice Guide.</p> <p>GSST 48 Pedestrian Crossings Facilitate the provision of pedestrian crossings adjacent to schools and at other appropriate locations within the plan area.</p> <p>GSST 49 Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) and Road Safety Audits (RSA) Require all significant development proposals to be accompanied by a Road Safety Audit and Traffic & Transport Assessment carried out by suitably competent consultants, which are assessed in association with their cumulative impact with neighbouring developments on the road network, in accordance with the requirements contained within the TII's</p> | <p>AQ 1 Ambient Air Quality To promote the preservation of best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development in accordance with the EU Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFE) Directive (2008/50/EC) and ensure that all air emissions associated with new developments are within Environmental Quality Standards as set out in the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (SI No. 180 of 2011) (or any updated/superseding documents).</p> <p>AQ 2 Assessment of Air Quality To require developments which would have the potential to have adverse impacts on air quality to carry out assessments of the impact of the development on air quality.</p> <p>AQ 3 Air Quality Mitigation Measures To require the use of appropriate mitigation measures such as dust dampeners to minimise the potential impacts of developments on air quality.</p> <p>AQ 4 Air Purification Galway County Council shall encourage landscaping and deciduous tree planting in an environmentally sensitive manner within towns and villages as a means of air purification, the filtering of suspended particles and the improvement of their micro-climate.</p> <p>AQ 5 Radon Galway County Council shall have regard, to the specific guidance on radon prevention measures for new homes as contained within the existing Building Regulations (including any updated/superseding Regulations that may be published within the lifetime of this Development Plan).</p> <p>NP 1 Galway County Council Noise Action Plan 2019-2023 To implement the Galway County Council Noise Action Plan 2019-2023 (and any subsequent Plan) in order to avoid, prevent and reduce the harmful effects, including annoyance, due to environmental noise exposure.</p> <p>NP 2 Developments within Noise Maps (Noise Action Plan 2019-2023) To require that where new developments are proposed within the noise limits of the noise maps for the designated sections of roads in the County, appropriate mitigation measures are undertaken so as to prevent harmful effects from environmental noise.</p> <p>NP3 Noise Impact Assessments To require an assessment of impact of the development on noise levels, having regard to the provisions of the Environmental Protection Agency Acts 1992 and 2003 and the EPA Noise Regulations 1994 when assessing planning application.</p> <p>NP 4 Noise Pollution and Regulation Restrict development proposals causing noise pollution in excess of best practice standards and regulate and control activities likely to give rise to excessive noise, other than those activities which are regulated by the EPA</p> <p>NP 5 Noise Mitigation Measures Require activities likely to give rise to excessive noise to install noise mitigation measures and monitors. The provision of a noise audit may be required where appropriate.</p> |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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| | | | <p>ARC 3 Archaeological Landscapes To facilitate where possible the identification of important archaeological landscapes in the County</p> <p>ARC 4 Protection of Archaeological Sites All planning applications for new development, redevelopment, any ground works, refurbishment, and restoration, etc. within areas of archaeological potential or within close proximity to Recorded Monuments or within the historic towns of County Galway will take account of the archaeological heritage of the area and the need for archaeological mitigation.</p> <p>ARC 6 Burial Grounds Protect the burial grounds, identified in the Record of Monuments and Places, in co-operation with the National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Encourage the local community to manage burial grounds in accordance with best conservation and heritage principles.</p> <p>ARC 7 Battlefield Sites Protect the Battle of Aughrim site and other battlefield sites and their settings.</p> <p>ARC 8 Underwater Archaeological Sites To protect and preserve the archaeological value of underwater archaeological sites and associated features. In assessing proposals for development, the Council will take account of the potential underwater archaeology of rivers, lakes, intertidal and subtidal locations.</p> <p>ARC 9 Recorded Monuments Ensure that any development in the immediate vicinity of a Recorded Monument is sensitively designed and sited and does not detract from the monument or its visual amenity.</p> <p>ARC 10 Zones of Archaeological Potential To protect the Zones of Archaeological Potential located within both urban and rural areas and around archaeological monuments generally as identified in the Record of Monuments and Places. Any development within the ZAPs will need to take cognisance of the potential for subsurface archaeology and if archaeology is demonstrated to be present appropriate mitigation (such as preservation in situ/buffer zones) will be required.</p> <p>ARC 11 Industrial and Post Medieval Archaeology Protect and preserve the archaeological value of industrial and post medieval archaeology such as mills, limekilns, bridges, piers, harbours, penal chapels and dwellings. Proposals for refurbishment, works to or redevelopment/conversion of these sites should be subject to careful assessment.</p> <p>ARC 12 Archaeology and Infrastructure Schemes Have regard to archaeological concerns when considering proposed service schemes (including electricity, sewerage, telecommunications, water supply) and proposed roadwork's (both realignments and new roads) located in close proximity to Recorded Monuments and Places and their known archaeological monuments.</p> <p>CUH 1 Cultural heritage Protect and promote the cultural heritage assets and the intangible cultural heritage assets of County Galway as important social and economic assets.</p> <p>CUH 2 Special Places of Historic Interest To protect and promote where possible special places of historical interest.</p> <p>CUH 3 Placenames/Naming of New Developments Promote and preserve local place names, local heritage and the Irish language by ensuring the use of local place names or geographical or cultural names which reflect the history and landscape of their settings in the naming of new residential and other developments. All names will be in the Irish language only. The naming and numbering schemes including associated signage must be submitted to the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of a new development.</p> <p>CUH 4 The Gaeltacht and Linguistic Heritage (a) To protect the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht and to promote Irish as a community language. To promote and facilitate the sustainable development of An Ghaeltacht and Island communities in County Galway. (b) To support organisations involved in the continued promotion and preservation of the Irish language and culture. To work in a positive and encouraging way to create and maintain a bilingual environment in the County, and to ensure the availability of opportunities for the use of spoken and written Irish.</p> <p>CUH 5 Library and Archives (a) To facilitate the development and implementation of Galway Library Development Programme 2016-2021 or subsequent programme and support the development and promotion of the library network in the county. (b) Galway County Council shall support the provision of a purpose built repository, meeting international archival standards, to house, and ensure the preservation, of this important heritage resource.</p> |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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

Section 10 Monitoring Measures

10.1 Introduction

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

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

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

10.2 Indicators and Targets

Monitoring is based around indicators which allow quantitative measures of trends and progress over time relating to the Strategic Environmental Objectives identified in Section 5 and used in the evaluation. Each indicator to be monitored is accompanied by the target(s) which were identified with regard to the relevant strategic actions. The monitoring measures identified below as part of the Gort Local Area Plan SEA are consistent with the measures that were identified by the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 SEA. This consistency across the hierarchy of land use plans will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of future monitoring.

Table 10.1 overleaf shows the indicators and targets which have been selected for monitoring the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan, if unmitigated.

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

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

10.3 Sources

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

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

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

Internal monitoring of the environmental effects of grants of permission in the Council would provide monitoring of certain indicators on a *grant of permission*⁸² basis. Where significant adverse effects as a result of the development to be permitted are identified, such effects could be identified, recorded and used to inform monitoring evaluation.

⁸² The likely significant effects of development proposals on environmental sensitivities are further determined during the development management process. Documenting any identified effects as a result of a development to be permitted can help to fulfill monitoring requirements.

10.4 Reporting

A stand-alone Monitoring Report on the significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan will be prepared in advance of the beginning of the review of the Plan. This report should address the indicators set out on Table 10.1.

Interim reporting may be undertaken as part of reporting on the County Development Plan and other Local Area Plans.

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

Table 10.1 Indicators, Targets, Sources and Remedial Action

| Environmental Component | SEO Code | Indicators | Targets | Sources | Remedial Action ⁸³ |
|--------------------------------------|----------|---|---|---|---|
| Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna | BFF | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Condition of European sites | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all local level land use plans to include ecosystem services and green/blue infrastructure provisions and to have regard to the required targets in relation to the conservation of European sites, other nature conservation sites, ecological networks, and protected species Confirmation of compliance with Plan provisions relating to the protection of European Sites and sustaining resources Implement and review, as relevant, the Galway County Heritage and Biodiversity Plan 2024-2030 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DHLGH report of the implementation of the measures contained in the Habitats Directive - as required by Article 17 of the Directive (every 6 years)⁸⁴ DHLGH National Birds Directive Monitoring Report for the under Article 12 (every 6 years)⁸⁵ Internal review of local land use plans Internal review of development management / grants of permission | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where condition of European sites is found to be deteriorating this will be investigated with the Regional Assembly and the DHLGH to establish if the pressures are related to Plan actions / activities. A tailored response will be developed in consultation with these stakeholders in such a circumstance. |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of spatial plans that have included ecosystem services content, mapping and policy to protect ecosystem services when their relevant plans are either revised or drafted | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all local level land use plans to include ecosystem services and green/blue infrastructure provisions and to have regard to the required targets in relation to the conservation of European sites, other nature conservation sites, ecological networks, and protected species Implement and review, as relevant, the Galway County Heritage and Biodiversity Plan 2024-2030 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of local land use plans | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEAs and AAs as relevant for new Council policies, plans, programmes etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screen for and undertake SEA and AA as relevant for new Council policies, plans, programmes etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of new Council policies, plans, programmes etc. under the County Development Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status of water bodies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included under Water below | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included under Water below | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included under Water below |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance of planning permissions with Plan measures providing for the protection of Biodiversity and flora and fauna – see County Development Plan Chapter 10 “Natural Heritage, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For planning permission to be only granted when applications demonstrate that they comply with all Plan measures providing for the protection of biodiversity and flora and fauna – see County Development Plan Chapter 10 “Natural Heritage, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of development management / grants of permission | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems |

⁸³ Where remedial action is required, consultations with government agencies (e.g. DECC, DT, EPA, HSE, NPWS, Regional Assembly, Uisce Éireann) may be undertaken in order to confirm causes of any identified changes in the environment and in order to develop appropriate responses.

⁸⁴ Including confirmation with development management that the following impacts have been considered and including use of monitoring data, where available: biodiversity/habitat loss; nitrogen deposition impacts on European sites; recreational disturbance resulting from implementation of tourism and recreation policies and objectives particularly in riparian areas; biodiversity enhancement; and disturbance /visitor pressure impacts of recreation, amenity and tourism development.

⁸⁵ Including confirmation with development management that the following impacts have been considered and including use of monitoring data, where available: biodiversity/habitat loss; nitrogen deposition impacts on European sites; recreational disturbance resulting from implementation of tourism and recreation policies and objectives particularly in riparian areas; biodiversity enhancement; and disturbance /visitor pressure impacts of recreation, amenity and tourism development.

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

| Environmental Component | SEO Code | Indicators | Targets | Sources | Remedial Action ⁸³ |
|------------------------------------|----------|---|---|---|--|
| Population and Human Health | PHH | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Plan measures relating to the promotion of economic growth as provided for by County Development Plan Chapter 9 "Economic, Enterprise and Retail" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to the promotion of economic growth as provided for by County Development Plan Chapter 9 "Economic, Enterprise and Retail" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of progress on implementing Plan objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems Consultations with DECC |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors resulting from development permitted under the Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of implementing the Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of published information from the Health Service Executive and EPA Internal consultations with the Council's Environment Department | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultations with the Health Service Executive and EPA |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to active travel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO data Internal review of progress on implementing Plan objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, the Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, the DHLGH, DECC and NTA to develop a tailored response. |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of spatial plans that include specific green infrastructure mapping | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all local level land use plans to include specific green infrastructure mapping | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of local land use plans | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems |
| Soil (and Land) | S | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of population growth occurring on infill and brownfield lands compared to greenfield (also relevant to Material Assets) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain built surface cover nationally to below the EU average of 4% as per the NPF In accordance with National Policy Objectives 3c of the National Planning Framework, a minimum of 30% of the housing growth targeted in any settlement is to be delivered within the existing built-up footprint of the settlement To map brownfield and infill land parcels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPA Geoportal Compilation of greenfield and brownfield development for the DHLGH Internal review of development management / grants of permission | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where the proportion of growth on infill and brownfield sites is not keeping pace with the targets set in the NPF and the RSES, the Council will liaise with the Regional Assembly to establish reasons and coordinate actions to address constraints to doing so. |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instances where contaminated material generated from brownfield and infill must be disposed of | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dispose of contaminated material in compliance with EPA guidance and waste management requirements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of development management / grants of permission where contaminated material must be disposed of | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultations with the EPA and Development Management |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental assessments and AAs as relevant for applications for brownfield and infill development prior to planning permission | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screen for and undertake environmental assessments and AA as relevant for applications for brownfield and infill development prior to planning permission | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of development management / grants of permission | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

| Environmental Component | SEO Code | Indicators | Targets | Sources | Remedial Action ⁸³ |
|-------------------------|----------|--|---|---|--|
| Water | W | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status of water bodies as reported by the EPA Water Monitoring Programme for the WFD | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to exemptions provided for by Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive, not to cause deterioration in the status of any surface water or affect the ability of any surface water to achieve 'good status' Implementation of the objectives of the River Basin Management Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPA Monitoring Programme for WFD compliance ⁸⁶ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where water bodies are failing to meet at least good status this will be investigated with the DHLGH Water Section, the EPA Catchment Unit, the Regional Assembly and, as relevant, Uisce Éireann to establish if the pressures are related to Plan actions / activities. A tailored response will be developed in consultation with these stakeholders in such a circumstance. Where planning applications are rejected due to insufficient capacity in the WWTP or failure of the WWTP to meet Emission Limit Values, the Council will consider whether it is necessary to coordinate a response with the Regional Assembly, EPA and Uisce Éireann to achieve the necessary capacity. |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of incompatible developments permitted within flood risk areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimise developments granted permission on lands which pose - or are likely to pose in the future - a significant flood risk | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of development management / grants of permission | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where planning applications are being permitted on flood zones, the Council will ensure that such grants are in compliance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines and include appropriate flood risk mitigation and management measures. |
| Material Assets | MA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programmed delivery of Uisce Éireann infrastructure for all key growth towns in line with Uisce Éireann Investment Plan and prioritisation programme to ensure sustainable growth can be accommodated Number of new developments granted permission which can be adequately and appropriately served with waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new developments granted permission to be connected to and adequately and appropriately served by waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan Where septic tanks are proposed, for planning permission to be only granted when applications demonstrate that the outfall from the septic tank will not – in combination with other septic tanks – contribute towards any surface or ground water body not meeting the objective of good status under the Water Framework Directive Facilitate, as appropriate, Uisce Éireann in developing water and wastewater infrastructure See also targets relating to greenfield and brownfield development of land under Soil and broadband under Population and Human Health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of development management / grants of permission | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where planning applications are rejected due to insufficient capacity in the WWTP or failure of the WWTP to meet Emission Limit Values, the Council will consider whether it is necessary to coordinate a response with the Regional Assembly, EPA and Uisce Éireann to achieve the necessary capacity. |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to active travel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO data Internal review of progress on implementing Plan objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, the Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, the DHLGH, DECC and NTA to develop a tailored response. |

⁸⁶ Including monitoring of water quality and nitrogen deposition due to bioenergy and agricultural projects where available

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

| Environmental Component | SEO Code | Indicators | Targets | Sources | Remedial Action ⁸³ |
|-------------------------|----------|--|---|--|---|
| Air | A | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels NO₂ (Nitrogen Dioxide), PM10 (particulate matter with diameter of 10 microns or less) and O₃ (Ozone) as part of Ambient Air Quality Monitoring | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease in proportion of journeys made by car compared to previous levels Improvement in Air Quality trends, particularly in relation to transport related emissions Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to sustainable mobility and travel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO data EPA Air Quality Monitoring Internal review of progress on implementing Plan objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, DHLGH, DECC and NTA to develop a tailored response. See also entry under Population and human health above |
| Climatic Factors | C | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Plan measures relating to climate reduction targets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For review of progress on implementing Plan objectives to demonstrate successful implementation of measures relating to climate reduction targets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of development management / grants of permission | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute towards transition to a competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmation of progress in implementing of Galway County Council's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 and Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 EPA Greenhouse Gas Emissions reporting Internal review of implementation of Plan provisions relating to renewable energy in transport, including facilitating the development of electricity charging and transmission infrastructure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where targets are not achieved, the Council will liaise with the Regional Assembly and the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office to establish reasons and develop solutions. |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share of renewable energy in transport | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute towards the National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030 sectoral target for transport (RES-T) of 14%, by 2030 (this may be increased following a provisional European agreement on 30 March 2023 for a binding overall RES target of at least 42.5% by 2030) | | |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greenhouse gas emissions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute towards the target of aggregate reduction in carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions of at least 51% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2030 (helping to set Ireland on a path to reach net-zero emissions by 2050) | | |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy consumption, the uptake of renewable options and solid fuels for residential heating | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote reduced energy consumption and support the uptake of renewable options and a move away from solid fuels for residential heating | | |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease in the proportion of journeys made by residents of the settlement using private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to sustainable mobility and travel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO data Internal review of progress on implementing Plan objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where trends toward carbon reduction are not recorded, the Council will liaise with the Regional Assembly and the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office to establish reasons and develop solutions. |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to active travel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO data Internal review of progress on implementing Plan objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, the Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, the DHLGH, DECC and NTA to develop a tailored response. |

| Environmental Component | SEO Code | Indicators | Targets | Sources | Remedial Action ⁸³ |
|-------------------------|----------|---|---|--|---|
| Cultural Heritage | CH | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, and the context these entries within the surrounding landscape where relevant, protected from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, and the context of these entries within the surrounding landscape where relevant, from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of development management / grants of permission | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where monitoring reveals visitor or development pressure is causing negative effects on designated archaeological or architectural heritage, the Council will work with Regional Assembly, Fáilte Ireland and the National Monuments Service and other stakeholders, as relevant, to address pressures through additional mitigation. |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission under the Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission under the Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of development management / grants of permission | |
| Landscape | L | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of developments permitted that result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, especially with regard to landscape and amenity designations included in Land Use Plans, resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No developments permitted which result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, especially with regard to landscape and amenity designations included in Land Use Plans, resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of development management / grants of permission | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where monitoring reveals developments permitted which result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, the Council will re-examine Plan provisions and the effectiveness of their implementation |

Appendix I Screening for SEA Determination

Screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment Determination

under Article 8 (14A) (3) Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (SI No. 436 of 2004), as amended by the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 201 of 2011) for the:

Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2024-2030

This Screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) determination regarding whether or not implementation of the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2024-2030 would be likely to have significant effects on the environment is being made under the above Regulations.

As part of this determination, the Council is considering whether or not implementation of the local area plan or amended plan would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, taking account of relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the above Regulations. These criteria are taken into account as follows:

PART 1

1. *The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to: the degree to which the plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources*

The Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2024-2030 will be prepared over the coming months. The Plan will provide a six-year framework for the sustainable development of Gort, while considering the conservation and protection of the built and natural environment. It will set out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the town in terms of its social, cultural, economic and physical development and will consist of a written statement supported by mapping and other appendices indicating the development objectives for Gort.

2. *The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to: the degree to which the plan influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy*

The Plan will be guided by the National Planning Framework, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region and the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028. In turn, the Plan will guide any lower-tier plans and future proposals for land use developments and activities.

3. *The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to: the relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development*

The Plan will integrate environmental considerations with a view to promoting sustainable development at local level in Gort.

4. *The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to: environmental problems relevant to the plan*

Environmental problems arise where there is a conflict between current environmental conditions and legislative targets.

It is intended that, through provisions relating to environmental protection and management, the Plan will contribute towards ensuring that environmental conditions do not get worse and, where possible, they contribute towards its amelioration.

The status of rivers and streams (2016-2021) draining the Plan is identified as being good (Kilchreest) and moderate (Cannahowna). The status (2016-2021) of Lough Cutra c. 2 km to the south-east of the Plan area is identified as good. Provisions contributing towards the Water Framework Directive's overall objective of good status are provided by the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028.

There are significant areas at elevated levels of flood risk within the Plan area – including those at risk from fluvial (from rivers/streams) and groundwater sources. Other sources of flood risk present including those from rainwater (pluvial) and surface drainage systems.

5. The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to: the relevance of the plan for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans linked to waste-management or water protection)

The Plan relates to the land use and town planning sector. It is expected that the Plan will integrate considerations with regard to EU and national legislation on the environment, including those relating to the waste management and the Water Framework Directive.

PART 2

1. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects

The development of the Plan area will involve a range of land use developments and activities that would be likely to, if unmitigated, significantly affect all environmental components; this would include positive and negative effects across the Plan area and beyond. Such effects would encompass short term construction effects and longer-term operational effects.

Effects could be mitigated by integrating measures relating to environmental protection and management into the Plan and by adhering to such provisions from the existing Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028.

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the cumulative nature of the effects

There are two types of potential cumulative effects that would be likely to occur, namely:

- Potential intra-Plan cumulative effects - these would be likely to arise from the interactions between different types of potential environmental effects resulting from the Plan. Examples of interrelationships between environmental components that help determine such effects include those between: human health and water quality; human health and air quality; human health and flood risk; and ecology and water quality.
- Potential inter-Plan cumulative effects - these would be likely to arise when the effects of the implementation of Plan occur in combination with those of other plans, programmes, etc. such as the County Development Plan and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

3. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the transboundary nature of the effects

Potential effects, such as those on water will extend beyond the Plan boundary; however, significant environmental effects on other countries are unlikely.

4. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)

Human health has the potential to be impacted upon by environmental vectors (i.e. environmental components such as air, water or soil through which contaminants or pollutants, which have the potential to cause harm, can be transported so that they come into contact with human beings). Hazards or nuisances to human health can arise as a result of exposure to these vectors arising from incompatible adjacent land uses for example. There is historic and predictive evidence of Fluvial flooding in various locations across the Plan area.

5. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)

The spatial extent of potential effects includes the Plan area and areas downstream. The population most likely to be affected would be the population of the Plan area. Census 2016 recorded a population of 2,994 persons in Gort and the town is identified as a "Self-Sustaining Town" in the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028. Self-Sustaining Towns have a high levels of population growth and a limited employment base and are reliant on other areas for employment and/or services requiring targeted 'catch up' investment to become more self-sustaining.

6. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:

a) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;

Key ecological sensitivities within and surrounding the Plan area include those relating to:

- Ecologically designated sites located less than 5 km of the Plan area, including: Pollduagh Cave, Gort proposed Natural Heritage Area (partially adjacent to the south of the Plan area); The Coole-Garryland Complex Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area and proposed Natural Heritage Area (c. 1 km to the north-west of the Plan area); and Lough Cutra Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area and proposed Natural Heritage Area (c. 2 km to the south-east of the Plan area);
- Locally important habitats within the Plan area, various woodlands, parks, gardens, hedgerows, old buildings/stone walls and lands used for agriculture within and surrounding the Plan area, providing habitats for flora and fauna and facilitating linkages and corridors to the surrounding countryside for the wildlife; and

- Aquatic and riverine ecology associated with the Cannahowna River (including its tributaries and riparian buffer zones) and the Coole-Garryland Turlough and Caherglassaun Turlough.

The emerging finding of the Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) process being undertaken alongside the preparation of the Draft Plan is that the Plan has the potential, if unmitigated, to affect European Sites.

There are various entries to the Record of Monuments and Places within and around the Plan area, such as: castles; churches; graveyards; holy wells; ringforts; enclosures; ponds; and ecclesiastical remains.

There are many Protected Structures within and surrounding the Plan area, including examples of: railway stations; religious buildings; courthouses; barracks; terraced houses; and schools. Gort has a several buildings and structures of architectural interest, including: well-preserved Georgian period market town; St. Colman's Catholic Church; Gort Crane House; Gort Library; Gort Bridge; and St. Colman's Hall Heritage Centre. There is one Architectural Conservation Area designated within the Plan area: Gort Town Centre ACA. Many of the Protected Structures in the town are located within this ACA.

b) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values, and;

The status of rivers and streams (2016-2021) draining the Plan is identified as being good (Kilchreest) and moderate (Cannahowna). The status (2016-2021) of Lough Cutra c. 2 km to the south-east of the Plan area is identified as good. Provisions contributing towards the Water Framework Directive's overall objective of good status are provided by the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028. Provisions contributing towards the Water Framework Directive's overall objective of good status are provided by the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028.

c) intensive land-use.

The Plan will provide for the relative intensive land use of urban and semi urban areas within the Plan area.

7. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status

Gort is located in a generally flat area towards the south of the County of Galway. The Cannahowna River runs from south to north through the centre of the Plan area and provides a recreational amenity for the town (3 km looped Gort River Walk). The land surrounding Gort is predominantly made up of agricultural lands with woodlands associated with the Coole-Garryland Nature Reserve to the north-west and Lough Cutra to the south-west of the Plan area.

The existing Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 identifies three Landscape Regions, which include ten Landscape Character Types (subdivided into smaller Landscape Character Units), 52 Viewing Points and seven Scenic Routes within the Council's administrative area. Landscape Character Units in County Galway are arranged in a hierarchy according to the level of their sensitivity.

The Plan area is located within the 'South Galway Region' Landscape Region, the 'Urban Environs' and 'Central Galway Complex' Landscape Character Types and the 'Urban Environs' and 'Kilchreest Basin Unit' Landscape Character Units. These Landscape Character Areas are classified as 'low' landscape value. Other landscape designations within the Plan area include 'Slieve Aughty Scenic Route'.

Furthermore, the emerging finding of the Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) process being undertaken alongside the preparation of the Draft Plan is that the Plan has the potential, if unmitigated, to affect European Sites. Stage 2 AA must therefore be carried out for the Plan. The SEA Directive (Article 3 para. 2) requires that SEA is carried out for certain plans and programmes that are being subject to Stage 2 AA. As a result, SEA must be carried out for the Plan.

With reference to the foregoing information, it is determined that the Plan would, if unmitigated, be likely to result in significant environmental effects and that SEA is required to be undertaken on the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2024-2030.

Galway County Council

Date: January 2023

Appendix II Relationship with Legislation and Other Policies, Plans and Programmes

| Legislation, Plan, etc. | Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective | Additional information/lower-level objectives, etc. | Relevance to the Draft Plan |
|--|---|---|---|
| European Level | | | |
| SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development. Provide for a high level of protection of the environment by carrying out an environmental assessment of plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out an environmental assessment for plans or programmes referred to in Articles 2 to 4 of the Directive. Prepare an environmental report which identifies, describes and evaluates the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme and reasonable alternatives that consider the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme. Consult with relevant authorities, stakeholders and public allowing sufficient time to make a submission. Consult other Member States where the implementation of a plan or programme is likely to have transboundary environmental effects. Inform relevant authorities and stakeholders on the decision to implement the plan or programme. Issue a statement to include requirements detailed in Article 9 of the Directive. Monitor and mitigate significant environmental effects identified by the assessment. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| EIA Directive (2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires the assessment of the environmental effects of public and private projects which are likely to have significant effects on the environment. Aims to assess and implement avoidance or mitigation measures to eliminate environmental effects, before consent is given of projects likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue, inter alia, of their nature, size or location are made subject to a requirement for development consent and an assessment with regard to their effects. Those projects are defined in Article 4. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All projects listed in Annex I are considered as having significant effects on the environment and require an EIA. For projects listed in Annex II, a "screening procedure" is required to determine the effects of projects on the basis of thresholds/criteria or a case by case examination. This should take into account Annex III. The environmental impact assessment shall identify, describe and assess in an appropriate manner, in the light of each individual case and in accordance with Articles 4 to 12, the direct and indirect effects of a project on the following factors: human beings, fauna and flora, soil, water, air, climate and the landscape, material assets and the cultural heritage, the interaction between each factor. Consult with relevant authorities, stakeholders and public allowing sufficient time to make a submission before a decision is made. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the preservation, protection and improvement of the quality of the environment, including the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. Contribute towards ensuring biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. Maintain or restore to favourable conservation status, natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora of community interest. Promote the maintenance of biodiversity, taking account of economic, social, cultural and regional requirements. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Propose and protect sites of importance to habitats, plant and animal species. Establish a network of European sites hosting the natural habitat types listed in Annex I and habitats of the species listed in Annex II, to enable the natural habitat types and the species' habitats concerned to be maintained or, where appropriate, restored at a favourable conservation status in their natural range. Carry out comprehensive assessment of habitat types and species present. Establish a system of strict protection for the animal species and plant species listed in Annex IV. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conserve all species of naturally occurring birds in the wild state including their eggs, nests and habitats. Protect, manage and control these species and comply with regulations relating to their exploitation. The species included in Annex I shall be the subject of special conservation measures concerning their habitat in order to ensure their survival and reproduction in their area of distribution. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserve, maintain or re-establish a sufficient diversity and area of habitats for all the species of birds referred to in Annex 1. Preserve, maintain and establish biotopes and habitats to include the creation of protected areas (Special Protection Areas). Ensure the upkeep and management in accordance with the ecological needs of habitats inside and outside the protected zones, re-establish destroyed biotopes and creation of biotopes. Measures for regularly occurring migratory species not listed in Annex I is required as regards their breeding, moulting and wintering areas and staging posts along their migration routes. The protection of wetlands and particularly wetlands of international importance. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

| Legislation, Plan, etc. | Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective | Additional information/lower-level objectives, etc. | Relevance to the Draft Plan |
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| EU Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) | It aims to reduce water pollution from nitrates used for agricultural purposes and prevent any further pollution. It forms an integral part of the water framework directive (Directive 2000/60/EC) of the European Union and is closely linked to other EU policies that address air quality, climate change and agriculture. | <p>EU Member States must do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designate as vulnerable zones all those draining into waters that are or could be affected by high nitrate levels and eutrophication. The designation is reviewed and possibly revised at least every 4 years to take account of any changes that have occurred. Establish mandatory action programmes for these areas, taking into account available scientific and technical data and overall environmental conditions. Monitor the effectiveness of the action programmes. Test the nitrate concentration in fresh ground and surface water at sampling stations, at least monthly and more frequently during flooding. Carry out a comprehensive monitoring programme and submit – every 4 years – a detailed report on the directive's implementation. The report includes information on nitrate-vulnerable zones, results of water monitoring and a summary of the relevant aspects of codes of good agricultural practices and action programmes. Draw up a code of good agricultural practices, which farmers apply on a voluntary basis. It sets out various good practices, such as when fertiliser use is inappropriate. Provide training and information for farmers, where appropriate. <p>The European Commission provides a report every 4 years on the basis of the national information it has received.</p> | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| EU Environmental Quality Standards Directive (EQSD) (2008/105/EC) | It sets out environmental quality standards (EQSs) for the presence in surface water of certain substances or groups of substances identified as priority pollutants because of the significant risk they pose to or via the aquatic environment. These standards are in line with the strategy and objectives of the European Union (EU)'s water framework directive (Directive 2000/60/EC). It repeals Directives 82/176/EEC, 83/513/EEC, 84/156/EEC, 84/491/EEC and 86/280/EEC with effect from 22 December 2012. | <p>The directive sets EQSs for priority substances and eight other pollutants. These substances include: the metals cadmium, lead, mercury and nickel, and their compounds; benzene; polyaromatic hydrocarbons; and several pesticides. Several of these priority substances are classed as hazardous.</p> <p>The EQSs in Directive 2008/105/EC are limits on the concentration of the priority substances and eight other pollutants in water (or biota), i.e. thresholds which must not be exceeded if a good chemical status is to be met. There are two types of water standard.</p> <p>A threshold for the average concentration of the substance concerned calculated from measurements over a 1-year period. The purpose of this standard is to ensure protection against long-term exposure to pollutants in the aquatic environment. A maximum allowable concentration of the substance concerned, i.e. the maximum for any single measurement. The purpose of this standard is to ensure protection against short-term exposure, i.e. pollution peaks.</p> <p>The EQSs are different for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> inland surface waters (rivers and lakes); other surface waters (transitional, coastal and territorial waters). EU Member States must ensure compliance with the EQSs. They must also take measures to ensure that the concentrations of substances that tend to accumulate in sediment and/or biota do not increase significantly. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

| Legislation, Plan, etc. | Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective | Additional information/lower-level objectives, etc. | Relevance to the Draft Plan |
|---|--|--|---|
| EU Industrial Emissions (Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control) –IED Directive (2010/75/EU) | <p>It is aimed at achieving significant benefits to the environment and human health by reducing harmful industrial emissions across the EU, in particular through better application of Best Available Techniques (BAT).</p> <p>The IED is based on the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an integrated approach (focusing on the installation being permitted rather than separately on different environmental media such as air, water or soil); • best available techniques; • flexibility; • inspections; • public participation. <p>The IED combines seven separate existing Directives related to industrial emissions: With effect from 7 January 2014:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directive 78/176/EEC of 20 February 1978 on waste from the titanium dioxide industry; • Directive 82/883/EEC on the surveillance and monitoring of titanium dioxide waste; • Directive 92/112/EEC on the reduction of titanium dioxide industrial waste; • Directive 1999/13/EC on reducing emissions of volatile organic compounds; • Directive 2000/76/EC on waste incineration (Waste Incineration Directive); • Directive 2008/1/EC concerning integrated pollution prevention and control (IPPC Directive); <p>With effect from 1st January 2016:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directive 2001/80/EC on the limitation of emissions of certain pollutants from large combustion plants (LCP Directive). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IED aspires to reduce and, as far as possible, eliminate pollution arising from industrial activities. It seeks to achieve this by providing a general framework for the control of the industries with the highest pollution potential in order to prevent the shifting of pollution from one environmental medium (or industry) to another. The overall intention is to provide an integrated approach to the prevention and control of emissions into the various environmental media such as, air, water and soil while striking a commercial balance for businesses. • The IED aims to increase the effectiveness of the legislation by supporting Member States in implementing BAT-based permitting. The IED aims to improve and clarify the concept and use of BAT and increases transparency by requiring that the use of flexibility must be justified and documented leading to a more coherent and EU-wide application of BAT. • The IED also strengthens existing minimum requirements in certain sectors (such as large combustion plants, waste incineration, etc.) so as to ensure the achievement of objectives of the Commission's Thematic Strategy on Air Pollution. • The IED aims to further increase the effectiveness of the legislation by strengthening provisions on environmental improvement and enforcement, while stimulating innovation. The IED introduces minimum requirements as regards the environmental inspections of installations, the review and update of permits, and reporting on compliance. It also provides incentives for the development and promotion of environment-friendly technologies. • The IED aims to cut all identified unnecessary administrative burdens and simplify current legislation. The IED tackles the shortcomings of current EU legislation on industrial emissions by overhauling the seven existing pieces of legislation on industrial emissions. This has improved the clarity and coherence of the legislation and should reduce the administrative burden through combined requirements on granting permits and streamlined reporting. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| EU Plant Protection (products) Directive 2009/127/EC | The Directive applies to pesticides which are plant protection products. Regarding pesticide application equipment already in professional use, the Framework Directive introduces requirements for the inspection and maintenance to be carried out on such equipment. | This Directive is limited to the essential requirements with which machinery for pesticide application must comply before being placed on the market and/or put into service, while the European standardisation organisations are responsible for drawing up harmonised standards providing detailed specifications for the various categories of such machinery in order to enable manufacturers to comply with those requirements. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| EU Renewable Energy Directive (RED) 2023/2413 - amending Directive (EU) 2018/2001, Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 and Directive 98/70/EC as regards the promotion of energy from renewable sources, and repealing Council Directive (EU) 2015/652 | The Renewable Energy Directive is the legal framework for the development of clean energy across all sectors of the EU economy, supporting cooperation between EU countries towards this goal. The revised Directive introduces stronger measures to ensure that all possibilities for the further development and uptake of renewables are fully utilised. This will be key to achieving the EU's objective of climate neutrality by 2050 and to strengthen Europe's security of energy supply. In addition to double the existing share of renewable energy sources, a strong policy framework will facilitate electrification in different sectors, with new increased sector-specific targets for renewables in heating and cooling, transport, industry, buildings and district heating/cooling, but also with a framework promoting electric vehicles and smart recharging. | The revised Directive sets an overall renewable energy target of at least 42.5% binding at EU level by 2030 - but aiming for 45%. The amended RED contains revised targets for renewable energy consumption in transport, of 29% energy share (known as the 'RES-T') or a 14.5% GHG reduction by 2030. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Indirect Land Use Change Directive (2012/0288 (COD)) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 3(4) of Directive 2009/28/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (3) requires Member States to ensure that the share of energy from renewable energy sources in all forms of transport in 2020 is at least 10 % of their final energy consumption. • The blending of biofuels is one of the methods available for Member States to meet this target, and is expected to be the main contributor. • Other methods available to meet the target are the reduction of energy consumption, which is imperative because a mandatory percentage target for energy from renewable sources is likely to become increasingly difficult to achieve sustainably if overall demand for energy for transport continues to rise, and the use of electricity from renewable energy sources. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit the contribution that conventional biofuels (with a risk of ILUC emissions) make towards attainment of the targets in the Renewable Energy Directive; • Improve the greenhouse gas performance of biofuel production processes (reducing associated emissions) by raising the greenhouse gas saving threshold for new installations subject to protecting installations already in operation on 1st July 2014; • Encourage a greater market penetration of advanced (low-ILUC) biofuels by allowing such fuels to contribute more to the targets in the Renewable Energy Directive than conventional biofuels; • Improve the reporting of greenhouse gas emissions by obliging Member States and fuel suppliers to report the estimated indirect land-use change emissions of biofuels. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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|---|--|--|--|
| <p>Alternative Fuel Infrastructure Regulation (AFIR) -</p> <p>(Regulation (EU) 2023/1804 on the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure, and repealing Directive 2014/94/EU)</p> | <p>The regulation sets mandatory national targets for European Union Member States to deploy publicly accessible alternative fuels infrastructure (in particular for electricity and hydrogen) for road vehicles, vessels moored at the quayside and stationary aircraft, with a specific focus on the trans-European networks. The regulation also includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • common rules for user information, data provision and payment requirements; • a mandate for the Commission to adopt delegated acts to ensure interoperability of infrastructure by mandating technical specifications on the basis of European standards; and • planning and reporting requirements for Member States. | <p>Recharging infrastructure for electric cars and vans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member States must ensure that publicly accessible recharging stations are set up in proportion to the number of registered vehicles, as follows: • for each registered electric vehicle, a total power output of at least 1.3 kilowatts (kW); for each registered plug-in hybrid vehicle, a total power output of at least 0.80 kW. • Member States must also ensure the deployment of publicly accessible recharging stations along the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) road network. <p>Recharging infrastructure for electric heavy-duty vehicles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member States must ensure a minimum coverage of recharging points for heavy-duty electric vehicles. <p>Hydrogen infrastructure for road vehicles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 31 December 2030, Member States must ensure that publicly accessible hydrogen refuelling stations with a total capacity of at least 1 tonne per day are deployed at least every 200 km along the TEN-T core network. At least one refuelling station must be deployed in each urban node. <p>Liquefied methane for road transport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Until 31 December 2024, Member States must ensure that an appropriate number of publicly accessible refuelling points for liquefied methane are set up, at least along the TEN-T core network, where there is demand, unless the costs are disproportionate to the benefits, including environmental benefits. <p>Electricity supply in maritime ports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 31 December 2029, there must be sufficient shoreside electricity for ships moored at the quayside at TEN-T core and TEN-T comprehensive maritime ports to serve at least 90% of all container and passenger vessels above 5,000 gross tonnage. <p>Electricity for stationary aircraft:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 31 December 2024, all airports of the TEN-T core and comprehensive network must provide electricity to stationary aircraft used for commercial air transport operations at aircraft contact stands, and by 31 December 2029 at all remote stands. <p>Railway infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member States must assess the development of alternative fuel technologies and propulsion systems (including hydrogen and battery power) for rail infrastructure that cannot be fully electrified for technical or cost-efficiency reasons. <p>Payment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Users of electric and hydrogen vehicles must be able to pay easily at recharging and hydrogen refuelling points (with payment cards and without subscriptions). Prices, including all of their components and specific to the recharging session, must be communicated clearly to end users before the start of a recharging session. | <p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p> |
| <p>EU Energy Efficiency Directive (2012/27/EU)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes a set of binding measures to help the EU reach its 20% energy efficiency target by 2020. • Under the Directive, all EU countries are required to use energy more efficiently at all stages of the energy chain, from production to final consumption. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy distributors or retail energy sales companies have to achieve 1.5% energy savings per year through the implementation of energy efficiency measures • EU countries can opt to achieve the same level of savings through other means, such as improving the efficiency of heating systems, installing double glazed windows or insulating roofs • The public sector in EU countries should purchase energy efficient buildings, products and services • Every year, governments in EU countries must carry out energy efficient renovations on at least 3% (by floor area) of the buildings they own and occupy • Energy consumers should be empowered to better manage consumption. This includes easy and free access to data on consumption through individual metering • National incentives for SMEs to undergo energy audits • Large companies will make audits of their energy consumption to help them identify ways to reduce it • Monitoring efficiency levels in new energy generation capacities. | <p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p> |
| <p>EU Seveso Directive (2012/18/EU)</p> | <p>This Directive lays down rules for the prevention of major accidents which involve dangerous substances, and the limitation of their consequences for human health and the environment, with a view to ensuring a high level of protection throughout the Union in a consistent and effective manner.</p> | <p>The Seveso Directive is well integrated with other EU policies, thus avoiding double regulation or other administrative burden. This includes the following related policy areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classification, labelling and packaging of chemicals; • The Union's Civil Protection Mechanism; • The Security Union Agenda including CBRN-E and Protection of critical infrastructure; • Policy on environmental liability and on the protection of the environment through criminal law; • Safety of offshore oil and gas operations. | <p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p> |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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|---|---|---|---|
| EU Effort Sharing Regulation (ESR) 2018 (as amended in 2023) | The ESR establishes binding annual greenhouse gas emission targets for Member States from 2021 to 2030. It is part of a set of policies and measures to reduce the EU's emissions by at least 55% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels. This is a crucial milestone to deliver the European Green Deal and achieve climate neutrality by 2050. The ESR is also part of the Energy Union strategy and the EU's implementation of the Paris Agreement. | The national targets concern emissions from the following sectors: domestic transport (excluding aviation), buildings, agriculture, small industry, and waste. These sectors account for almost 60% of emissions in the EU. The ESR assigns each Member State with an emission reduction target for 2030, a set of annual emission allocations for each year from 2021 to 2030, and flexibilities to deal with annual fluctuations in greenhouse gas emissions due to weather or economic conditions. The amended legislation increases the emissions reduction target for the targeted sectors including transport, from 29% to 40% by 2030, compared to 2005 levels. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| The Energy Union Strategy (COM/2015/080) (2015) and the EU “Clean energy for all Europeans” package (2019) | <p>The Energy Union Strategy aims at building an energy union that gives EU consumers - households and businesses - secure, sustainable, competitive and affordable energy. Since its launch in 2015, the EC has published several packages of measures and regular progress reports, which monitor the implementation of this key priority, to ensure that the energy union strategy is achieved.</p> <p>The package aims to help to decarbonise EU's energy system in line with the European Green Deal objectives. The ESR transforms the targets of the Clean Energy Package into binding annual climate targets for each Member State for the period 2021–2030. The “Clean energy for all Europeans” package – marked a significant step towards implementing the Energy Union Strategy.</p> | <p>The Energy Union Strategy builds five closely related and mutually reinforcing dimensions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security, solidarity and trust - diversifying Europe's sources of energy and ensuring energy security through solidarity and cooperation between EU countries. • A fully integrated internal energy market - enabling the free flow of energy through the EU through adequate infrastructure and without technical or regulatory barriers. • Energy efficiency - improved energy efficiency will reduce dependence on energy imports, lower emissions, and drive jobs and growth. • Climate action, decarbonising the economy - the EU is committed to a quick ratification of the Paris Agreement and to retaining its leadership in the area of renewable energy. • Research, innovation and competitiveness - supporting breakthroughs in low-carbon and clean energy technologies by prioritising research and innovation to drive the energy transition and improve competitiveness. <p>Based on Commission proposals published in 2016, the Clean Energy package consists of 8 new laws. Following political agreement by the EU Council and the European Parliament (finalised in May 2019) and the entry into force of the different EU rules, EU countries have 1-2 years to convert the new directives into national law.</p> | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Directive on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe 2024/EC recast: Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe Directive 2008/50/EC and Fourth Daughter Directive 2004/107/EC | <p>This new directive simplifies EU rules on ambient air quality by merging the two existing EU directives into one. Its goal is to bring quality standards in line with the World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations.</p> <p>The new directive introduces stricter limits on key air pollutants, aligning EU standards more closely with World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines.</p> | <p>Air quality is assessed using common methods and criteria across the EU, and the revised directive brings further improvements to air quality monitoring and modelling.</p> <p>The revised directive will also ensure early action, with air quality roadmaps that need to be prepared ahead of 2030 if there is a risk that the new standards will not be attained by that date. The air quality standards will be reviewed regularly in line with latest scientific evidence to assess whether they continue to be appropriate.</p> <p>The revised directive prioritises the health of EU citizens: it sets new air quality standards for pollutants to be reached by 2030 which are more closely aligned with the WHO air quality guidelines. Those pollutants include, among others, particulate matter PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}, nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide, all known to cause respiratory problems. Member states may request that the 2030 deadline be postponed if specific conditions are met.</p> | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| EU (2018) Clean Air Policy Package | Aims to substantially reduce air pollution across the EU. | The proposed strategy sets out objectives for reducing the health and environmental impacts of air pollution by 2030, and contains legislative proposals to implement stricter standards for emissions and air pollution. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| National Emissions Ceilings (NEC) Directive 2016/2284/EU on the reduction of certain atmospheric pollutants | It aims to reduce the health risks and environmental impact of air pollution by establishing national emission reduction commitments. The Directive also aligns emission reduction commitments under EU law with international commitments (following the revision of the Gothenburg Protocol in 2012). The legislation was proposed as part of the EU's 2013 Clean Air Policy Package, which included a Clean Air Programme for Europe. | <p>The Directive covers 5 air pollutants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sulphur dioxide; • nitrogen oxides; • non-methane volatile organic compounds; • ammonia; and • fine particulate matter. <p>The Directive sets emission reduction commitments per pollutant for each EU country to be attained by 2020 and 2030. The emission reduction commitments for each pollutant that will apply each year from 2020 to 2029 are the same as those which the EU countries are already committed to under the revised Gothenburg protocol. New stricter reductions have been agreed from 2030 onwards.</p> | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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| UNECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (1979) | The first international treaty to deal with air pollution on a broad regional basis. The Convention entered into force in 1983, laying down the general principles of international cooperation for air pollution abatement and setting up an institutional framework which has since brought together research and policy. | The Convention has substantially contributed to the development of international environmental law and has created the essential framework for controlling and reducing the damage to human health and the environment caused by transboundary air pollution. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Directive on arsenic, cadmium, mercury, nickel and PAH in ambient air (2004/107/EC), as amended | Directive 2004/107/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2004 relating to arsenic, cadmium, mercury, nickel and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in ambient air. | The objective of this Directive is to establish a target value for the concentration of arsenic, cadmium, nickel and benzo(a)pyrene in ambient air so as to avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects of arsenic, cadmium, nickel and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons on human health and the environment as a whole. It determines common methods and criteria for the assessment of concentrations of arsenic, cadmium, mercury, nickel and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in ambient air as well as of the deposition of such substances. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Medium Combustion Plants (MCP) Directive (2015/2193) | Directive (EU) 2015/2193 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the limitation of emissions of certain pollutants into the air from medium combustion plants. | This Directive lays down rules to control emissions of sulphur dioxide (SO ₂), nitrogen oxides (NO _x) and dust into the air from medium combustion plants, as well as to monitor emissions of carbon monoxide (CO). The aim is to reduce emissions to air and the potential risks to human health and the environment from such emissions. As regards the scope, Article 2 identifies the types of combustion plants to which these rules apply. Emission limits values are set out in Annex II. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| EU Energy Efficiency Directive 2023/1791 on energy efficiency and amending Regulation (EU) 2023/955 (recast) | The revised Energy Efficiency Directive significantly raises the EU's ambition on energy efficiency. It establishes 'energy efficiency first' as a fundamental principle of EU energy policy, giving it legal-standing for the first time. The Commission has published a series of recommendations, including guidelines for EU countries related to the revised directive, to help countries transpose its different elements into national law. | The revised Directive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> raises the EU energy efficiency target, making it binding for EU countries to collectively ensure an additional 11.7% reduction in energy consumption by 2030, compared to the projections of the EU reference scenario 2020; more than doubles the annual energy savings obligation (Article 8) by 2028, this is one of the key policy instruments of the directive to meet the headline target and to drive energy savings in end-use sectors, such as buildings, industry and transport; puts a stronger focus on alleviating energy poverty, it aims at empowering consumers through stronger requirements for EU countries to raise awareness and provide information on energy efficiency; it includes improved regulations to identify and remove barriers related to split incentives for energy efficiency renovations between tenants and owners or among multiple owners; introduces an obligation for the monitoring and reporting of the energy performance of data centres; expands the scope of energy audit obligations to include all those companies, regardless of their size, which are consuming energy above a certain threshold; mandates EU countries to report on energy efficiency investments, including energy performance contracts, as part of the Governance Regulation, ensuring transparency and accountability; establishes project development assistance mechanisms at national, regional, and local levels to support energy efficiency investments and facilitate the attainment of the EU's ambitious energy efficiency targets. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Noise Directive (2002/49/EC) | The Noise Directive - Directive 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise - is part of an EU strategy setting out to reduce the number of people affected by noise in the longer term and to provide a framework for developing existing Community policy on noise reduction from source. | The Directive requires competent authorities in Member States to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draw up strategic noise maps for major roads, railways, airports and agglomerations, using harmonised noise indicators and use these maps to assess the number of people which may be impacted upon as a result of excessive noise levels; Draw up action plans to reduce noise where necessary and maintain environmental noise quality where it is good; and Inform and consult the public about noise exposure, its effects, and the measures considered to address noise. The Directive does not set any limit value, nor does it prescribe the measures to be used in the action plans, which remain at the discretion of the competent authorities. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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| Floods Directive (2007/60/EC) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes a framework for the assessment and management of flood risks Reduce adverse consequences for human health, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity associated with floods in the Community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess all water courses and coast lines at risk from flooding through Flood Risk Assessment Prepare flood hazard maps and flood risk maps outlining the extent or potential of flooding and assets and humans at risk in these areas at River Basin District level (Article 3(2) (b)) and areas covered by Article 5(1) and Article 13(1) (b) in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3. Implement flood risk management plans and take adequate and coordinated measures to reduce flood risk for the areas covered by the Articles listed above. Inform the public and allow the public to participate in planning process. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a framework for the protection of water bodies to include inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater and their dependent wildlife and habitats. Preserve and prevent the deterioration of water status and where necessary improve and maintain "good status" of water bodies. Promote sustainable water usage. The Water Framework Directive repealed the following Directives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Drinking Water Abstraction Directive Sampling Drinking Water Directive Exchange of Information on Quality of Surface Freshwater Directive Shellfish Directive Freshwater Fish Directive Groundwater (Dangerous Substances) Directive Dangerous Substances Directive | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect, enhance and restore all water bodies and meet the environmental objectives outlined in Article 4 of the Directive. Achieve "good status" for all waters. Manage water bodies based on identifying and establishing river basins districts. Involve the public and streamline legislation. Prepare and implement a River Basin Management Plan for each river basin districts identified and a Register of Protected Areas. Establish a programme of monitoring for surface water status, groundwater status and protected areas. Recover costs for water services. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect, control and conserve groundwater. Prevent the deterioration of the status of all bodies of groundwater. Implements measures to prevent and control groundwater pollution, including criteria for assessing good groundwater chemical status and criteria for the identification of significant and sustained upward trends and for the definition of starting points for trend reversals. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet minimum groundwater standards listed in Annex 1 of Directive. Meet threshold values adopted by national legislation for the pollutants, groups of pollutants and indicators of pollution which have been identified as contributing to the characterisation of bodies or groups of bodies of groundwater as being at risk, also taking into account Part B of Annex II. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Drinking Water Directive (98/83/EC) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve and maintain the quality of water intended for human consumption. Protect human health from the adverse effects of any contamination of water intended for human consumption by ensuring that it is wholesome and clean. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set values applicable to water intended for human consumption for the parameters set out in Annex I. Set values for additional parameters not included in Annex I, where the protection of human health within national territory or part of it so requires. The values set should, as a minimum, satisfy the requirements of Article 4(1) (a). Implement all measures necessary to ensure that regular monitoring of the quality of water intended for human consumption is carried out, in order to check that the water available to consumers meets the requirements of this Directive and in particular the parametric values set in accordance with Article 5. Ensure that any failure to meet the parametric values set in accordance with Article 5 is immediately investigated in order to identify the cause. Ensure that the necessary remedial action is taken as soon as possible to restore its quality and shall give priority to their enforcement action. Undertake remedial action to restore the quality of the water where necessary to protect human health. Notify consumers when remedial action is being undertaken except where the competent authorities consider the non-compliance with the parametric value to be trivial. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This Directive concerns the collection, treatment and discharge of urban waste water and the treatment and discharge of waste water from certain industrial sectors. The objective of the Directive is to protect the environment from the adverse effects of waste water discharges. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban waste water entering collecting systems shall before discharge, be subject to secondary treatment. Annex II requires the designation of areas sensitive to eutrophication which receive water discharges. Establishes minimum requirements for urban waste water collection and treatment systems in specified agglomerations to include special requirements for sensitive areas and certain industrial sectors. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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| Water Reuse Regulation (2020/741) | The purpose of this Regulation is to facilitate the uptake of water reuse whenever it is appropriate and cost-efficient, thereby creating an enabling framework for those Member States who wish or need to practise water reuse. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulation (EU) 2020/741 of the European Parliament and of the Council on minimum requirements for water reuse. This Regulation lays down minimum requirements for water quality and monitoring and provisions on risk management, for the safe use of reclaimed water in the context of integrated water management. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC) as amended by Directive 2006/21/EC, Directive 2009/31/EC and Directive 2013/30/EU | The overall aim of the ELD is to prevent and fully remedy damaged natural resources and their services to the condition that would have existed if no damage had occurred. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relates to environmental damage caused by any of the occupational activities listed in Annex III, and to any imminent threat of such damage occurring by reason of any of those activities; damage to protected species and natural habitats caused by any occupational activities other than those listed in Annex III, and to any imminent threat of such damage occurring by reason of any of those activities, whenever the operator has been at fault or negligent. Where environmental damage has not yet occurred but there is an imminent threat of such damage occurring, the operator shall, without delay, take the necessary preventive measures. Where environmental damage has occurred the operator shall, without delay, inform the competent authority of all relevant aspects of the situation and take all practicable steps to immediately control, contain, remove or otherwise manage the relevant contaminants and/or any other damage factors in order to limit or to prevent further environmental damage and adverse effects on human health or further impairment of services and the necessary remedial measures, in accordance with Article 7. The operator shall bear the costs for the preventive and remedial actions taken pursuant to this Directive. The competent authority shall be entitled to initiate cost recovery proceedings against the operator. The operator may be required to provide financial security guarantees to ensure their responsibilities under the directive are met. The Environmental Liability Directive has been amended through a number of Directives. Implementation of the Environmental Liability Directive is contributed towards by a Multi-Annual Work Programme (MAWP) 'Making the Environmental Liability Directive more fit for purpose' that is updated annually to changing developments, growing knowledge and new needs. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Sewage Sludge Directive (Council Directive 86/278/EEC of 12 June 1986 on the protection of the environment, and in particular of the soil, when sewage sludge is used in agriculture) | <p>The purpose of this Directive is to regulate the use of sewage sludge in agriculture in such a way as to prevent harmful effects on soil, vegetation, animals and man, thereby encouraging the correct use of such sewage sludge. Member States shall prohibit the use of sludge where the concentration of one or more heavy metals in the soil exceeds the limit values which they lay down in accordance with Annex I A and shall take the necessary steps to ensure that those limit values are not exceeded as a result of the use of sludge.</p> <p>The aims of the Sewage Sludge Directive are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to protect humans, animals, plants and the environment by ensuring that heavy metals in soil and sludge do not exceed set limits to increase the amount of sewage sludge used in agriculture | <p>The Directive also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sets limits for the concentration of seven heavy metals in sewage sludge intended for agricultural use and in sludge-treated soils (cadmium, copper, nickel, lead, zinc, mercury, chromium) bans the use of sewage sludge that results in concentrations of these heavy metals in soil exceeding these limit values | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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| Bathing Waters Directive (Directive 2006/7/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the management of bathing water quality and repealing Directive 76/160/EEC) | <p>With a view to preserving, protecting and improving human health and the environment, within the legal framework of Directive 2000/60/EC, the present Directive establishes provisions for: (a) the monitoring and classification of bathing water quality; (b) the management of bathing water quality; and (c) the provision of information to the public on bathing water quality. Member States are required to annually identify all bathing waters and define the length of the bathing season.</p> <p>The EU aims to protect the environment and the health of Europeans by attaining good bathing water quality throughout the EU. More specifically, it aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide better and earlier information to citizens about the quality of their bathing waters, including logos move from simple sampling and monitoring of bathing waters to bathing quality management integrate into other EU measures protecting the quality of all our waters (rivers, lakes, ground waters and coastal waters) through the Water Framework Directive | <p>The Bathing Water Directive requires Member States to monitor and assess bathing water. It ensures timely information is given to the public during the bathing season and requires Member States to disseminate information on bathing water quality actively and promptly. In particular, notices banning or advising against bathing should be rapidly and easily identifiable. The Directive applies to all surface waters that can be used for bathing, except for swimming pools and spa pools, confined waters subject to treatment or used for therapeutic purposes and confined waters artificially separated from surface water and groundwater. Decision establishing a symbol for information to the public on bathing water classification and any bathing prohibition. View the symbols for informing the public on bathing water prohibition, advice against bathing and bathing water classification.</p> <p>The implementation of the Bathing Water Directive is supported by a broad EU framework of water legislation, including the Water Framework Directive, the Environmental Quality Standards Directive, the Groundwater Directive, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive.</p> | <p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p> |
| Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive (2009/128/EC) Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the sustainable use of plant protection products and amending Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 | <p>The Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive (SUD) establishes a framework for European Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides by setting minimum rules to reduce the risks to human health and the environment that are associated with pesticide use.</p> <p>The Directive aims to achieve a sustainable use of pesticides in the EU by reducing the risks and impacts of pesticide use on human health and the environment and promoting the use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and of alternative approaches or techniques, such as non-chemical alternatives to pesticides. EU countries have drawn up National Action Plans to implement the range of actions set out in the Directive.</p> | <p>The main actions relate to training of users, advisors and distributors of pesticides, inspection of pesticide application equipment, the prohibition of aerial spraying, limitation of pesticide use in sensitive areas, and information and awareness raising about pesticide risks. EU countries must also promote Integrated Pest Management, for which, general principles are laid down in Annex III to the Directive.</p> <p>The European Commission has adopted a proposal for a new Regulation on the Sustainable Use of Plant Protection Products, including EU wide targets to reduce by 50% the use and risk of chemical pesticides by 2030, in line with the EU's Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies. The proposal, adopted on 22 June 2022, is part of a package of measures to reduce the environmental footprint of the EU's food system and help mitigate the economic losses that we are already suffering due to climate change and biodiversity loss.</p> <p>The proposal transforms the existing Directive into a Regulation which will be directly binding and uniformly applicable to all Member States. It overhauls the existing rules on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides (see Directive 2009/128/EC) to bring them in line with the ambitions set in the EU Green Deal, Biodiversity and Farm to Fork strategies. The proposals must be approved by Member States in the Council and the European Parliament, under the normal legislative procedure.</p> | <p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p> |
| EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) (1962) CAP 2023-2027 | <p>The CAP is a partnership between society and agriculture that ensures a stable supply of food, safeguards farmers' income, protects the environment and keeps rural areas vibrant. It aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> support farmers and improve agricultural productivity, ensuring a stable supply of affordable food; safeguard European Union farmers to make a reasonable living; help tackle climate change and the sustainable management of natural resources; maintain rural areas and landscapes across the EU; keep the rural economy alive by promoting jobs in farming, agri-food industries and associated sectors. | <p>The CAP 2023-2027 entered into force on 1 January 2023. Support for farmers and rural stakeholders across the 27 EU countries is based on the CAP 2023-2027 legal framework and the choices detailed in the CAP Strategic Plans, approved by the Commission. The approved Plans are designed to make a significant contribution to the ambitions of the European Green Deal, Farm to Fork Strategy and Biodiversity Strategy.</p> | <p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p> |
| EU REACH Regulation (EC 1907/2006), as amended | <p>The purpose of this Regulation is to ensure a high level of protection of human health and the environment, including the promotion of alternative methods for assessment of hazards of substances, as well as the free circulation of substances on the internal market while enhancing competitiveness and innovation.</p> | <p>This Regulation lays down provisions on hazardous substances and mixtures and specification of hazard classes; general obligations of manufacturers, importers and downstream users to classify, label and package the substances and mixtures; identification and examination of available information on substances and mixtures; evaluation of hazard information and decision on classification; establishment of a classification and labelling inventory in the form of a database; and the manufacture, placing on the market and use of chemical substances and preparations, pursuant to the precautionary principle.</p> <p>The Regulation sets forth the framework concerning the registration of such substances and preparations as well as the granting of authorizations. Furthermore, it sets up the European Chemicals Agency for the purposes of managing and carrying out the technical, scientific and administrative aspects of this Regulation. This Regulation sets out eight annexes attached. Annex I sets out the criteria for classification and labelling requirements for hazardous substances and mixtures. Annex II lays down special rules for labelling and packaging of certain classified substances and mixtures.</p> | <p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p> |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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| UN Sustainable Development Goals | The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which reflect the need for all countries to urgently act as a global partnership. | Sustainable transport is mainstreamed across several SDGs and targets, especially those related to food security, health, energy, economic growth, infrastructure, and cities and human settlements. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| European Commission's "Forging a climate-resilient Europe - the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change" (2021) | The Strategy sets out how the European Union can adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change and become climate resilient by 2050. | The Strategy has four principal objectives: to make adaptation smarter, swifter and more systemic, and to step up international action on adaptation to climate change. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| European Environment Agency's European Climate Risk Assessment (2024) | This assessment identifies 36 climate risks with potentially severe consequences across Europe. | The risks are evaluated in the contexts of risk severity, policy horizon (lead time and decision horizon), policy readiness and risk ownership. It further identifies priorities for EU policy action, based on a structured risk assessment united with qualitative aspects, such as considering social justice. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| UN Kyoto Protocol (2nd Kyoto Period), the Second European Climate Change Programme (ECCP II), Paris climate conference (COP21) 2015 (Paris Agreement) | The UN Kyoto Protocol set of policy measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Second European Climate Change Programme (ECCP II) aims to identify and develop all the necessary elements of an EU strategy to implement the Kyoto Protocol. At the Paris climate conference (COP21) in December 2015, 195 countries adopted the first-ever universal, legally binding global climate deal. The agreement sets out a global action plan to put the world on track to avoid dangerous climate change by limiting global warming to well below 2°C and in line with recommendations of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) take steps "to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above preindustrial levels". | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Kyoto Protocol is implemented through the European Climate Change Programme (ECCP II). EU member states implement measures to improve on or complement the specified measures and policies arising from the ECCP. <p>Under COP21, governments agreed to come together every 5 years to set more ambitious targets as required by science; report to each other and the public on how well they are doing to implement their targets; track progress towards the long-term goal through a robust transparency and accountability system.</p> | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| European Green Deal (2019) and "Fit for 55" legislation (2021) | The European Green Deal provides a roadmap for making the EU's economy sustainable by turning climate and environmental challenges into opportunities across all policy areas and making the transition just and inclusive for all. The "Fit for 55" legislative package is a central part of the European Green Deal. | <p>The European Green Deal covers all sectors of the economy, notably transport, energy, agriculture, buildings, and industries such as steel, cement, ICT, textiles and chemicals. It outlines investments needed and financing tools available, and explains how to ensure a just and inclusive transition.</p> <p>The 'Fit for 55' package responds to the requirements in the EU Climate Law to reduce Europe's net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030. It was updated when the Commission proposed increased ambition on renewable energy and energy efficiency in the REPowerEU plan to respond to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and boost Europe's energy security. The final legislative package is expected to reduce EU net greenhouse gas emissions by 57% by 2030. For transport, the package is primarily focused on reducing fossil fuel dependency and increasing the availability of, and infrastructure for, renewable alternatives.</p> | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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| Leaders Pledge for Nature 2020 | Political leaders (including Taoiseach Michael Martin) participating in the United Nations Summit on Biodiversity in September 2020, representing 75 countries from all regions and the European Union, have committed to reversing biodiversity loss by 2030. | <p>As part of the UN Decade of Action to achieve sustainable development, the leaders commit to achieve the vision of Living in Harmony with Nature by 2050 by undertaking ten actions, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Putting biodiversity, climate, and the environment at the heart of COVID-19 recovery strategies and investments as well as national and international development and cooperation; Developing and implementing an ambitious and transformational post-2020 global biodiversity framework for adoption at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Kunming, China, as a key instrument to reach the SDGs; Raising ambition and aligning domestic climate policies with the Paris Agreement on climate change, with enhanced nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and long-term strategies consistent with the temperature goals of the Paris Agreement, and the objective of net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by mid-century, and strengthen climate resilience of economies and ecosystems; and Mainstream biodiversity into relevant sectoral and cross-sectoral policies at all levels, including in food production, agriculture, fisheries and forestry, energy, tourism, infrastructure and extractive industries, and trade and supply chains, as well as into key international agreements and processes. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Europe 2020: European 2020 Strategy for Growth and Employment | The Europe 2020 Strategy aims to ensure that the economic revival of the European Union following the economic and financial crisis is supported by a series of reforms in order to build solid foundations for growth and job creation by 2020. While addressing the structural weaknesses of the EU's economy and economic and social issues, the strategy also takes account of the longer-term challenges of globalisation, pressure on resources and ageing. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Europe 2020 Strategy should enable the EU to achieve growth that is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> smart, through the development of knowledge and innovation; sustainable, based on a greener, more resource efficient and more competitive economy; inclusive, aimed at strengthening employment and social and territorial cohesion. The EU has set itself five major targets for this ambition to be achieved by 2020: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increasing the employment rate of the population aged 20-64 to at least 75 %; investing 3 % of gross domestic product in research and development; reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20 %, increasing the share of renewable energies to 20 % and increasing energy efficiency by 20 %; reducing the school drop-out rate to less than 10 % and increasing the proportion of tertiary degrees to at least 40 %; reducing the number of people threatened by poverty or social exclusion by 20 million. The Europe 2020 Strategy targets are also supported by 7 flagship initiatives at European level and in EU countries: the Innovation Union; Youth on the move; the Digital Agenda for Europe; a Resource-efficient Europe; an industrial policy for the globalisation era; the agenda for new skills and jobs; and the European Platform against Poverty. At European level, the single market, the EU budget and the European external policy are additional levers in achieving the targets of the Europe 2020 strategy | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 - Bringing nature back into our lives (European Commission, 2020) | <p>The EU's biodiversity strategy for 2030 is a comprehensive, ambitious and long-term plan to protect nature and reverse the degradation of ecosystems. The strategy aims to put Europe's biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030, and contains specific actions and commitments.</p> <p>Aims to build resilience to future threats such as the impacts of climate change, forest fires, food insecurity, disease outbreaks and protecting wildlife and fighting illegal wildlife trade.</p> | <p>The Strategy contains specific commitments and actions to be delivered by 2030, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing a larger EU-wide network of protected areas on land and at sea; Launching an EU nature restoration plan; Introducing measures to enable the necessary transformative stage; and Introducing measures to tackle the global biodiversity challenge. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| EU Green Infrastructure Strategy (2013) | Aims to create a robust enabling framework in order to promote and facilitate Green Infrastructure (GI) projects. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting GI in the main EU policy areas. Supporting EU-level GI projects. Improving access to finance for GI projects. Improving information and promoting innovation. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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| European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Valletta, 1992) | The aim of this (revised) Convention is to protect the archaeological heritage as a source of the European collective memory and as an instrument for historical and scientific study. | The Valletta Convention makes the conservation and enhancement of the archaeological heritage one of the goals of urban and regional planning policies. The Convention sets guidelines for the funding of excavation and research work and publication of research findings. It also deals with public access, in particular to archaeological sites, and educational actions to be undertaken to develop public awareness of the value of the archaeological heritage. It also constitutes an institutional framework for pan-European co-operation on the archaeological heritage, entailing a systematic exchange of experience and experts among the various States. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| ICOMOS (2011) Principles for the Conservation of Industrial Heritage Sites, Structures, Areas and Landscapes ('Dublin Principles') | It is aimed to assist in the documentation, protection, conservation and appreciation of industrial heritage as part of the heritage of human societies around the World. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (I) Document and understand industrial heritage structures, sites, areas and landscapes and their values; (II) Ensure effective protection and conservation of the industrial heritage structures, sites, areas and landscapes; (III) Conserve and maintain the industrial heritage structures, sites, areas and landscapes; and (IV) Present and communicate the heritage dimensions and values of industrial structures, sites, areas and landscapes to raise public and corporate awareness, and support training and research. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Convention of the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada, 1995) | The main purpose of the Convention is to reinforce and promote policies for the conservation and enhancement of Europe's heritage. It also affirms the need for European solidarity with regard to heritage conservation and is designed to foster practical co-operation among the Parties. It establishes the principles of "European co-ordination of conservation policies" including consultations regarding the thrust of the policies to be implemented. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The reinforcement and promotion of policies for protecting and enhancing the heritage within the territories of the parties. The affirmation of European solidarity with regard to the protection of the heritage and the fostering of practical co-operation between states and regions. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro, 2005) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural heritage is a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time. A heritage community consists of people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise that rights relating to cultural heritage are inherent in the right to participate in cultural life, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Recognise individual and collective responsibility towards cultural heritage. Emphasise that the conservation of cultural heritage and its sustainable use have human development and quality of life as their goal. Take the necessary steps to apply the provisions of this Convention concerning the role of cultural heritage in the construction of a peaceful and democratic society. Greater synergy of competencies among all the public, institutional and private actors concerned. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| European Landscape Convention (Florence, 2000) | The European Landscape Convention introduced a Europe-wide concept centring on the quality of landscape protection, management and planning and covering the entire territory, not just outstanding landscapes. Through its ground-breaking approach and its broader scope, it complements the Council of Europe's and UNESCO's heritage conventions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote protection, management and planning of landscapes. Organise European co-operation on landscape issues. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| The Seventh Environmental Action Programme (EAP) of the European Community (2013-2020) | It identifies three key objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to protect, conserve and enhance the Union's natural capital to turn the Union into a resource-efficient, green, and competitive low-carbon economy to safeguard the Union's citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and wellbeing | <p>Four so called "enablers" will help Europe deliver on these objectives (goals):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better implementation of legislation. Better information by improving the knowledge base. More and wiser investment for environment and climate policy. Full integration of environmental requirements and considerations into other policies. <p>Two additional horizontal priority objectives complete the programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To make the Union's cities more sustainable. To help the Union address international environmental and climate challenges more effectively. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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| Bern Convention (Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats) (1979) | <p>The convention has three main aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to conserve wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats to promote cooperation between states to give particular attention to endangered and vulnerable species including endangered and vulnerable migratory species | <p>The Parties under the convention recognise the intrinsic value of nature, which needs to be preserved and passed to future generations, they also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek to ensure the conservation of nature in their countries, paying particular attention to planning and development policies and pollution control. Look at implementing the Bern Convention in central Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. Take account of the potential impact on natural heritage by other policies. Promote education and information of the public, ensuring the need to conserve species is understood and acted upon. Develop an extensive number of species action plans, codes of conducts, and guidelines, at their own initiative or in co-operation with other organisations. Created the Emerald Network, an ecological network made up of Areas of Special Conservation Interest. | <p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p> |
| Bali Road Map (2007) | <p>The Bali Road Map includes the Bali Action Plan, which charts the course for a new negotiating process designed to tackle climate change. The Bali Action Plan is a comprehensive process to enable the full, effective and sustained implementation of the Convention through long-term cooperative action, now, up to and beyond 2012, in order to reach an agreed outcome and adopt a decision.</p> | <p>The Bali Action Plan is divided into five main categories: shared vision, mitigation, adaptation, technology and financing. The shared vision refers to a long-term vision for action on climate change, including a long-term goal for emission reductions.</p> | <p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p> |
| Cancun Agreements (2010) | <p>Set of decisions taken at the COP 16 Conference in Cancun in 2010, which addresses a series of key issues in the fight against climate change. Cancun Agreements' main objectives cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitigation Transparency of actions Technology Finance Adaptation Forests Capacity building | <p>Among the most prominent agreements is the establishment of a Green Climate Fund to transfer money from the developed to developing world to tackle the impacts of climate change.</p> | <p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p> |
| Doha Climate Gateway (2012) | <p>Set of decisions taken at the COP 18 meeting in Doha in 2012 which pave the way for a new agreement in Paris in 2015.</p> | <p>Among the many decisions taken, governments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthened their resolve and set out a timetable to adopt a universal climate agreement by 2015, which will come into effect in 2020. Streamlined the negotiations, completing the work under the Bali Action Plan to concentrate on the new work towards a 2015 agreement under a single negotiating stream in the Ad hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action. Emphasized the need to increase their ambition to cut greenhouse gases and to help vulnerable countries to adapt. Launched a new commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol, thereby ensuring that this treaty's important legal and accounting models remain in place and underlining the principle that developed countries lead mandated action to cut greenhouse gas emissions. Made further progress towards establishing the financial and technology support and new institutions to enable clean energy investments and sustainable growth in developing countries. | <p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p> |
| Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) (2001) | <p>The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants is a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from chemicals that remain intact in the environment for long periods, become widely distributed geographically, accumulate in the fatty tissue of humans and wildlife, and have harmful impacts on human health or on the environment. The objective of the Stockholm Convention is to protect human health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prohibit and/or eliminate the production and use, as well as the import and export, of the intentionally produced POPs that are listed in Annex A to the Convention Restrict the production and use, as well as the import and export, of the intentionally produced POPs that are listed in Annex B to the Convention Reduce or eliminate releases from unintentionally produced POPs that are listed in Annex C to the Convention Ensure that stockpiles and wastes consisting of, containing or contaminated with POPs are managed safely and in an environmentally sound manner Other provisions of the Convention relate to the development of implementation plans, information exchange, public information, awareness and education, research, development and monitoring, technical assistance, financial resources and mechanisms, reporting, effectiveness evaluation and non-compliance | <p>Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p> |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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| Ramsar Convention (1971) | The Convention's mission is <i>"the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world"</i> . | Under the "three pillars" of the Convention, the Contracting Parties commit to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work towards the wise use of all their wetlands; • Designate suitable wetlands for the list of Wetlands of International Importance (the "Ramsar List") and ensure their effective management; • Cooperate internationally on transboundary wetlands, shared wetland systems and shared species. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| OSPAR Convention (1992) | The mission of OSPAR is to conserve marine ecosystems and safeguard human health in the North-East Atlantic by preventing and eliminating pollution; by protecting the marine environment from the adverse effects of human activities; and by contributing to the sustainable use of the seas. | OSPAR's work is organised under six strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity and Ecosystem Strategy • Eutrophication Strategy • Hazardous Substances Strategy • Offshore Industry Strategy • Radioactive Substances Strategy • Strategy for the Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme These six strategies fit together to underpin the ecosystem approach. For each strategy a programme of work is designed and implemented annually. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| National Level | | | |
| Ireland 2040 - Our Plan, the National Planning Framework, and the National Development Plan | The National Planning Framework is the Government's high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of to the year 2040. It is a framework to guide public and private investment, to create and promote opportunities for people, and to protect and enhance the environment - from villages to cities, and everything around and in between. The National Development Plan sets out the investment priorities that will underpin the successful implementation of the new National Planning Framework. This will guide national, regional and local planning and investment decisions in Ireland over the next two decades, to cater for an expected population increase of over 1 million people. | National Strategic Outcomes as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compact Growth 2. Enhanced Regional Accessibility 3. Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities 4. Sustainable Mobility 5. A Strong Economy, supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills 6. High-Quality International Connectivity 7. Enhanced Amenity and Heritage 8. Transition to a Low-Carbon and Climate-Resilient Society 9. Sustainable Management of Water and other Environmental Resources 10. Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) | An Act to consolidate and revise the law relating to planning and development; to provide for proper planning and sustainable development in the interests of the common good; to provide for the licensing of events and control of funfairs; for those purposes to repeal and replace the Planning and Development Act 2000; to amend certain other enactments; and to provide for matters connected therewith. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development, with certain exceptions, is subject to development control under the Planning Acts and the local authorities grant or refuse planning permission for development, including ones within protected areas. • There are, however, a range of exemptions from the planning system. Use of land for agriculture, peat extraction and afforestation, subject to certain thresholds, is generally exempt from the requirement to obtain planning permission. • Additionally, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required for a range of classes and large-scale projects. • Under planning legislation, Development Plans must include mandatory objectives for the conservation of the natural heritage and for the conservation of European sites and any other sites which may be prescribed. There are also discretionary powers to set objectives for the conservation of a variety of other elements of the natural heritage. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Planning and Development Act 2024 | An Act to consolidate and revise the law relating to planning and development; to provide for proper planning and sustainable development in the interests of the common good; to provide for the licensing of events and control of funfairs; for those purposes to repeal and replace the Planning and Development Act 2000 and amend certain other enactments; for purposes unrelated to the foregoing, to amend the Residential Tenancies Act 2004, the Residential Tenancies (Amendment) Act 2019, the Land Development Agency Act 2021 and the National Asset Management Agency Act 2009; and to provide for matters connected therewith. | Key reforms included in the Act: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction of statutory timelines for all consenting processes, to give confidence and certainty to applicants; • A significant reorganisation of An Bord Pleanála, to be known as An Coimisiún Pleanála; • Greater mandatory alignment of all tiers of planning, improving consistency; • Improvements to the planning judicial review processes; • Clearer, more consistent policies and guidance; • Longer term, more strategic, ten-year plans for Local Authorities; • More agile local implementation, through the introduction of Urban and Priority Area Plans, including new bespoke plans for Gaeltacht and Island communities; • Creation of Urban Development Zones, which will facilitate a more plan-led approach to development, increasing certainty at the master-planning stage; • Provisions to deter abuse of planning processes through spurious planning submissions and appeals, as well as a ban on requesting payment for not opposing development and; • Ability to suspend the duration of a permission while subject to judicial review proceedings, so as not to lose any time available for completing the development. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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| European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (S.I. 435 of 2004), as amended by S.I. 200 of 2011 | The purpose of these Regulations is to transpose into Irish law Directive 2001/42/EC of 27 June 2001 (O.J. No. L 197, 21 July 2001) on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment — commonly known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Regulations cover plans and programmes in all of the sectors listed in article 3(2) of the Directive except land-use planning. These Regulations also amend certain provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 to provide the statutory basis for the transposition of the Directive in respect of land-use planning. Transposition in respect of the land-use planning sector is contained in the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 436 of 2004). | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477 of 2011), as amended | These Regulations provide a new for the implementation in Ireland of Council Directive 92/43/EEC on habitats and protection of wild fauna and flora (as amended) and for the implementation of Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of wild birds. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They provide, among other things, for: the appointment and functions of authorized officers; identification, classification and other procedures relative to the designation of Community sites. The Regulations have been prepared to address several judgments of the CJEU against Ireland, notably cases C-418/04 and C-183/05, in respect of failure to transpose elements of the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive into Irish law. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| European Communities Environmental Objectives (FPM) Regulations 2009 (S.I. 296 of 2009) | The purpose of these Regulations is to support the achievement of favourable conservation status for freshwater pearl mussels, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set environmental quality objectives for the habitats of the freshwater pearl mussel populations named in the First Schedule to these Regulations that are within the boundaries of a site notified in a candidate list of European sites, or designated as a Special Area of Conservation, under the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997 (S.I. No. 94/1997). Require the production of sub-basin management plans with programmes of measures to achieve these objectives. Set out the duties of public authorities in respect of the sub-basin management plans and programmes of measure. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations 2010 (S.I. 9 of 2010), as amended | To amend the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations 2010 (S.I. No. 9 of 2010) to make further provision to implement Commission Directive 2014/80/EU of 20 June 2014 amending Annex II to Directive 2006/118/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of groundwater against pollution and deterioration. | <p>The substances and threshold values set out in Schedule 5 to S.I. No. 9 of 2010 have been reviewed and amended where necessary, based on existing monitoring information and international guidelines on appropriate threshold values.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part A of Schedule 6 has been amended to include changes to the rules governing the determination of background levels for the purposes of establishing threshold values for groundwater pollutants and indicators of pollution. Part B of Schedule 6 has been amended to include nitrites and phosphorus (total) / phosphates among the minimum list of pollutants and their indicators which the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) must consider when establishing threshold values. Part C of Schedule 6 amends the information to be provided to the Minister by the EPA with regard to the pollutants and their indicators for which threshold values have been established. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations of 2003 (S.I. 722 of 2003) European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations of 2003 (S.I. 350 of 2014) European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface waters) Regulations of 2009 (S.I. 272 of 2009) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transpose the Water Framework Directive into legislation. Outlines the general duty of public authorities in relation to water. Identifies the competent authorities in charge of water policy (amended to Irish Water in 2013) and gives EPA and the CER the authority to regulate and supervise their actions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implements River basin districts and characterisation of RBDs and River Basin Management Plans. Requires the public to be informed and consulted on the Plan and for progress reports to be published on RBDs. Implements a Register of protected areas, Classification systems and Monitoring programmes for water bodies. Allows the competent authority to recover the cost of damage/destruction of status of water body. Outlines environmental objectives and programme of measures and environmental quality standards for priority substances. Outlines criteria for assessment of groundwater. Outlines environmental objectives to be achieved for surface water bodies. Outlines surface water quality standards. Establishes threshold values for the classification and protection of surface waters against pollution and deterioration in quality. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

| Legislation, Plan, etc. | Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective | Additional information/lower-level objectives, etc. | Relevance to the Draft Plan |
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| Water Pollution Acts 1977 to 1990 | The Water Pollution Acts allow Local Authorities the authority regulate and supervise actions relating to water in their division. | The Water Pollution Acts enable local authorities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prosecute for water pollution offences. Attach appropriate pollution control conditions in the licensing of effluent discharges from industry, etc., made to waters. Issue notices ("section 12 notices") to farmers, etc., specifying measures to be taken within a prescribed period to prevent water pollution. Issue notices requiring a person to cease the pollution of waters and requiring the mitigation or remedying of any effects of the pollution in the manner and within the period specified in such notices; Seek court orders, including High Court injunctions, to prevent, terminate, mitigate or remedy pollution/its effects. Prepare water quality management plans for any waters in or adjoining their functional areas. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Water Services Act 2007 (No. 30 of 2007) Water Services Act 2013 (No. 6 of 2013) Water Services (No. 2) Act 2013 (No. 50 of 2013) Water Services Act 2017 (No. 29 of 2017) Water Services (Amendment) Act 2022 (No. 39 of 2022) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides the water services infrastructure. Outlines the responsibilities involved in delivering and managing water services. Identifies the authority in charge of provision of water and waste water supply. <p>Irish Water was given the responsibility of the provision of water and waste water services in the amendment act during 2013, therefore these services are no longer the responsibility of the 34 Local Authorities in Ireland.</p> | Key strategic objectives include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring Uisce Éireann delivers infrastructural projects that meet key public health, environmental and economic objectives in the water services sector. Ensuring the provision of adequate water and sewerage services in the gateways and hubs listed in the National Spatial Strategy, and in other locations where services need to be enhanced. Ensuring good quality drinking water is available to all consumers of public and group water supplies, in compliance with national and EU drinking water standards Ensuring the provision of the remaining infrastructure needed to provide secondary waste water treatment, for compliance with the requirements of the EU Urban Waste water Treatment Directive. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Irish Water's Water Services Strategic Plan 2015 and Capital Investment Plan 2020-2024 | <p>This Water Services Strategic Plan sets out strategic objectives for the delivery of water services over the next 25 years up to 2040. It details current and future challenges which affect the provision of water services and identifies the priorities to be tackled in the short and medium term.</p> <p>The Capital Investment Plan 2020-2024 is Uisce Éireann investment plan for water and wastewater assets and infrastructure for the next 5 years. The Capital Investment Plan sets out where to prioritise investment to deliver the most urgently needed improvements in drinking water quality, leakage reduction, water availability, wastewater compliance, efficiencies and customer service.</p> | The Capital Investment Plan 2020-2024 is made up of investment in individual projects such as building new or upgrading existing water and wastewater treatment plants and upgrading existing networks, and national programmes where activities are being delivered in a consistent and efficient manner across the country. Some examples of these programmes are the Leakage Reduction Programme, the National Disinfection Programme, the Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme, and the National Certification Authorisation Programme. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Ireland's Forest Strategy 2023-2030 and associated Implementation Plan including the National Forestry Programme 2023-2027 | The Implementation Plan will facilitate the initial steps in the implementation of the Strategy on the road to achieving the Shared Vision for 2050. The Implementation Plan includes the new Forestry Programme (2023 – 2027), which will be the primary implementation mechanism for the Forest Strategy. The Plan also includes a list of actions that will be funded and enabled by mechanisms outside of the Forestry Programme. | The Forestry Programme 2023-2027 was created in alignment with Ireland's Forest Strategy and is designed to provide lasting benefits for many key areas including climate change, biodiversity, wood production, and employment alongside enhancing societal benefits. The Forestry Programme will provide incentives for farmers and other landowners and will provide farm families with the opportunity to increase and diversify their income streams. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Water Action Plan 2024: River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027 (3rd Cycle) (2024) | The Water Action Plan 2024 is Ireland's third River Basin Management Plan and it outlines the measures the Government and other sectors are taking to improve water quality in Ireland's groundwater, rivers, lakes, estuarine and coastal waters, and provide sustainable management of our water resources (as specified under SDG 6). This Water Action Plan enhances and builds upon the work of the first and second-cycle plans. Where necessary, this plan addresses the shortcomings experienced during the implementation of previous plans. | The responses to shortcomings addressed include, for example, strengthening the incorporation of the integrated catchment management approach, improving the environmental ambition, improving the evidence base for 'targeting the right measures in the right place' and securing dedicated resources to deliver these, increasing environmental enforcement and compliance, and strengthening the governance structures. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Ireland's National Water Quality Monitoring Programme 2022-2027 | The main purpose of Ireland's National Water Quality Monitoring Programme 2022-2027 is to provide a comprehensive national overview of the ecological and chemical status of surface waters and the quantitative and chemical status of groundwaters. The information is used to track progress towards the achievement of the environmental objectives required by the Water Framework Directive, and those set out in the River Basin Management Plan. | The programme is comprised of 2,899 surface and groundwater bodies representing 60% of the total number of national water bodies, covering 2,429 river water bodies, 224 lakes, 80 transitional water bodies, 45 coastal waters, 16 canals and 121 groundwater bodies. The programme is operated by the Environmental Protection Agency, Marine Institute, Inland Fisheries Ireland, Waterways Ireland, National Parks and Wildlife Service and Local Authorities. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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| National Water Resources Plan (NWRP) – Framework Plan (2021) | <p>The NWRP is a plan on how to provide a safe, secure and reliable water supply to customers for the next 25 years, without causing adverse impact on the environment. The objective of the NWRP is to set out how we intend to maintain the supply and demand for drinking water over the short, medium and long term whilst minimising the impact on the environment.</p> <p>The preparation of the plan has been divided into two distinct phases, the combination of which will become the final NWRP. Phase 1 was carried out in 2021 and the NWRP Framework has been adopted. In Phase 2 of the NWRP, Uisce Éireann summarised the needs across the 539 individual water supplies and identified the solutions to address these needs. Due to the large number of supplies in Ireland, Phase 2 was delivered as four Regional Water Resources Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Water Resources Plan: North West (RWRP NW) Regional Water Resources Plan: South West (RWRP SW) Regional Water Resources Plan: South East (RWRP SE) Regional Water Resources Plan: Eastern and Midlands (RWRP EM) | <p>The key objectives are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify areas where there are current and future potential water supply shortfalls, taking into account normal and extreme weather conditions Assess the current and future water demand from homes, businesses, farms, and industry Consider the impacts of climate change on Ireland's water resources Develop a drought plan advising measures to be taken before and during drought events Develop a plan detailing how we deal with the material that is produced as a result of treating drinking water Assess the water resources available at a national level including lakes, rivers and groundwater | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development 2030 | The national plans are intended to inform investment priorities for aquaculture under Member States' operational programmes under the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund. They are also intended to identify measures to reduce the administrative burden on operators, to secure sustainable development and growth of aquaculture through coordinated spatial planning, to enhance the competitiveness of the aquaculture sector and to promote a level playing field for EU operators by exploiting their competitive advantages. Ireland's National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development was finalised following public consultation earlier in 2022. The Plan was adopted by the European Commission in 2022. | The National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development proposes 58 actions to be implemented over the period up to 2030. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Aquaculture Acts 1997 to 2006 (Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006 (8/2006), s. 1(3)) Fisheries (Amendment) Act 1997 (23/1997) Fisheries and Foreshore (Amendment) Act 1998 (54/1998), ss. 2, 3 and 4 Fisheries (Amendment) Act 2001 (40/2001) Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006 (8/2006) | The Aquaculture and Foreshore Management Division ensures the efficient and effective management of Aquaculture licensing and Foreshore licensing in respect of Aquaculture and Sea Fishery related activities. | <p>The Strategic Objectives of the Aquaculture and Foreshore Management Division are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to develop and manage an efficient and effective regulatory framework in respect of Aquaculture licensing and Foreshore licensing of Aquaculture and Sea Fishery related activities; to secure a fair financial return from the State's foreshore estate in the context of Aquaculture licensing and Foreshore licensing in respect of Aquaculture and Sea Fishery related activities; to progressively reduce arrears in the clearing of licence applications. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Foreshore Acts 1933 to 2011 | The Foreshore Acts require that a lease or licence must be obtained from the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government for the carrying out of works or placing structures or material on, or for the occupation of or removal of material from, State-owned foreshore, which represents the greater part of the foreshore. Construction of permanent structures on privately owned foreshore also required the prior permission of the Minister under the Foreshore Act. | Developments on the foreshore require planning permission in addition to a Foreshore Lease/Licence/Permission. All Foreshore Leases, Licences Permissions are without prejudice to the powers of the local planning authority. Applicants should, therefore, consult initially with the local planning authority regarding their proposal. In the case of developments on foreshore for, by or on behalf of a Local Authority where an EIS is required, applications should be made to An Bord Pleanála under Part XV, Planning and Development Act 2000. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) (2024) | <p>The NMPF details how marine activities will interact with each other in an ocean space that is under increasing spatial pressure, ensuring the sustainable use of Ireland's marine resources to 2040.</p> <p>The NMPF has been prepared with an ecosystem-based approach and informed by best available knowledge.</p> | <p>The National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) brings together all marine-based human activities for the first time, outlining the Government's vision, objectives and marine planning policies for each marine activity. The NMPF is intended as the marine equivalent to the National Planning Framework. This approach will enable the Government to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> set a clear direction for managing our seas clarify objectives and priorities direct decision makers, users and stakeholders towards strategic, plan-led, and efficient use of our marine resources | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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| Seafood Development Programme 2021-2027 | Based on the challenges identified for the seafood sector and coastal communities and the policy context, Ireland's Programme requires an ambitious vision to: "To support a resilient, climate smart, environmentally sustainable and profitable Irish seafood sector in order to maximise its contribution to jobs and growth and maintain the economic and social activities of our most vibrant and sustainable coastal communities" | The Programme details the vision and key missions to be achieved by the implementation of the programme. It also demonstrates how the strategic objectives of the EMFAF fund (specified in Regulation (EU) 2021/1139) will be employed in fulfilling the Programme. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth: An Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland 2012 | Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth is an Integrated Marine Plan (IMP), setting out a roadmap for the Government's vision, high-level goals and integrated actions across policy, governance and business to enable our marine potential to be realised. Implementation of this Plan will see Ireland evolve an integrated system of policy and programme planning for our marine affairs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable economic growth of marine/ maritime sectors; • Increase the contribution to the national GDP; • Deliver a business friendly yet robust governance, policy and planning framework; • Protect and conserve our rich marine biodiversity and ecosystems; • Manage our living and non-living resources in harmony with the ecosystem; • Implement and comply with environmental legislation; • Building on our maritime heritage, strengthen our maritime identity; • Increase our awareness of the value, opportunities and societal benefits; and • Engagement and participation by all. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Flood Risk Management Plans arising from National Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Programme | The national Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) programme commenced in Ireland in 2011 and is being overseen by the Office of Public Works. The CFRAM Programme is intended to deliver on core components of the National Flood Policy, adopted in 2004, and on the requirements of the EU Floods Directive. | CFRAM Studies have been undertaken for all River Basin Districts. The studies are focusing on areas known to have experienced flooding in the past and areas that may be subject to flooding in the future either due to development pressures or climate change. Flood Risk and Hazard mapping, including Flood Extent Mapping, was finalised in 2017. The final outputs from the studies are the CFRAM Plans, finalised in 2018. The Plans define the current and future flood risk in the River Basin Districts and set out how this risk can be managed. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation Management Plan 2017 – 2022 and a Review of Raised Bog Natural Heritage Area Network | The National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation Management Plan 2017 - 2022 sets out a roadmap for the long-term management, restoration and conservation of protected raised bogs in Ireland. | The Plan is part of the measures being implemented in response to the on-going infringement action against Ireland in relation to the implementation of the EU Habitats Directive, with regard to the regulation of turf cutting on the Special Areas of Conservation and on foot of the recommendation of Mr. Justice Quirke that a National Raised Bog SAC Management Plan be drawn up, arising from the Peatlands Forum (2012). | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| National Peatlands Strategy (2015-2025) | This Strategy aims to provide a long-term framework within which all of the peatlands within the State can be managed responsibly in order to optimise their social, environmental and economic contribution to the well-being of this and future generations. | <p>Objectives of the Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To give direction to Ireland's approach to peatland management. • To apply to all peatlands, including peat soils. • To ensure that the relevant State authorities and state-owned companies that influence such decisions contribute to meeting cross-cutting objectives and obligations in their policies and actions. • To ensure that Ireland's peatlands are sustainably managed so that their benefits can be enjoyed responsibly. • To inform appropriate regulatory systems to facilitate good decision making in support of responsible use. • To inform the provision of appropriate incentives, financial supports and disincentives where required. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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| European Union (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2022 (S.I. No. 113/2022) | The purpose of these Regulations is to give effect to Ireland's Nitrates Action Programme pursuant to Council Directive 91/676/EEC concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural source. | <p>Part 2 concerns farmyard management. The Part requires an occupier of a holding shall take all such steps, as far as is practicable for the purposes of minimising the amount of soiled water produced on the holding; livestock manure and other organic fertilisers, soiled water and effluents from dungsteeds, farmyard manure pits, silage pits or silage clamps arising or produced in a building or yard on a holding shall, prior to its application to land or other treatment, be collected and held in a manner that prevents the run-off or seepage, directly or indirectly, into groundwaters or surface waters of such substances. The Regulations provides for general obligations related to capacity of storage facilities and then distinguishes among requirements for storage facilities of: effluents and soiled water; pig manure; poultry manure; manure from deer, goats and sheep; manure from cattle.</p> <p>Part 3 concerns nutrient management.</p> <p>Part 4 is focused on the prevention of water pollution from fertilizers and certain activities; this includes the distances from a water body and other issues requirements as to manner of application of fertilizers, soiled water etc; periods when application of fertilizers is prohibited; limits on the amount of livestock manure to be applied.</p> <p>Part 5 regulates general duty of occupier, such as keeping of records, etc. Offences and related matters.</p> <p>Part 6 is functions of the public authorities: certificates, exemptions, etc.</p> | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) (Sea-Fisheries) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 (S.I. 565 of 2014) | These Regulations the European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) (Sea-fisheries) Regulations 2013 so as to apply them to the regulation of sea-fishing activity in so far as the regulation of that activity is necessary to secure compliance with the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 and the objectives of the Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulation 3 provides for the submission of a Fisheries Natura Plan in relation to planned fisheries; Regulation 4 provides for a screening of a Fisheries Natura Plan to determine whether or not an appropriate assessment is required; Regulation 5 provides for an appropriate assessment of a Fisheries Natura Plan and also provides for public and statutory consultation; Regulation 6 provides for the Minister to make a determination to adopt a Fisheries Natura Plan. The Minister may amend, withdraw or revoke a plan; Regulation 7 provides for publication of the adopted Fisheries Natura Plan; Regulation 8 provides for a Risk Assessment of unplanned fisheries and also provides for public and statutory consultation on the assessment; Regulation 9 provides for the issue of a Natura Declaration to prohibit, restrict including restricting by permit, control, etc. of sea fishing activities; Regulation 10 provides for Natura Permits to be issued where required by Natura Declarations; and Regulations 11 to 31 deal with functions of authorised officers and related matters, offences, etc. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Wildlife Act of 1976 Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000 Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2023 | <p>The act provides protection and conservation of wild flora and fauna.</p> <p>The Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2023 introduced a new public sector duty on biodiversity. The legislation provides that every public body, as listed in the Act, is obliged to have regard to the objectives and targets in the National Biodiversity Action Plan.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides protection for certain species, their habitats and important ecosystems Give statutory protection to NHAs Enhances wildlife species and their habitats Includes more species for protection | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030 | Ireland's 4 th National Biodiversity Action Plan sets the national biodiversity agenda for the period 2023-2030 and aims to deliver the transformative changes required to the ways in which we value and protect nature. | <p>This National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030 builds upon the achievements of the previous Plan. It will continue to implement actions within the framework of five strategic objectives, while addressing new and emerging issues:</p> <p>Objective 1 - Adopt a Whole of Government, Whole of Society Approach to Biodiversity Objective 2 - Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs Objective 3 - Secure Nature's Contribution to People Objective 4 - Enhance the Evidence Base for Action on Biodiversity Objective 5 - Strengthen Ireland's Contribution to International Biodiversity</p> | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025 | <p>The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan is an island-wide attempt to reverse declines in pollinating insects to ensure the sustainability of our food, avoid additional economic impacts on agriculture, and protect the health of the environment.</p> <p>The main objectives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making farmland, public land and private land in Ireland pollinator friendly; Raising awareness of pollinators and how to protect them; Managed pollinators – supporting beekeepers and growers; Expanding our knowledge of pollinators and pollination service; and Collecting evidence to track change and measure success. | This voluntary Plan identified 81 actions, shared out between over 100 governmental and non-governmental organisations. A large focus of the Plan is to identify actions to improve the quality and amount of flower-rich habitat. Actions range from creating pollinator highways along our transport routes, to supporting pollinators on farmland, in gardens, businesses, and on public land. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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| Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 (as amended) | An Act to provide for the approval of plans by the Government in relation to climate change for the purpose of pursuing the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy. | When considering a plan or framework, for approval, the Government shall endeavour to achieve the national transition objective within the period to which the objective relates and shall, in endeavouring to achieve that objective, ensure that such objective is achieved by the implementation of measures that are cost effective and shall, for that purpose, have regard to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ultimate objective specified in Article 2 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change done at New York on 9 May 1992 and any mitigation commitment entered into by the European Union in response or otherwise in relation to that objective, The policy of the Government on climate change, Climate justice, Any existing obligation of the State under the law of the European Union or any international agreement referred to in section 2; and The most recent national greenhouse gas emissions inventory and projection of future greenhouse gas emissions, prepared by the Agency. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| National Climate Action Plan 2024 | The National Climate Action Plan 2023 provided a detailed plan for taking decisive action to achieve a 51% reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and setting Ireland on a path to reach net-zero emissions by no later than 2050, as committed to in the Programme for Government and set out in the Climate Act 2021. The Climate Action Plan 2024 builds upon the 2023 Plan by refining and updating the measures and actions required to deliver the carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings. | The Climate Action Plans list the actions needed to deliver on Ireland's climate targets and sets indicative ranges of emissions reductions for each sector of the economy. It will be updated periodically to ensure alignment with Ireland's legally binding economy-wide carbon budgets and sectoral ceilings. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| National Adaptation Framework (NAF) 2024 and associated regional, local and sectoral adaptation plans | NAF specifies the national strategy for the application of adaptation measures in different sectors and by local authorities in their administrative areas in order to reduce the vulnerability of the State to the negative effects of climate change and to avail of any positive effects that may occur. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adaptation under this Framework should seek to minimise costs and maximise the opportunities arising from climate change. Adaptation actions range from building adaptive capacity (e.g. increasing awareness, sharing information and targeted training) through to policy and finance-based actions. Adaptation actions must be risk based, informed by existing vulnerabilities of our society and systems and an understanding of projected climate change. Adaptation actions taken to increase climate resilience must also consider impacts on other sectors and levels of governance | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| National Climate Mitigation Plan 2017 | The Plan represents an initial step to set Ireland on a pathway to achieve the deep decarbonisation required in Ireland by mid-century in line with the Government's policy objectives. | The National Mitigation Plan focuses on the following issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate Action Policy Framework Decarbonising Electricity Generation Decarbonising the Built Environment Decarbonising Transport An Approach to Carbon Neutrality for Agriculture, Forest and Land Use Sectors | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Climate Adaptation Sectoral Adaptation Plans | The Climate Act sets out the requirements for the preparation of Sectoral Adaptation Plans. The 12 priority sectors identified in the 2018 NAF were grouped into 9 such Plans and clustered into four themes covering natural and cultural capital, critical infrastructure, water resource and flood risk management, and public health. This approach aims to provide a structured and systematic approach to sectoral developments. | To support key national sectors in planning for climate change adaptation and according to the requirements of the National Adaptation Framework (2018), sectoral planning guidelines were developed as part of the Irish Climate Information Platform, Climate Ireland project. The guidelines aim to ensure that a coherent and consistent approach to adaptation planning is adopted at national and local levels. Since the guidelines' publication in May 2018, they have been successfully implemented by relevant Departments to develop Sectoral Adaptation Plans. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| National Sustainable Mobility Policy (SMP) (2022) | It sets out a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport journeys to help Ireland meet its climate obligations. It is framed around three key principles that will guide the delivery of sustainable mobility policy over the coming decade. They are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe and green mobility; People focussed mobility; and Better integrated mobility. | The SMP includes an Action Plan covering the period 2022-2025 with 91 actions, supporting behavioural change across a wide range of interventions including, among other things, public transport infrastructure and services, active travel promotion and supports, road safety initiatives, legislative measures, research, and public engagement. The Policy also supports the implementation of large-scale transport projects including MetroLink and DART+ in Dublin, BusConnects in the five cities, the Connecting Ireland scheme in rural areas, and an Active Travel Infrastructure Programme providing high-quality cycling infrastructure across the country. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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| Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2025 and associated implementation plan | It sets out a pathway for the delivery of EV charge point infrastructure, including the rollout of EV infrastructure as required under the EU's Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation (AFIR), where a 300% increase in the amount of public recharging infrastructure is targeted for delivery. | The strategy takes a people-first approach, focusing on the different transport needs across the country and is being informed by the piloting of different technologies and charging options in Ireland. An Implementation Plan has also been developed in conjunction with the strategy to provide an initial set of actions and deliverables to support the strategy's delivery. This includes the development of the National Road Network EV Charging Plan and the Regional and Local EV Charging Network Plan. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Renewable Transport Fuel Policy 2023-2025 | The Renewable Transport Fuel Policy, 2023 – 2025 sets out a pathway to incentivise the supply of renewable transport fuel through annual increases in the renewable transport fuel obligation rate to 2030. | The policy will underpin the shift to the Climate Action Plan 2023 (CAP 23) biofuel targets of at least B20 (biodiesel equivalent) in diesel and E10 (Ethanol) in petrol by 2030 (with an interim B12/E10 by 2025 target). | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| National Energy Security Framework (2022) | National Energy Security Framework provides an overarching and comprehensive response to Ireland's energy security needs in the context of the war in Ukraine. The Framework outlines the structures which are in place within Government to monitor and manage our energy supplies. It sets out the plans which are in place to deal with energy security emergencies should they arise, and outlines out how these plans will be tested in light of the war in Ukraine. | The Framework sets out the government's action in response to these issues across three key themes: - managing the impact on consumers and businesses, with a specific focus on financially vulnerable residential consumers in the short-term - ensuring security of energy supply in the near term, with a focus on the period up to and including winter 2022/23 - reducing our dependency on imported fossil fuels, in the context of the phasing out of Russian energy imports across the EU | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Ireland's National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) 2021-2030 (published in 2024) | National Energy and Climate Plans are the framework within which EU Member States must notify their climate and energy objectives, targets, policies, and measures to the European Commission and were established under Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action. Member States are required to develop NECPs on a ten-year rolling basis. The aim of the plans is to outline our energy and climate policies in detail for the period from 2021 to 2030 and provide projections and ambitions towards 2050. Under the Regulation, Member States are also required to update their initial plans after 5 years, this is the first update of the initial NECP which was published in 2019. The NECP covers five dimensions of the Energy Union: - Decarbonisation - Energy Efficiency - Energy Security - Internal Energy Market - Research, Innovation and Competitiveness The NECP brings together the policies, targets, tools and associated material relating to our climate and energy obligations under various EU Regulations and Directives from across government bodies and departments into one document. It reflects our ambitions and provides certainty to investors and policymakers that we are committed to EU-wide targets and ambitions to move towards becoming a carbon-neutral society. | It outlines our department's energy and climate policies in detail for the period from 2021 to 2030 and looks onwards to 2050. The NECP collates the policies, measures and actions related to energy and climate outlined in a range of government plans: such as the Climate Action Plan, the National Development Plan, and Project Ireland 2040, into one cohesive document. It also presents modelling that illustrates Ireland's current trajectories toward its three main European targets. The NECP reflects the ambitions set out in Climate Action Plan 2024. The NECP will act to identify gaps and areas that Ireland can improve on, which should be reflected in updated policies and measures in subsequent Climate Action Plans. The policies outlined in the NECP reflect the ambition of Climate Action Plan 2024. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| National Implementation Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals 2022-2024 | It is the second National Implementation Plan for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals reviews the progress made towards each of the 17 Goals. | The Plan sets out five strategic objectives and 51 actions, with 119 individual measures to increase Ireland's ambition and strengthen implementation structures to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It also incorporates 23 external actions from four other National Plans or Strategies which contribute to and are complementary to the objectives of this Plan and which have been included for coherence and reporting purposes. Strategic Objective 1: To embed the SDG framework into the work of Government Departments to achieve greater Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development Strategic Objective 2: To integrate the SDGs into Local Authority work to better support the localisation of the SDGs Strategic Objective 3: Greater partnerships for the Goals Strategic Objective 4: To further incorporate the principle of Leave No One Behind into Ireland's Agenda 2030 implementation and reporting mechanisms Strategic Objective 5: Strong reporting mechanisms | Implementation of the Strategy needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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| Planning, Land Use and Transport Outlook 2040 | The PLUTO takes account of forecasted future economic and demographic scenarios, affordability considerations and relevant Government policies. | The PLUTO seeks to: 1. Quantify in broad terms the appropriate scale of financial investment in land transport over the long term; 2. Consider how fiscal, environmental and technological developments might impact on this investment; and, 3. Identify strategic priorities for future investment to ensure land transport infrastructure provision facilitates the objectives of Project Ireland 2040. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI) (2021) | The high-level strategic framework for prioritising future investment in the land transport network. This new framework is the Department of Transport's contribution to Project Ireland 2040, Government's long-term strategy for accommodating population growth in a sustainable manner and making Ireland a better country for all of its people. It has been developed to ensure that our transport sectoral strategy is underpinned by and supports the achievement of the spatial objectives and National Strategic Objectives set out in the National Planning Framework. | The framework establishes high-level investment priorities to efficiently and effectively address key transport challenges identified by the background analysis and to ensure that transport investment is aligned with and supports Government's overarching spatial and climate change objectives, as articulated in the National Planning Framework and Climate Action Plan. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Investing in our Future: A Strategic Framework for Investment in Land Transport (SFILT) – Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport | SFILT sets out a set of priorities to guide the allocation of the State's investment to best develop and manage Ireland's land transport network over the coming decades. | The three priorities stated in SFILT are: • Priority 1: Achieve steady state maintenance (meaning that the maintenance and renewal of the existing transport system is at a sufficient level to maintain the system in an adequate condition); • Priority 2: Address urban congestion; and • Priority 3: Maximise the value of the road network. In delivering on the steady state maintenance objective set out in SFILT, the Plan includes for: • Planned replacement programme for the bus fleet operated under Public Service Obligation ("PSO") contracts; • Tram refurbishment and asset renewal in the case of light rail; and • To the extent within the Authority' remit, support for the operation of the existing rail network within the GDA. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Infrastructure and Capital Investment Plan (2016-2021) | €27 billion multi-annual Exchequer Capital Investment Plan, which is supported by a programme of capital investment in the wider State sector, and which over the period 2016 to 2021 will help to lay the foundations for continued growth in Ireland. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This Capital Plan reflects the Government's commitment to supporting strong and sustainable economic growth and raising welfare and living standards for all. It includes allocations for new projects across a number of key areas and funding to ensure that the present stock of national infrastructure is refreshed and maintained. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Energy Security in Ireland to 2030 ("Energy Security Package") | It outlines a new strategy to ensure energy security in Ireland for this decade, while ensuring a sustainable transition to a carbon neutral energy system by 2050. | The Energy Security Package includes a range of measures to implement this approach in the short and medium term by prioritising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced and Responsive Demand A Renewables-Led System More Resilient Systems Robust Risk Governance | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Our Sustainable Future: A framework for Sustainable Development for Ireland 2012 | A medium to long term framework for advancing sustainable development and the green economy in Ireland. It identifies spatial planning as a key challenge for sustainable development and sets a series of measures to address these challenges. It aims at improving synergies and identifying and tackling policy gaps, policy conflicts and trade-offs as part of a coherent, joined-up approach to policy making on sustainable development. Ireland's Framework for Sustainable Development timeframe is to 2020 to tie in with other national and international frameworks, but a longer-term horizon to 2050 is also taken where appropriate, to provide a framework for guiding and reporting on long-term broad development trends such as on climate change. | The objectives of the Framework are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and prioritise policy areas and mechanisms where a sustainable development approach will add value and enable progress towards the strategy aims. Highlight and promote existing sustainable practices that, with the correct support, can underpin sustainable development more generally. Strengthen policy integration, coherence and co-ordination and bring a long term perspective to decision making. Set out governance mechanisms which ensure effective participation within government and across all stakeholders. Set out clear measures, responsibilities and timelines in an implementation plan. Set out how progress is to be measured and reported on through the use of indicators. Incorporate adequate and effective monitoring, learning and improvement into the Framework process. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |

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| Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future – A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009 – 2020 | <p>Outlines a policy for how a sustainable travel and transport system can be achieved. Sets out five key goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reduce overall travel demand. To maximise the efficiency of the transport network. To reduce reliance on fossil fuels. To reduce transport emissions. To improve accessibility to transport. | <p>Others lower level aims include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reduce distance travelled by private car and encourage smarter travel, including focusing population growth in areas of employment and to encourage people to live in close proximity to places of employment ensuring that alternatives to the car are more widely available, mainly through a radically improved public transport service and through investment in cycling and walking improving the fuel efficiency of motorised transport through improved fleet structure, energy efficient driving and alternative technologies strengthening institutional arrangements to deliver the targets | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Draft National Bioenergy Plan 2014 - 2020 | The Draft Bioenergy Plan vision: Bioenergy resources contributing to economic development and sustainable growth, generating jobs for citizens, supported by coherent policy, planning and regulation, and managed in an integrated manner. | <p>Three high-level goals, of equal importance, based on the concept of sustainable development are identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To harness the market opportunities presented by bioenergy in order to achieve economic development, growth and jobs. To increase awareness of the value, opportunities and societal benefits of developing bioenergy. To ensure that bioenergy developments do not adversely impact the environment and its living and non-living resources. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Draft Renewable Electricity Policy and Development Framework (DCCAE) 2016 | Goal: To optimise the opportunities in Ireland for renewable electricity development on land at significant scale, to serve both the All Island Single Electricity Market and any future regional market within the European Union, in accordance with European and Irish law, including Directive 2009/28/EC: On the promotion of the use of energy from renewable resources. | Objective: To develop a Policy and Development Framework for renewable electricity generation on land to serve both the All Island Single Electricity Market and any future regional market within the European Union, with particular focus on large scale projects for indigenous renewable electricity generation. This will, inter alia, provide guidance for planning authorities and An Bord Pleanála. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| National Alternative Fuels Infrastructure for the Transport Sector (DTTAS) 2017- 2030 | This Framework sets targets to achieve an appropriate level of alternative fuels infrastructure for transport, which is relative to national policy and Irish market needs. Non-infrastructure-based incentives to support the use of the infrastructure and the uptake of alternative fuels are also included within the scope of the Framework. | <p>Targets for alternative fuel infrastructure include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AFV forecasts Electricity targets Natural gas (CNG, LNG) targets Hydrogen targets Biofuels targets LPG targets Synthetic and paraffinic fuels targets | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| National Cycle Network Scoping Study 2010 | <p>Outlines objectives and actions aimed at developing a strong cycle network in Ireland.</p> <p>Sets out 19 specific objectives, and details the 109 actions, aimed at ensuring that a cycling culture is developed.</p> | <p>Sets a target where 10% of all journeys will be made by bike by 2020.</p> <p>Proposes the planning, infrastructure, communication, education and stakeholder participations measures required to implement the initiative.</p> | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| National Policy Framework for Alternative Fuels Infrastructure for Transport in Ireland 2017 to 2030 | <p>This National Policy Framework on Alternative Fuels Infrastructure for Transport represents the first step in communicating our longer-term national vision for decarbonising transport by 2050, the cornerstone of which is our ambition that by 2030 all new cars and vans sold in Ireland will be zero-emissions capable.</p> <p>By 2030 it is envisaged that the movement in Ireland to electrically-fuelled cars and commuter rail will be well underway, with natural gas and biofuels developing as major alternatives in the freight and bus sectors.</p> | <p>This policy set out to achieve five key goals in transport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce overall travel demand Maximise the efficiency of the transport network Reduce reliance on fossil fuels Reduce transport emissions Improve accessibility to transport <p>These goals remain the cornerstone of transport policy and are fully aligned to the objectives of this National Policy Framework.</p> | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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| Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland – The Energy Policy Framework 2007 – 2020 (2007) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> White paper setting out a framework for delivering a sustainable energy future in Ireland. Outlines strategic Goals for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Security of Supply Sustainability of Energy Competitiveness of Energy Supply | <p>The underpinning Strategic Goals are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that electricity supply consistently meets demand Ensuring the physical security and reliability of gas supplies to Ireland Enhancing the diversity of fuels used for power generation Delivering electricity and gas to homes and businesses over efficient, reliable and secure networks Creating a stable attractive environment for hydrocarbon exploration and production Being prepared for energy supply disruptions | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP) (2010) | The National Renewable Energy Action Plan sets out the Government's strategic approach and concrete measures to deliver on Ireland's 16% target under Directive 2009/28/EC. National Renewable Energy Action Plan. | The areas of intervention identified by the NREAP are heat, transport and electricity. Section 4 provides an overview of all policies and measures to promote the use of energy from renewable resources, these are: Biofuels Mineral Oil Tax Relief (MOTR) Schemes to increase production and use of biofuel; Greener Homes Scheme, financial facilitates to wider deployment of renewable-energy heating technologies in the residential sector; Grant support for the planting of perennial biomass crops (willow and miscanthus) – contributes to biomass needs of renewable energy sector; a policy that facilitates renewables by providing for grid connections outside the gate process for certain small, renewable, low carbon generators; new local and central authorities; etc. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| National Energy Efficiency Action Plan for Ireland (2017 – 2020) | Article 24 of the EU Energy Efficiency Directive requires Member States to submit a National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP) every three years. Ireland's 4th NEEAP was produced in early 2017. | It provides a comprehensive overview on the progress made towards the above targets the measures in place to ensure the targets are met the strategies and policies in place across the residential, commercial, transport and public sector. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| National Broadband Plan (2012) | The National Broadband Plan is the Government's initiative to deliver high speed broadband services to all premises in Ireland. This will be delivered through investment by commercial enterprises coupled with intervention by the State in those parts of the country where private companies have no plans to invest. | <p>The Plan sets out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clear statement of Government policy on the delivery of High-Speed Broadband. Specific targets for the delivery and rollout of high-speed broadband and the speeds to be delivered. The strategy and interventions that will underpin the successful implementation of these targets. A series of specific complementary measures to promote implementation of Government policy in this area. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Shaping Our Electricity Future - Version 1.1 EirGrid's Grid25 Strategy and associated Grid25 Implementation Programme 2017-2022 | The main objective of the Shaping Our Electricity Future Roadmap Version 1.1 is to outline how EirGrid can make the grid ready so that 80% of Ireland's and Northern Ireland's electricity can come from renewable sources, like the wind and sun, by 2030. EirGrid's mission is to develop, maintain and operate a safe, secure, reliable, economical and efficient transmission system for Ireland; "Our vision is of a grid developed to match future needs, so it can safely and reliably carry power all over the country to the major towns and cities and onwards to every home, farm and business where the electricity is consumed and so it can meet the needs of consumers and generators in a sustainable way." | Shaping Our Electricity Future - Version 1.1 addresses various challenges including those relating to networks, engagement, operations and markets. Grid25, EirGrid's roadmap to uprate the electricity transmission grid by 2025, continues to be implemented so as to increase the capacity of the grid, to satisfy future demand, and to help Ireland meet its target of 40 per cent of electricity from renewable energy by 2020. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways (2018) | The objective of this Strategy is to assist in the strategic development of nationally and regionally significant greenways in appropriate locations constructed to an appropriate standard in order to deliver a quality experience for all greenways users. It also aims to increase the number and geographical spread of greenways of scale and quality around the country over the next 10 years with a consequent significant increase in the number of people using greenways as a visitor experience and as a recreational amenity. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A strategic greenway network of national and regional routes, with a number of high capacity flagship routes that can be extended and/or link with local Greenways and other cycling and walking infrastructure; Greenways of scale and appropriate standard that have significant potential to deliver an increase in activity tourism to Ireland and are regularly used by overseas visitors, domestic visitors and locals thereby contributing to a healthier society through increased physical activity; Greenways that provide a substantially segregated off road experience linking places of interest, recreation and leisure in areas with beautiful scenery of different types with plenty to see and do; and Greenways that provide opportunities for the development of local businesses and economies, and Greenways that are developed with all relevant stakeholders in line with an agreed code of practice. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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| Construction 2020, A Strategy for a Renewed Construction Sector | Construction 2020 sets out a package of measures agreed by the Government and is aimed at stimulating activity in the building industry. The Strategy aims both to increase the capacity of the sector to create and maintain jobs, and to deliver a sustainable sector, operating at an appropriate level. It seeks to learn the lessons of the past and to ensure that the right structures and mechanisms are in place so that they are not repeated. | This Strategy therefore addresses issues including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A strategic approach to the provision of housing, based on real and measured needs, with mechanisms in place to detect and act when things are going wrong; Continuing improvement of the planning process, striking the right balance between current and future requirements; The availability of financing for viable and worthwhile projects; Access to mortgage finance on reasonable and sustainable terms; Ensuring we have the tools we need to monitor and regulate the sector in a way that underpins public confidence and worker safety; Ensuring a fit for purpose sector supported by a highly skilled workforce achieving high quality and standards; and Ensuring opportunities are provided to unemployed former construction workers to contribute to the recovery of the sector. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland (1997) | The overall aim of this Strategy 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 Strategy addresses all areas of Government policy, and of economic and societal activity, which impact on the environment. It seeks to re-orientate policies as necessary to ensure that the strong growth Ireland enjoys and seeks to maintain will be environmentally sustainable. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025 and National Landscape Character Assessment (pending preparation) | The National Landscape Strategy will be used to ensure compliance with the European Landscape Convention and to establish principles for protecting and enhancing the landscape while positively managing its change. It will provide a high-level policy framework to achieve balance between the protection, management and planning of the landscape by way of supporting actions. <i>Landscape Strategy Vision: "Our landscape reflects and embodies our cultural values and our shared natural heritage and contributes to the well-being of our society, environment and economy. We have an obligation to ourselves and to future generations to promote its sustainable protection, management and planning."</i> | The objectives of the National Landscape Strategy are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the European Landscape Convention by integrating landscape into the approach to sustainable development; Establish and embed a public process of gathering, sharing and interpreting scientific, technical and cultural information in order to carry out evidence-based identification and description of the character, resources and processes of the landscape; Provide a policy framework, which will put in place measures at national, sectoral - including agriculture, tourism, energy, transport and marine - and local level, together with civil society, to protect, manage and properly plan through high quality design for the sustainable stewardship of the landscape; Ensure that we take advantage of opportunities to implement policies relating to landscape use that are complementary and mutually reinforcing and that conflicting policy objectives are avoided in as far as possible. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Waste Management Act 1996 (as amended) | To make provision in relation to the prevention, management and control of waste; to give effect to provisions of certain acts adopted by institutions of the European communities in respect of those matters; to amend the Environmental Protection Agency Act, 1992, and to repeal certain enactments and to provide for related matters. | The Waste Management Act contains a number of key legal obligations, including requirements for waste management planning, waste collection and movement, the authorisation of waste facilities, measures to reduce the production of waste and/or promote its recovery. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| National Hazardous Waste Management Plan 2021-2027 | The EPA's National Hazardous Waste Management Plan (NWHMP) covers a six-year period from 2021 to 2027. This is the fourth National Hazardous Waste Management Plan and is made under Section 26 of the Waste Management Act 1996. It sets out the priorities to be pursued over the next six years and beyond to improve the prevention and management of hazardous waste, taking into account the progress made since the previous revised plan, and the waste policy and legislative changes that have occurred since the previous revised plan was published. The purpose of this plan is to protect the environment and human health in Ireland through best-practice management of hazardous wastes. | The Plan's objectives are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Support and drive priority prevention actions by industry and the public to reduce the generation of hazardous waste; Support the identification of adequate and appropriate collection infrastructure for all hazardous wastes with a view to mitigating environmental and health impacts; Endorse the proximity principle such that hazardous wastes are treated as close to the point of production as possible – including within Ireland, taking into account the need for specialised installations for certain types of waste. Support effective regulation of the movement and management of hazardous wastes in line with national policy priorities; Promotion of safe reuse and recycling pathways in support of the circular economy. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy (2024) | The Regional Waste Management Planning Offices, under the auspices of the County and City Management Association National Oversight Group, have co-ordinated the preparation of this plan which is the first National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy. This Plan sets out a framework for the prevention and management of waste in Ireland for the period 2024 to 2030. | The Plan seeks to influence sustainable consumption and prevent the generation of waste, improve the capture of materials to optimise circularity and enable compliance with policy and legislation. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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| Ministerial Guidelines such as Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines and Flood Risk Management Guidelines | The Department produces a range of guidelines designed to help planning authorities, An Bord Pleanála, developers and the general public and cover a wide range of issues amongst others, architectural heritage, child care facilities, landscape, quarries and residential density. | The Minister issues statutory guidelines under Section 28 of the Act which planning authorities and An Bord Pleanála are obliged to have regard to in the performance of their planning functions. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Healthy Ireland Framework 2019-2025 | The Healthy Ireland Framework 2019-2025 is a roadmap for building a healthier Ireland. | It is based around four key goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life to reduce health inequalities to protect the public from threats to health and wellbeing to create an environment where every individual and sector of society can play their part in achieving a healthy Ireland | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| S.I. 232/2018 - European Union (National Emission Ceilings) Regulations 2018 | The Regulations require the Minister to ensure that emissions of the specified pollutants are limited in accordance with the ceilings set out in Schedule 2. Annex III part 2 includes a set of measures to reduce emissions from agriculture. | The Regulations provide that the Environment Protection Agency shall prepare an annual inventory report of emissions of 5 specified pollutants (sulphur dioxide (SO ₂), nitrogen oxides (NO _x), non-methane volatile organic compounds (NMVOC), ammonia (NH ₃), and fine particulate matter (PM _{2.5}), and in certain years a report on projections of emissions. The Regulations also require the preparation of a national air pollution control programme Referring, among other things, to the 1979 UNECE Convention on Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution), and the establishment of a network to monitor the negative impacts of air pollution upon ecosystems based on a network of monitoring sites that is representative of Ireland's freshwater, natural and semi-natural habitats and forest ecosystem types. The Programme shall contain elements on the use of nitrogen fertilizer and soil protection. In fulfilling the requirements of subparagraph (b) the Minister shall ensure coordination with other monitoring programmes established pursuant to Union legislation including Directive 2008/50/EC, Directive 2000/60/EC and Council Directive 92/43/EEC and, if appropriate, the LRTAP Convention and, where appropriate, make use of data collected under those programmes. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| National Clean Air Strategy 2023 | The Clean Air Strategy provides the strategic policy framework necessary to identify and promote integrated measures across government policy that are required to reduce air pollution and promote cleaner air while delivering on wider national objectives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having a National Strategy provides a policy framework by which Ireland can develop the necessary policies and measures to comply with new and emerging EU legislation. The Strategy should also help tackle climate change. The Strategy considers a wider range of national policies that are relevant to clean air policy such as transport, energy, home heating and agriculture. In any discussion relating to clean air policy, the issue of people's health is paramount and this is a theme of the Strategy. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Agri-Food Strategy 2030 | The Food Vision 2030 Strategy is a new ten year Strategy for the Irish agri-food sector (taken to include primary agriculture, food and drink processing and manufacturing, fisheries, aquaculture and fish processing, forestry and forestry processing and the equine sector). | The Strategy consists of 22 Goals, grouped into four high-level "Missions" for the sector to work toward: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Climate Smart, Environmentally Sustainable Agri-Food Sector Viable and Resilient Primary Producers with Enhanced Well-Being Food Which is Safe, Nutritious And Appealing, Trusted And Valued at Home and Abroad An Innovative, Competitive and Resilient Agri-Food Sector, Driven by Technology And Talent | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Agricultural Schemes, including: Rural Environmental Protection Scheme (REPS), Agri-Environmental Options Scheme (AEOS), Green, Low-Carbon, Agri-environment Scheme (GLAS) and Results-based Environment-Agri Pilot Scheme (REAP) | Agri-environmental funding schemes aimed at rural development for the environmental enhancement and protection. The REPS evolved to AEOS 1, 2 and 3 and currently the Green Low Carbon Agri-Environment (GLAS) Scheme is in place. The recently introduced REAP scheme in Ireland is a two year scheme in place for 2021 and 2022. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish best practice farming methods and production methods in order to protect landscapes and maximise conservation. Protect biodiversity, endangered species of flora and fauna and wildlife habitats. Ensure food is produced with the highest regard to the environment. Implement nutrient management plans and grassland management plans. Protect and maintain water bodies, wetlands and cultural heritage. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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| National Rural Development Programme 2014-2022 (as amended) | The National Rural Development Programme, prepared by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, sets out a national programme based on the EU framework for rural development and prioritises improving the competitiveness of agriculture, improving the environment and improving the quality of life in rural areas. | At a more detailed level, the programme also: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports structural change at farm level including training young farmers and encouraging early retirement, support for restructuring, development and innovation; • Aims to improve the environment, biodiversity and the amenity value of the countryside by support for land management through funds such as Natura 2000 payments etc.; and • Aims to improve quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of economic activity through the implementation of local development strategies such as non-agricultural activities | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025 | The vision of this policy is for a thriving rural Ireland which is integral to our national economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing and development. Our Rural Future represents the Irish Government's blueprint for a post-COVID-19 recovery and development of rural Ireland over the next 5 years. It provides the framework to achieve the vision of transforming the quality of life and opportunity for people living in rural areas. | A set of policy measures aim to deliver wellbeing for all, and to support an aligned policy approach to rural development. It seeks to promote enhanced community participation, to prepare rural areas for technological, demographic and environmental change, and to address the diversity of challenges and opportunities facing rural areas, informed by analysis, data, and consultation. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Food Wise 2025 (DAFM) | Food Wise 2025 sets out a ten-year plan for the agri-food sector. It underlines the sector's unique and special position within the Irish economy, and it illustrates the potential which exists for this sector to grow even further. | Food Wise 2025 identifies ambitious and challenging growth projections for the industry over the next ten years including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 85% increase in exports to €19 billion. • 70% increase in value added to €13 billion. • 60% increase in primary production to €10 billion. • The creation of 23,000 additional jobs all along the supply chain from producer level to high-end value-added product development. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Tourism Action Plan 2019-2021 | The Tourism Action Plan 2019-2021 sets out actions that the Tourism Leadership Group has identified as priorities to be progressed until 2021 in order to maintain sustainable growth in overseas tourism revenue and employment. Each action involves specific tourism stakeholders, both in the public and private sectors, all of whom we expect to proactively work towards the completion of actions within the specified timeframe. | The Plan contains 27 actions focusing on the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Context • Marketing Ireland as a Visitor Destination • Enhancing the Visitor Experience • Research in the Irish Tourism Sector • Supporting Local Communities in Tourism • Wider Government Policy • International Context • Co-ordination Structures | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Tourism Policy Statement: People, Place and Policy – Growing Tourism to 2025 | Growing Tourism to 2025 is a policy framework for the development of tourism within the Country. The main goal of this policy statement is to have a vibrant, attractive tourism sector that makes a significant contribution to employment across the country; is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable; helps promote a positive image of Ireland overseas, and is a sector in which people want to work. | The Tourism Policy Statement sets three headline targets to be achieved by 2025: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overseas tourism revenue of €5 billion per year • net of inflation excluding carrier receipts; • 250,000 people employed in tourism; and • 10 million overseas visitors to Ireland per year. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Waterways Ireland Heritage Plan 2016-2020 | The Waterways Ireland Heritage Plan provides a strategic framework for the integration of built, natural and cultural heritage into the future management of waterways. The overarching aim of the Plan is to: <i>"Identify and protect the unique waterways heritage and promote its sustainable use for the enjoyment of this and future generations"</i> . | Four objectives of the Plan include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 1: Fostering partnerships to continue building waterway heritage knowledge through storing information, undertaking research and developing best practice. • Objective 2: Promoting awareness, appreciation and enjoyment of our waterway heritage with a focus on community engagement. • Objective 3: Promoting the integrated management, conservation, protection and sustainable use of the inland navigable waterway asset. • Objective 4: To develop Waterways Ireland as a heritage organisation committed to achieving the aim of this plan. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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| Waterways Ireland “Reimagining Our Waterways” 10-Year Plan 2023 | <p>10-Year Plan is a visionary roadmap for reimagining historical waterways, greenways and blueways.</p> <p>Waterways Ireland's Vision is to be recognised as having enabled the creation of inspirational inland navigations and waterways experiences, through conservation and sustainable development for the benefit of all.</p> | <p>At the core of our 10-year plan is set of six strategic priorities. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation Development & Governance • Sustainable Funding Model • Asset Portfolio Management • Participation and Reputation • Sustainable Development • Climate Action, Environment and Heritage | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Tourism Development and Innovation – A Strategy for Investment 2016-2022, (Fáilte Ireland, 2016) | This strategy sets out the framework and mechanism for the delivery of investment to cities, towns, villages, communities and businesses across the country. It identifies priorities to support innovation in the sector to retain and grow the country's competitiveness in the marketplace. Its ultimate aim is to strengthen the appeal of Ireland for international visitors. | <p>The objectives of the Tourism Development and Innovation Strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To successfully and consistently deliver a world class visitor experience; • To support a tourism sector that is profitable and achieves sustainable levels of growth and delivers jobs; • To facilitate communities to play an enhanced role in developing tourism in their locality, thereby strengthening and enriching local communities; and • To recognise, value and enhance Ireland's natural environment as the cornerstone of Irish tourism. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 | The Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 requires that each Housing Authority adopts a Traveller Accommodation Programme for its functional area. | This Act amended and extended the Housing Acts, 1966 to 1997, the Local Government (Planning and Development) Acts, 1963 to 1998, the Local Government Act, 1991, to make provision for the accommodation needs of travellers, to provide for the appointment of a national traveller accommodation consultative committee and local traveller accommodation consultative committees and to provide for related matters. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines (DHLGH, 2024) | The Guidelines set out policy and guidance in relation to the planning and development of urban and rural settlements, with a focus on sustainable residential development and the creation of compact settlements. They are accompanied by a companion non-statutory Design Manual that illustrates best practice examples of how the policies and objectives of the Guidelines can be applied. | The Guidelines build on and update previous guidance to take account of current Government policy and economic, social and environmental considerations. There is a renewed focus in the Guidelines on the renewal of existing settlements and on the interaction between residential density, housing standards and quality urban design and placemaking to support sustainable and compact growth. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012) | <p>The Guidelines have five key policy objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that retail development is plan-led; • Promoting city/town centre vitality through a sequential approach to development; • Securing competitiveness in the retail sector by actively enabling good quality development proposals to come forward in suitable locations; • Facilitating a shift towards increased access to retailing by public transport, cycling and walking in accordance with the Smarter Travel strategy; and • Delivering quality urban design outcomes. | The aim of the Guidelines is to ensure that the planning system continues to play a key role in supporting competitiveness in the retail sector for the benefit of the consumer in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development. In addition, the planning system must promote and support the vitality and viability of city and town centres thereby contributing to a high standard of urban design and encouraging a greater use of sustainable transport. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Architectural Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011) | Part 1 of these guidelines includes the criteria to be applied when selecting proposed protected structures for inclusion in the RPS. It also offers guidance to planning authorities on issuing a declaration on a protected structure and on determining planning applications in relation to a protected structure, a proposed protected structure or the exterior of a building within an ACA. | Part 2 contains supplementary detailed guidance to support planning authorities in their role to protect the architectural heritage when a protected structure, a proposed protected structure or the exterior of a building within an ACA is the subject of development proposals and when a declaration is sought in relation to a protected structure. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |

SEA Environmental Report for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

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|--|---|---|---|
| National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027 | The primary objective of the strategy which is to facilitate disabled people to live independently with the appropriate choices and control over where, how and with whom they live, promoting their inclusion in the community. | This Strategy will build on the progress made under the previous strategy, The National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability (NHSPWD) 2011 – 2016 (extended to 2021). The Strategy promotes a whole of community approach to housing for disabled people when planning the provision of housing, including infrastructure, transport, education, and employment. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Derelict Sites Act (1990) | An Act to make provision with respect to land to prevent it being or becoming a derelict site, to enable Local Authorities to require the taking of measures on derelict sites by the owners or occupiers and, in certain circumstances, to acquire derelict sites compulsorily, to establish registers of derelict sites, to enable the minister to give directions in relation to derelict sites, to provide for a derelict sites levy and to provide for other matters connected with the aforesaid and to repeal the Derelict Sites Act 1961. | Under the Act, local authorities can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prosecute owners who do not comply with notices served Make compulsory land purchases Carry out necessary work themselves and charge the owners for the cost All local authorities must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain derelict sites register Make the register available for public inspection - It can remove an entry from the Register when it is satisfied that improvement works have been carried out on the derelict site. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 (as amended) | An Act to make provision with respect to land in areas in which housing is required and in areas which are in need of renewal to prevent it lying idle or remaining vacant, to establish a register of vacant sites in those areas, to provide for vacant sites levy, to amend the Derelict Sites Act 1990, to amend Parts II, III and V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, to amend the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 and to provide for related matters. | This Revised Act is an administrative consolidation of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015. It is prepared by the Law Reform Commission in accordance with its function under the Law Reform Commission Act 1975 (3/1975) to keep the law under review and to undertake revision and consolidation of statute law. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Housing for All - a New Housing Plan for Ireland | The government's overall objective is that every citizen in the State should have access to good quality homes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to purchase or rent at an affordable price built to a high standard and in the right place offering a high quality of life | The policy has four pathways to achieving housing for all: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> supporting home ownership and increasing affordability eradicating homelessness, increasing social housing delivery and supporting social inclusion increasing new housing supply addressing vacancy and efficient use of existing stock | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Town Centre First Policy (2022) | The Town Centre First Policy is a major cross-government policy that aims to tackle vacancy, combat dereliction and breathe new life into town centres. It advocates for a holistic, place-based approach to sustainable rural development. The Town Centre First policy aims to create town centres that function as viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit, while also functioning as the business, service, social and. cultural. | The Policy contains 33 actions which will give towns the tools and resources they need to become more viable and attractive places in which to live, work, socialise and run a business. This will focus on charting the future direction of their towns, address issues of vacancy and dereliction and add vibrancy to the town centre. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Regional/ County/Local Level | | | |
| Northern and Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032 | The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy provides a long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the Northern and Western Region in order to support the implementation of the National Planning Framework. The strategy includes a high-level Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan for Galway. This sets out the strategic direction for the Metropolitan Area to achieve compact growth which is the first national strategic outcome of the National Planning Framework. | The Northern and Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy includes provisions for its nine constituent local authorities: Roscommon County Council; Donegal County Council; Sligo County Council; Leitrim County Council; Mayo County Council; Monaghan County Council; Cavan County Council; Galway City Council; and Galway County Council. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |

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| Legislation, Plan, etc. | Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective | Additional information/lower-level objectives, etc. | Relevance to the Draft Plan |
|--|---|--|---|
| Integrated Implementation Plan 2019-2024 | The priorities in the Integrated Infrastructure Plan align with the objectives and priorities set out in the Greater Dublin Transport Strategy 2016-2035, focused on improving public and sustainable transport. While the bulk of the Plan relates solely to the Greater Dublin Area, certain areas such as public transport services and activities related to small public service vehicles are dealt with on a national basis. | The Implementation Plan identifies investment proposals for a number of areas including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus; • Light Rail; • Heavy Rail; • Integration Measures and Sustainable Transport Investment; • Integrated Service Plan; and • Integration and Accessibility. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Galway Transport Strategy 2016-2036 | Galway City Council & Galway County Council, in partnership with the National Transport Authority, have developed the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS), an Integrated Transport Strategy for Galway City and Environs. | The GTS sets out a series of actions and measures, covering infrastructural, operational and policy elements to be implemented in Galway over the next 20 years and sets out a framework to deliver the projects in a phased manner. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| NPWS Conservation Plans and/or Conservation Objectives for SACs and SPAs | Management planning for nature conservation sites has a number of aims. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify and evaluate the features of interest for a site • To set clear objectives for the conservation of the features of interest • To describe the site and its management • To identify issues (both positive and negative) that might influence the site • To set out appropriate strategies/management actions to achieve the objectives | Conservation objectives for SACs and SPAs (i.e. sites within the Natura 2000 network) have to be set for the habitats and species for which the sites are selected. These objectives are used when carrying out appropriate assessments for plans and projects that might impact on these sites. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Groundwater Protection Schemes | A Groundwater Protection Scheme provides guidelines for the planning and licensing authorities in carrying out their functions, and a framework to assist in decision-making on the location, nature and control of developments and activities in order to protect groundwater. | A Groundwater Protection Scheme aims to maintain the quantity and quality of groundwater, and in some cases improve it, by applying a risk assessment-based approach to groundwater protection and sustainable development. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs), including Galway LECP 2024-2030 | The overarching vision for each LECP is: “to promote the well-being and quality of life of citizens and communities.” | The purpose of the LECP, as provided for in the Local Government Reform Act 2014, is to set out, for a six-year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of the relevant local authority area, both by itself directly and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Land Use Plans including those in force in County Galway (including the overarching Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028), and those in force in other adjoining planning authorities (including development plans for Local Authorities in: Galway City; Mayo; Roscommon; Offaly; Tipperary; and Clare; and local plans for settlements) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline planning objectives for land use development. • Strategic framework for planning and sustainable development including those set out in National Planning Framework and Regional Economic and Spatial Strategies. • Set out the policies and proposals to guide development in the specific Local Authority area. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify future infrastructure, development and zoning required. • Protect and enhances amenities and environment. • Guide planning authority in assessing proposals. • Aim to guide development in the area and the amount of nature of the planned development. • Aim to promote sustainable development. • Provide for economic development and protect natural environmental, heritage. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |

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|--|--|--|---|
| Galway County Landscape (and Seascape) Character Assessment and Landscape Character Assessments in adjoining local authorities | Landscape Character Assessments characterise the geographical dimension of the landscape. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the quality, value, sensitivity and capacity of the landscape area. Guide strategies and guidelines for the future development of the landscape. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Galway County Heritage and Biodiversity Plan 2024-2030 | Vision: <i>"The rich heritage and biodiversity of County Galway will be cherished, valued, conserved and enhanced in a manner that is respectful of our past, mindful of our present needs and sustainable for future generations."</i> | The Plan details a number of actions and initiatives aimed at ensuring that heritage continues to make a significant contribution to quality of life and remains an important part of the social and cultural infrastructure of the County. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Galway County Council Noise Action Plan 2024-2028 | The Noise Action Plan is required under the Environmental Noise Directive ("END") (2002/49/EC) which was transported into Irish law through the European Communities (Environmental Noise) Regulations 2018 (S.I. 549/2018) and the European Communities (Environmental Noise) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 (S.I. 663/2021). The Regulations require Strategic Noise Maps and Noise Action Plans to be made or revised every five years. | The actions detailed in the Plan have been drawn up to assess noise exposure in priority areas, as indicated by strategic noise mapping located on the identified routes within the respective functional areas of the Council. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Galway County Council's Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 | Vision: <i>"The communities, environment and economy of County of Galway are thriving, climate-resilient, biodiversity-rich, environmentally sustainable and carbon neutral."</i> Mission Statement: <i>"Deliver and enable transformative change and measurable climate action across our county and within our own organisation, ensuring a just transition to a carbon neutral and climate resilient future."</i> | The Plan is developed around thematic areas for actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance and Leadership Energy and Built Environment Transport Communities and Enterprise Circular Economy Land Use and Green Infrastructure Adaptation to Climate Risk | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Galway County Council Renewable Energy Strategy | The Strategy sets out the framework for the delivery of sustainable and renewable energies throughout the County. | The LARES outlines the potential for a range of renewable energy resources and developments and acknowledges the significant contribution that they can make to the county in terms of energy security, reduced reliance on traditional fossil fuels, enabling future energy exports, meeting assigned national targets and the transition to a low carbon economy. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Town Centre First Plans, including Gort Town Centre First Plan 2023 | Town Centre First aims to create town centres that function as viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit, while also functioning as the service, social, cultural and recreational hub for the local community. | Town Centre First (TFC) lays the foundation for each town to develop, at a local level, their own plan-led path forward. This will be expressed through a tailored TCF plan, which is underpinned by a clear diagnosis of local strengths and challenges. The TCF approach is centred on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration and communication – a collaborative process involving all relevant local stakeholders, represented by a collaborative Town Team, with good communication in respect of issues raised and the agreed direction. Understanding the place – analysis and appraisal underpinned by a town audit/ data gathering -process. Defining the place – shaping the plan around high-level objectives that are subsequently expressed through a series of actions. Enabling the place– identifying a clear path to delivery of the Plan, cognisant that this will require actions of varying scale to be delivered by different partners. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |

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| Legislation, Plan, etc. | Summary of high-level aim/ purpose/ objective | Additional information/lower-level objectives, etc. | Relevance to the Draft Plan |
|---|--|---|---|
| Fáilte Ireland Tourism plans and strategies, including those relating to "Wild Atlantic Way" including Destination Experience Development Plans and Regional Tourism Development Strategies | Fáilte Ireland's work includes preparing various plans and strategies for brands and initiatives. These plans are subject to their own environmental assessment processes and any project arising is required to be consistent with and conform with the provisions of all adopted/approved Statutory Policies, Strategies, Plans and Programmes, including provisions for the protection and management of the environment. | Some of Fáilte Ireland's plans and strategies include various projects relating to land use and infrastructural development, including those relating to development of land or on land and the carrying out of land use activities. Many of these projects exist already while some are not currently in existence. The Statutory Policies, Strategies, Plans and Programmes that provide for different projects undergo a variety of environmental assessments. These assessments ensure that environmental effects are considered, including: those arising from new and intensified uses and activities; and those arising from various sectors such as tourism. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |
| Various existing, planned and emerging projects provided for by the above plans and programmes | These projects have been provided for by higher-level plans and programmes. | These projects will contribute towards the development of the area to which the Plan relates and/or wider area and will contribute towards environmental protection and management. | Where new land use developments or activities occur as a result of this legislation, plan, programme, etc., individually or in combination with others, potential in-combination effects may arise. Implementation of the Draft Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. |



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

Draft Gort Local Area Plan

2025 - 2031

Appendix B

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

FOR THE

DRAFT GORT LOCAL AREA PLAN 2025-2031

FOLLOWING PUBLIC DISPLAY OF THE

DRAFT PLAN AND ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Text added following public display in red "like this"
Text deleted following public display in red strikethrough "like this"

for: Galway County Council



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

by: CAAS Ltd.



DECEMBER 2024MARCH 2025

Table of Contents

| | | |
|---|---|-----------|
| Section 1 | Introduction and Policy Background..... | 1 |
| 1.1 | Introduction | 1 |
| 1.2 | The Draft Plan | 1 |
| 1.3 | Flood Risk and its Relevance as an Issue to the Plan..... | 1 |
| 1.4 | Flood Risk Management Policy | 1 |
| 1.5 | Emerging Information and Disclaimer | 5 |
| Section 2 | Stage 1 SFRA - Flood Risk Identification | 6 |
| 2.1 | Introduction | 6 |
| 2.2 | Drainage, Defences and Early Warning Systems | 6 |
| 2.3 | Other Flood Studies | 7 |
| 2.4 | Flood Risk Indicators..... | 7 |
| 2.5 | Conclusion | 8 |
| Section 3 | Stage 2 SFRA - Flood Risk Assessment | 9 |
| 3.1 | Introduction | 9 |
| 3.2 | Findings and Adequacy of Existing Information and Delineation of Flood Zones..... | 9 |
| 3.3 | Flood Risk Zone Mapping..... | 9 |
| 3.4 | Sensitivity to Climate Change..... | 10 |
| 3.5 | Sustainable Drainage Systems and Surface Water Guidance and Strategy..... | 11 |
| Section 4 | Flood and Drainage Provisions..... | 14 |
| 4.1 | Introduction | 14 |
| 4.2 | Land Use Zoning..... | 14 |
| 4.3 | Integration of flood risk management provisions into the Galway County Development Plan.. | 14 |
| 4.4 | Integration of flood risk management provisions into the Draft Local Area Plan..... | 16 |
| 4.5 | Justification Tests | 17 |
| Section 5 | Conclusion | 23 |
| Appendix I: Summary of the requirements of the Flood Guidelines for land uses in Flood Zones | | 24 |
| Appendix II: Flood Risk Indicator and Flood Zone Mapping | | 29 |

Section 1 Introduction and Policy Background

1.1 Introduction

Galway County Council have prepared a Draft Local Area Plan for Gort under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The Plan sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the town over the years 2025-2031.

This Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) document has been prepared alongside the Plan taking into account *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management - Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and Office of Public Works, 2009) and Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government Circular PL 2/2014.

1.2 The Draft Plan

Local Area Plans are required to be consistent with the policy objectives of the relevant Development Plan(s) and its Core Strategy, as well as the National Planning Framework and relevant Regional Spatial Economic Strategy.

Land use zoning contained within the Draft Plan has been informed by the SFRA process and associated delineation of flood risk zones. The detailed Plan preparation process undertaken by the Planning Department combined with specialist input from the SFRA process facilitated zoning that helps to avoid inappropriate development being permitted in areas of elevated flood risk. A variety of written provisions have been integrated into the Plan that will contribute towards flood risk management and sustainable drainage.

1.3 Flood Risk and its Relevance as an Issue to the Plan

Flooding is an environmental phenomenon and can pose a risk to human health as well as causing economic and social effects. Some of the effects of flooding are identified on Table 1.

Certain lands within the Plan area have the potential to be vulnerable to flooding and this vulnerability could be exacerbated by changes in both the occurrence of severe rainfall events and associated flooding. Local conditions such as low-lying lands and slow surface water drainage can increase the risk of flooding.

Table 1 Potential effects that may occur as a result of flooding

| Tangible Effects | Intangible Human and Other Effects |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Damage to buildings (houses) | Loss of life |
| Damage to contents of buildings | Physical injury |
| Damage to new infrastructure e.g. roads | Increased stress |
| Loss of income | Physical and psychological trauma |
| Disruption of flow of employees to work causing knock on effects | Increase in flood related suicide |
| Enhanced rate of property deterioration and decay | Increase in ill health |
| Long term rot and damp | Homelessness |
| | Loss of uninsured possessions |

1.4 Flood Risk Management Policy

1.4.1 EU Floods Directive

The European Directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risk aims to reduce and manage the risks that floods pose to human health, the environment, cultural heritage and

economic activity. The Directive applies to inland waters as well as all coastal waters across the whole territory of the EU. The Directive requires Member States to:

- Carry out a preliminary assessment by 2011 in order to identify the river basins and associated coastal areas where potential significant flood risk exists (preliminary mapping was prepared and a list of Areas for Further Assessment finalised in 2012).
- Prepare flood extent maps for the identified areas (finalised in 2016 for inclusion in Flood Risk Management Plans – see below).
- Prepare flood risk management plans focused on prevention, protection and preparedness. These plans are to include measures to reduce the probability of flooding and its potential consequences. These Plans were adopted in 2018.

Implementation of the EU Floods Directive is required to be coordinated with the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive and the current National River Basin Management Plan.

1.4.2 National Flood Policy

Historically, flood risk management focused on land drainage for the benefit of agricultural improvement. With increasing urbanisation, the Arterial Drainage Act, 1945, was amended in 1995 to permit the Office of Public Works (OPW) to implement localised flood relief schemes to provide flood protection for cities, towns and villages.

In line with changing national and international paradigms on how to manage flood risk most effectively and efficiently, a review of national flood policy was undertaken in 2003-2004. The review was undertaken by an Inter-Departmental Review Group, led by the Minister of State at the Department of Finance with special responsibility for the OPW. The Review Group prepared a report that was put to Government, and subsequently approved and published in September 2004 (Report of the Flood Policy Review Group, OPW, 2004).

The scope of the review included a review of the roles and responsibilities of the different bodies with responsibilities for managing flood risk, and to set a new policy for flood risk management in Ireland into the future. The adopted policy was accompanied by many specific recommendations, including:

- Focus on managing flood risk, rather than relying only flood protection measures aimed at reducing flooding;
- Taking a catchment-based approach to assess and manage risks within the whole-catchment context; and
- Being proactive in assessing and managing flood risks, including the preparation of flood maps and flood risk management plans.

1.4.3 National CFRAM Programme

The national Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) programme commenced in Ireland in 2011. The CFRAM Programme is intended to deliver on core components of the National Flood Policy, adopted in 2004, and on the requirements of the EU Floods Directive. The Programme has been implemented through CFRAM studies that have been undertaken for each of the river basin districts in Ireland.

The CFRAM Programme comprises three phases as follows:

- The Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment¹ (PFRA) mapping exercise, which was completed in 2012;
- The CFRAM Studies and parallel activities, with Flood Risk Management Plans finalised in 2018; and

¹ The PFRAs identified areas at risk of significant flooding and includes maps showing areas deemed to be at risk. The areas deemed to be most significant risk, where the flood risk that is of particular concern nationally, are identified as Areas for Further Assessment (AFAs). Gort was identified as an AFA. The OPW has undertaken a detailed assessment on the extent and degree of fluvial flood risk for various areas, including these AFAs, producing Flood Extent Mapping.

- Implementation and Review.

The Programme provides for three main consultative stages as follows:

- Consultation for the PFRA mapping that was adopted in 2012;
- Consultation for Flood Extent mapping, that was finalised in 2016 for inclusion in Flood Risk Management Plans; and
- Consultation for Flood Risk Management Plans, that were adopted in 2018.

The OPW is the lead agency for flood risk management in Ireland. The coordination and implementation of Government policy on the management of flood risk in Ireland is part of its responsibility. The European Communities (Assessment and Management of Flood Risks) Regulations 2010 (S.I. No. 122) identifies the Commissioners of Public Works as the 'competent authority' with overall responsibility for implementation of the Floods Directive 2007/60/EC. The OPW is the principal agency involved in the preparation of CFRAM Studies.

1.4.4 Flood Risk Management Guidelines

1.4.4.1 Introduction

In 2009, the OPW and the then Department of the Environment and Local Government (DEHLG) published Guidelines on flood risk management for planning authorities entitled *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management - Guidelines for Planning Authorities*. The Guidelines introduce mechanisms for the incorporation of flood risk identification, assessment and management into the planning process. Implementation of the Guidelines is intended to be achieved through actions at the national, regional, local authority and site-specific levels. Planning authorities and An Bord Pleanála are required to have regard to the Guidelines in carrying out their functions under the Planning Acts.

The core objectives of the Guidelines are to:

- Avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding;
- Avoid new developments increasing flood risk elsewhere, including that which may arise from surface water run-off;
- Ensure effective management of residual risks for development permitted in floodplains;
- Avoid unnecessary restriction of national, regional or local economic and social growth;
- Improve the understanding of flood risk among relevant stakeholders; and
- Ensure that the requirements of EU and national law in relation to the natural environment and nature conservation are complied with at all stages of flood risk management.

1.4.4.2 Principles of Flood Risk Management

The key principles of flood risk management set out in the flood Guidelines are to:

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

The Guidelines follow the principle that development should not be permitted in flood risk areas, particularly floodplains, except where there are no alternative and appropriate sites available in lower risk areas that are consistent with the objectives of proper planning and sustainable development.

Development in areas that have the highest flood risk should be avoided and/or only considered in exceptional circumstances (through a prescribed *Justification Test*) if adequate land or sites are not available in areas that have lower flood risk. Most types of development would be considered inappropriate in areas that have the highest flood risk. Only water-compatible development such as docks and marinas, dockside activities that require a waterside location, amenity open space, outdoor sports and recreation and essential transport infrastructure that cannot be located elsewhere would be considered appropriate in these areas.

1.4.4.3 Stages of SFRA

The Flood Risk Management Guidelines 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 Spatial and Economic Strategies, Development Plans and Local Area Plans 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 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 are scoped.

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.

1.4.4.4 Flood Zones

Flood risk is an expression of the combination of the flood probability or likelihood and the magnitude of the potential consequences of the flood event. It is normally expressed in terms of the following relationship:

$$\text{Flood risk} = \text{Likelihood of flooding} \times \text{Consequences of flooding}$$

Likelihood of flooding is normally defined as the percentage probability of a flood of a given magnitude or severity occurring or being exceeded in any given year. For example, a 1% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) indicates the severity of a flood that is expected to be exceeded on average once in 100 years, i.e. it has a 1 in 100 (1%) chance of occurring in any one year.

Consequences of flooding depend on the hazards associated with the flooding (e.g. depth of water, speed of flow, rate of onset, duration, wave-action effects, water quality) and the vulnerability of people, property and the environment potentially affected by a flood (e.g. the age profile of the population, the type of development and the presence and reliability of mitigation measures).

Flood zones are geographical areas within which the likelihood of flooding is in a particular range and they are a key tool in flood risk management within the planning process as well as in flood warning and emergency planning.

There are three types 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 flooding²);
- **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 other areas that are not in zones A or B.

A summary of the requirements of the Flood Guidelines for land uses across each of the above flood zones is provided at Appendix I.

² Coastal flooding is not relevant to the Gort Local Area Plan.

1.5 Emerging Information and Disclaimer

It is important to note that compliance with the requirements of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines is currently based on emerging and best available data at the time of preparing the assessment, including Flood Risk Management Plans, which will be updated on a cyclical basis. The SFRA process for the Draft Plan is ongoing and will be updated as relevant, including to take account of any submissions made and any Material Alterations that arise during the Plan-preparation process.

Following adoption of the Plan, information in relation to flood risk may be altered in light of future data and analysis, by, for example, the OPW, or future flood events. As a result, all landowners and developers are advised that Galway County Council and their agents can accept no responsibility for losses or damages arising due to assessments of the vulnerability to flooding of lands, uses and developments. Owners, users and developers are advised to take all reasonable measures to assess the vulnerability to flooding of lands and buildings (including basements) in which they have an interest prior to making planning or development decisions.

Any future SFRAs for the Plan area or for the Counties will integrate other new and emerging data.

Section 2 Stage 1 SFRA - Flood Risk Identification

2.1 Introduction

Stage 1 SFRA (flood risk identification) has been undertaken in order to identify whether there may be any flooding or surface water management issues within or adjacent to zoned lands and consequently whether Stage 2 SFRA (flood risk assessment) should be proceeded to. It is reproduced in part this document.

Gort is located within the Shannon Upper & Lower River Basin for which the "Flood Risk Management Plan for the Shannon Upper & Lower River Basin (UOM25-26)" has been prepared. Stage 1 SFRA is based on existing information on flood risk indicators based on historical evidence and computational models. A selection of key indicators are mapped for Gort in Appendix II.

2.2 Drainage, Defences and Early Warning Systems

With regard to areas benefitting from drainage and defences (flood relief scheme works), there are various measures that have been implemented in Gort area that will contribute towards flood risk management. These include the culverting of streams and rivers in urban areas.

Benefited land, land that was drained as part of the Drainage District measures, are also identified within the Plan area.

The 2018 Flood Risk Management Plan (FRMP) for the Galway Bay South East River Basin (UOM29) identifies the following general measures applicable to the catchment under "Measures Applicable for all Areas":

- Prevention: Sustainable Planning and Development Management
- Prevention: Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
- Prevention: Adaptation Planning
- Prevention: Land Use Management and Natural Flood Risk Management
- Protection: Maintenance of Channels Not Part of a Scheme
- Preparedness: Flood Forecasting and Warning
- Preparedness: Emergency Response Planning
- Preparedness: Promotion of Individual and Community Resilience
- Preparedness: Individual Property Protection
- Preparedness: Flood-Related Data Collection
- Prevention: Voluntary Home Relocation

The FRMP identifies the following existing measures for the Galway Bay South East Catchment:

- Maintenance of Arterial Drainage Schemes³;
- Maintenance of Drainage Districts⁴; and
- Development of a Flood Forecasting System⁵.

³ The OPW has a statutory duty under the Arterial Drainage Act, 1945, and the Amendment of the Act, 1995, to maintain the Arterial Drainage and Flood Relief Schemes constructed by it under those Acts.

⁴ The statutory duty of maintenance for 4,600 km of river channel benefitting from Drainage District Schemes rests with the relevant Local Authorities.

⁵ The development of a coastal flood forecasting system for Galway Bay - To progress as part of the development of the National Flood Forecasting Service.

- Maintain the existing Gort Flood Relief Scheme:
"There is an existing Flood Relief Scheme providing protection to properties in Gort. Ongoing maintenance will be undertaken of this scheme. The Gort River (Bridge Street) Drainage Scheme was initiated in 1996 following major flooding in 1990 and 1994/1995, and was constructed in 1997. The Scheme comprises channel deepening and widening upstream and downstream of the N18 Road Bridge on the Gort/Cannahowna River for a length of 260m including associated bank protection walls, underpinning of the N18 Road Bridge and the construction of a flood embankment along the southern side of the N18 east of the bridge. The scheme provides protection against a 100-Year flood (1% Annual Exceedance Probability) from the Gort/Cannahowna River for 21 properties."
- Development of a Flood Forecasting System:
"The development of a flood forecasting system for Gort - To progress as part of the development of the National Flood Forecasting Service. This system would include a "level trigger flood warning" which would require the installation of a new telemetered level gauge at Gort Bridge. This system would provide the ability to inform managing authorities and the public of the potential for failure or overtopping of flood defence structures and to trigger emergency response plans."

The provision of flood protection measures can significantly reduce flood risk. However, the Ministerial Guidelines require that the presence of flood protection structures should be ignored in determining flood zones. This is because of risks relating to failure and severe flood events that exceed design capacity (the risk of severe events is exacerbated with climate change). Notwithstanding this, new development can proceed in areas that are at elevated levels of flood risk subject to the Justification Test provided for by the Guidelines being passed, which takes into account proposals to manage flood risk, such as the development of defences. Although insurance can be challenging to attain in these instances.

Met Éireann currently issues flood warnings for County Galway. Met Éireann, in collaboration with the OPW, is currently engaged in the establishment of a National Flood Forecasting and Warnings Service to forecast for fluvial and coastal flood events.

2.3 Other Flood Studies

Other Flood Studies considered in the preparation of this assessment include:

- Previous SFRAs in County Galway;
- Flood Risk Management Plan (Galway Bay South East River Basin), 2018; and
- Regional Flood Risk Assessment for the Northern and Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, 2020.

2.4 Flood Risk Indicators

Indicators of flood risk that are based on historical flooding events are identified and described on Table 2. Indicators of flood risk that are based on computational models – predictive flood risk indicators – are identified and described on Table 3. A selection of the historical and predictive flood risk indicators that were considered by the SFRA are mapped at settlement level for Gort in Appendix II.

Table 2 Historical Flood Risk Indicators

| Information Source | Description | Strategic Limitations |
|---|--|---|
| Recorded Flood Events from the OPW | A flood event is the occurrence of recorded flooding at a given location on a given date. The flood event is derived from different types of information (reports, photographs etc.). | This dataset only provides a spot location |
| Recurring Flood Events | A flood event that has occurred more than once at a certain area is named a recurring flood event. | This dataset only provides a spot location |
| OPW Flood Extent | A flood extent is an inundated area as recorded at a certain moment in time. This layer of information includes floods recorded in Winter 1994-95 at Gort Ardrahan and Cannahowna Gort. | Coverage limited |
| Alluvium Soils | Mineral alluvial soil mapping is indicative of recurrent or significant fluvial flooding at some point in the past and was generated by Teagasc with co-operation of the Forest Service, EPA and GSI. This project was completed May 2006. | Drainage may have changed significantly since these soils were deposited. |

Table 3 Predictive Flood Risk Indicators

| Information Source | Description | Strategic Limitations |
|--|--|--|
| CFRAM Study, Flood Extent Mapping, 2016 | Following the undertaking of the PFRA, the OPW, through its engineering consultants and working with local authorities and other stakeholders, conducted extensive engineering assessments to better understand and detail the actual risk from flooding for areas that were at highest levels of risk. This was the subject of public consultation. The outcome of that work includes Predicted Flood Extent maps that were finalised in 2016. For fluvial flood levels, calibration and verification of the models make use of the best available data including hydrometric records, photographs, videos, press articles and anecdotal information. | Spatial spread is limited, including to the areas that are considered to be at most risk of flooding. |
| National Indicative Fluvial Mapping (NIFM) 2021 2020 | The PFRA indicative flood maps have now been superseded by the recently published NIFM. The OPW NIFM project has produced second generation indicative fluvial flood spatial data that are of a higher quality and accuracy to those produced for the first cycle PFRA. This project has covered 27,000 km of river reaches, separated into 37 drainage areas, consisting of 509 sub-catchments. Data has been produced for catchments greater than 5km ² in areas for which flood maps were not produced under the National CFRAM Programme and should be read in this context. | Does not cover smaller sized catchments less than 5km ² . |
| Predictive groundwater flood mapping | <p>The predictive groundwater flood map presents the probabilistic flood extents for locations of recurrent karst groundwater flooding. It consists of a series of stacked polygons at each site representing the flood extent for specific AEP's mapping floods that are expected to occur every 10, 100 and 1000 years (AEP of 0.1, 0.01, and 0.001 respectively). The map is focussed primarily (but not entirely) on flooding at seasonally inundated wetlands known as turloughs. Sites were chosen for inclusion in the predictive map based on existing turlough databases as well as manual interpretation of Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) imagery.</p> <p>The mapping process tied together the observed and SAR-derived hydrograph data, hydrological modelling, stochastic weather generation and extreme value analysis to generate predictive groundwater flood maps for over 400 qualifying sites.</p> | Not all turloughs are included in the predictive map as some sites could not be successfully monitored with SAR and/or modelled. |

2.5 Conclusion

The information detailed above indicates elevated levels of flood risk in various locations across the town; therefore, a Stage 2 SFRA was proceeded to.

Section 3 Stage 2 SFRA - Flood Risk Assessment

3.1 Introduction

Stage 2 SFRA (flood risk assessment) has been undertaken in order to:

- Confirm the sources of flooding that may affect zoned and adjacent areas;
- Appraise the adequacy of existing information as identified by the Stage 1 SFRA; and
- Scope the extent of the risk of flooding through the preparation of flood zone maps.

3.2 Findings and Adequacy of Existing Information and Delineation of Flood Zones

Desk and in-field studies were undertaken taking into account the following factors:

- Predictive indicators, including the emerging findings of the Gort Flood Relief Scheme Project;
- Historical indicators of flood risk;
- Documented Council knowledge of lands;
- The potential source and direction of flood paths from rivers and streams;
- Vegetation indicative of flood risk; and
- The locations of topographic/built features that coincide with the flood indicator related boundaries/topographical survey.

Within the annual exceedance probabilities specified by the Flood Guidelines for Flood Zones A and B, there are elevated levels of flood risk at certain areas in Gort, as shown in Appendix II.

3.3 Flood Risk Zone Mapping

Flood Risk Zone maps have been produced taking into account the findings of the Stage 1 and Stage 2 SFRA desk and in field studies as identified above⁶.

The Flood Risk Zone map for Gort is provided in Appendix II and identifies Flood Zone A (darker blue) and Flood Zone B⁷ (lighter blue). All other areas fall within Flood Zone C. As per the Guidelines, the flood zones are as follow:

- **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 flooding⁸);
- **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 other areas that are not in zones A or B.

⁶ Including taking into account predictive and historical indicators of flood risk, documented Council knowledge of lands, Council Engineer review and input into indicators and flood zones (local knowledge), the potential source and direction of flood paths from rivers and streams, vegetation indicative of flood risk and the locations of topographic/built features that coincide with the flood indicator related boundaries/topographical survey.

⁷ As identified by the Guidelines, in rivers with a well-defined floodplain or where the coastal plain is well defined at its rear, the limits of Zones A and B will virtually coincide. Zone B will only be significantly different in spatial extent from Zone A where there is extensive land with a gentle gradient away from the river or the sea.

⁸ Coastal flooding is not relevant to the Gort Local Area Plan.

3.4 Sensitivity to Climate Change

'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities and Technical Appendices, 2009' recommends that a precautionary approach to climate change is adopted due to the level of uncertainty involved in the potential effects. In this regard, the Guidelines recommend:

- Recognising that significant changes in the flood extent may result from an increase in rainfall or tide events and accordingly adopting a cautious approach to zoning land in these potential transitional areas;
- Ensuring that the levels of structures designed to protect against flooding such as flood defences⁹, land raising or raised floor levels are sufficient to cope with the effects of climate change over the lifetime of the development they are designed to protect (normally 85-100 years); and
- Ensuring that structures to protect against flooding and the development protected are capable of adaptation to the effects of climate change when there is more certainty about the effects and still time for such adaptation to be effective.

The CFRAM Programme include maps for two potential future scenarios taking account of different degrees of climate impact, the Mid-Range Future Scenario (more likely to occur over the coming decades) and the High-Range Future Scenario (less likely to occur over the coming decades). Furthermore, the National Coastal Flood Hazard Mapping 2021 provides updated national scale coastal flood extent and depth maps for the present-day scenario and for various future scenario maps, representing projected future scenarios for the end of century (c. 2100).

A selection of Future Scenario Mapping is provided under Appendix II of this SFRA report. In compliance with the Guidelines, the Flood Zones identified by the SFRA are defined on the basis of current flood risk.

The Guidelines state that:

"A precautionary approach should be applied, where necessary, to reflect uncertainties in flooding datasets and risk assessment techniques and the ability to predict the future climate and performance of existing flood defences. Development should be designed with careful consideration to possible future changes in flood risk, including the effects of climate change and / or coastal erosion so that future occupants are not subject to unacceptable risks."

As identified in Section 1.2 "Climate Change" of the Draft Plan:

- "The Gort LAP is subject to a Stage 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. The Stage 2 Flood Risk Assessment undertaken accords with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009. These Guidelines recommend that a precautionary approach to climate change is adopted due to the level of uncertainty involved in the potential effects and this approach has been followed in the preparation of the LAP and the undertaking of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment."
- Policy Objective GSST 59 Flood Risk Management and Assessment provides that: "....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...."
- Policy Objective GSST 64 "Flood Risk Assessment and Climate Change" provides that: "Flood Risk Assessment in Gort shall provide information on the implications of climate change with regards to flood risk in relevant locations. The Flood Risk Management – Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan 2019 (or any superseding document) shall be consulted with to this effect."

⁹ Defended areas are highly sensitive to climate change as the likelihood of defence failure and resulting flooding increases.

3.5 Sustainable Drainage Systems and Surface Water Guidance and Strategy

As provided for by measures integrated into the existing, already in force, Galway County Development Plan and the Draft Local Area Plan (including the measures reproduced at Section 4 of this report), new developments will be required to incorporate the requirement for Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) where appropriate. In combination, these provisions contribute towards a sustainable drainage strategy for the Plan area.

It is likely that some or all of the following SuDS techniques will be applicable to opportunity sites¹⁰ within Gort, including to manage surface water run-off:

- Rainwater harvesting
- Green roofs
- Infiltration systems
- Proprietary treatment systems
- Filter strips
- Filter drains
- Swales
- Bioretention systems
- Trees
- Pervious pavements
- Attenuation storage tanks
- Detention basins
- Ponds and wetlands

Each land use zoning objective, including those for opportunity sites, allows for a range of possible uses and the Local Area Plan, and associated County Development Plan, allow for a range of scales, heights, densities configurations/layouts and designs. The application of different SuDS techniques will be dependent on a combination of the site's characteristics and the development (when known) being considered.

Because of the infinite range of land use types and associated developments and designs that could occur on sites within the Plan area under this type of Plan¹¹, the guidance from this SFRA is to consider the full range of SUDs available, taking into account the recommendations and information provided above and below. On key development/opportunity sites, in particular, integrated and area-based provision of SuDS and green infrastructure may be appropriate in order to avoid reliance on individual site by site solutions.

Some sites, such as those for which guidance is provided for below, will pose particular challenges for SuDS. The best practice manuals cited at the end of this sub-section should be considered in determining solutions at these and other development sites.

At sites with high groundwater levels:

- Infiltration techniques may be particularly challenging and shallow infiltration basins or permeable pavements, may be most appropriate.
- Storage and conveyance systems need to be kept above maximum groundwater levels and membranes of appropriate robustness should be used to line any tanks
- Locating storage tanks or lined sub-base systems below the maximum likely groundwater level can cause result in flotation and structural risks

¹⁰ Including: Opportunity Sites identified comprise Opportunity Site 1 – Town Centre Georges Street & Loughrea Road, Opportunity Site 2 – The Barracks, Opportunity Site 3 – Courtney's Lane and Opportunity Site 4 – Community Lands.

¹¹ Refer to Local Area Plan Section "1.7 Land Use Zones", including "Land Use Matrix Table".

At sites that are very flat:

- On very flat sites, it is often not possible to construct piped drainage systems with sufficient falls to achieve minimum self-cleansing velocities. The solution can involve the use of shallow SuDS components such as swales, pervious pavements or high-capacity linear drainage channels, often dividing the site into small sub-catchments and providing local combined storage and conveyance components.
- A slight fall on any subgrade exposed to water is preferred in order to avoid ponding of water and reduction in strength in the soil due to waterlogging. If this is not possible then reduction in strength should be taken into account in the structural design of tanks or pervious pavements.
- Pumping should be a last resort and only allowable in situations where guaranteed maintenance of the pumps can be ensured.

At sites that include areas of floodplain:

- Notwithstanding that all storage volume should normally be provided within the development footprint, outside of the floodplain, SuDS on floodplains can be effective in managing routine rainfall/treatment for frequent events.
- SuDS should be selected and designed taking account of the likely high groundwater table and vulnerability to erosion during periods of high flows/water levels and SuDS should not reduce floodplain storage or conveyance.
- Conveyance routes should limit grading and the creation of surface features that could either reduce floodplain capacity or be washed out in a flood.
- Surface discharge from SuDS should be dispersed with point discharges minimised or eliminated.
- All SuDS within or crossing a floodplain should take full consideration of the likely influence of river water levels on the design performance. Combined probability assessments may be required.
- Siltation and subsequent clearance after a flood event has subsided should also be taken into account in the design.

At sites that are steeply sloping (less relevant to the Gort Plan area):

- Effective utilisation of SuDS storage capacity should be considered, which can benefit from aligning with contours of roads and other structures, where these sites are terraced. Terraced car-parking areas can allow for storage of water through pervious pavements. Basins on terraces can provide open space. The runoff catchment on these sites can also be divided into smaller sub catchments.
- Velocities in swales and basins due to the steep slope can be managed by using check dams in swales or in storage layers, such as below permeable pavements.
- The possibility of infiltrating water resurfacing downslope or to increase pressure on downslope structures, such as walls, causing them to fail should be considered.

SuDS are effective technologies, which aim to reduce flood risk, improve water quality and enhance biodiversity and amenity.

The systems should aim to mimic the natural drainage of the application site to minimise the effect of a development on flooding and pollution of existing waterways. SuDS include devices such as swales, permeable pavements, filter drains, storage ponds, constructed wetlands, soakways and green roofs. The integration of nature-based solutions, such as amenity areas, ecological corridors and attenuation ponds, into public and private development initiatives, is applicable within the provisions of the Plan and should be encouraged. Applications for development should take into account, as appropriate, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage's (2022) "Nature-based Solutions to the Management of Rainwater and Surface Water Runoff in Urban Areas - Water Sensitive Urban Design - Best Practice Interim Guidance Document".

In some exceptional cases, and at the discretion of the relevant Council, where it is demonstrated that SuDS devices are not feasible, approval may be given to install underground attenuation tanks or

enlarged pipes in conjunction with other devices to achieve the required water quality. Such alternative measures will only be considered as a last resort. Proposals for surface water attenuation systems should include maintenance proposals and procedures.

Urban developments, both within developments and within the public realm, should seek to minimise and limit the extent of hard surfacing and paving and require the use of sustainable drainage techniques for new development or for extensions to existing developments, in order to reduce the potential impact of existing and predicted flood risk. Development proposals should be accompanied by a comprehensive SuDS assessment that addresses run-off rate, run-off quality and its impact on the existing habitat and water quality.

For larger sites (i.e. multiple dwellings or commercial units) master planning should ensure that existing flow routes are maintained, through the use of green infrastructure. In addition, where multiple individual proposals are being made SUDS should be integrated where appropriate and relevant.

All proposed development, should consider the impact of surface water flood risks on drainage design e.g. in the form of a section within the flood risk assessment (for sites in Flood Zone A or B) or part of a surface water management plan.

Pluvial flood risk is likely to be present in local areas, however; it is not taken into account in the delineation of flood zones. Furthermore, PFRA indicative pluvial maps (2012) are not considered to be reliable for the purposes of zoning or decision-making. Particular attention should be given to development in low-lying areas which may act as natural ponds for collection of run-off. The drainage design should ensure no increase in flood risk to the site, or the downstream catchment. Where possible, and particularly in areas of new development, floor levels should be at an appropriate height above adjacent roads and hard standing areas to reduce the consequences of any localised flooding. Where this is not possible, an alternative design appropriate to the location may be prepared.

Further to the above, proposals for development should consider the Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA) SuDS Manual 2015 and any future update of this guidance and Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study documents in designing SUDS solutions, including the New Development Policy, the Final Strategy Report, the Code of Practice and "Irish SuDS: guidance on applying the GDSDS surface water drainage criteria".

As identified by Uisce Éireann, sewage lines in Gort are vulnerable to flooding, including along Crowe Street. The Draft Plan seeks to maintain and enhance as appropriate the existing surface water drainage system in Gort, as required by Policy Objective GSST 61.

Section 4 Flood and Drainage Provisions

4.1 Introduction

In order to comply with *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management - Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and Office of Public Works, 2009) and Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government Circular (*PL 2/2014*) and in order to contribute towards flood risk management within the Plan area, the measures below have been integrated into the Draft Gort Local Area Plan and the existing, already in force, Galway County Development Plan.

4.2 Land Use Zoning

That Flood Zones identified by the SFRA were used in line with the requirements provided for by the Flood Guidelines for land uses in Flood Zones A and B.

4.3 Integration of flood risk management provisions into the Galway County Development Plan

Provisions relating to flood risk management have already been integrated into the Galway County Development Plan. These are detailed on Table 4.

Table 4 Galway County Development Plan Provisions relating to Flood Risk Management

| Galway County Development Plan Provision |
|--|
| <p>Policy Objectives Flood Risk Management</p> <p>FL 1 Flood Risk Management Guidelines</p> <p>It is the policy objective of Galway County Council to support, in co-operation with the OPW, the implementation of the EU Flood Risk Directive (2007/60/EC), the Flood Risk Regulations (SI No. 122 of 2010) and the DEHLG/OPW publication <i>The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines</i> (2009) (and any updated/superseding legislation or policy guidance) and Department Circular PL2/2014 or any updated / superseding version.</p> <p>FL 2 Flood Risk Management and Assessment</p> <p>Comply with the requirements of the DoEHLG/OPW <i>The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities</i> and its accompanying Technical Appendices Document 2009 (including any updated/superseding documents).</p> <p>This will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Avoid, reduce and/or mitigate, as appropriate in accordance with the Guidelines; (b) Development proposals in areas where there is an identified or potential risk of flooding or that could give rise to a risk of flooding elsewhere will be required to carry out a Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment, and justification test where appropriate, in accordance with the provisions of <i>The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines</i> 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; (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; (d) Galway County Council shall work with other bodies and organisations, as appropriate, to help protect critical infrastructure, including water and wastewater, within the County, from risk of flooding. <p>FL 3 Principles of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines</p> <p>The Planning Authority shall implement the key principles of flood risk management set out in the <i>Flood Risk Management Guidelines</i> as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Avoid development that will be at risk of flooding or that will increase the flooding risk elsewhere, where possible; (b) Substitute less vulnerable uses, where avoidance is not possible; and (c) Mitigate and manage the risk, where avoidance and substitution are not possible. <p>Development should only be permitted in areas at risk of flooding when there are no alternative, reasonable sites available in areas at lower risk that also meet the objectives of proper planning and sustainable development. Vulnerable development in areas which have the highest flood risk should be avoided and/or only considered in exceptional circumstances (through a prescribed Justification Test) if adequate land or sites are not available in areas which have lower flood risk</p> <p>FL 4 Flood Relief Schemes</p> <p>The Planning Authority shall support and co-operate with the Office of Public Works (OPW) in the delivery of Flood Relief Schemes.</p> <p>FL 5 Catchment Planning</p> <p>The Planning Authority will support the OPW's CFRAM Programme and catchment-based Flood Planning Groups, especially where catchments go beyond the Council's administrative boundary, in the development and implementation of catchment-based strategies for the management of flood risk - including those relating to storage and conveyance.</p> <p>FL 6 Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs)</p> <p>Maintain and enhance, as appropriate, the existing surface water drainage system in the County. Ensure that new developments are</p> |

Galway County Development Plan Provision

adequately serviced with surface water drainage infrastructure and promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems in all new developments. Surface water run-off from development sites will be limited to pre-development levels and planning applications for new developments will be required to provide details of surface water drainage and sustainable drainage systems proposals.

FL 7 Protection of Waterbodies and Watercourses

Protect waterbodies and watercourses within the County from inappropriate development, including rivers, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains. This will include protection buffers in riverine, wetland and coastal areas as appropriate.

FL 8 Flood Risk Assessment for Planning Applications and CFRAMS

"Protect Flood Zone A and Flood Zone B from inappropriate development and direct developments/land uses into the appropriate Flood Zone in accordance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009 (or any superseding document) and the guidance contained in Development Management Standard 69.

Site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is required for all planning applications in areas at elevated risk of flooding, even for developments appropriate to the particular flood zone. The detail of these site-specific FRAs will depend on the level of risk and scale of development. A detailed site-specific FRA should quantify the risks, the effects of selected mitigation and the management of any residual risks. The Planning Authority shall have regard to the results of any CFRAM Studies in the assessment of planning applications.

Development proposal will need to be accompanied by a Development Management Justification Test in addition to the site-specific Flood Risk Assessment.

Where only a small proportion of a site is at risk of flooding, the sequential approach shall be applied in site planning, in order to seek to ensure that no encroachment onto or loss of the flood plain occurs and/or that only water compatible development such as Open Space would be permitted for the lands which are identified as being at risk of flooding within that site.

In Flood Zone C, where the probability of flooding is low (less than 0.1%, Flood Zone C), site-specific Flood Risk Assessment may be required and the developer should satisfy themselves that the probability of flooding is appropriate to the development being proposed.

In addition to the County Plan SFRA datasets (including the Flood Zones, CFRAMS mapping, historical and predictive groundwater mapping, predictive pluvial mapping and historical flood risk indicator mapping, such as the Benefitting Lands mapping), new and emerging datasets (such as the OPW's National Fluvial Mapping that will supersede existing PFRA fluvial mapping for catchments greater than 5km²) must be consulted by prospective applicants for developments and will be made available to lower-tier Development Management processed in the Council. Applications for developments in coastal areas and associated assessments shall also consider wave overtopping and coastal erosion.

FL 9 SFRA of Lower Tier Plans

Lower tier plans shall undertake SFRA (Strategic Flood Risk Assessment) in compliance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines.

FL 10 SFRA/FRA and Climate Change

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

FL 11 FRA and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

Flood risk may constitute a significant environmental effect of a development proposal that in certain circumstances may trigger a sub-threshold EIA. FRA should therefore be an integral part of any EIA undertaken for projects within the County.

FL 12 Inland Fisheries

It is a policy objective of the Planning Authority to consult, where necessary, with Inland Fisheries Ireland, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and other relevant agencies in the construction of flood alleviation measures in County Galway.

FL 13 CFRAM

It is a policy objective of the Planning Authority to take account of and incorporate into local planning policy and decision making, including possible future variations to this plan, CFRAM measures that may be published in the future, including planned investment measures for managing and reducing flood risk.

FL 14 Flood Vulnerable Zones

It is a policy objective of the Planning Authority to ensure that applications pertaining to existing developments in flood vulnerable zones provide details of structural and non-structural risk management measures to include, but not be limited to specifications of the following - floor levels, internal layout, flood resilient construction, flood resistant construction, emergency response planning, access and egress during flood events.

FL 15 Flood Risk Management

Ensure each flood risk management activity is examined to determine actions required to embed and provide for effective climate change adaptation as set out in the OPW Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan for Flood Risk Management applicable at the time.

FL 16 Benefitting Land

Applications for development on land identified as benefitting land may be prone to flooding, and as such site-specific flood risk assessments may be required in these areas.

FL 17 Consultation with OPW

Consult with the OPW in relation to proposed developments in the vicinity of drainage channels and rivers for which the OPW are responsible and retain a strip on either side of such channels where required, to facilitate maintenance access thereto. In addition, promote the sustainable management and uses of water bodies and avoid culverting or realignment of these features.

FL 18 Inappropriate Development on Flood Zones

Where a development/land use is proposed within any area subject to this objective the development proposal will need to be accompanied by a detailed hydrological assessment and robust SUDS design which demonstrates the capacity to withstand potential flood events to maintain water quality and avoid potential effects to ecological features.

- Any development proposals should be considered with caution and will be required to comply with The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities/Circular PL2/2014 & the associated Development Management Justification Test.
- Climate Change should be duly considered in any development proposal.
- Protect the riparian zones of watercourse systems throughout the plan area through a general 10 metre protection buffer from rivers within the plan area as measured from the near riverbank, (this distance may be increased and decreased on a site by site basis, as appropriate).
- Any development proposals submitted for this site will require a detailed ecological report (s), carried out by suitably qualified personnel for the purposes of informing Appropriate Assessment Screening by Galway County Council, the competent authority.
- The relevant lands will be outlined and flagged with a symbol on the land use zoning map and on the GIS system of Galway County Council so that staff and the public are aware of the special conditions/constraints attached.
- A briefing will be provided to relevant staff within Galway County Council on the special conditions and constraints on relevant lands.

4.4 Integration of flood risk management provisions into the Draft Local Area Plan

Further to the land use zoning approach contained in the Draft Local Area Plan (see Section 4.2 above) and the measures contained in the existing County Development Plan (see Section 4.3 above), a number of other measures relating to flood risk and drainage have been integrated into the Draft Local Area Plan as detailed on Table 5.

Table 5 Draft Local Area Plan Provisions relating to Flood Risk Management

| Draft Local Area Plan Provision (to be updated following agreement on Proposed Material Alterations) |
|--|
| <p>GSST 25 Constrained Land Use To facilitate the appropriate management and sustainable use of land within Flood Zones A and B. New development in these areas will generally be limited (apart from where the Plan-level Justification Test outlined in the accompanying SFRA has been passed or where the uses comprise minor developments in existing developed areas, as outlined in Section 5.28 of the Guidelines as amended by Circular PL 2/2014) to water-compatible uses in Flood Zone A, and less vulnerable or water compatible uses in Flood Zone B, and a detailed site-specific Flood Risk Assessment will be required in these areas. This limitation shall take primacy over any other provision relating to land use zoning objectives. The Plan-level Justification Test has been passed for the lands zoned Town Centre overlapping within Flood Zone A or B.</p> <p>GSST 35 Green Infrastructure Galway County Council shall promote the benefit of open spaces and implement the integration of green infrastructure/networks (e.g., interconnected network of green spaces (including aquatic ecosystems) and other physical features on land) into new development and regeneration proposals in order to mitigate and adapt to climate change.</p> <p>GSST 57 Biodiversity & Ecological Networks Support the protection of biodiversity and ecological connectivity within the Plan Area including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, rivers, streams, natural springs, peatlands, wetlands, stonewalls, and other landscape features, where these form part of the ecological network. Seek to retain and/or incorporate these natural features into developments, to avoid ecological fragmentation and maintain ecological corridors.</p> <p>GSST 58 Flood Risk Management Guidelines It is the policy objective of Galway County Council to support, in co-operation with the OPW, the implementation of the EU Flood Risk Directive (2007/60/EC), the Flood Risk Regulations (SI No. 122 of 2010) and the DEHLG/OPW publication The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines (2009) (and any updated/superseding legislation or policy guidance) and Department Circular PL2/2014 or any updated / superseding version.</p> <p>GSST 59 Flood Risk Management and Assessment It is a Policy Objective of the Council to comply with the requirements of the DoEHLG/OPW The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities and its accompanying Technical Appendices Document 2009 (including any updated/superseding documents). This will include the following: a) Avoid, reduce and/or mitigate, as appropriate in accordance with the Guidelines; b) Development proposals in areas where there is an identified or potential risk of flooding or that could give rise to a risk of flooding elsewhere will be required to carry out a Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment, and justification test where appropriate, in accordance with the provisions of The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009 (or any superseding document); Any flood risk assessment should include an assessment of the potential impacts of climate change, such as an increase in the extent or probability of flooding, and any associated measures necessary to address these impacts; 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; d) Galway County Council shall work with other bodies and organisations, as appropriate, to help protect critical infrastructure, including water and wastewater, within the County, from risk of flooding.</p> <p>GSST 60 Principles of Flood Risk Management Guidelines The Council shall implement the key principles of flood risk management set out in the Flood Risk Management Guidelines as follows: a) Avoid development that will be at risk of flooding or that will increase the flooding risk elsewhere, where possible; b) Substitute less vulnerable uses, where avoidance is not possible; and, c) Mitigate and manage the risk, where avoidance and substitution are not possible. Development should only be permitted in areas at risk of flooding when there are no alternative reasonable sites available in areas at lower risk that also meet the objectives of proper planning and sustainable development. Vulnerable development in areas which have the highest flood risk should be avoided and/or only considered in exceptional circumstances (through a prescribed Justification Test) if adequate land or sites are not available in areas which have lower flood risk.</p> <p>GSST 61 Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) Maintain and enhance, as appropriate, the existing surface water drainage system in Gort. Ensure that new developments are adequately serviced with surface water drainage infrastructure and promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems in all new developments. Surface water runoff from development sites will be limited to pre-development levels and planning applications for new developments will be required to provide details of surface water drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems proposals. To maximise the capacity of existing collection systems for foul water, the discharge of additional surface water to combined (foul and surface water) sewers is not permitted. Refer also to Section 3.5 of the accompanying SFRA, "Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and Surface Water Guidance and Strategy".</p> <p>GSST 62 Protection of Waterbodies and Watercourses Protect waterbodies and watercourses within the County from inappropriate development, including rivers, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains. This will include protection buffers in the riverine, wetland and coastal areas as appropriate. To contribute towards protection and improvement of the status of surface and ground waters in accordance with the Water Framework Directive. Applications for development under the Plan must demonstrate that the proposed development would not adversely affect a water body's ability to meet its objectives under the Water Framework Directive, individually as a result of the proposed development or cumulatively, in combination with other developments.</p> <p>GSST 63 Flood Risk Assessment for Planning Applications and CFRAMS Protect Flood Zone A and Flood Zone B from inappropriate development and direct developments/land uses into the appropriate Flood Zone in accordance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009 (or any superseding</p> |

Draft Local Area Plan Provision**(to be updated following agreement on Proposed Material Alterations)**

document) and the guidance contained in Development Management Standards 2 and 3. Site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is required for all planning applications in areas at elevated risk of flooding, even for developments appropriate to the particular flood zone. The detail of these site-specific FRAs will depend on the level of risk and scale of development. A detailed site-specific FRA should quantify the risks, the effects of selected mitigation and the management of any residual risks. The Council shall have regard to the results of any CFRAM Studies in the assessment of planning applications. Where a development/land use is proposed that is inappropriate within the Flood Zone, then the development proposal will need to be accompanied by a Development Management Justification Test in addition to the site-specific Flood Risk Assessment. In Flood Zone C, where the probability of flooding is low (less than 0.1%, Flood Zone C), site-specific Flood Risk Assessment may be required, and the developer should satisfy themselves that the probability of flooding is appropriate to the development being proposed.

GSST 64 Flood Risk Assessment and Climate Change

Flood Risk Assessment in Gort shall provide information on the implications of climate change with regards to flood risk in relevant locations. The Flood Risk Management – Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan 2019 (or any superseding document) shall be consulted with to this effect.

GSST 65 River Basin Management Plan and Protection of Waters

Support the implementation of the relevant recommendations and measures as outlined in the National River Basin Management Plan or any other plan that may supersede same during the lifetime of this Local Area Plan. Development shall only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on the water environment, including surface water, groundwater quality and quantity, river corridors and associated wetlands. Galway County Council will support the protection and, where appropriate, the restoration of all water bodies in order to reach good status and will seek to prevent deterioration in the status of all water bodies.

GSST 66 Flood Vulnerable Zones

It is a policy objective of the Council to ensure that applications pertaining to existing developments in flood vulnerable zones provide details of structural and non-structural risk management measures to include, but not be limited to specifications of the following – floor levels, internal layout, flood resilient construction, flood resistant construction, emergency response planning, access and egress during flood events.

GSST 67 Flood Risk Management

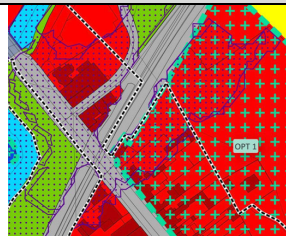

Ensure each flood risk management activity is examined to determine actions required to embed and provide for effective climate change adaptation as set out in the OPW Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan for Flood Risk Management applicable at the time.

4.5 Justification Tests

In order to meet the objectives of proper planning and sustainable development various uses are provided for in Flood Zones A and B. The limitations outlined in Policy Objective GSST 25 Constrained Land Use, as detailed in Table 5 of this SFRA above (including “This limitation shall take primacy over any other provision relating to land use zoning objectives.”) applies to all lands zoned in Flood Zone A and B, apart from those which pass the Justification Test set out in the Guidelines.

Table 6 provides the findings of the Justification Test undertaken for certain lands within Flood Zones A and B, as required by the Flood Guidelines, informed by Galway County Council.



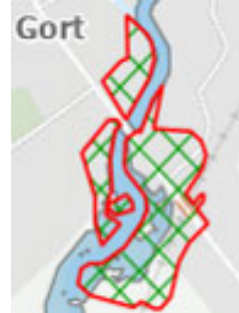
Table 6 Justification Test

| Map of Site and Land Use Zoning | Flood Zone (A and / or B) | Justification Test (Fails, if one of the following fails; all must be passed for the test to be passed) | | | | | | Overall Result (Fail or Pass) | |
|--|----------------------------------|---|---|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--|------|
| | | Settlement targeted for growth under the NPF, RSES and/or CDP? | Is the zoning of the lands required to achieve the proper planning and sustainable development of the settlement and in particular has the required sub-criteria been satisfied ¹² ? | | | | | | |
| | | | (i) – see footnote | (ii) – see footnote | (iii) – see footnote | (iv) – see footnote | (v) – see footnote | | |
|  Lands beside Gort Train Station zoned Town Centre. Some of these lands are part of Opportunity Site 1. | A and B | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | <p>A Stage 1 and 2 Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken as part of the plan preparation process. This level of assessment is considered appropriate and has informed the land use zoning and written provisions contained in the Plan. Section 4 of the SFRA outlines the measures integrated into Plan to adequately manage flood risks.</p> <p>A precautionary approach has been applied to the zoning of lands with undeveloped lands that is liable to flood generally zoned for "Open Space/Recreation & Amenity" or "Agriculture".</p> <p>Future development will: be subject to site-specific flood risk assessments; and comply with the flood risk management provisions of the Local Area Plan and relevant County Development Plan (see Section 4 above), including structural and non-structural risk management measures¹³. This is in order to ensure that flood hazard and risk to the area and to other adjoining locations will not be increased or, if practicable, will be reduced. Overlaps between Land Use Zoning and Flood Zones have been mapped to clearly indicate lands constrained by flood risk – these are subject to the Constrained Land Use Provisions of the Plan. Development is subject to the provisions of the Local Area Plan and relevant County Development Plan that relate to flood risk and climate change.</p> <p>The areas below would be protected from a 1% AEP event as indicated.</p>  | Pass |

¹² (i) Is essential to facilitate regeneration and/or expansion of the centre of the urban settlement; (ii) Comprises significant previously developed and/or under-utilised lands; (iii) Is within or adjoining the core of an established or designated urban settlement; (iv) Will be essential in achieving compact and sustainable urban growth; and (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.



¹³ General flood risk management measures would include those from the County Development Plan (FL 4 Flood Relief Schemes, FL 5 Catchment Planning, FL 6 Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems and FL 10 SFRA/FRA and Climate Change) and the Local Area Plan (GSST 59 Flood Risk Management and Assessment, GSST 61 Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems, GSST 63 Flood Risk Assessment for Planning Applications and CFRAMS and GSST 64 Flood Risk Assessment and Climate Change). X from the County Development Plan and Y from the Local Area Plan would apply. FL 14 Flood Vulnerable Zones from the County Development Plan and GSST 66 Flood Vulnerable Zones from the Local Area Plan identify structural and non-structural measures relating to mitigate risks. Measures that could be used at this site to mitigate risk comprise floor levels, internal layout, flood resilient construction, flood resistant construction, emergency response planning and access and egress during flood events. Furthermore, this site would be benefitted by the Gort Flood Relief Scheme, which provides protection from a 1% AEP event as indicated in the map above.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031



| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--|---|
|  <p>Lands zoned Town Centre in the north of the town centre.</p> | A and B | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | <p>A Stage 1 and 2 Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken as part of the plan preparation process. This level of assessment is considered appropriate and has informed the land use zoning and written provisions contained in the Plan. Section 4 of the SFRA outlines the measures integrated into Plan to adequately manage flood risks.</p> <p>A precautionary approach has been applied to the zoning of lands with undeveloped lands that is liable to flood generally zoned for "Open Space/Recreation & Amenity" or "Agriculture".</p> <p>Future development will: be subject to site-specific flood risk assessments; and comply with the flood risk management provisions of the Local Area Plan and relevant County Development Plan (see Section 4 above), including structural and non-structural risk management measures¹⁴. This is in order to ensure that flood hazard and risk to the area and to other adjoining locations will not be increased or, if practicable, will be reduced. Overlaps between Land Use Zoning and Flood Zones have been mapped to clearly indicate lands constrained by flood risk – these are subject to the Constrained Land Use Provisions of the Plan. Development is subject to the provisions of the Local Area Plan and relevant County Development Plan that relate to flood risk and climate change.</p> | Pass |
|  <p>Lands zoned Community Facilities close to church. Some of these lands are part of Opportunity Site 4.</p> | A and B | Yes | No | No | No | No | No | <p>A Stage 1 and 2 Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken as part of the plan preparation process. This level of assessment is considered appropriate and has informed the land use zoning and written provisions contained in the Plan. Section 4 of the SFRA outlines the measures integrated into Plan to adequately manage flood risks.</p> <p>A precautionary approach has been applied to the zoning of lands with undeveloped lands that is liable to flood generally zoned for "Open Space/Recreation & Amenity" or "Agriculture".</p> <p>Future development will: be subject to site-specific flood risk assessments; and comply with the flood risk management provisions of the Local Area Plan and relevant County Development Plan (see Section 4 above), including structural and non-structural risk management measures. This is in order to ensure that flood hazard and risk to the area and to other adjoining locations will not be increased or, if practicable, will be reduced. Overlaps between Land Use Zoning and Flood Zones have been mapped to clearly indicate lands constrained by flood risk – these are subject to the Constrained Land Use Provisions of the Plan. Development is subject to the provisions of the Local Area Plan and relevant County Development Plan that relate to flood risk and climate change.</p> <p>The areas below would be protected from a 1% AEP event as indicated.</p>  | <p>Fail, however Policy Objective GSST 25 Constrained Land Use will limit development at these lands. <u>As detailed under Policy Objective GSST 25, the limitation provided "shall take primacy over any other provision relating to land use zoning objectives".</u></p> |

¹⁴ General flood risk management measures would include those from the County Development Plan (FL 4 Flood Relief Schemes, FL 5 Catchment Planning, FL 6 Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems and FL 10 SFRA/FRA and Climate Change) and the Local Area Plan (GSST 59 Flood Risk Management and Assessment, GSST 61 Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems, GSST 63 Flood Risk Assessment for Planning Applications and CFRAMS and GSST 64 Flood Risk Assessment and Climate Change). X from the County Development Plan and Y from the Local Area Plan would apply. FL 14 Flood Vulnerable Zones from the County Development Plan and GSST 66 Flood Vulnerable Zones from the Local Area Plan identify structural and non-structural measures relating to mitigate risks. Measures that could be used at this site to mitigate risk comprise floor levels, internal layout, flood resilient construction, flood resistant construction, emergency response planning and access and egress during flood events. Furthermore, this site would be benefitted by the Gort Flood Relief Scheme, which provides protection from a 1% AEP event as indicated in the map above.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------|-----|----|----|----|----|----|--|---|
|  <p>Lands zoned Commercial/Mixed Use to the north of the town centre.</p> | A and B | Yes | No | No | No | No | No | <p>A Stage 1 and 2 Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken as part of the plan preparation process. This level of assessment is considered appropriate and has informed the land use zoning and written provisions contained in the Plan. Section 4 of the SFRA outlines the measures integrated into Plan to adequately manage flood risks.</p> <p>A precautionary approach has been applied to the zoning of lands with undeveloped lands that is liable to flood generally zoned for "Open Space/Recreation & Amenity" or "Agriculture".</p> <p>Future development will: be subject to site-specific flood risk assessments; and comply with the flood risk management provisions of the Local Area Plan and relevant County Development Plan (see Section 4 above), including structural and non-structural risk management measures. This is in order to ensure that flood hazard and risk to the area and to other adjoining locations will not be increased or, if practicable, will be reduced. Overlaps between Land Use Zoning and Flood Zones have been mapped to clearly indicate lands constrained by flood risk – these are subject to the Constrained Land Use Provisions of the Plan. Development is subject to the provisions of the Local Area Plan and relevant County Development Plan that relate to flood risk and climate change.</p> | <p>Fail, however Policy Objective GSST 25 Constrained Land Use will limit development at these lands. <u>As detailed under Policy Objective GSST 25, the limitation provided "shall take primacy over any other provision relating to land use zoning objectives".</u></p> |
|  <p>Lands zoned Industrial in the north of the town.</p> | B | Yes | No | No | No | No | No | <p>A Stage 1 and 2 Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken as part of the plan preparation process. This level of assessment is considered appropriate and has informed the land use zoning and written provisions contained in the Plan. Section 4 of the SFRA outlines the measures integrated into Plan to adequately manage flood risks.</p> <p>A precautionary approach has been applied to the zoning of lands with undeveloped lands that is liable to flood generally zoned for "Open Space/Recreation & Amenity" or "Agriculture".</p> <p>Future development will: be subject to site-specific flood risk assessments; and comply with the flood risk management provisions of the Local Area Plan and relevant County Development Plan (see Section 4 above), including structural and non-structural risk management measures. This is in order to ensure that flood hazard and risk to the area and to other adjoining locations will not be increased or, if practicable, will be reduced. Overlaps between Land Use Zoning and Flood Zones have been mapped to clearly indicate lands constrained by flood risk – these are subject to the Constrained Land Use Provisions of the Plan. Development is subject to the provisions of the Local Area Plan and relevant County Development Plan that relate to flood risk and climate change.</p> | <p>Fail, however Policy Objective GSST 25 Constrained Land Use will limit development at these lands. <u>As detailed under Policy Objective GSST 25, the limitation provided "shall take primacy over any other provision relating to land use zoning objectives".</u></p> |

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------|-----|----|----|----|----|----|--|---|
|  <p>Lands zoned Business and Technology off Glenbrack Road</p> | A and B | Yes | No | No | No | No | No | <p>A Stage 1 and 2 Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken as part of the plan preparation process. This level of assessment is considered appropriate and has informed the land use zoning and written provisions contained in the Plan. Section 4 of the SFRA outlines the measures integrated into Plan to adequately manage flood risks.</p> <p>A precautionary approach has been applied to the zoning of lands with undeveloped lands that is liable to flood generally zoned for "Open Space/Recreation & Amenity" or "Agriculture".</p> <p>Future development will: be subject to site-specific flood risk assessments; and comply with the flood risk management provisions of the Local Area Plan and relevant County Development Plan (see Section 4 above), including structural and non-structural risk management measures. This is in order to ensure that flood hazard and risk to the area and to other adjoining locations will not be increased or, if practicable, will be reduced. Overlaps between Land Use Zoning and Flood Zones have been mapped to clearly indicate lands constrained by flood risk – these are subject to the Constrained Land Use Provisions of the Plan. Development is subject to the provisions of the Local Area Plan and relevant County Development Plan that relate to flood risk and climate change.</p> | <p>Fail, however Policy Objective GSST 25 Constrained Land Use will limit development at these lands. <u>As detailed under Policy Objective GSST 25, the limitation provided "shall take primacy over any other provision relating to land use zoning objectives".</u></p> |
|  <p>Lands zoned Residential/Residential Infill off Tubber Road.</p> | A and B | Yes | No | No | No | No | No | <p>A Stage 1 and 2 Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken as part of the plan preparation process. This level of assessment is considered appropriate and has informed the land use zoning and written provisions contained in the Plan. Section 4 of the SFRA outlines the measures integrated into Plan to adequately manage flood risks.</p> <p>A precautionary approach has been applied to the zoning of lands with undeveloped lands that is liable to flood generally zoned for "Open Space/Recreation & Amenity" or "Agriculture".</p> <p>Future development will: be subject to site-specific flood risk assessments; and comply with the flood risk management provisions of the Local Area Plan and relevant County Development Plan (see Section 4 above), including structural and non-structural risk management measures. This is in order to ensure that flood hazard and risk to the area and to other adjoining locations will not be increased or, if practicable, will be reduced. Overlaps between Land Use Zoning and Flood Zones have been mapped to clearly indicate lands constrained by flood risk – these are subject to the Constrained Land Use Provisions of the Plan. Development is subject to the provisions of the Local Area Plan and relevant County Development Plan that relate to flood risk and climate change.</p> | <p>Fail, however Policy Objective GSST 25 Constrained Land Use will limit development at these lands. <u>As detailed under Policy Objective GSST 25, the limitation provided "shall take primacy over any other provision relating to land use zoning objectives".</u></p> |

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---|--|
| Any lands zoned Transport Infrastructure overlapping with Flood Zone A or B | A and B | Yes | No | No | No | No | No | <p>A Stage 1 and 2 Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken as part of the plan preparation process. This level of assessment is considered appropriate and has informed the land use zoning and written provisions contained in the Plan. Section 4 of the SFRA outlines the measures integrated into Plan to adequately manage flood risks.</p> <p>A precautionary approach has been applied to the zoning of lands with undeveloped lands that is liable to flood generally zoned for "Open Space/Recreation & Amenity" or "Agriculture".</p> <p>Future development will: be subject to site-specific flood risk assessments; and comply with the flood risk management provisions of the Local Area Plan and relevant County Development Plan (see Section 4 above), including structural and non-structural risk management measures. This is in order to ensure that flood hazard and risk to the area and to other adjoining locations will not be increased or, if practicable, will be reduced. Overlaps between Land Use Zoning and Flood Zones have been mapped to clearly indicate lands constrained by flood risk – these are subject to the Constrained Land Use Provisions of the Plan. Development is subject to the provisions of the Local Area Plan and relevant County Development Plan that relate to flood risk and climate change.</p> | <p>Fail, however Policy Objective GSST 25 Constrained Land Use will limit development at these lands. As detailed under Policy Objective GSST 25, the limitation provided "shall take primacy over any other provision relating to land use zoning objectives".</p> |
| <u>All Agriculture zoned lands</u> | <u>A and B</u> | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> | <u>No</u> | <u>No</u> | <u>No</u> | <u>No</u> | <p><u>A Stage 1 and 2 Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken as part of the plan preparation process. This level of assessment is considered appropriate and has informed the land use zoning and written provisions contained in the Plan. Section 4 of the SFRA outlines the measures integrated into Plan to adequately manage flood risks.</u></p> <p><u>A precautionary approach has been applied to the zoning of lands with undeveloped lands that is liable to flood generally zoned for "Open Space/Recreation & Amenity" or "Agriculture".</u></p> <p><u>Future development will: be subject to site-specific flood risk assessments; and comply with the flood risk management provisions of the Local Area Plan and relevant County Development Plan (see Section 4 above), including structural and non-structural risk management measures. This is in order to ensure that flood hazard and risk to the area and to other adjoining locations will not be increased or, if practicable, will be reduced. Overlaps between Land Use Zoning and Flood Zones have been mapped to clearly indicate lands constrained by flood risk – these are subject to the Constrained Land Use Provisions of the Plan. Development is subject to the provisions of the Local Area Plan and relevant County Development Plan that relate to flood risk and climate change.</u></p> | <p>Fail, however Policy Objective GSST 25 Constrained Land Use will limit development at these lands. As detailed under Policy Objective GSST 25, the limitation provided "shall take primacy over any other provision relating to land use zoning objectives".</p> |

Section 5 Conclusion

Galway County Council have prepared a Draft Local Area Plan for Gort under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The Plan sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development over the years 2025-2031.

Land use zoning contained within the Draft Plan has been informed by the SFRA process and associated delineation of flood risk zones. The detailed Plan preparation process undertaken by the Planning Department combined with specialist input from the SFRA process facilitated zoning that helps to avoid inappropriate development being permitted in areas of elevated flood risk. A variety of written provisions have been integrated into the Plan that will contribute towards flood risk management and sustainable drainage.

Appendix I: Summary of the requirements of the Flood Guidelines for land uses in Flood Zones

Requirements relating to land uses in Flood Zones as set out in the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) and Office of Public Works (OPW) 2009 Flood Guidelines (including at Chapter 3 Principles and Key Mechanisms and Chapter 5 Flooding and Development Management) and Departmental Circular PL2/2014 should be adhered to.

- The Sequential Approach, including the Justification test -

The key principles of the Guidelines' risk-based sequential approach (see Figure 1) are:

- Avoid development in areas at risk of flooding. If this is not possible, consider substituting a land use that is less vulnerable to flooding. Only when both avoidance and substitution cannot take place should consideration be given to mitigation and management of risks.
- Inappropriate types of development that would create unacceptable risks from flooding should not be planned for or permitted.
- Exceptions to the restriction of development due to potential flood risks are provided for through the use of a Justification Test, where the planning need and the sustainable management of flood risk to an acceptable level must be demonstrated.

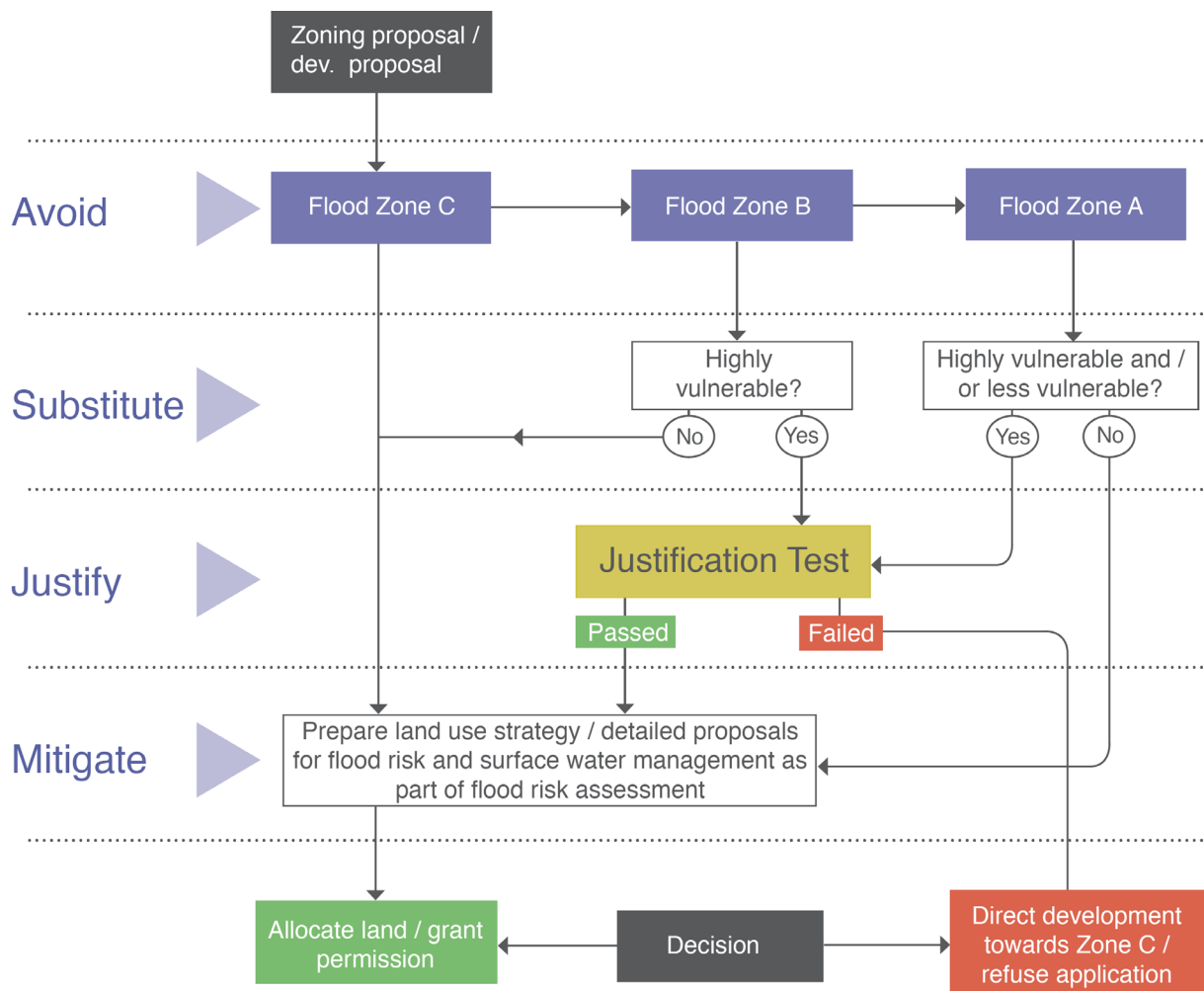


Figure 1 Sequential Approach Process¹⁵

In summary, the **planning implications** for each of the flood zones are:

Zone A - High probability of flooding. Most types of development would be considered inappropriate in this zone. Development in this zone should be avoided and/or only considered in exceptional circumstances, such as in city and town centres, or in the case of essential infrastructure that cannot be located elsewhere, and where the Justification Test has been applied. Only water-compatible development, such as docks and marinas, dockside activities that require a waterside location, amenity open space, outdoor sports and recreation, would be considered appropriate in this zone.

Zone B - Moderate probability of flooding. Highly vulnerable development, such as hospitals, residential care homes, Garda, fire and ambulance stations, dwelling houses and primary strategic transport and utilities infrastructure, would generally be considered inappropriate in this zone, unless the requirements of the Justification Test can be met. Less vulnerable development, such as retail, commercial and industrial uses, sites used for short-let for caravans and camping and secondary strategic transport and utilities infrastructure, and water-compatible development might be considered appropriate in this zone. In general however, less vulnerable development should only be considered in this zone if adequate lands or sites are not available in Zone C and subject to a flood risk assessment to the appropriate level of detail to demonstrate that flood risk to and from the development can or will adequately be managed.

Zone C - Low probability of flooding. Development in this zone is appropriate from a flood risk perspective (subject to assessment of flood hazard from sources other than rivers and the coast) but

¹⁵ Flood Zone C covers all areas outside of Zones A and B

would need to meet the normal range of other proper planning and sustainable development considerations.

Table 7 overleaf classifies the vulnerability of different types of development while Table 8 identifies the appropriateness of development belonging to each vulnerability class within each of the flood zones as well as identifying what instances in which the Justification Test should be undertaken. 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.

Table 7 Classification of vulnerability of different types of development

| Vulnerability class | Land uses and types of development which include*: |
|---|---|
| Highly vulnerable development (including essential infrastructure) | <p>Garda, ambulance and fire stations and command centres required to be operational during flooding;</p> <p>Hospitals;</p> <p>Emergency access and egress points;</p> <p>Schools;</p> <p>Dwelling houses, student halls of residence and hostels;</p> <p>Residential institutions such as residential care homes, children's homes and social services homes;</p> <p>Caravans and mobile home parks;</p> <p>Dwelling houses designed, constructed or adapted for the elderly or, other people with impaired mobility; and</p> <p>Essential infrastructure, such as primary transport and utilities distribution, including electricity generating power stations and sub-stations, water and sewage treatment, and potential significant sources of pollution (SEVESO sites, IPPC sites, etc.) in the event of flooding.</p> |
| Less vulnerable development | <p>Buildings used for: retail, leisure, warehousing, commercial, industrial and non-residential institutions;</p> <p>Land and buildings used for holiday or short-let caravans and camping, subject to specific warning and evacuation plans;</p> <p>Land and buildings used for agriculture and forestry;</p> <p>Waste treatment (except landfill and hazardous waste);</p> <p>Mineral working and processing; and</p> <p>Local transport infrastructure.</p> |
| Water-compatible development | <p>Flood control infrastructure;</p> <p>Docks, marinas and wharves;</p> <p>Navigation facilities;</p> <p>Ship building, repairing and dismantling, dockside fish processing and refrigeration and compatible activities requiring a waterside location;</p> <p>Water-based recreation and tourism (excluding sleeping accommodation);</p> <p>Lifeguard and coastguard stations;</p> <p>Amenity open space, outdoor sports and recreation and essential facilities such as changing rooms; and</p> <p>Essential ancillary sleeping or residential accommodation for staff required by uses in this category (subject to a specific warning and evacuation plan).</p> |
| *Uses not listed here should be considered on their own merits | |

Table 8 Vulnerability Classes and Flood Zones

| | Flood Zone A | Flood Zone B | Flood Zone C |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Highly vulnerable development (including essential infrastructure) | Justification Test | Justification Test | Appropriate |
| Less vulnerable development | Justification Test | Appropriate | Appropriate |
| Water-compatible development | Appropriate | Appropriate | Appropriate |

The **Justification Test** which is referred to as part of the Sequential Approach is an assessment of whether a development proposal within an area at risk of flooding meets specific criteria for proper planning and sustainable development and demonstrates that it will not be subject to unacceptable risk nor increase flood risk elsewhere. The Justification Test should be applied only where development is within flood risk areas that would be defined as inappropriate under the screening test of the sequential risk based approach outlined above. This Justification Test is shown below.

Where, as part of the preparation and adoption or variation and amendment of a development/local area plan¹, 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 Table 3.2, all of the following criteria must be satisfied:

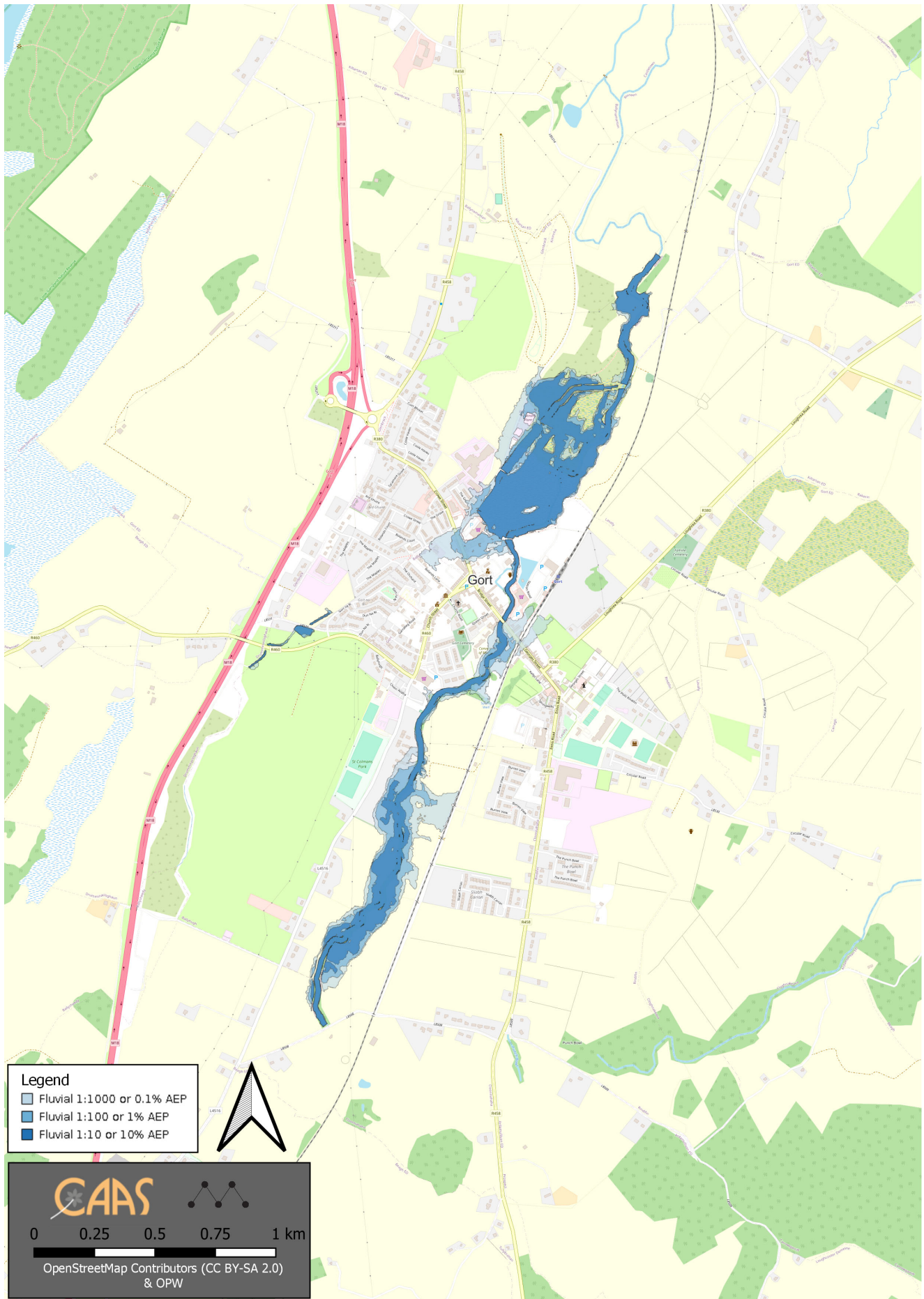
- 1 The urban settlement is targeted for growth under the National Spatial Strategy, regional planning guidelines, statutory plans as defined above or under the Planning Guidelines or Planning Directives provisions of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended.
- 2 The zoning or designation of 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:
 - (i) Is essential to facilitate regeneration and/or expansion of the centre of the urban settlement²;
 - (ii) Comprises significant previously developed and/or under-utilised lands;
 - (iii) Is within or adjoining the core³ of an established or designated urban settlement;
 - (iv) Will be essential in achieving compact and sustainable urban growth; and
 - (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 settlement⁴.
- 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 development 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.

N.B. The acceptability or otherwise of levels of any residual risk should be made with consideration for the proposed development and the local context and should be described in the relevant flood risk assessment.

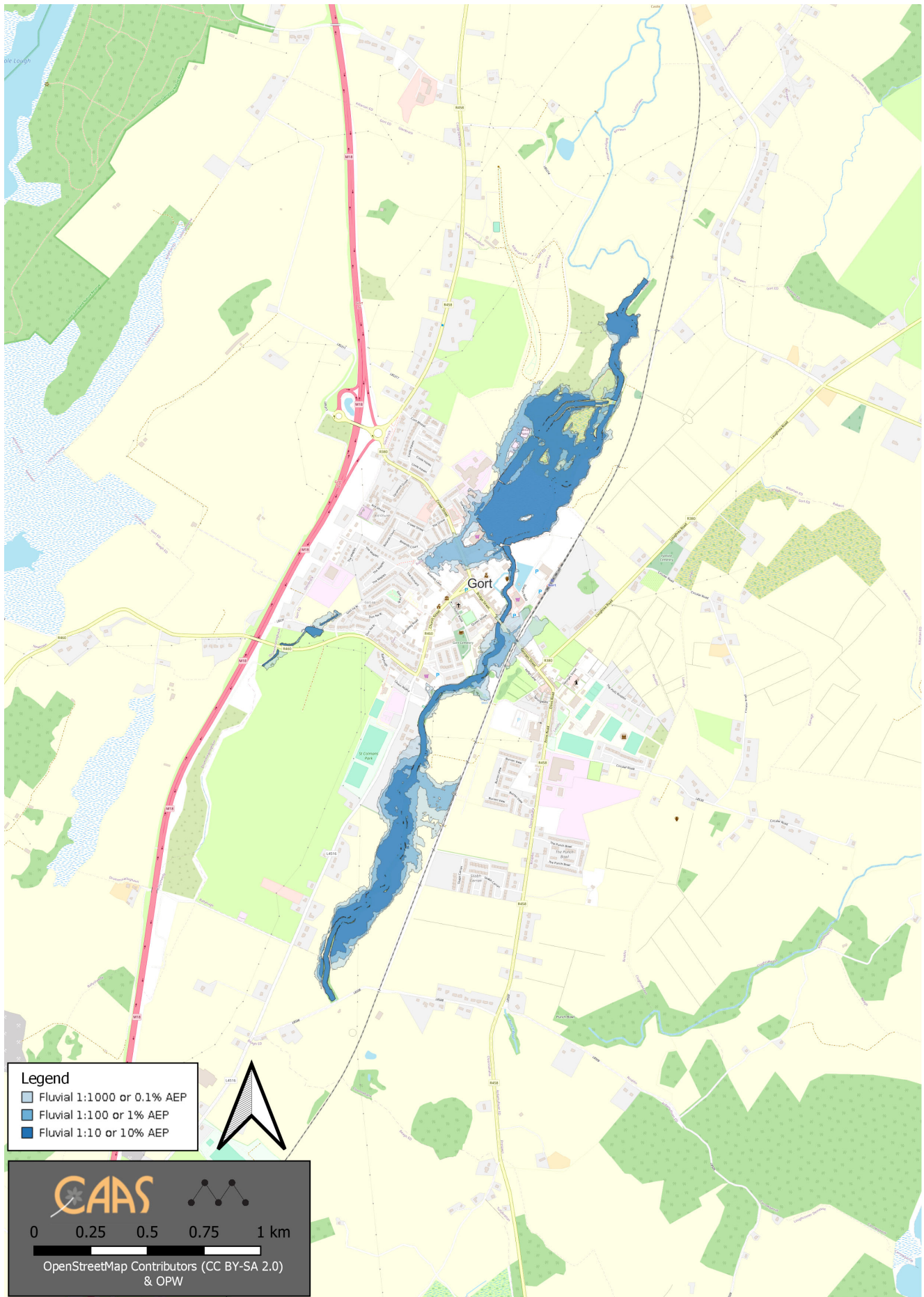
Figure 2 Justification Test ¹⁶

¹⁶ Footnotes: ¹ Including Strategic Development Zones and Section 25 Schemes in the area of the Dublin Docklands Development Authority ²In the case of Gateway planning authorities, where a number of strategic growth centres have been identified within the overall area of the authority, the Justification Test may be applied for vulnerable development within each centre. ³ See definition of the core of an urban settlement in Glossary of Terms. ⁴ This criterion may be set aside where section 4.27b applies.

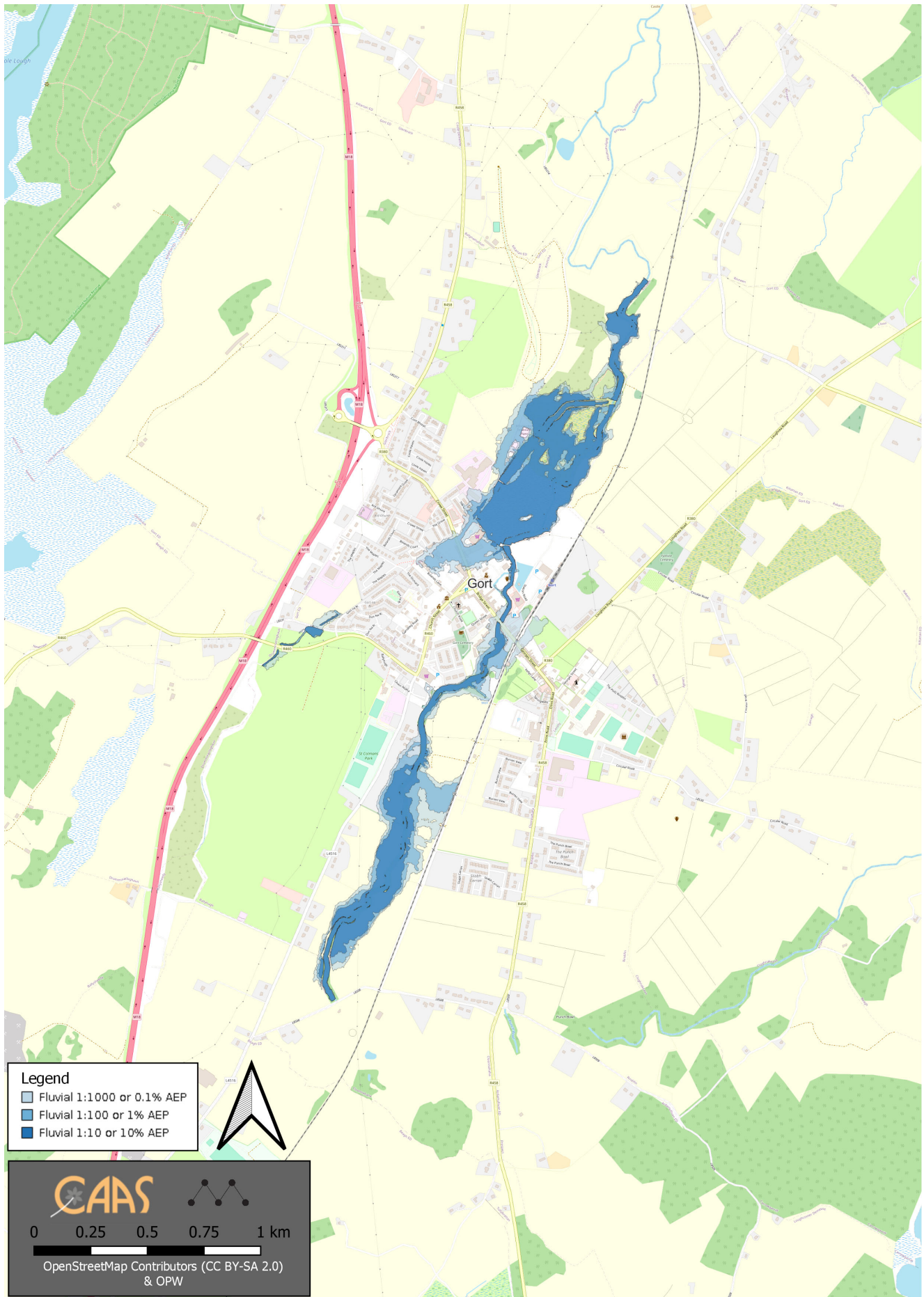
Appendix II: Flood Risk Indicator and Flood Zone Mapping



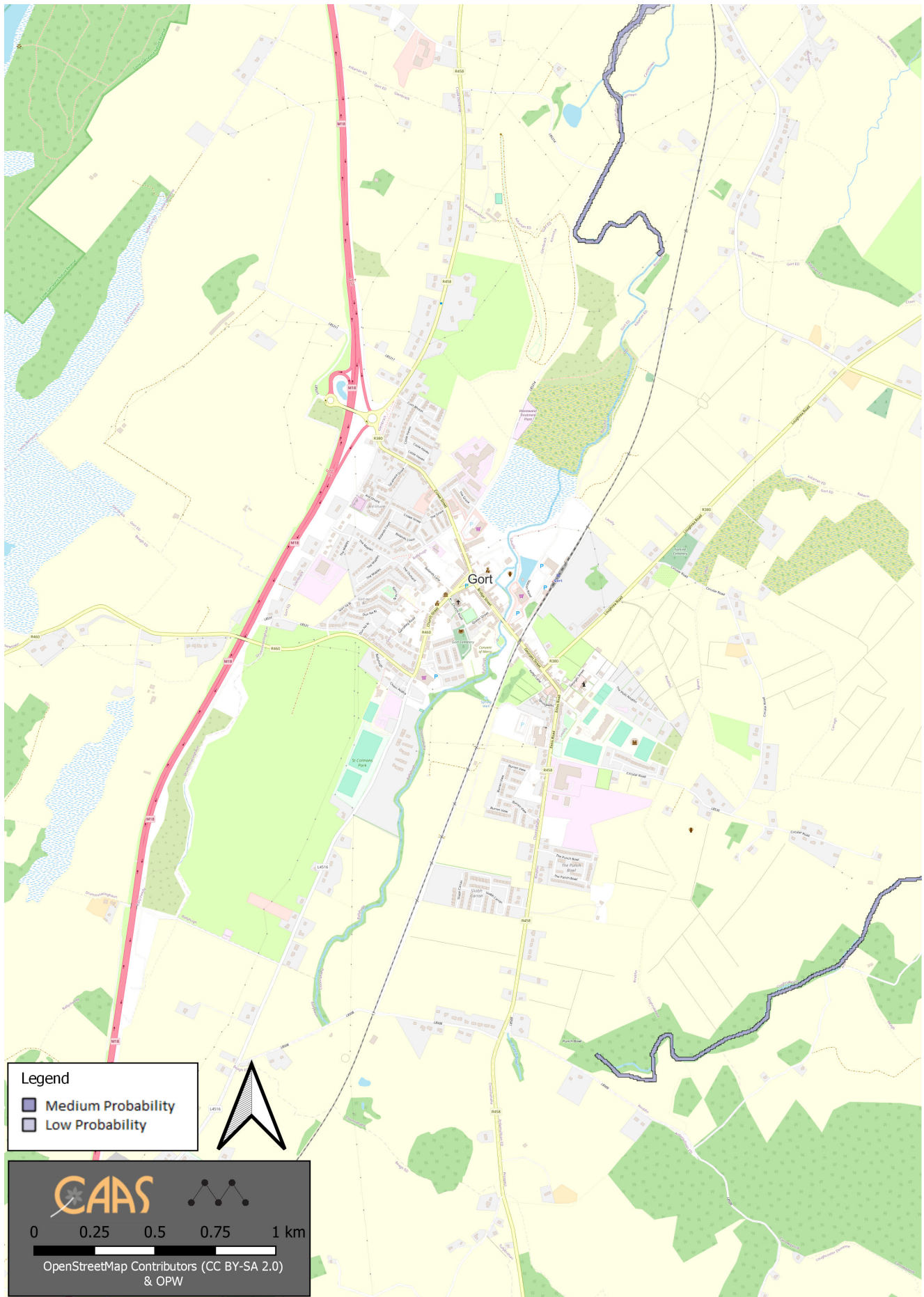
CFRAMS Flood Extent Present Day Scenario



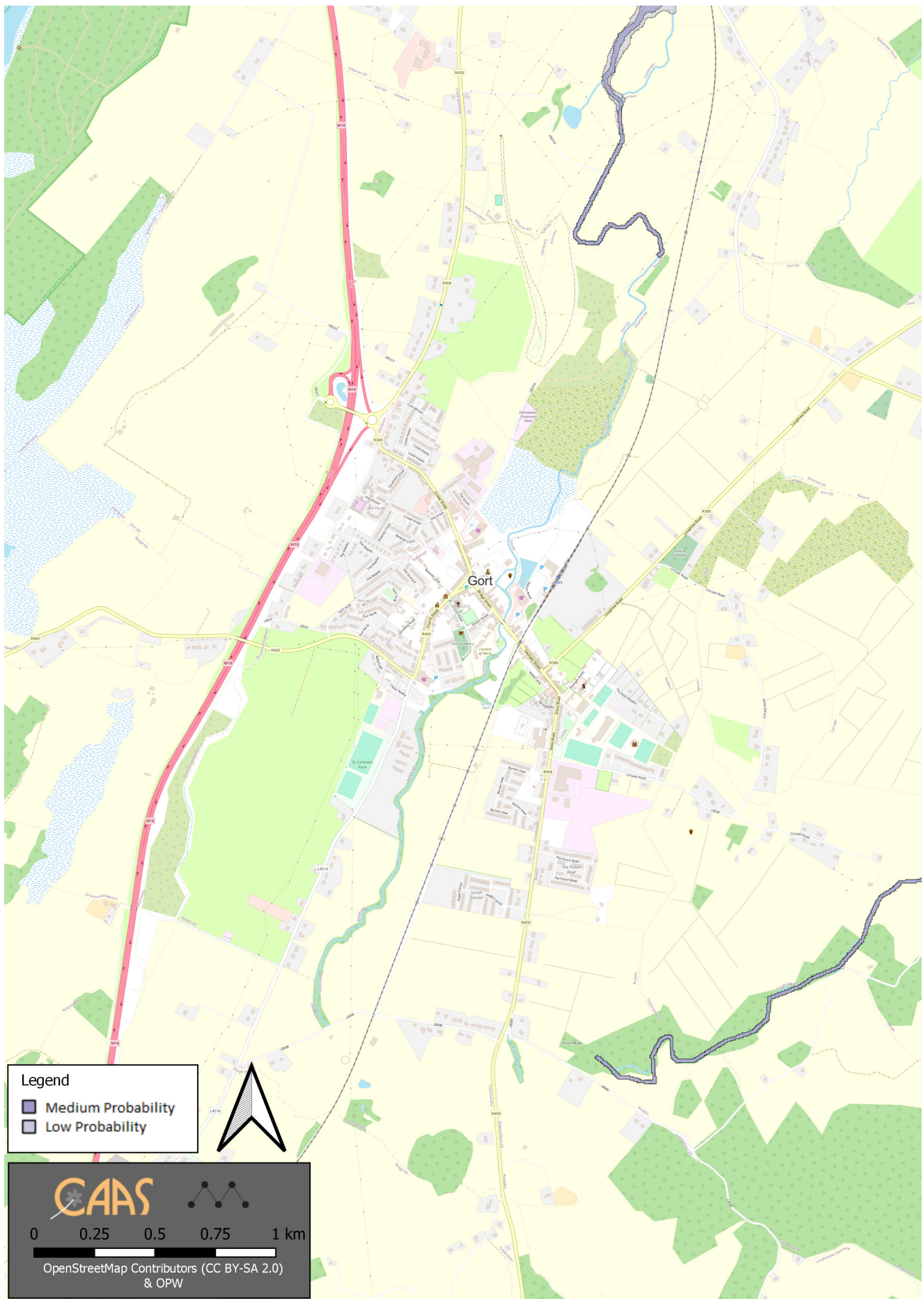
CFRAMS Flood Extent Mid Range Scenario



CFRAMS Flood Extent High End Scenario

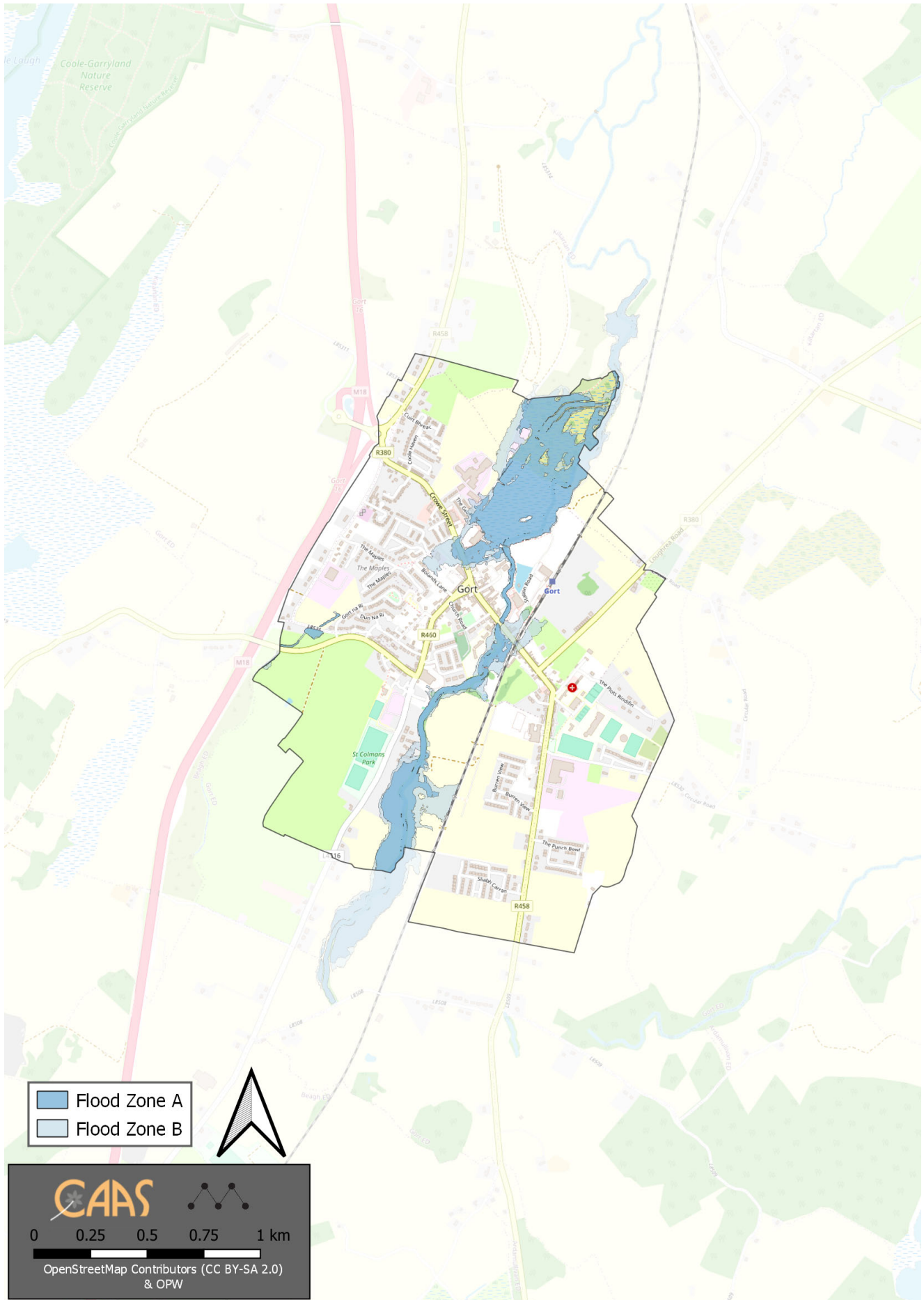


NIFM Flood Extent Present Day Scenario



NIFM Flood Extent Mid Range Scenario

CAAS for Galway County Council



Flood Zones A and B



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

Draft Gort Local Area Plan

2025 - 2031

Appendix C Local Transport Plan

Draft Gort Local Transport Plan



DRAFT GORT LOCAL AREA PLAN 2025-2031

Draft Gort Local Transport Plan

IDENTIFICATION TABLE

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Client/Project owner | Galway County Council |
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| Study | Draft Gort Local Transport Plan |
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|------------|--|-----------|
| 1. | INTRODUCTION | 8 |
| 1.1 | OVERVIEW OF LTP | 8 |
| 1.2 | STUDY METHODOLOGY | 8 |
| 1.3 | REPORT STRUCTURE | 9 |
| 2. | POLICY CONTEXT | 10 |
| 2.1 | INTRODUCTION | 10 |
| 2.2 | POLICY REPORT | 10 |
| 2.3 | LOCAL POLICY AND PLANS FOR GORT | 12 |
| 2.4 | SUMMARY | 17 |
| 3. | BASELINE ASSESSMENT | 18 |
| 3.1 | DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AREA | 18 |
| 3.2 | DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE | 24 |
| 3.3 | ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS & PHYSICAL CONSTRAINTS | 25 |
| 3.4 | EXISTING TRAVEL PATTERNS | 26 |
| 3.5 | MODE SHARE | 30 |
| 3.6 | TRIP LENGTH DISTRIBUTION | 32 |
| 3.7 | ACCESS TO EDUCATION (ATOS TOOL) | 33 |
| 3.8 | EXISTING TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE & SERVICES | 38 |
| 3.9 | SWOT ASSESSMENT | 47 |
| 4. | LTP OBJECTIVES & FUTURE DEMAND FOR TRAVEL | 50 |
| 4.1 | OVERVIEW | 50 |
| 4.2 | DEVELOPING THE OBJECTIVES AND KPIS | 50 |
| 4.3 | FUTURE DEMAND FOR TRAVEL | 52 |
| 5. | OPTIONS DEVELOPMENT & ASSESSMENT PROCESS | 54 |
| 5.1 | OPTIONS DEVELOPMENT | 54 |
| 5.2 | OPTIONS ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY | 58 |
| 5.3 | SUMMARY | 60 |

| | | |
|------------|--|-----------|
| 6. | EMERGING PREFERRED STRATEGY | 61 |
| 6.1 | OVERVIEW | 61 |
| 6.2 | WALKING & CYCLING | 61 |
| 6.3 | PUBLIC TRANSPORT | 74 |
| 6.4 | ROAD & TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT OPTIONS | 77 |
| 6.5 | SUPPORTING MEASURES | 78 |
| 6.6 | KPI ASSESSMENT | 79 |
| 7. | MONITORING STRATEGY & LTP REVIEW | 82 |
| 8. | SUMMARY | 84 |
| 8.1 | OVERVIEW | 84 |

APPENDIX A – GALWAY POLICY CONTEXT REPORT

APPENDIX B – FULL LIST OF STRATEGY MEASURES

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|---|----|
| Figure 1-1: Gort LTP Methodology | 8 |
| Figure 3-1: Gort Population Density | 19 |
| Figure 3-2: Gort Employment Density | 20 |
| Figure 3-3: Gort Services & Amenities | 23 |
| Figure 3-5: POWSCAR Sector map | 28 |
| Figure 3-6: Employment Mode Share | 30 |
| Figure 3-7: Education Mode Share | 31 |
| Figure 3-8: Education Trip Length Distribution, by Mode [POWSCAR, 2016] | 32 |
| Figure 3-9: Access to Primary Schools (Walk) | 34 |
| Figure 3-10: Access to Post Primary Schools (Walk) | 34 |
| Figure 3-11: Access to Primary Schools (Cycle) | 36 |
| Figure 3-12: Access to Post Primary Schools (Cycle) | 36 |
| Figure 3-13: Highlighted Sections of Walking Infrastructure in Gort | 38 |
| Figure 3-14: Permeability block in Gort (1km walk for 50m crow fly distance) | 39 |
| Figure 3-15: Loughrea Road Zebra Crossing | 40 |
| Figure 3-16: Junction of Georges Street & Station Road | 40 |
| Figure 3-17: Gort Community School, Gort Community Centre and Gaelscoil na bhFilí Car Park Area | 41 |
| Figure 3-18: Gort River Walk Route – Recently Upgraded Section | 42 |
| Figure 3-19: Gort Bus Network | 44 |
| Figure 3-20: Gort Strategic Road Network | 45 |
| Figure 3-21: Gort Town Centre Local Road Network | 46 |
| Figure 3-22: Church Road Signalised Crossing | 47 |
| Figure 4-1: Emerging Gort LAP Draft Land Use Zone Map | 53 |
| Figure 5-1: Options Assessment Methodology | 55 |
| Figure 5-2: Example of a Segregated Cycle Track | 55 |
| Figure 5-3: Options Assessment Methodology | 58 |
| Figure 6-1: Emerging Preferred Strategy: Walking & Cycling Measures – Gort LTP Study Area | 65 |
| Figure 6-2: Emerging Preferred Strategy: Walking & Cycling Measures – central Gort area | 67 |
| Figure 6-4: Gort with Cycle Connects Network Plan and Galway-Athlone Cycleway | 69 |
| Figure 6-6: Crowe Street Proposed | 71 |
| Figure 6-7: Missing footway along R460 looking towards Tubber Road | 72 |
| Figure 6-8: Missing footway at blind bend on Glenbrack Road | 72 |
| Figure 6-9: New housing and wide footway on Loughrea Road looking towards Loughrea | 73 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 2-1: Background Planning and Policy Documents | 10 |
| Table 3-1: Population Age Structure Comparison | 24 |
| Table 3-2: Employment Opportunities & Education Attraction Comparison | 25 |
| Table 3-3: Trip Pattern Summary | 27 |
| Table 3-4: Destination Gort Origin Trips | 28 |
| Table 3-5: Origin of Gort Destination Trips | 28 |
| Table 3-6: Gort Rail Services | 42 |
| Table 3-7: Gort Bus Routes | 43 |
| Table 3-8: SWOT Assessment of Gort | 48 |
| Table 4-1: Gort LTP Objectives and KPIs | 51 |
| Table 5-1: Interim MCA Scoring System | 60 |
| Table 6-1: Active Travel Terminology | 63 |
| Table 6-2: Emerging Preferred Strategy: Accessibility & Social Inclusion Outcomes | 79 |
| Table 6-3: Emerging Preferred Strategy: Integration Outcomes | 80 |
| Table 6-4: Emerging Preferred Strategy: Safety & Physical Activity Outcomes | 80 |
| Table 6-5: Emerging Preferred Strategy: Environment Outcomes | 81 |
| Table 6-6: Emerging Preferred Strategy: Economy Outcomes | 81 |

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview of LTP

Galway County Council (GCC) has prepared a new Transport Study for the county alongside Local Transport Plans (LTPs) for the towns of Ballinasloe, Athenry, Loughrea and Tuam. The Galway County Transport and Planning Study (GCTPS) has been adopted alongside the Galway County Development Plan (2022-2028).

SYSTRA Ltd (SYSTRA) has been commissioned by the Council to support the development of the GCTPS and the LTPs referenced above. Through this work, SYSTRA has identified a range of sustainable transport measures and options suitable for the context of Galway County relating to the pedestrian, cycle, public transport and road networks. This LTP extends this process to the town of Gort and seeks to determine how the transport needs of the town and its visitors can be met in a manner which reflects overarching national policy and builds upon the wider strategy set out in the GCTPS, as well as the Policy Objectives within the draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031 (LAP).

1.2 Study Methodology

The methodology for developing the Gort LTP follows guidelines set out in TII/NTA's 'Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) Guidance Notes – December 2018'¹, as illustrated in **Figure 1-1**.

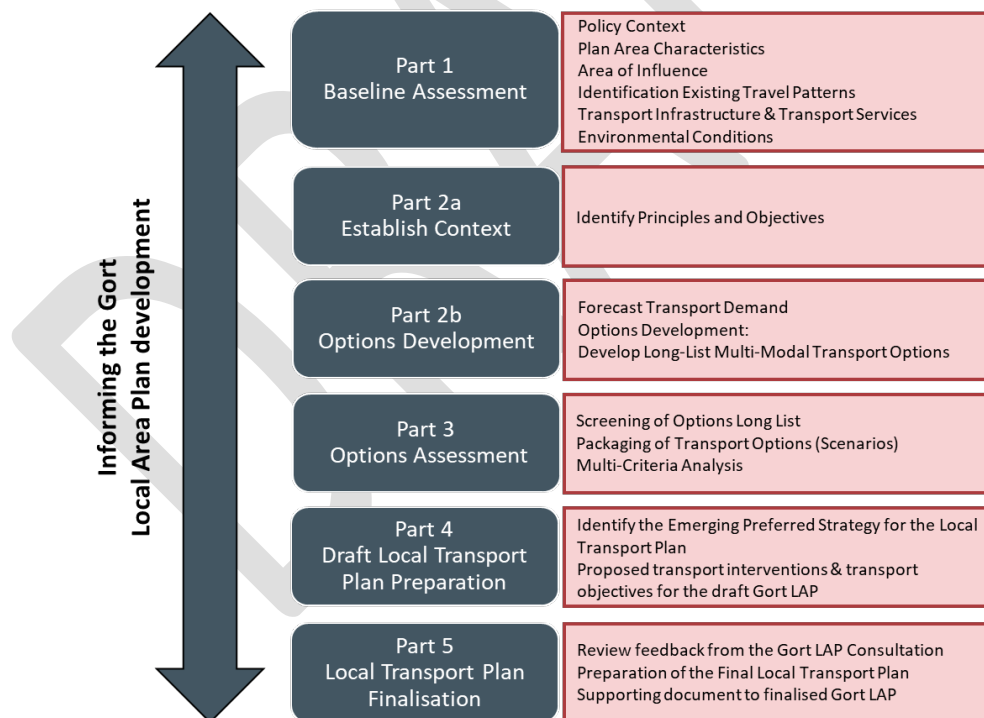


Figure 1-1: Gort LTP Methodology

¹ Source: https://www.nationaltransport.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Area_Based_Transport_Assessment_LTP.pdf

This report covers parts 1-4 of the ABTA methodology, and provides an overview of all tasks undertaken to derive the emerging preferred strategy for the Gort Local Transport Plan (LTP). The preferred strategy has fed transport interventions and Policy Objectives into the draft Gort Local Area Plan (LAP) for public consultation. Feedback from the consultation process will then be used to update and inform the finalised LTP for the Gort study area.

1.3 Report Structure

The Gort LTP report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2** provides an overview of existing local policies, plans and guidelines that are relevant to the study area. Background international, national, regional and county policies, plans and guidance can be found in **Appendix A: Galway Policy Context Report**.
- **Chapter 3** gives an overview of the Baseline Assessment phase of the LTP, including a summary of the area characteristics, existing travel patterns and transport conditions.
- **Chapter 4** examines the objectives for the LTP which have been determined from consideration of policy, transport baseline and demand information.
- **Chapter 5** outlines the process for developing and assessing the long-list of transport options to overcome existing constraints within the study area and assist in achieving the overall study objectives.
- **Chapter 6** sets out recommendations with regard to the combination of transport measures which the LTP will seek to promote and implement (with engagement and assistance from other parties such as the NTA where appropriate).
- **Chapter 7** outlines the monitoring strategy for this LTP.
- **Chapter 8** provides a summary and conclusion to the report.

2. POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction

The following chapter provides an overview of relevant local policies and plans, along with relevant international and national policies, plans and guidance relevant to the Gort Local Transport Plan. The development of the LTP was shaped by and reflects these policies.

2.2 Policy Report

A technical note comprising a policy review of international, national, regional, and county level policies and plans relevant to the studies in the Galway Transport Support Programme has been compiled. This note will be used as a reference for the LTP development. An overview of the policies, plans and guidance documents reviewed for this note is presented in the table below. More detail can be found in **Appendix A: Galway Policy Context Report**.

Table 2-1: Background Planning and Policy Documents

| International Policy |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> European Union Green Deal (European Commission, 2020) and Fit For 55 Package (European Commission, 2021) UN Convention for the Rights of People with Disabilities (2019) |
| National Policy |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Ireland 2040 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Planning Framework (NPF) National Development Plan 2021-2030 (NDP) National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland 2021 (NIFTI) Climate Action Plan 2024 (2024) All-Ireland Strategic Rail Review (2024) TII National Roads 2040 Strategy (2023) TII National Cycle Network and NTA Cycle Connects (ongoing) NTA Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan (ongoing) National Sustainable Mobility Policy (2022) OECD Redesigning Ireland's Transport Network for Net Zero (2022) Five Cities Demand Management Study (2021) Our Journey Towards Vision Zero: Road Safety Strategy 2021 – 2030 Irish Rail Strategy 2027 (2021) National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS) 2017-2021 Sport Ireland Participation Plan 2021 – 2024 (2021) Housing for All – a New Housing Plan for Ireland (2021) Travelling in a Woman's Shoes (2020) Transport – Climate Change Sectoral Adaption Plan (2019) Get Ireland Walking Healthy Ireland: A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2019 – 2025 (2019) Healthy Ireland: National Physical Activity Plan (2019) |

National Guidance

- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS)² (2019)
- NTA Greening and Nature-based SuDS for Active Travel Schemes (2023)
- NTA Rapid Build Active Travel Facilities (2023)
- Permeability Best Practice Guide (2015)
- Universal Design Walkability Audit Tool for Roads and Streets
- National Cycle Design Manual (2023)
- Greenways Guidelines & Rural Cycleway Design (Offline and Greenways)
- Traffic Management Guidelines Manual (2019)
- TII/NTA Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) Guidance Notes (2018) & ABTA How to Guide, Pilot Methodology (2021)
- Safe to School: An Ideas Document for Safe Access to School (2020)
- NTA Safe Routes to School Design Guide (2022)
- Spatial Planning and National Roads - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012)

National Consultations

- Moving Together: A Strategic Approach to the Improved Efficiency of the Transport System in Ireland (2024)

Regional Policy

- Northern & Western Regional Assembly, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) 2020-2032 (2020), including the Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (GMASP)
- Galway Transport Strategy (2017)
- N6 Galway City Ring Road Project
- Western Rail Corridor Financial and Economic Appraisal (2020)
- JASPERS Project Screening Note: Western Rail Corridor Phase 2/3 (2020)

County & Local Policy and Plans

- Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028
- Galway County Tourism Strategy 2023 – 2031
- Galway County Transport and Planning Study (GCTPS) (2022)
- Galway County Walking & Cycling Strategy (2013)
- County Galway Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019 – 2024 (2019)
- Galway City and County Age Friendly Programme 2014 – 2019
- Galway County Integration & Diversity Strategy 2013 – 2017

- Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025 - 2031
- Gort Inse Guaire Town Centre First Plan
- Gort Public Realm Enhancement Project Proposals

² Works to national roads in urban areas are required to adhere to TII Publications (Standards) as well as DMURS. The TII Publication 'The Treatment of Transition Zones to Towns and Villages on National Roads' (TII Publications DN-GEO-03084) outlines design standards to be applied to national roads and national road junctions. A Design Report is required for works to national roads in accordance with TII Publications DN-GEO-03030 (Design Phase Procedure for Road Safety Improvement Schemes, Urban Renewal Schemes and Local Improvement Schemes).

2.2.1 Active Travel Advice Note: Rapid Build Active Travel Facilities (NTA, 2023)

In response to rising construction costs and the Climate Action Plan (CAP) requirement for 1,000km of new active travel infrastructure to be built by 2025, the NTA issued an Active Travel Advice Note in February 2023 concerning rapid build facilities. This note outlines that cost-effective rapid build construction approaches, including road space reallocation, are now required as initial options to be considered when planning for new active travel infrastructure.

Rapid build active travel facilities are schemes that utilise cost-effective measures to deliver walking and cycling infrastructure quicker than traditional (full build) construction methods. They do not typically involve major construction works such as full road reconstruction or significant changes to drainage systems or relocation of utilities, however they may involve changes to kerb lines and minor drainage works. The works will also be typically within the boundaries of the existing roadway which can simplify the planning process, with positive impacts on project programme and delivery.

Rapid Build Schemes do not necessarily require bollards, although utilising this type of infrastructure to secure road space for walking and cycling can be a useful interim measure. There are design options available for rapid build projects which use robust materials with a quality finish, resulting in schemes that can remain in place over multiple years.

2.3 Local Policy and Plans for Gort

2.3.1 Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028

The Galway County Development Plan (CDP) 2022-2028 defines Gort as a self-sustaining town with a significant quantum of population growth, 800 people or 27%, allocated to the town. Gort experienced a high level of population growth, 13%, from 2011-2016. The growth strategy for Gort is to consolidate and continue to support expansion of the employment base. In addition, residential development will be facilitated that will support sustainable growth.

The CDP also includes specific policy objectives relating to improving the safety of children at schools, including NNR5: 'Increase the safety of children at school by assessing safe routes to schools for school children and by the installation of traffic management measures. Require School Travel Plans to be submitted with applications by schools or colleges in accordance with actions as set out under Smarter Travel, A Sustainable Transport Future 2009 – 2020'.

2.3.2 Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025 – 2031

The Local Area Plan (LAP) for Gort is currently being prepared by Galway County Council, with a draft report published for consultation in early 2025. The draft Gort LAP 2025 – 2031 has the following vision:

"Gort is a Self-Sustaining, vibrant, and socially inclusive town with a focus on protecting and enhancing its historical core, natural environment, supporting an educated workforce, and providing a range of supporting services/facilities/amenities. This plan will be delivered through a managed and phase development strategy of appropriately zoned and serviced lands to achieve balanced and sustainable growth for Gort and the immediate environment that it serves."

The LAP aims to progress Gort's role as a Self-Sustaining Town as categorised in the Galway County Development Plan 2022 – 2028. As part of this, strategic aims have been established within the LAP to ensure Gort's development harnesses its economic potential in a sustainable manner. Relevant strategic aims to the Local Transport Plan include:

1. Delivery of residential units on appropriately zoned land targeted in the Housing Strategy set out in Chapter 2 of the GCDP 2022 – 2028, encouraging sequential and compact growth in the town.
2. Actively encourage sustainable mobility, including walking and cycling, in accordance with the aspirations of the LTP and support the continued provision of investment in public transport and active travel infrastructure.
3. Support the redevelopment of underutilised buildings within the town centre to accommodate multi-functional community and cultural spaces, to facilitate the growth of remote-working, cultural, creative and community sectors in the town centre.

The Transport and Movement chapter of the LAP will be informed by the Gort LTP upon its completion, in order to ensure continuity between plans and proposals. The LTP has considered the aims of improved sustainable mobility in terms of access to the town and internal movements. The integration of land use planning and the transport network will help to facilitate compact growth of the town and provide greater opportunities for the implementation and utilisation of sustainable transport.

The existing public transport links between the town and Galway City will be maintained and improved and the strategic importance of the M18 motorway to Galway, Limerick and Shannon will be recognised in any proposals. **This is in order to:**

- **Maintain the strategic function, capacity and safety of the national roads network, including planning for future capacity enhancements, in the local plan area.**
- **Ensure that the existing transport networks in the local area plan area, which have been greatly enhanced, are maintained to a high level to ensure quality levels of service, safety, accessibility and connectivity to transport users.**

To support these strategic aims, a number of Policy Objectives relevant to the LTP are outlined in Section 4 of the LAP. These Gort Self Sustaining Town (GSST) Policy Objectives are as follows:

- **GSST 44 Local Transport Plan:** “Support the implementation of the Local Transport Plan as set out in Section 3 in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.”
- **GSST 45 Transportation Infrastructure:** “Facilitate the provision and maintenance of essential transportation infrastructure. This shall include the reservation of lands to facilitate public roads, footpaths, cycle ways, bus stops and landscaping together with any necessary associated works, as appropriate.”
- **GSST 46 Sustainable Transportation:** “Facilitate any Smarter Travel initiatives that will improve sustainable transportation within the plan area and facilitate sustainable transportation options including public transportation, rail freight, electric vehicles rentals, car clubs, public bike schemes, cycle parking as appropriate.”
- **GSST 47 Pedestrian and Cycle Network:** “Facilitate the improvement of the pedestrian and cycling environment and network so that it is safe and accessible to all, through the provision of the necessary infrastructure. New development shall promote and prioritise walking and cycling, shall be permeable, adequately linked and connected to neighbouring areas, the town centre, recreational, educational, residential and employment destinations and shall adhere to the principles contained within the national policy document Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future 2009 – 2020, the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) and NTA document Permeability: Best Practice Guide.”

- **GSST 48 Pedestrian Crossings:** “Facilitate the provision of pedestrian crossings adjacent to schools and at other appropriate locations within the plan area.”
- **GSST 49 Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) and Road Safety Audits (RSA):** “Require all significant development proposals to be accompanied by a Road Safety Audit and Traffic & Transport Assessment carried out by suitably competent consultants, which are assessed in association with their cumulative impact with neighbouring developments on the road network, in accordance with the requirements contained within the TII’s *Traffic & Transport Assessment Guidelines (PE-PDV-02045) 2014* (including any updated/superseding document) and ‘*Road Safety Audit*’ (GE-STY-01024) December 2017.”
- **GSST 50 Preservation of Routes, Road Upgrades and Infrastructure Provision:** “Prohibit development on lands which are reserved for proposed road/street corridors and associated buffers and where development would affect a route, line, level or layout of any proposed new roadway or any junction required between a proposed and existing road.”
- **GSST 51 Reservation of Access Points:** “Reserve access points for future development and the development of backlands that may be identified for reservation by the Planning Authority during the plan period, to ensure adequate vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access to backlands, in order to facilitate efficient development of these lands and to ensure connectivity and accessibility to lands with limited road frontage.”
- **GSST 52 Road Junction Improvements:** “Continue to carry out road junction improvements where improvements to traffic flow and safety can be achieved, subject to normal planning and environment considerations.”
- **GSST 53 Climate Change:** “Support and encourage sustainable compact growth and settlement patterns, integrated land use and low carbon transportation, and maximise opportunities through development location, form, layout and design to secure climate resilience and reduce carbon emissions.”

2.3.3 Gort Inse Guaire Town Centre First Plan

The Gort Town Centre First Plan 2023 sets out the key proposals and implementation strategy to realise the town’s potential and improve the economic vibrancy and liveability of the town. It was developed by the Gort Town Team to provide a locally informed plan for the town’s development that complies with national, regional and local policies and the lived experiences of residents.

The Plan focuses on strategic improvements that can be made to the town centre to improve its viability as a site for economic, community and social activities combatting its predominant use as a vehicle thoroughfare.



An extensive programme of public engagement identified challenges to the town centre developments that included the strong presence of vacant and derelict buildings, a poor pedestrian environment that lacks adequate crossing points, an absence of usable public space and a vehicle centric main street with parking for over 100 vehicles at Market Square. The views and ideas expressed during the engagement phase were reimagined into 10 Themes with detailed proposals and benefits to overcome the challenges identified. Each proposal identified within the plan has been given defined actions, indicative timeframes for completion and the key bodies (alongside the Town Team) that will drive them towards implementation and completion.

2.3.4 Gort Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement Project Proposals

The Gort Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement Project proposals were developed by a partnership of BDP, Gort Town Centre First Team and Galway County Council.

Through the completion of parking and traffic surveys and public consultations, a detailed analysis of how Market Square and the town centre was utilised was identified.

Findings indicated that weekday occupancy of the Market Square's 119 parking spaces did not exceed 77%, while Saturday afternoon was the busiest period with 91% occupancy.



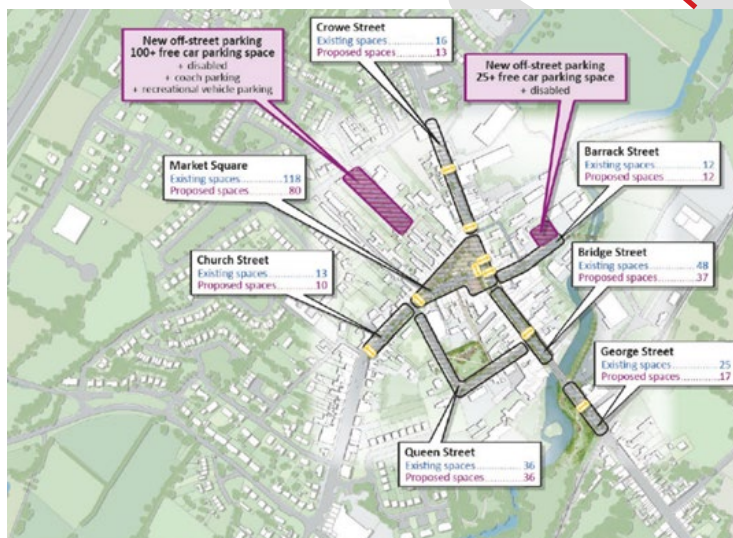
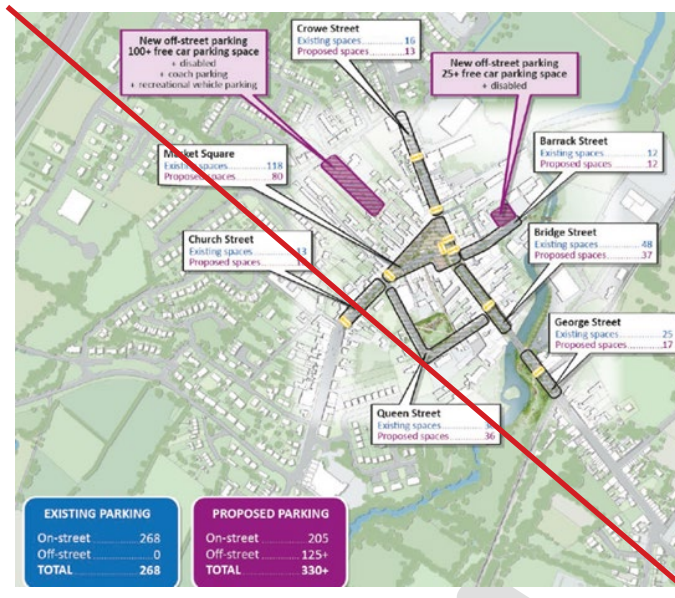
Typically, peak occupancy was between 1200 and 1600hrs, with 70% of vehicles parking within the allocated 2 hour time limit. Private vehicles constitute 90% of parked vehicles throughout the day with 1 – 8 light goods vehicles seen across various time slots. The parking survey highlighted that on-street occupancy in adjoining town centre streets averaged 55% over the same period.

It was identified that the current road layout and parking arrangements at the Market Square do not provide for safe pedestrian and cycle connectivity or adequate space for community events, such as the Friday Market, and was contributing to reduced footfall in the town and a loss of vibrancy.

The public realm design proposals aims to address these issues through alignment with the Town Centre First objectives to create a more liveable and accessible town.

The final proposal for the Market Square allows for an inclusive and flexible community focused space in the functioning heart of the town. This is achieved through the reduction of car parking spaces while making greater provision for age friendly and accessible bays.

The reconfiguration of the car parking and vehicular circulation provides an opportunity for a dedicated coach drop-off point for services such as the Local Link, school buses, and tour coaches.



The loss of parking on Market Square would be remediated through the reconfiguration of parking along streets which demonstrated lower occupancy, such as Church Street, and the construction of new off-street car parks on Barrack Street and Crowe Street. Lowry's Lane could provide direct pedestrian access from the Market Square to the proposed new car park on Crowe Street.

In addition, it is proposed to redistribute parking on the Square across a variety of types including free

15 minute parking bays, dedicated loading bays, coach parking and laybys. Furthermore the secondary car parking area directly opposite Barrack Street, which was the original location of the historic market square, will be enhanced to accommodate covered outdoor events to broaden the variety of community events which could be held in the town centre.

The proposal also includes the redesign of Canon Quinn Park to include all-age play areas, an amphitheatre, and a bandstand. Proposed improvements along Bridge Street would see the carriageway narrowed to facilitate additional spill out space for located premises with parallel parking intersected by parklets and new vegetation.

2.4 Summary

- A technical note comprising a policy review of international, national, regional, and county level policies and plans relevant to the studies in the Galway Transport Support Programme has been compiled and is available in **Appendix A**.
- Gort is classified as a self-sustaining town in the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028, with a high level of population growth.
- The draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031 aims for the town to be a sustainable, self-sufficient, vibrant and socially inclusive key town with development progressing in a way that consolidates around the town centre.
- The proposed Gort Town Centre First Plan and the Gort Public Realm Enhancement Project proposals aim to revitalise the town centre with an emphasis on prioritising accessibility to Market Square and creating an attractive and inclusive public space to increase footfall and facilitate
- Both the County Development Plan and draft Local Area Plan include policy objectives to promote the use of sustainable transport in place of the private car in the town including the provision of safe active travel infrastructure and facilities, appropriate traffic management, compact growth and improved public transport options and waiting facilities.

3. BASELINE ASSESSMENT

The following chapter provides an overview of the Baseline Assessment undertaken for the Gort LTP. The aim of the Baseline Assessment is to gain a clear understanding of the existing spatial characteristics, land uses, transport conditions and constraints relating to the Plan area.

3.1 Description of Study Area

The study area boundary for the Gort LTP was identified in collaboration with Galway County Council. It broadly aligns with the LAP boundary, containing the established town and surrounding areas earmarked for development and buffer zones. A ‘best-fit’ selection of Census Small Areas (CSAs) has been identified to form the study area for the purpose of undertaking baseline analyses of census data (utilising 2016 Census data).

Located approximately 45km to the south east of Galway City, the Gort study area had a population of 3,033 as of 2016 (Census 2016). The previous Census in 2011 put the population at 2,671, representing an increase of 14%. Based on the 2022 Census updates, the population of Gort is 2,870. This is a slight decrease from the 2016 figures due to changes in the CSO boundary for Gort. However, it is noted that the geographic definition of Gort as a settlement changed from the 2016 to the 2022 Census – based on the comparative analysis of settlement size, in real terms, the population of Gort is 3,144 inhabitants based on the settlement boundaries in the 2016 Census. This represents 5.4% population growth in real terms from the 2016 Census.³

Gort hosts 1,428 jobs, benefitting from a well-established road network. The M18 links Gort to the national strategic road network, with onward connections to Galway City, Ballinasloe, Tuam, Athenry, Athlone and Dublin. The town is served by the regional roads R360, R458 and R460 connecting to Loughrea, Oranmore and Ennis. Gort railway station is located south east of the town centre, with services on the Galway-Limerick line.

The town of Gort serves a rural hinterland as a market town and service centre. It serves a particularly large education catchment, with over 1,700 school places in Gort. The main attraction of the town is Market Square and the medieval town core.

3.1.1 Trip Generators & Attractors

To present the concentration of local trip generators and attractors in Gort, maps of the town’s distribution of population and employment density by 2016 Census Small Area have been generated and are shown below in Figure 3-1 and Figure 3-2.

The analysis has been derived from Census Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS) data along with 2016 Place of Work, School or College - Census of Anonymised Records (POWSCAR) data. The POWSCAR database includes a range of information on travel patterns for trips to work and school as recorded in the Census⁴. This data was used to identify the total number of destination work trips for each of the Census Small Areas (CSAs) within the Gort LTP study area.

³ [The Plan – Gort Town Centre First Plan](#)

⁴ Further information on POWSCAR is available on the CSO website at: <https://www.cso.ie/en/census/census2016reports/powscar/>

3.1.2 Population

The population density for CSAs within the Gort study area (represented as population per square kilometre) are illustrated in **Figure 3-1**. The areas of Gort with the highest population density are located to the west and north west of the town centre, alongside the R458 and R460 corridors.

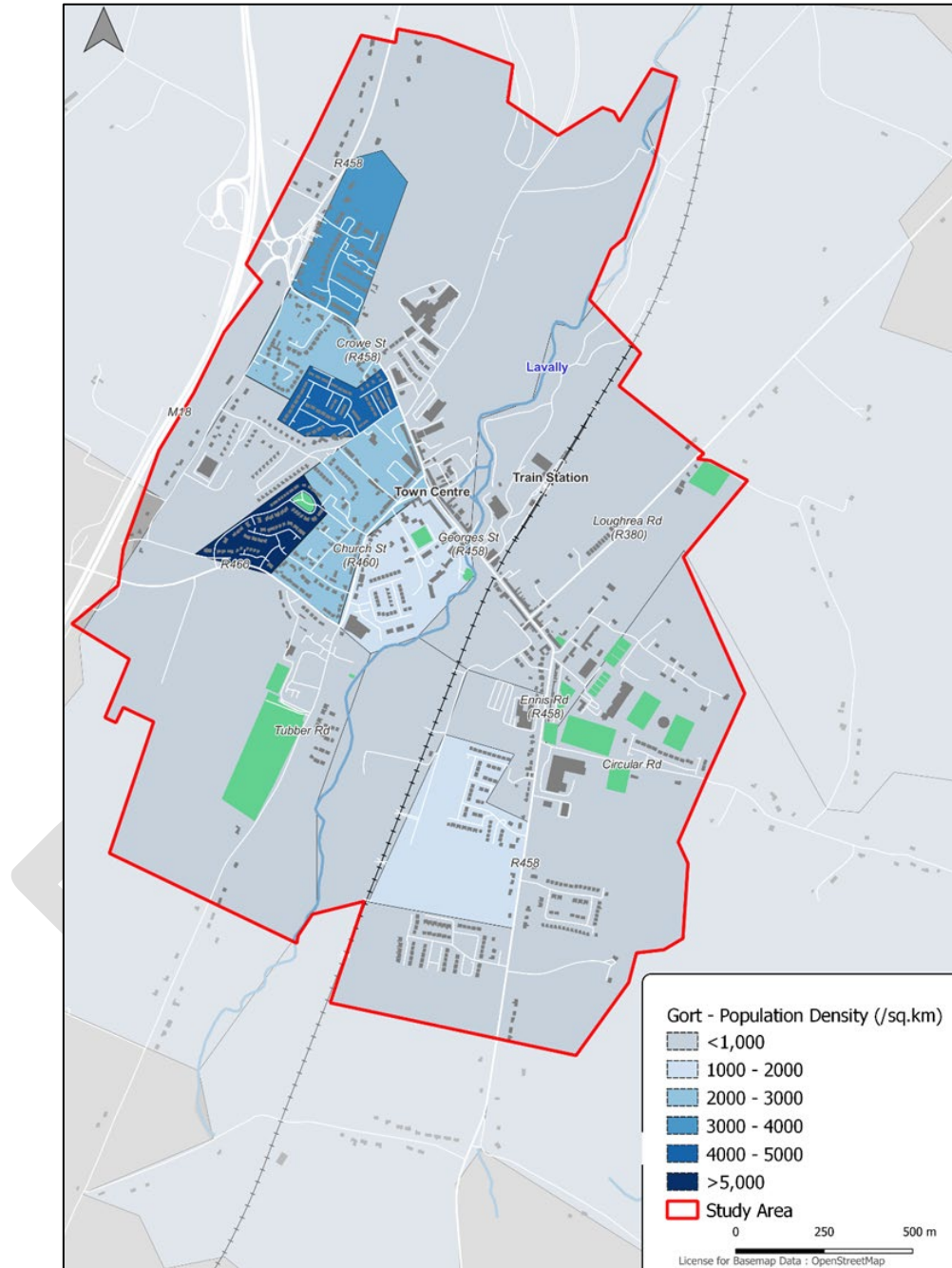


Figure 3-1: Gort Population Density

3.1.3 Employment

The employment density for CSAs within the Gort study area (represented as jobs per square kilometre) is illustrated in **Figure 3-2**. It demonstrates that the town centre is the largest attractor of employment trips within the study area.

Other significant employment sites include the Lidl supermarket immediately north of the town centre and the SuperValu supermarket to the south.

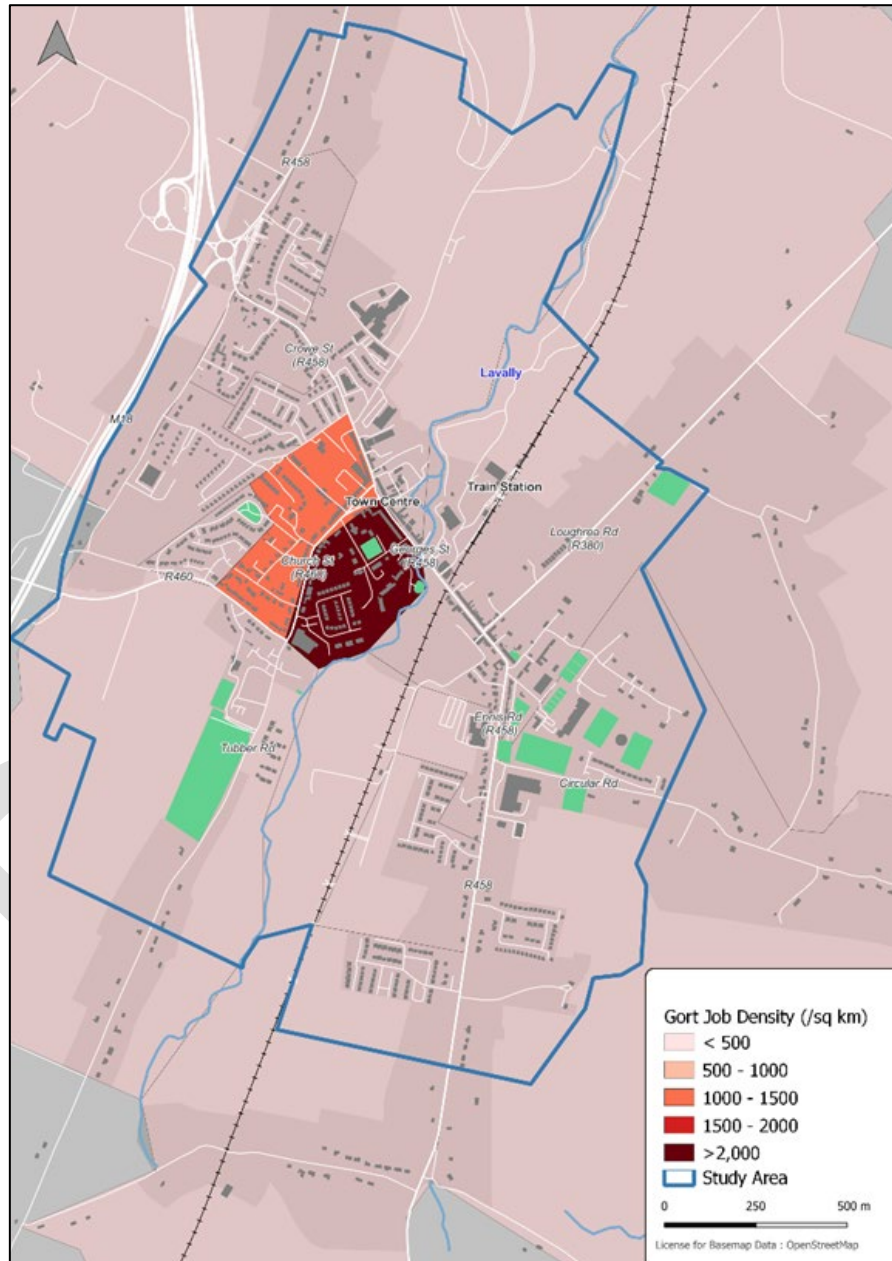


Figure 3-2: Gort Employment Density

3.1.4 Services & Amenities

The location of key services and amenities within Gort are presented in **Figure 3-3**.

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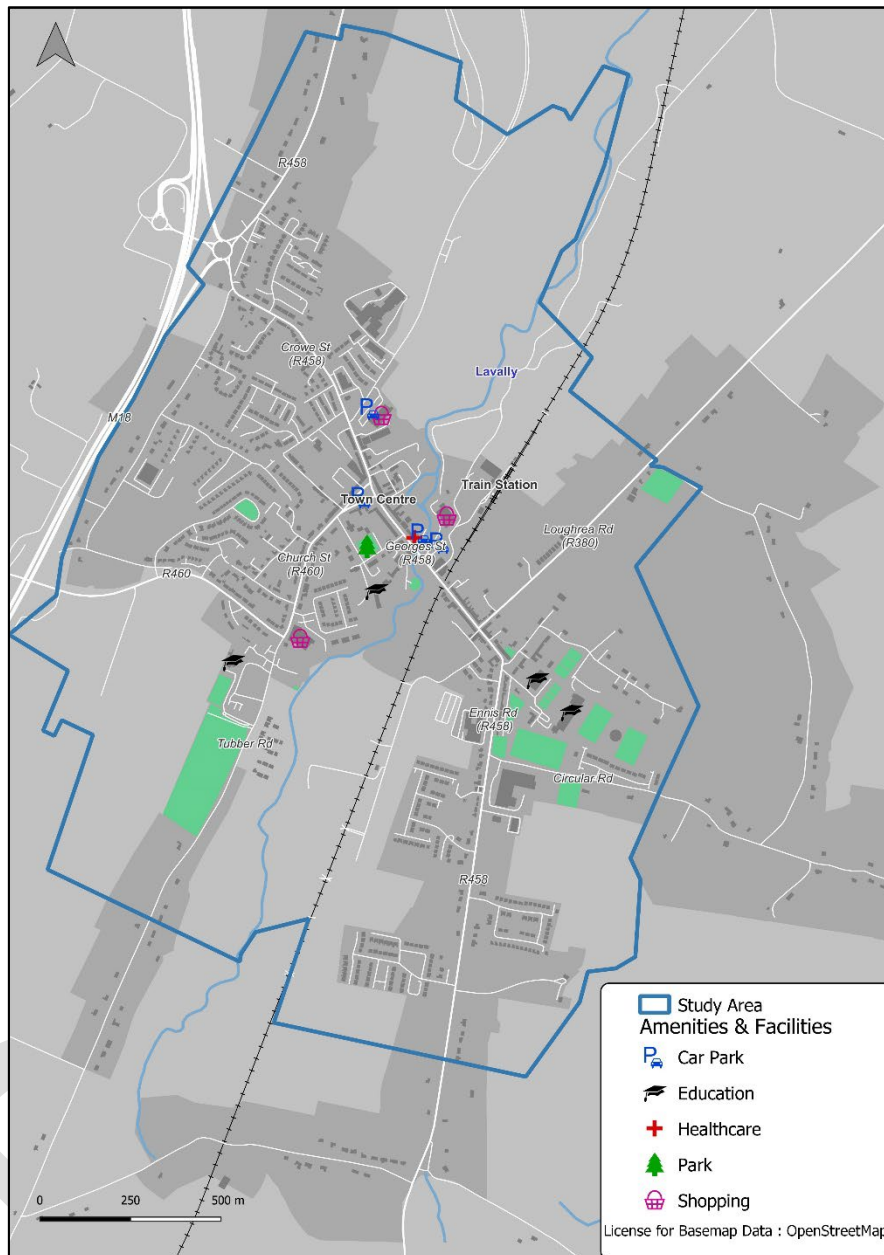


Figure 3-3: Gort Services & Amenities

A concentration of services and amenities within the town centre is noted, including the main retail-oriented streets, library, and St Coleman's Church.

The rail station is located on Station Road to the east of the town centre.

Two primary schools are located within Gort. Gort National School (primary) is located off the Tubber Road to the south west of the town centre. Gaelscoil na bhFilí is located off Ennis Road to the south east of the town centre. The town's only secondary school (Gort Community School, serving approximately 1,000 pupils) is also located off the Ennis Road.

Three supermarkets are located within the study area. Lidl is located off Crowe Street immediately north east of the town centre, Aldi is located off Station Road immediately to the east and Super Valu is located off Church Street to the south. Substantial parking facilities are available at all three facilities for customers.

The main council-operated car park in Gort is located north of Market Square, in the heart of the town centre.

3.2 Demographic Profile

3.2.1 Overview

To better understand the profile of residents in the Gort LTP study area, and their travel patterns, this section presents data extracted from the 2016 Census Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS) dataset. It summarises information on the proportion of residents travelling to work and school, as well as high level information on age, gender, and car ownership.

3.2.2 Total Population

As shown in **Table 3-1** below, the Study area has an estimated population of 3,033 according to the 2016 Census⁵. This represents a population growth of 14% compared to the 2011 Census (2,671), which is a higher growth rate than seen nationally (3.8%). The GCDP 2022-2028 targets a population increase of 800 persons for Gort during the plan period.

The age profile of residents in Gort is outlined in **Table 3-1**. The analysis indicates that the Gort LTP study area has a lower proportion of residents over the age of 65 than both the Galway County Area and the national average. Within the study area, 22.9% of the population are under the age of 15, a slightly lower proportion than for Galway County and slightly higher than the national figure.

Table 3-1: Population Age Structure Comparison

| LOCATION | POPULATION 2016 | 0-15 | 16-64 | 65+ |
|---------------|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Gort | 3,033 | 22.9% | 64.3% | 12.8% |
| Galway County | 179,390 | 24.0% | 61.4% | 14.5% |
| National | 4,761,865 | 22.4% | 64.2% | 13.4% |

3.2.3 Employment & Education

The number of employed people and number of jobs within the study area are outlined in **Table 3-2**. As can be seen below, the number of jobs is higher than the number of employed people, resulting in a Job Attraction/Employed ratio of 0.86. This compares to a ratio of 1.2 for Galway City and 0.5 for the rest of Galway County. The ratio in the study area results in a slight net flow of employed people from the study area for work.

Table 3-2 also outlines the number of education attractions within Gort. With 1,708 students commuting to schools within the study area, compared to 1,428 workers and a study area population of 3,033 it shows the prevalence of school trips entering the area.

⁵ As outlined in Section 3.1, the Gort LTP study area broadly aligns with the LAP boundary but has been derived from a 'best-fit' selection of Census Small Areas to facilitate ease of analysis of baseline Census data.

Table 3-2: Employment Opportunities & Education Attraction Comparison

| LOCATION | EMPLOYED RESIDENTS | JOB ATTRACTION | RATIO | PUPILS / STUDENTS |
|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------|-------|-------------------|
| Gort | 1,270 | 1,085 | 0.86 | 1,708 |
| Galway City | 34,951 | 42,062 | 1.20 | 25,494 |
| Rest of Galway County | 75,116 | 37,325 | 0.50 | 33,068 |

3.3 Environmental Conditions & Physical Constraints

There are a number of physical constraints to transport in the study area. The major environmental and physical constraint to travel through the study area is the rail line and Gort River which run roughly alongside each other in a north-south direction through the study area. This constraint, which can be seen in the figure below, causes considerable severance for travel east-west with only one main crossing provided on George's Street (with bridges over the river and under the railway line provided). For example, to get from the Tubber Road to the Ennis Road, the only route is through the centre of the town via George's Street.

In terms of topography, which can be a barrier to active travel in particular cycling, the town is generally flat. Some elevation is noted moving east from George's Street into the school campus off Ennis Road. This flat nature of the town therefore is beneficial to active travel.

A review of the Archaeological Survey of Ireland shows that there are a notable number of entries in Gort on the Sites and Monuments Record and the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. These are largely concentrated in Market Square, in particular on the west side of the square.

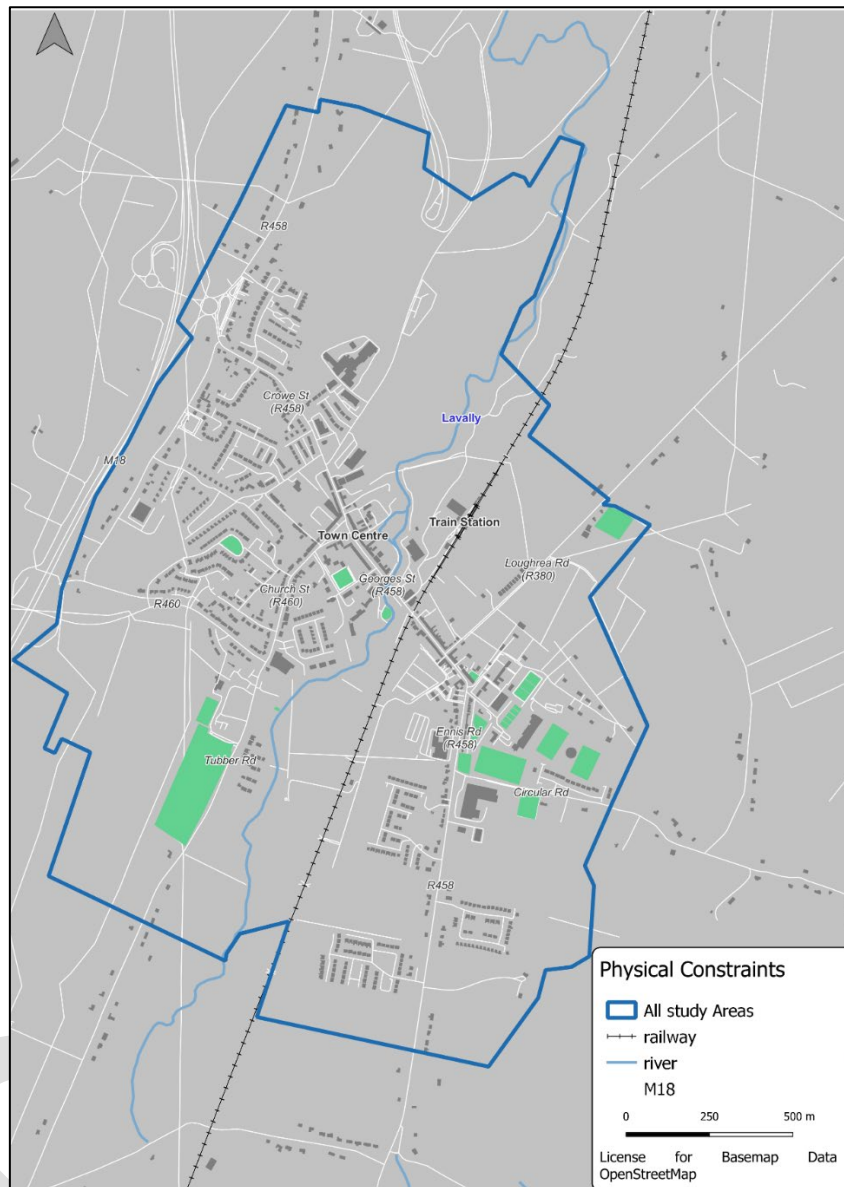


Figure 3-4: Physical and Environmental Constraints

3.4 Existing Travel Patterns

3.4.1 Introduction

The following section provides an overview of existing travel patterns for residents within the study area based on 2016 Census data, focusing on:

- **Trip Distribution Profile:** Identifying the key destinations and desire lines for travel,
- **Mode Share:** Highlights the proportion of trips undertaken by walking, cycling, public transport and car for employment and education purposes.

- **Trip Length Distribution:** Outlining the demand for travel at various distance bands for employment trips. This also includes information on the various modes used for different journey distances.

In order to determine the travel pattern for residents, two main Census data sources were used, namely:

- **Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS):** provides information on population demographics including details on commuting patterns such as mode used, typical journey times and time of departure.
- **Place of Work, School or College – Census of Anonymised Records (POWSCAR):** includes a range of information on travel patterns for trips to work and school as recorded in the Census.

3.4.2 Trip Distribution Profile

The POWSCAR database was analysed to identify the distribution of employment trips travelling to/from the study area in the AM period. Results are presented in the tables below.

Table 3-3: Trip Pattern Summary

| TRIP TYPE | TRIP PURPOSE | NUMBER OF TRIPS |
|---|--------------|-----------------|
| Internal trips within the Study Area | Work | 343 (48%) |
| | School | 370 (52%) |
| | All | 713 |
| Inbound trips from outside towards the Study Area | Work | 1,186 (70%) |
| | School | 500 (30%) |
| | All | 1,686 |
| Outbound trips from the study area | Work | 856 (77%) |
| | School | 256 (23%) |
| | All | 1,112 |

The table above shows the trip distribution for AM employment trips to and from the study area. 713 trips that do not leave the study area. This represents 39% of all trips originating in the study area, with 61% (1,112 trips) leaving the study area. 1,686 trips are inbound trips from outside the study area.

For more detailed results of the geographic distribution of trips to/from the study area, surrounding areas have been grouped into sectors. Insofar as possible, these sectors have been designed to align with the main transport corridors to/from Gort. For example, trips to/from the “north” and “south” sectors will mainly be along the M18 or Western Rail Corridor.

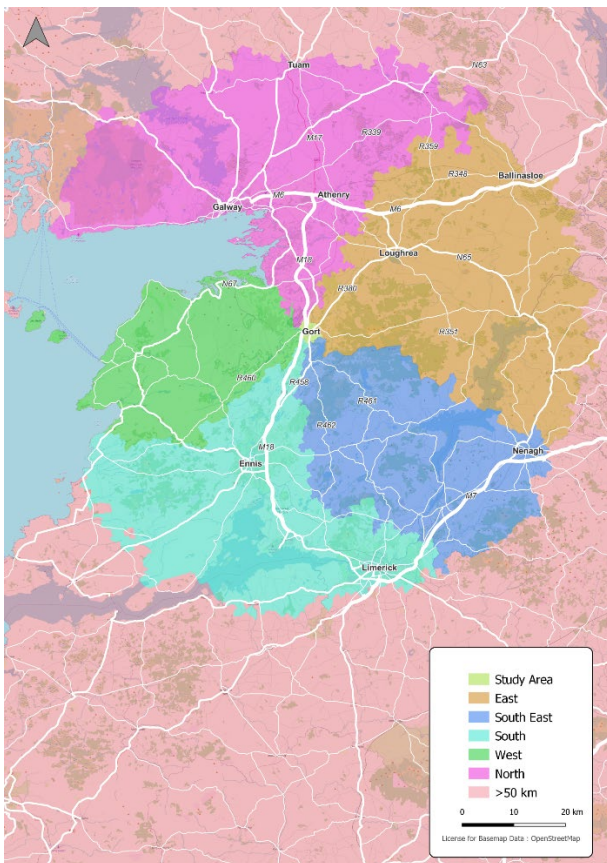


Figure 3-5: POWSCAR Sector map

Table 3-4: Destination Gort Origin Trips

| DESTINATION | WORK | EDUCATION | TOTAL | % |
|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| Study Area | 343 | 370 | 713 | 39% |
| East | 72 | 28 | 100 | 5% |
| South East | 16 | 14 | 30 | 2% |
| South | 132 | 20 | 152 | 8% |
| West | 66 | 36 | 102 | 6% |
| North | 506 | 126 | 632 | 35% |
| > 50 km | 64 | 32 | 96 | 5% |
| Total | 1,199 | 626 | 1,825 | 100% |

Table 3-5: Origin of Gort Destination Trips

| ORIGIN | WORK | EDUCATION | TOTAL | % |
|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| Study Area | 343 | 370 | 713 | 30% |
| East | 313 | 153 | 466 | 19% |
| South East | 102 | 73 | 175 | 7% |
| South | 168 | 40 | 208 | 9% |
| West | 162 | 86 | 248 | 10% |
| North | 391 | 144 | 535 | 22% |
| > 50 km | 50 | 4 | 54 | 2% |
| Total | 1,529 | 870 | 2,399 | 100% |

Key findings

As can be seen in the tables above, while 39% of combined work/education trips start and end in the study area, this breaks down to 59% of Gort origin education trips and 29% of Gort origin work trips.

Almost 71% of work trips originating in the study area have external destinations. The most significant external destination for trips from the study area is the northern sector, which encompasses Galway City, with 510 work trips and 636 total trips. 43% of work commute trips and 35% of combined work/education trips from the study area are headed north in the direction of Galway City and the surrounding area.

Given that the “south” sector is the third most significant attractor of trips from Gort after internal trips and the “north” sector, the M18 and Western Rail Corridor are clearly the most important travel corridors for work and education trips leaving the study area. All other sectors have relatively small volumes of trips from the study area, between 2%-7% of combined work and education trips.

For trips travelling to the Study Area, the travel patterns are more varied. Internal trips within the Study Area represent 30% of combined work and school related travel to Gort. Roughly equal numbers of trips come from the surrounding east sector (19%), which includes Loughrea and Ballinasloe, and the north sector (22%) which covers Galway City, Athenry and Tuam. These results mean the M18/Western Rail Corridor is of particular importance to inbound trips, in addition to the R380 corridor towards Loughrea.

The remaining sectors share relatively small volumes of trips, similar to outbound trips, with between 7% and 10% of inbound trips originating in the south, south-east and west sectors. Few trips (60) originate more than 50km from Gort.

3.5 Mode Share

SAPS data provides information from the Census on the typical mode of transport used for travelling to work and education. This data was used to identify the proportion of trips originating within the study area which are made by walking, cycling, public transport and car.

3.5.1 Employment Trips

The figure below illustrates the mode share for trips to work originating within the study area by walking, cycling, public transport and car (including drivers, passengers, vans and lorries). It also compares the study area mode share to the Galway County average as a whole, Galway City and nationally.

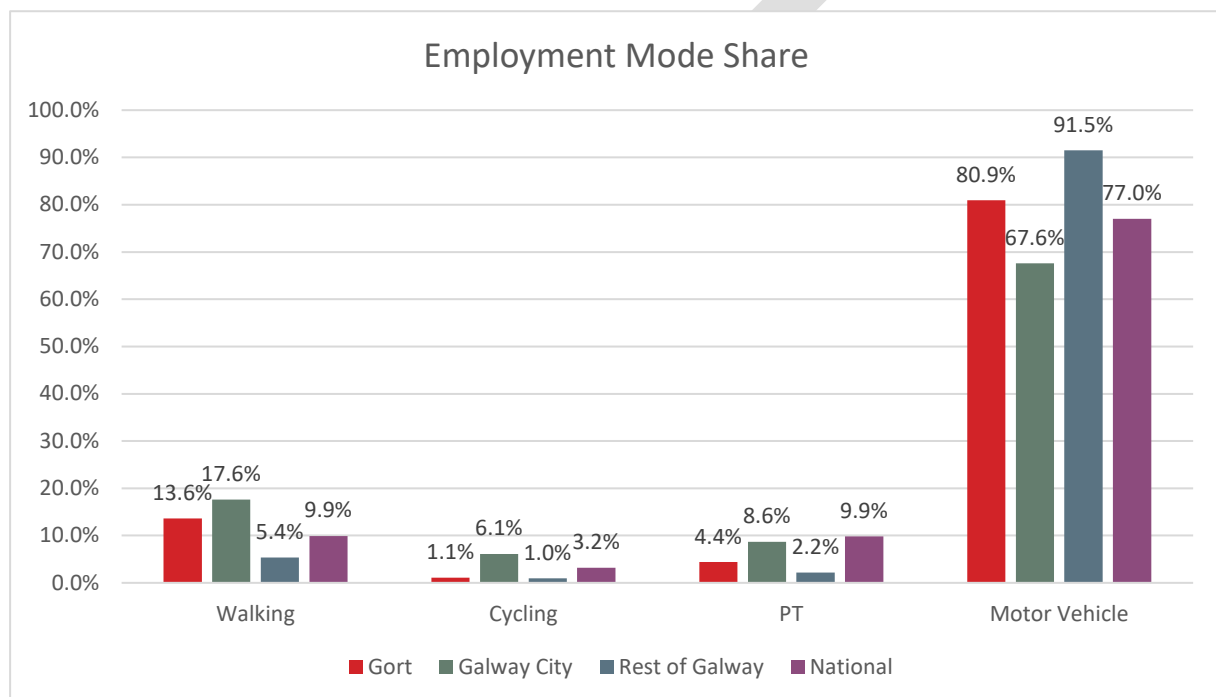


Figure 3-6: Employment Mode Share

Key findings observed from the mode share data for employment trips in the study area include:

- 14.7% of commute trips originating in the study area are undertaken by active modes. Walking trips form the majority of the active mode trips at 13.6% and are higher than the national average of 9.9%. Cycling totals at 1.1%, falling below the national average of 3.2% but in line with the largely rural Galway County area (with Galway city excluded).
- Public transport represents only 4.4% of commute trips from the study area, lower than the national average of 9.9%, but double the County average of 2.2%.
- The private car is the dominant mode of transport for work trips from the study area at 80.9%, higher than the national average of 77.0%. The commute car mode share is however lower than the county average of 91.5%.

3.5.2 Education Trips

Figure 3-7 below illustrates the mode share for trips to education originating within the study area.

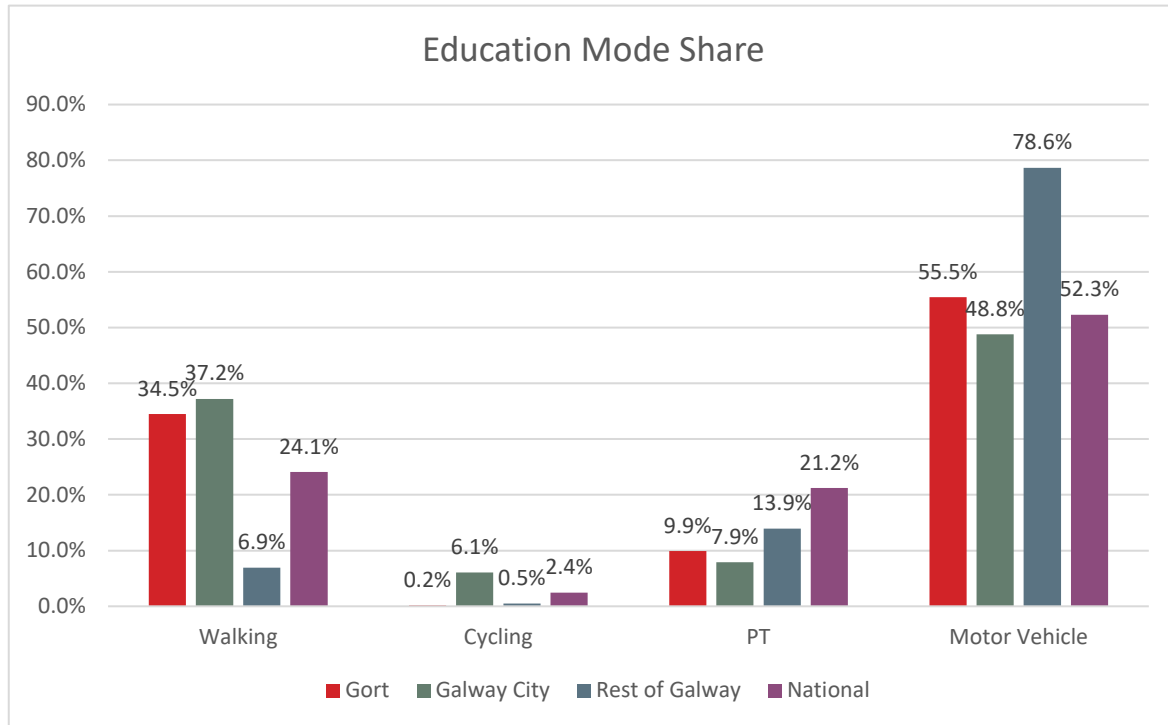


Figure 3-7: Education Mode Share

The key findings from the mode share data for education trips are listed below.

- The overall mode share for walking to education is 34.7%, higher than the national average (26.5%), and significantly higher than the county average of 6.9%.
- The study area cycling mode share of 0.2% is well below the national average of 2.4%, and also below the City and County averages.
- The study area public transport mode share is 9.9%, below that of the county average of 13.9% and national average of 21.2%.
- Overall, the car is still the dominant mode of transport for education-related trips, accounting for 55.5% of all journeys, compared to 52.3% nationally.
- Car trips are predominantly concentrated in areas further from Gort schools. However, there are still a sizeable number of car trips within the study area that are within a reasonable walk or cycle of the destination school.

3.6 Trip Length Distribution

Analysis was undertaken to determine the trip length distribution by mode for education purposes from 2016 POWSCAR data. This was used to establish the typical trip lengths, and modes used, for journeys by residents of the study area and help identify where opportunities might exist to further support a shift away from the private car and onto sustainable modes.

The trip length distribution by mode for all education trips travelling to schools within the study area is outlined in **Figure 3-8**.

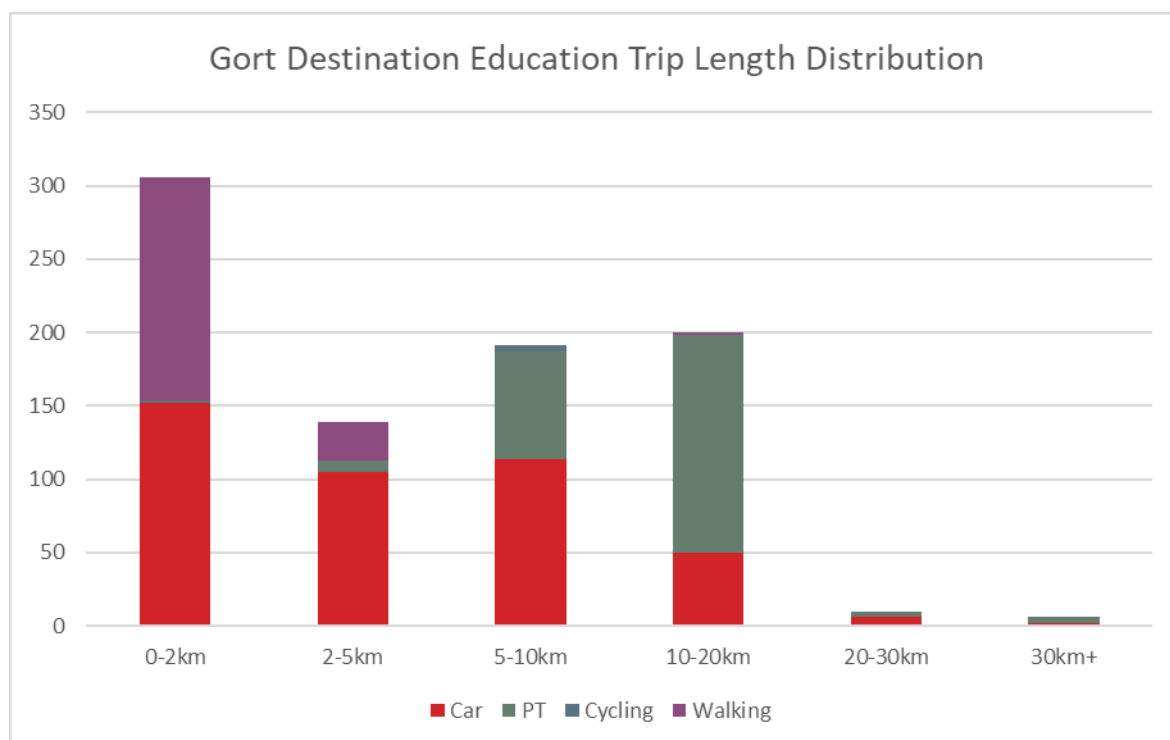


Figure 3-8: Education Trip Length Distribution, by Mode [POWSCAR, 2016]

Key findings:

- Approximately half of the shortest distance (<2km) education trips are made by private car.
- A minimal number of education trips are made by bike, across all distance categories.
- There are a significant number (216) education trips longer than 10km coming to Gort, the majority of which arrive by public transport (72%).
- Over half of the education trips to schools in Gort are shorter than 5km in length.

There is a general association between trip length and mode choice. For example, at shorter distances the average person may be willing to walk or cycle to access goods, services or employment. However, as trip lengths increase, these modes become less attractive.

Similarly, short distance trips by public transport may be unattractive compared to alternative modes as the wait time would be a significant proportion of overall journey time.

In terms of distance, trips can be broken down into:

- Short – generally serviceable by walking or cycling.
- Medium – generally serviceable by cycling (including eBikes), public transport or car.
- Long – generally serviceable by public transport or car.

The significant proportion of education trips in Gort under 10km, and particularly under 5km and 2km, provides an opportunity to shift car trips to active travel given the right package of measures.

For trips over 10km, public transport options may be competitive to the car for certain trips patterns. Insofar as is practicable, a public transport option should be provided for these longer trips for social equity reasons even where journey time competitiveness is challenging.

3.7 Access to Education (ATOS Tool)

3.7.1 Introduction to ATOS

Access to Opportunities and Services (ATOS) is a measure of how easy it is to access key services and employment by walking and cycling. In developing the ATOS tool, the National Transport Authority (NTA) have followed a methodology established by Transport for London and adapted it to make it more suitable for use outside of large metropolitan areas.

The ATOS tool has been run for access to primary and post-primary schools within the study area by walking and cycling. For this analysis, the defined criteria was the ability to access any primary school (at least one) and any post-primary school within a 15 minute walk and 15 minute cycle. The scoring for each grid is then determined by how the travel time compares to the average travel time for all squares that have access to a primary/post-primary school within the specified timeframes.

It should be noted again that the score is calculated based on how travel times to the nearest relevant destinations (for the specific type of service) compared to the average travel time across all locations in the study area. The score is comparative, measuring where accessibility is higher and lower than the mean in the study area, rather than an objective score of the levels of accessibility.

The figures below present the ATOS results for accessibility to schools in Gort by walking, with analysis, first and then cycling.

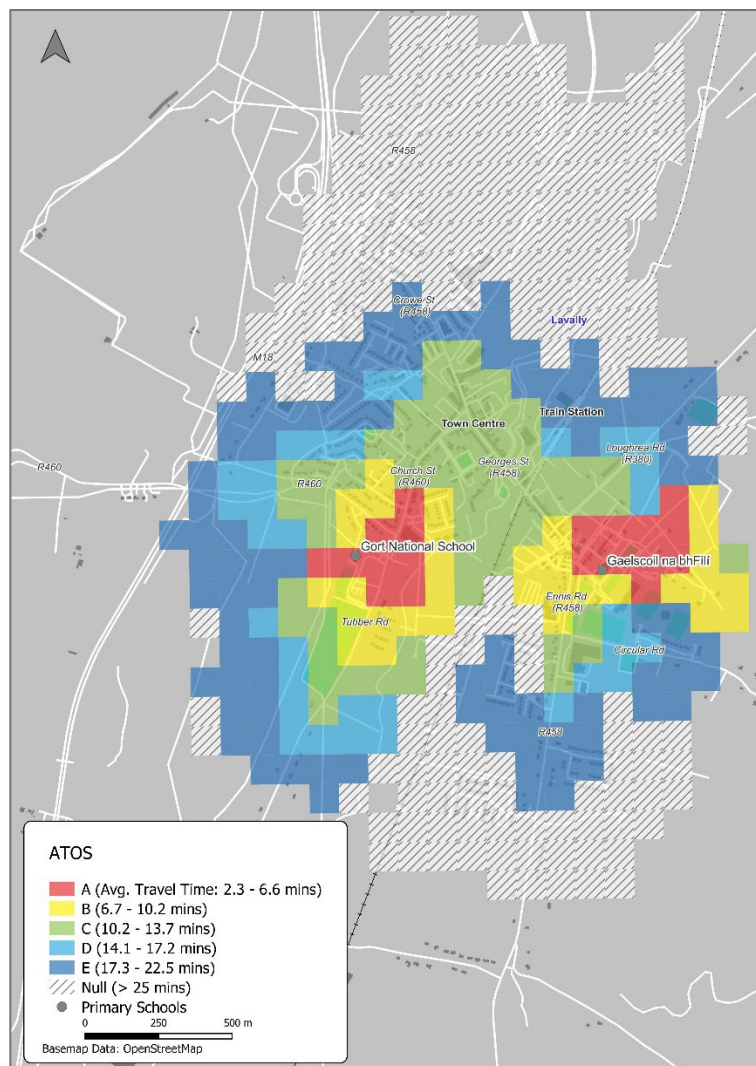


Figure 3-9: Access to Primary Schools (Walk)

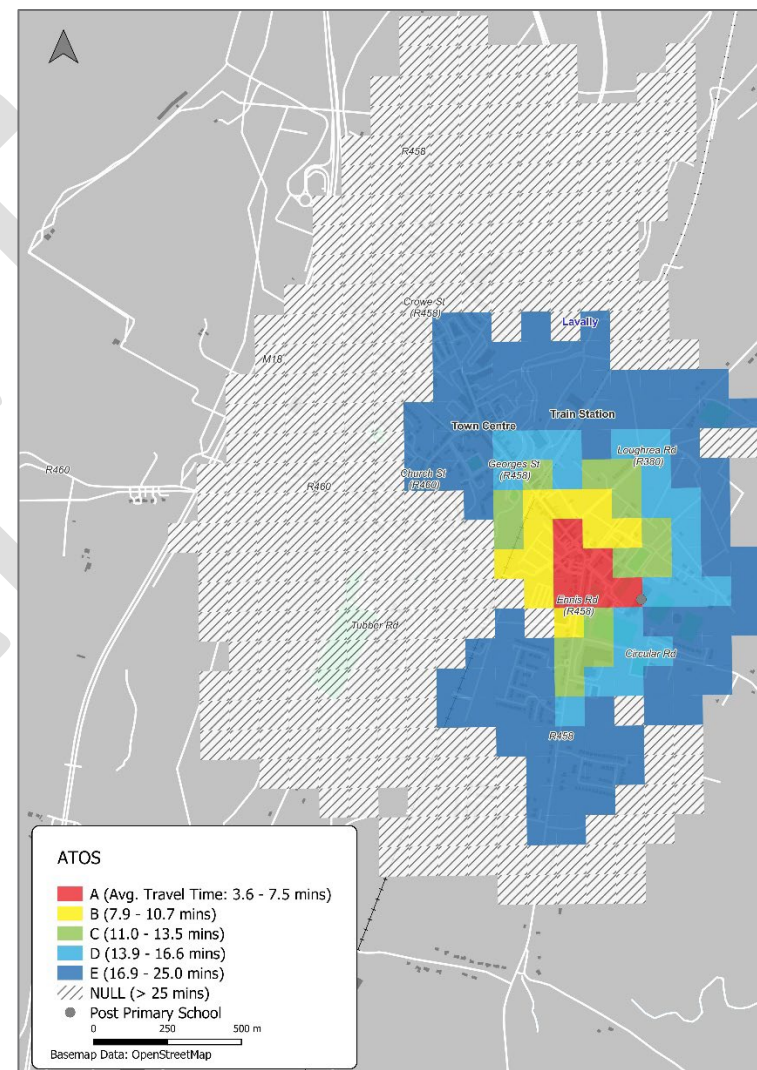


Figure 3-10: Access to Post Primary Schools (Walk)

The ATOS results for walking to school in Gort shows reasonable levels of accessibility in the town centre for both primary and secondary schools. The relatively poor level of permeability between housing estates and main roads is evident however, with a relatively quick transition from areas with A ratings to areas with C, D or E ratings in the vicinity of schools in the study area. For primary schools, the presence of two schools in the town creates good accessibility in the town. The vast majority of residential development in the town is within a 15-minute walk of a primary school (ATOS score or at least E).

For post-primary schools (Gort Community School), housing in the west of the study area are too far from the easterly located school off the Ennis Road to reach in a 15-minute walk. The poor permeability, lack of connections to Rinn Dúin development, Bóthar na hInse and the Loughrea Road reduce the total catchment and area with A, B and C scores.

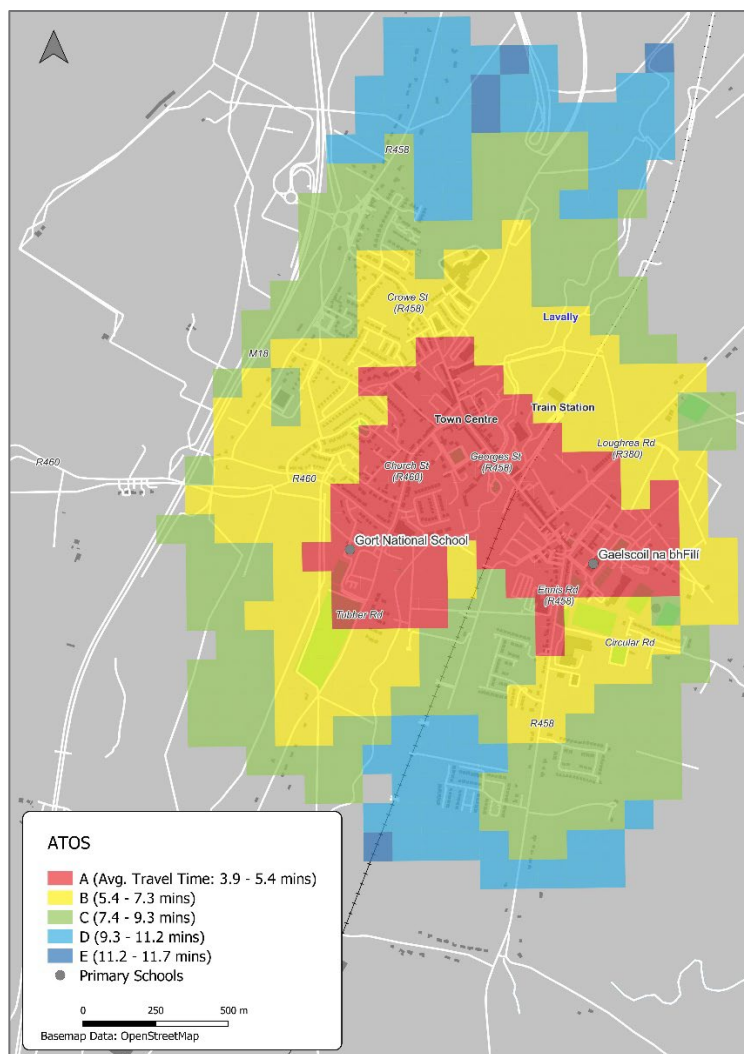


Figure 3-11: Access to Primary Schools (Cycle)

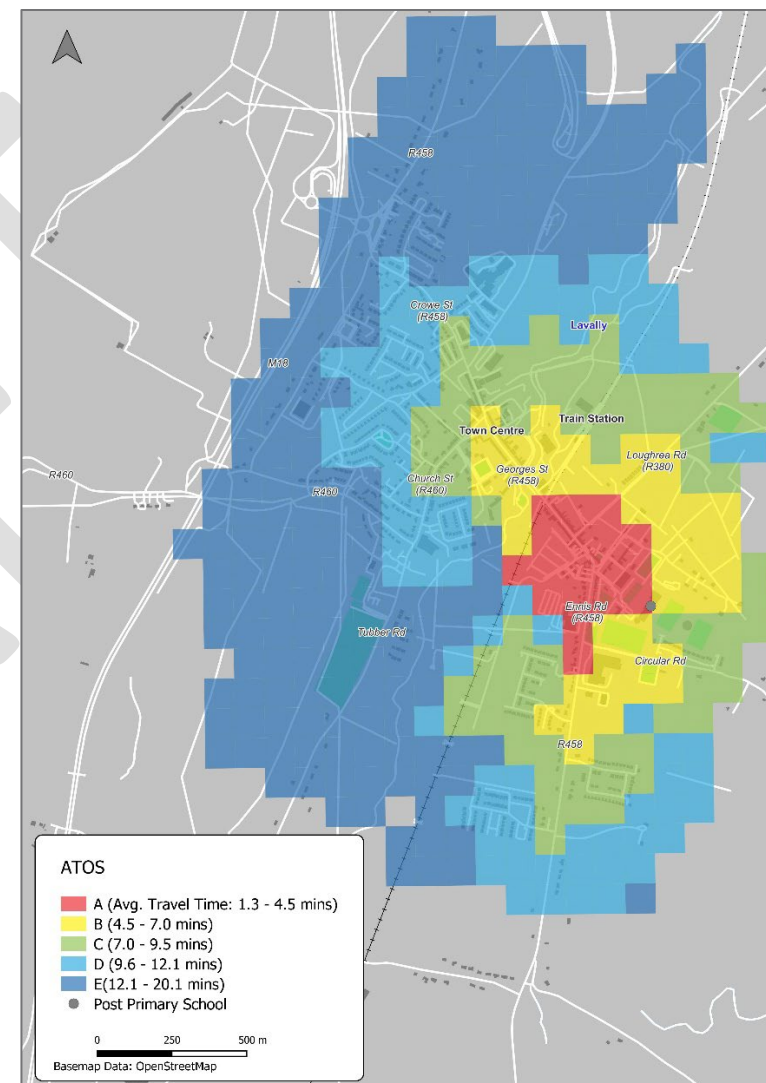


Figure 3-12: Access to Post Primary Schools (Cycle)

The increased distances that can be covered by cycling are evident in the total increase in 15-minute catchment for access to both primary and secondary schools compared to walking, and the much greater area that gets achieves an A-C rating. For access to primary schools, the good coverage provided by the locations of the two national schools is evidenced by nearly the entire study area receiving an A-C score. While the entire study area is within a 15-minute cycle of Gort Community School, there is a comparatively much smaller area with an A-C score. However, the large area with an E score is more sparsely populated than the areas with higher scores. Overall, the town's only secondary school is very accessible by bike to most residential areas in the town

The much higher levels of access by cycling than walking to schools in the study area shows the potential of cycling in Gort to provide great levels of access without the need to drive.

3.8 Existing Transport Infrastructure & Services

3.8.1 Walking Network

An analysis of the walking network in Gort has been undertaken involving both a desktop review and site visit. Key areas, including both strengths and weaknesses are highlighted in Figure 3-13 below.

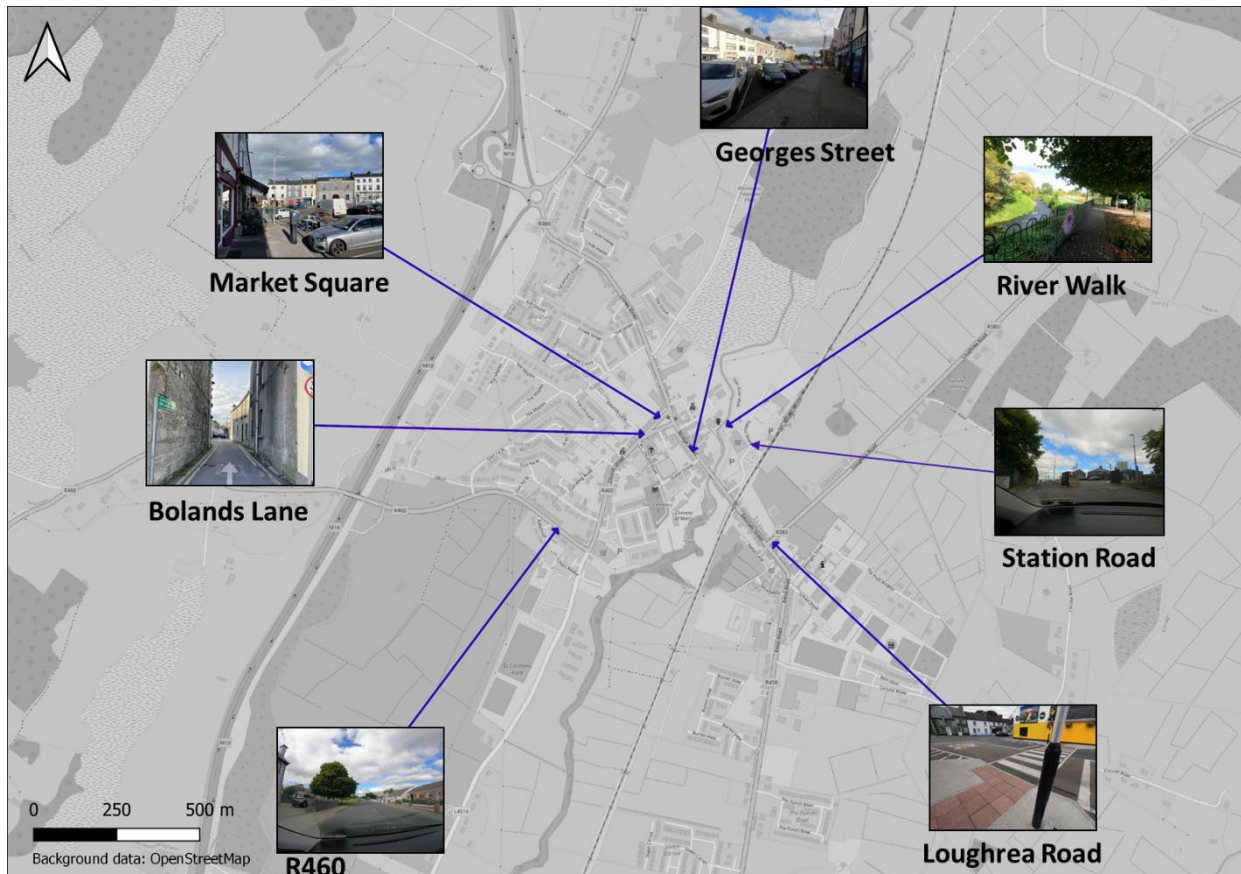


Figure 3-13: Highlighted Sections of Walking Infrastructure in Gort

The quality of pedestrian infrastructure in Gort is varied. The footways on the principal routes in and around the town centre are generally of acceptable width on both sides of the road with the exception of a few key pinch points. At pinch points, car travel is usually prioritised over pedestrian infrastructure, contradicting the modal hierarchy in DMURS.

There are a number of routes where footpaths are narrow or disappear completely, both in the town centre area and in residential neighbourhoods. In the town centre, no footways are present on Bolands Lane and Slipper Street due to the narrow width of both roads. No footways are present on the section of R460 fronted by residential properties between Ballyhugh and Dun Na Ri, nor at a corner of Glenbrack Road from Gort na Rí westwards.

It is noted that the rail line route causes a degree of severance to walking trips to/from the south east residential areas and schools, with Georges Street providing the only paved route across within the town. The footways on Georges Street were observed to be of adequate width on both sides. It is

noted that a small railway underbridge exists approximately 100 metres south of Georges Street, providing a future potential opportunity for additional active travel routes in the future.

Outside of main roads and streets, the residential areas north of the town centre suffer from poor permeability in places, particularly in an east-west direction – see example in **Figure 3-14** below. This can significantly increase walking distances to key services for residents in the town.



Figure 3-14: Permeability block in Gort (1km walk for 50m crow fly distance)

Throughout the study area there are limited formal crossing facilities, with the exception of signalised crossings on each of the three main approaches to Market Square. This results in a low level of service for pedestrians with mobility or visual impairments. It is however noted that a zebra crossing has been recently installed across Loughrea Road, at the junction with Georges Street, shown below.



Figure 3-15: Loughrea Road Zebra Crossing

The pedestrian links between the town centre and train station are considered to be of poor quality, in particular the section of route between the station and Georges Street. A narrow footway is provided on only one side of Station Road, with no crossing facilities present on Georges Street to access Station Road. A section of off-road footway is provided from Station Road to the station, providing a dedicated route for pedestrians to access the rail station. The junction of Georges Street and Station Road is shown in **Figure 3-16** below.



Figure 3-16: Junction of Georges Street & Station Road

The pedestrian links between Georges Street and Gort Community School and Gaelscoil na bhFilí are currently deemed to be of low quality. Railings restrict the width of both footways which ends at the entrance to the school car park, requiring those walking to the site to share the road with vehicles

parking in order to access the entrance. No signage indicating pedestrian priority in the car park was observed.



Figure 3-17: Gort Community School, Gort Community Centre and Gaelscoil na bhFilí Car Park Area

In addition, it is noted that Gort Community School has received planning permission for a large extension and other changes to their grounds (Ref: 24/0005), including improving facilities for pedestrians.

The Gort River Walk is a primarily leisure-oriented pedestrian route following the route of the Gort River. It is noted that the section of route between the Aldi supermarket and Station Road has been recently upgraded, with a high quality footpath provided as shown in **Figure 3-18**.



Figure 3-18: Gort River Walk Route – Recently Upgraded Section

3.8.2 Cycling Network

There is currently no formal cycle route infrastructure in Gort. Existing proposals for cycling infrastructure investment in Gort have been analysed, along with the development of potential new cycling options, during the Options Development and Assessment stages of the LTP.

There are limited cycle parking facilities within Gort. Sheffield stands are provided in the station forecourt area, ~~however no~~ with some formal cycle parking facilities ~~were~~ observed in the town centre (near the Weighhouse).

3.8.3 Public Transport

Rail Network

Gort rail station is located on the Limerick to Athenry rail line providing direct connections to both of these settlements as well as intermediary towns along the line, and onward connections to Galway City and Dublin via Athenry.

The table below outlines the daily services to/from Gort:

Table 3-6: Gort Rail Services

| ROUTE | MAX NUMBER OF SERVICES (MONDAY – FRIDAY) | MAX NUMBER OF WEEKEND SERVICES (SATURDAY) |
|-------------------|---|--|
| Limerick - Galway | 5 | 5 |
| Galway - Limerick | 5 | 5 |

The station is located to the east of the town centre, with access via Station Road. A footpath runs directly to the station from Station Road, approximately 70m north east of the junction with Georges Street.

Cycle links to the rail station are considered to be poor, with no dedicated infrastructure, and the front of station treatment aiming to maximise ease of car drop offs and parking. Cycle parking is provided at the station entrance.

Bus Network

The bus services and routes currently operating in Gort are outlined in Figure 3-19. Four routes serve the town, all of which call at a pair of bus stops located on Crowe Street adjacent to Market Square.

Bus Éireann route 51 provides an hourly service in each direction on the Galway City to Cork route, seven days a week, with route 434 providing one additional return service to Galway City on Fridays. Bus Éireann also operates a Friday return service to Scariff.

TFI Local Link route 934 runs three return services a day to Loughrea. This route is complemented by a once-weekly return service to Loughrea on Friday also operated by TFI Local Link. This is a door to door, advance booking service and times vary depending on pick-ups.

The bus routes and frequencies serving Gort are detailed in the table below.

Table 3-7: Gort Bus Routes

| ROUTE | OPERATOR | MAX NUMBER OF WEEKDAY SERVICES | MAX NUMBER OF WEEKEND SERVICES |
|-------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 51 (Galway – Limerick - Cork) | Bus Eireann | 14 | 14 |
| 349 (Gort – Scariff) | Bus Eireann | 1 | 0 |
| 434 (Galway – Gort) | Bus Eireann | 1 | 0 |
| 934 (Gort – Loughrea) | TFI Local Link | 3 | 0 |

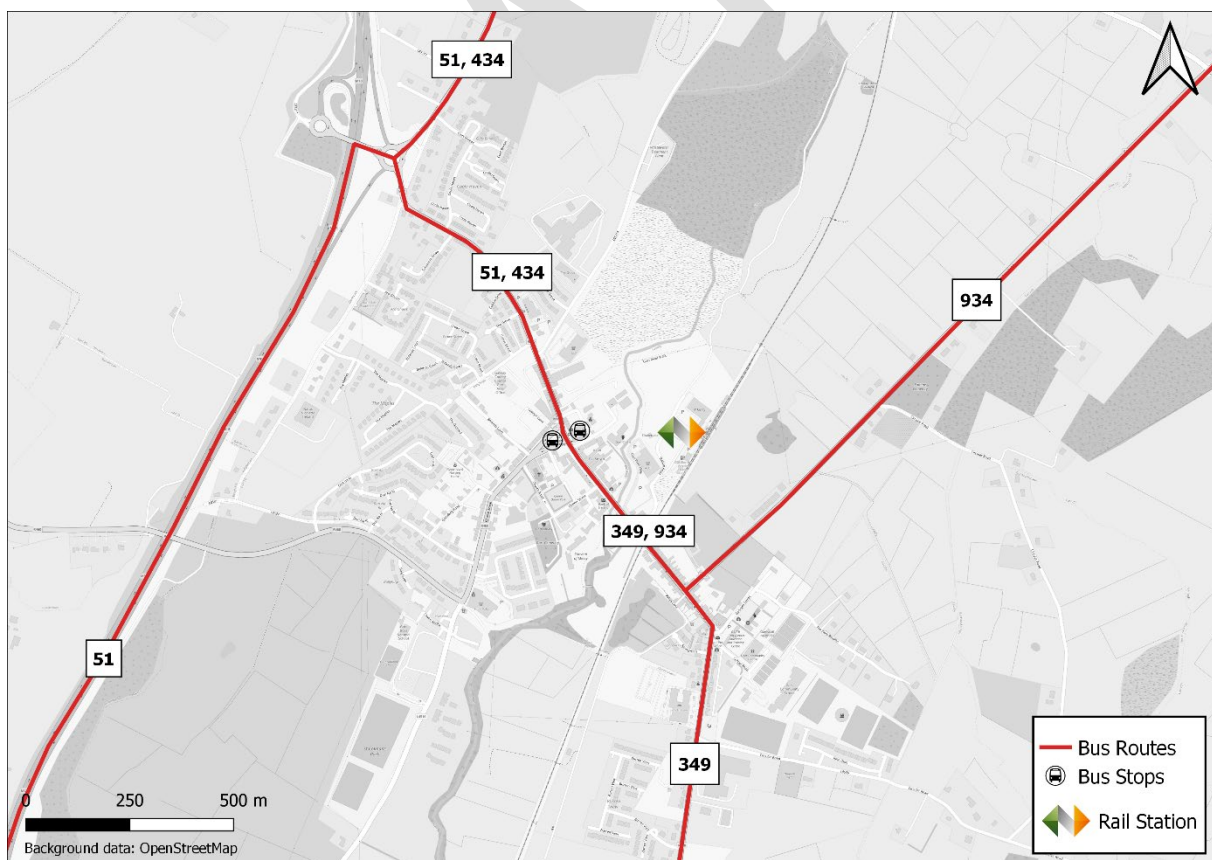


Figure 3-19: Gort Bus Network

Bus lay-bys are present on Crowe Street for both directions. A passenger waiting shelter with an accompanying bench and timetable information is provided for the northbound bus stop, with a flagpole with timetable information present for the southbound bus stop. It is also noted that the NTA has announced ambition to improve bus stop facilities across the country as part of its Bus Stop Enhancement Programme and has indicated support for upgrades to bus stop facilities that meet the requirements of this programme.

The Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan⁶ is a major national public transport initiative developed by the National Transport Authority (NTA), with the aim of increasing connectivity, particularly for people living outside our major cities and towns. Consultation on the proposed network took place during 2022, with the feedback currently being assessed by the NTA. For Gort, route 8 is proposed to replace routes 51 and 434, offering a minimum service frequency of 30 minutes between Galway City and Cork, although it is not clear whether this level of service would apply to Gort itself. In addition, route 934 would have a minimum frequency of three return trips per day, similar to the current level of service.

School buses also serve the local educational institutions in Gort. The School Transport Scheme provides transport to and from school for children who live remote from their nearest school. The scheme is operated by Bus Éireann on behalf of the Department of Education.

3.8.4 Road Network

Strategic Road Network

The primary road serving Gort is the M18 which bypasses the town and provides links to Athenry, Ennis and Limerick. The M6/M17/M18 junction lies roughly 25km north of Gort, linking to onward routes to Galway City and Dublin.

Access to the town's local road network from the M18 is via Junction 16 and the R458.

In addition to the M18, three regional roads serve the town. The R458 route was superseded by the M18 and runs north to south between Ennis and Kilcolgan before joining the N67. The R460 connects Gort to Corofin and Miltown Malbay in County Clare to the south west, and the R380 connects Gort to Loughrea to the north east.

⁶ Source : <https://www.nationaltransport.ie/connecting-ireland/proposals/>

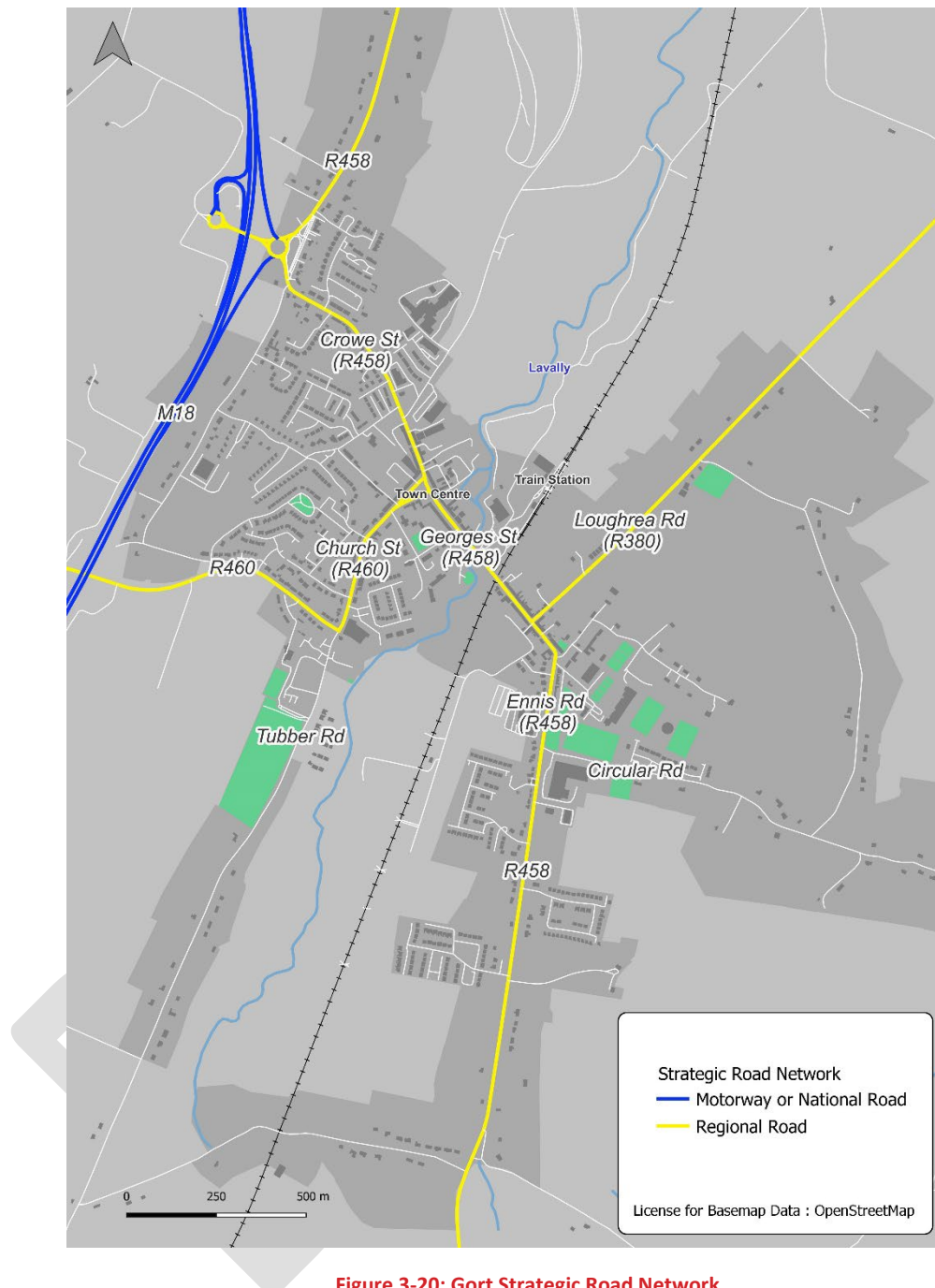


Figure 3-20: Gort Strategic Road Network

Local Road Network

The local road network in Gort is shown in **Figure 3-21** below.



Figure 3-21: Gort Town Centre Local Road Network

The R458 route runs through the centre of Gort on a roughly north west to south east axis and is known as Crowe Street north of Market Square and Bridge Street and Georges Street to the south. In the town centre, the R458 connects with the R460 at Market Square at two priority junctions, forming a triangular shaped space with one-way traffic on two sides in each direction. Much of Market Square is dedicated to vehicle parking.

Signalised pedestrian crossings are located on Crowe Street and Bridge Street, both approximately 60m upstream of the Market Square junctions with Church Street. A further signalised crossing is located on Church Street, approximately 80m south west of market Square, shown in the figure below. Footway build-out, dropped kerbs and tactile paving are included at all of these crossings.



Figure 3-22: Church Road Signalised Crossing

The R380 route is known as Loughrea Road within Gort. The R458 and R380 routes meet at a priority junction south east of the town centre. The minor R380 arm is relatively constrained for this type of road due to the locations of the adjacent buildings impacting sightlines resulting in a road safety issue. A zebra crossing with accompanying footway build-out and tactile paving is located on the R380 arm.

3.9 SWOT Assessment

The findings summarised above from the Baseline Assessment have been used to inform a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis for the study area. The results are outlined in Table 3-8 below. This has been used to inform subsequent stages of the LTP, in particular the objectives setting and options development phases.

Table 3-8: SWOT Assessment of Gort

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|--|
| <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gort is classified as a self-sustaining town in the GCDP 2022-2028. Strategic traffic to Galway, Dublin and Limerick is well served by the nearby M18 and onward connection to the M6. There are relatively frequent public transport services provided to Galway City by bus and train. Gort town centre is the largest attractor of employment trips within the study area. Other key employment areas include the areas to the east and south of the town. Walking distances within the town are fairly short due to a relatively compact urban form. Market Square provides an obvious focal point for the town centre. Public transport services are concentrated into single main corridor through town with good potential connectivity to adjacent residential areas. | <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is severance caused by the rail line and Gort River, limiting access from south east residential areas to town centre and north/west residential areas. No dedicated provision (on or off-street) for cyclists, with limited public cycle parking available. Market Square is dominated by motor vehicles, with an overwhelming focus on parking. Pedestrian facilities (pavement widths and pedestrian crossings) are poor or lacking at a number of links and key junctions within the town. Car remains the dominant mode of transport, even for shorter distance commute trips. A number of key junctions are unattractive to pedestrians and cyclists due to design prioritising motor vehicles. Public transport represents just 4.4% of commute trips and active travel 14.7%. Pedestrian access to the train station is poor with no crossing at the key junction and a narrow footpath along Station Road. |

Opportunities

Key Points:

- Most of the study area is accessible within a 10-minute cycle. The provision of safe and attractive active travel links provides a potential opportunity for modal shift from car.
- Footpaths and crossing points for pedestrians in the town centre could be greatly improved within existing street widths, improving the attractiveness of the town.
- The large number of school places within the study area compared to the study area population shows the large catchment of the town that could potentially be better attracted to shop and spend time in the town through improvements to the urban realm.
- Approximately two fifths of work and education combined trips from Gort remain within the study area, and due to the local nature of these trips, there may be an opportunity to support this demand via active travel.
- The relatively flat topography of the study area would be beneficial for potential trips shifted to active travel.
- The Gort River offers significant potential as an amenity and commuting route with the addition of new access points for the Gort River Walk along with bridge crossings

Threats / Constraints

Key Points:

- There are a very large number of school trips destined for the study area originating within the surrounding rural hinterland. It will be difficult for these trips to be served by active travel.
- The LTP study area is constrained by the physical barriers of the rail line and river which causes severance.
- Car ownership is quite high within the study area with 81% of households owning at least one car, and 32% owning two or more. If this pattern continues for new developments without substantial improvement to provision for alternative modes, it will likely lead to additional vehicular traffic on the road network.
- On-street parking needs appropriate management to ensure that improvements for sustainable modes can be realised.

4. LTP OBJECTIVES & FUTURE DEMAND FOR TRAVEL

4.1 Overview

Part Two of the ABTA process utilised to develop the Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Gort focuses on applying the information gathered from the baseline assessment (including the SWOT analysis) to determine the principles and objectives that guide the development of the LTP. The following sections provide an overview of the methodology used to derive the LTP objectives for Gort, along with the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) used to assess the performance of the strategy options in meeting the study objectives.

4.2 Developing the Objectives and KPIs

The development of the principles and objectives for the Gort LTP have been informed by:

- The opportunities and constraints identified in the Part One Baseline Assessment SWOT Analysis.
- Existing local policies and objectives.
- National level policy guiding the delivery of sustainable development.

In order to ensure a robust assessment of transport options, the objectives were broadly aligned with the key categories outlined in the Department of Transport's Transport Appraisal Framework (TAF) with common themes identified:

- **Accessibility & Social Inclusion:** supporting local accessibility by walking and cycling within Gort for all users.
- **Environmental:** supporting climate change initiatives and a general switch to more sustainable modes of travel.
- **Economic:** supporting the vibrancy and connectivity to Gort Town Centre enhancing its economic competitiveness.
- **Integration:** supporting the integration of land use and transport planning in a manner that can affect significant modal shift to walking, cycling, and public transport.
- **Safety & Physical Activity:** promote walking and cycling, and provide a safe environment for vulnerable users.

Align with CAF
and identify
core themes

Link to relevant
Local and
National Policy

Review SWOT
Analysis

Define
Principles &
Objectives

A detailed review has then been undertaken of Local and National Policy to identify existing objectives under each of the TAF headings and themes outlined above. In particular, strategic outcomes and policies from the GCDP 2022-2028 have been identified to help inform the principles and objectives for the Gort LTP. The SWOT analysis from the Baseline Assessment has also been reviewed to identify specific constraints and issues currently within the study area which should be addressed by the Gort LTP objectives.

Whilst the objectives developed for the LTP focus on the need to improve travel by sustainable modes in Gort, in accordance with DoECLG Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines 'Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities', an overarching aim in the development of all LTP transport measures is the need to safeguard the strategic function, capacity and safety of the existing national road network in the Plan area.

Performance measurement is used to determine if the full set of recommendations proposed under the Gort LTP achieve the desired outcomes. Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) have been identified and were used to measure the performance of the LTP strategies under the various objectives. The objectives and associated KPIs developed for the Gort LTP are outlined in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1: Gort LTP Objectives and KPIs

| HEADING | OBJECTIVE | KPI |
|---|--|---|
| Accessibility & Social Inclusion | Support and implement transport measures which reduce car dependency and improve access to local services by sustainable modes | Access to key services (ATOS Analysis) |
| | | Qualitative (Rating scale) access to PT opportunities |
| Integration | Align and integrate with existing and emerging national, regional, and local planning policy | Compatibility of transport measures with local, regional and national policy - Rating Scale |
| Safety & Physical Activity | Provide safe access to schools for vulnerable road users and ensure a safe front of school environment | Qualitative assessment of walking and cycling infrastructure to schools - Rating Scale |
| | | Reduction in walking/cycling distances to school sites (GIS/ATOS assessment) |
| Environment | Contribute to achieving Climate Action Plan targets through the creation of an environment which encourages a modal shift from the private car to more sustainable modes | Anticipated change on sustainable mode shares - rating scale |
| | | Length of additional / improved walk and cycle infrastructure |
| Economy | Contribute to Gort's economic vitality through improved connectivity and enhanced public realm | Access to Town Centre for each mode - Comparison of change in journey length (can be measured back to Do Min) and quality of route to town centre by mode |
| | | Quality of Town centre streetscape /public realm – Rating Scale |
| | | Deliverability Rating Scale (with consideration to cost, engineering constraints e.g. topography / flooding constraints, third party support/acceptability e.g. does the measure require land acquisition from a single or multiple bodies) |

4.3 Future Demand for Travel

In addition to the review of present-day conditions in Gort, the project team has examined the Draft Gort Land Use Zoning Map, as shown in the figure below.

In collaboration with Galway County Council, an assessment of appropriate lands for future potential development has been completed. The existing development patterns in Gort were taken into account during this process.

Access to existing and planned, development sites was taken into consideration when determining the transport options for the LTP.

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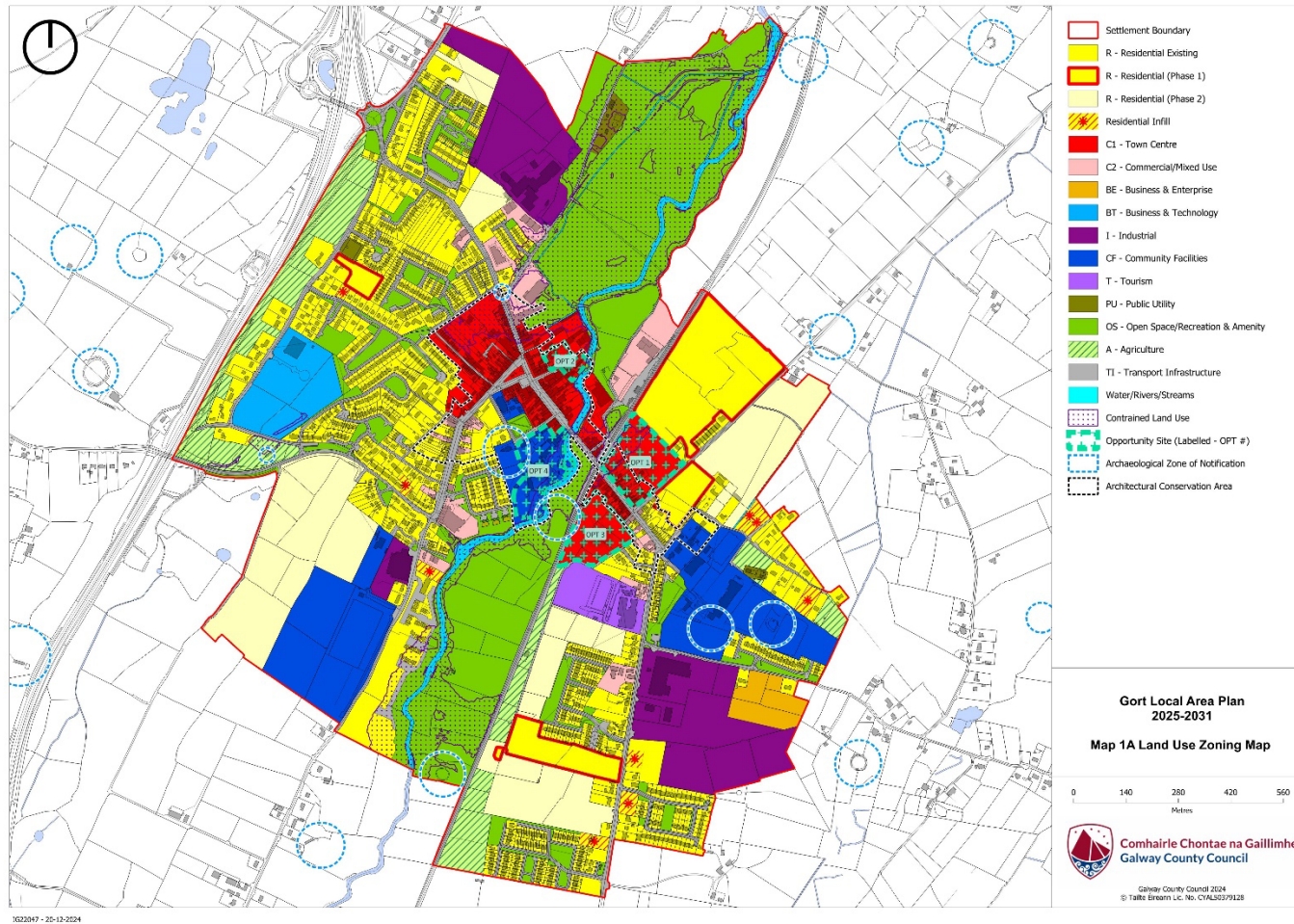


Figure 4-1: Emerging Gort LAP Draft Land Use Zone Map

5. OPTIONS DEVELOPMENT & ASSESSMENT PROCESS

5.1 Options Development

This section details the option development process and identifies options for assessment. Options are grouped into mode categories for ease of reporting. A full list of the options developed for the appraisal process can be viewed in **Appendix B**.

The proposed NTA Cycle Connects network, GCC's draft public realm enhancement proposals for Market Square, the proposed Gort Town Centre First Plan, and the Galway to Athlone Cycleway have been taken into account as part of the development of the strategy.

The Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement Project proposals have been taken as a Do Minimum project in consultation with GCC.

All LTP options have been developed in a manner that safeguards the function and safety of the strategic national road network and associated junctions.

All LTP options have been developed taking into account the draft Gort LAP's objectives and land use zoning strategy.

It is recognised that improvements to infrastructure will be planned and delivered in a different manner to improvements to services. The LTP focuses on infrastructure whilst including consideration of how this can support improvement and expansion of public transport services.

This chapter outlines the longlist of options developed to overcome some of the weaknesses and constraints identified in the baseline assessment and subsequently achieve the defined objectives for the LTP.

The option development process has been informed by the following:

- Data review to identify proposals from wider policy/strategies for the study area.
- Discussions and site visits accompanied by local engineers to review issues identified in the baseline assessment and opportunities for improvement.
- Options workshops with the project team.

The option development process has broadly followed the Department of Transport's National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI) modal and intervention hierarchies, shown in the figure below.



Figure 5-1: Options Assessment Methodology

As such, options for applicable measures were first considered in relation to active modes (walking and cycling), followed by public transport and finally general vehicular traffic. The options were also initially focused on maintaining, optimising and improving existing facilities before considering the construction of new infrastructure.

5.1.1 Active Travel – Walking and Cycling Options

The development of options for the Walking and Cycling Strategy element of the Gort LTP are built on the existing proposals of the NTA's Cycle Connects inter-urban network and planned network improvements identified by Galway County Council.

The key aim in developing Active Travel options is to provide Gort with a safe, comfortable and integrated walking and cycling network enabling trips to school, work, shopping and all other purposes to be made using active travel.

Options focused on improving connectivity and permeability from residential areas to main trip attractors, including the town centre, key employment and education sites and leisure opportunities.

Where feasible, fully segregated cycle facilities are proposed to improve safety for cyclists. Where segregation is not possible given space constraints, particularly within the town centre, measures have been proposed to provide a safe, low speed, traffic calmed environment for sections of cycle trips which must be made on-road.



Figure 5-2: Example of a Segregated Cycle Track

Certain streets within the town centre are very narrow, creating difficulties for the provision of segregated cycle infrastructure. Footpath widths are generally below minimum standards with a lack of formal road crossings creating an unattractive environment for pedestrians and cyclists. Given these spatial constraints and existing conditions, improving pedestrian safety and comfort was the priority in central areas. In addition, a number of contra-flow cycle tracks are proposed to increase cycling safety and permeability on the town centre's one-way streets.

A number of leisure and amenity routes have also been proposed, including an extension of the existing Gort River Walk.

5.1.2 Public Transport Options

While active travel investment focuses on encouraging people to switch from car to cycling or walking for short distance journeys, public transport has the potential to encourage mode shift from car journeys for medium and longer distance trips.

The development of public transport options has incorporated insight from the Baseline Assessment and engagement with the NTA, with the aim of encouraging increase in use. As such, the options within the LTP seek to:

- Enhance accessibility for active modes from residential areas to bus stops and the rail station.
- Improve facilities at public transport nodes, through the provision of sheltered waiting areas, cycle parking, and passenger information.
- Work alongside the NTA to deliver enhanced bus and rail services to villages and towns in the wider region.

5.1.3 Road & Traffic Management Options

Options for the Road Network strategy were identified in order to improve safety for all road users. The priority in the development of the road network options (as per NIFTI) is to maintain, renew, manage and operate the existing road infrastructure in a more efficient manner, and any new road schemes must demonstrate that public transport, traffic management or demand management measures cannot effectively address the problem prompting the road proposal or are not applicable/appropriate.

Therefore, road options that would unduly induce car trips that could otherwise be made by active travel would not be appropriate. However, road options that facilitate the reallocation of road space in the town centre by enabling traffic to bypass the town centre streets are more aligned with the LTP objectives and current national policy.

Given these considerations, the main road options are associated with the link road as defined in the LAP, connecting the Loughrea Road and Galway Road corridors. No further new road infrastructure schemes are proposed as part of the long list of options.

In addition to options concerning upgraded and new road infrastructure, a number of traffic management options have been developed in combination with associated Walking & Cycling proposals. These traffic management options are mainly located in the town centre where streets are narrow and active travel facilities are presently poor. These options and their associated Walking & Cycling measures aim to improve the public realm in key areas and provide a safer environment within the town for vulnerable road users.

5.1.4 Supporting Measures

In line with the Five Cities Demand Management Study Avoid-Shift-Reduce-Manage Transport Demand Management (TDM) Toolkit to reduce carbon, improve air quality and the urban environment, and manage congestion, a range of TDM Measures have been identified to support the switch to sustainable modes across the Study Area.

In line with Safe Routes to School measures proposed by An Taisce in Gort, a number of potential Park & Stride⁷ sites have been identified which would reduce congestion at school gates. Schools in Ireland which have implemented park and stride have found that children are more alert in the morning, having had some fresh air and exercise⁸.

Supporting measures include those to promote Active Travel, Public Transport and School Travel. A number of behavioural change measures are identified, including the role that Mobility Management at workplaces, schools and other large trip generators can play in both avoiding the need to travel and supporting a switch from car travel to sustainable modes on a site by site basis.

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⁷ The concept of 'Park & Stride' means parking the car a short distance from your destination and making the last leg of the journey on foot. This can have health benefits in terms of promoting physical exercise, whilst also removing traffic from heavily congested areas e.g. outside school gates.

⁸ Fingal School Streets: Pilot Review 1 <https://www.fingal.ie/sites/default/files/2020-03/20200302-300548-school-streets-pilot-review-1-issue-1.pdf>

5.2 Options Assessment Methodology

Having developed a long list of options, an assessment process was undertaken to determine which of these options are to be included in the Emerging Preferred Strategy for the Gort LTP. The long list of options were passed through a four-stage assessment process as outlined in **Figure 5-3**, including:

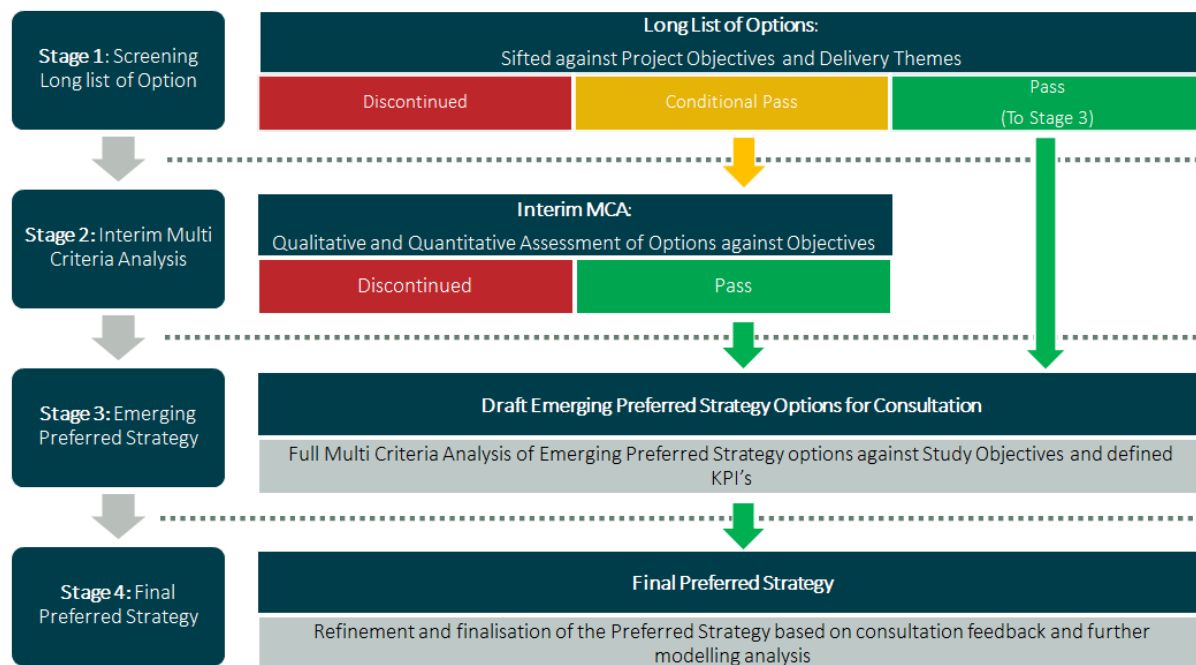


Figure 5-3: Options Assessment Methodology

- **Stage One Options Screening:** The long-list of options were screened against the overall project objectives and core delivery themes to identify which ones should be discontinued, which could pass directly to the final strategy, and which required further assessment.
- **Stage Two Interim Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA):** Options requiring further analysis were passed through a MCA with qualitative indicators used to score each option against the study objectives.
- **Stage Three Draft Emerging Preferred Strategy Options for Consultation:** Options passing Stage One and Stage Two form the initial draft Emerging Preferred Strategy for the LTP.
- **Stage 4 Final Preferred Strategy (Post LAP Consultation):** Feedback from the project steering group and public consultation as part of the Gort LAP process, will be used to refine the preferred strategy for the LTP.

The following sections provide a more detailed description of Stages One and Two outlined above.

5.2.1 Stage One: Options Screening

Stage One of the Options Assessment has examined each of the long list of measures against the LTP objectives. The options have also been assessed against the following core delivery themes:

- Engineering feasibility.
- Acceptability.
- Funding potential.
- Value for money.

Based on this initial screening, options have been classed as follows:

- **Discontinued:** the option did not align with the LTP objectives and therefore is not included in the Emerging Preferred Strategy.
- **Pass:** the option satisfied the project objectives and the core delivery themes, and no alternative proposals were identified in the options development process. These options passed directly into the Emerging Preferred Strategy without the need for an interim assessment.
- **Conditional Pass:** the option aligned with the LTP objectives, however, it either did not fully meet all of the core delivery themes or had a number of alternative proposals identified. In these instances, the options have been assessed in further detail as part of the interim MCA described in Section 5.2.2.

5.2.2 Stage 2: Interim Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA)

The Interim MCA stage has been used to evaluate alternatives based on their performance in achieving the overarching study objectives outlined in Table 4-1. This assessment was predominantly qualitative in nature. A five-point scoring system, outlined in Table 5-1 below, was used to assess the options across the various objectives. This produced a performance matrix which was reviewed to rank the scenarios and identify which ones performed best in terms of achieving the defined objectives of the study, and therefore, passed into the Emerging Preferred Strategy.

To ensure that the options that had advanced to the interim MCA stage were assessed holistically, and that mutually exclusive options were assessed at the same time, where possible/reasonable options were packaged together for the MCA process. Detailed work was undertaken to balance the positive and negative outcomes of each option to assess whether it would be included in the Emerging Preferred Strategy.

Table 5-1: Interim MCA Scoring System

| Scoring | |
|--|--|
| Major Benefit: The proposal is expected to have a clear and considerable benefit or positive impact when compared to existing conditions. | |
| Minor Benefit: The proposal is expected to have a minor benefit or positive impact when compared to existing conditions. | |
| Neutral: Overall, the proposal is expected to have neither a positive nor negative impact when compared to existing conditions. | |
| Minor Disbenefit: The proposal is only expected to result in a minor negative impact when compared to existing conditions. | |
| Major Disbenefit: The proposal is expected to have a clear and considerable negative impact when compared to existing conditions. | |

5.3 Summary

This section has outlined the process followed in developing a longlist of options for active travel, public transport, road & traffic management and supporting measures for Gort as well as the assessment process followed to determine which options would be included in the LTP's Emerging Preferred Strategy.

The following chapter outlines the Emerging Preferred Strategy arising from this Options Development and Assessment process.

6. EMERGING PREFERRED STRATEGY

6.1 Overview

The previous chapters in this report have detailed the process followed in identifying the Emerging Preferred Strategy for the Gort LTP. The following sections provide a summary of the proposed measures which have passed through the assessment process and now form part of the draft Local Transport Plan for Public Consultation. A full list of the measures in the strategy by mode of transport can be found in **Appendix B**.

6.2 Walking & Cycling

6.2.1 Overview

The proposed walking and cycling measures in the Emerging Preferred Strategy for Gort are illustrated in Figure 6-1 below. These measures have the potential to deliver improved connectivity and permeability by active travel from residential areas to main trip attractors including the town centre, key employment and education sites and leisure opportunities.

Where feasible, segregated cycle infrastructure has been proposed to improve the safety and comfort for cyclists across the network. Note that improvements to footpaths are also proposed on all links where cycle tracks are proposed, benefiting pedestrians.

In addition to these active travel measures, a number of permeability links are proposed which will improve access and increase the walking and cycling catchment of schools and the town centre. Also included are traffic calming measures and new or improved footpaths on a number of roads and streets – this will improve conditions for all active travel users.

The NTA's CycleConnects plan, along with GCC's proposed Gort Public Realm Enhancement Project for Market Square and the town centre, the proposed Gort Town Centre First Plan, and the Galway to Athlone Cycleway have all been taken into account as part of the development of the strategy.

In order to avoid duplication, and in consultation with GCC, the Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement proposals have been taken as a baseline project as part of the development of the Emerging Preferred Strategy for the draft Gort LTP. As such, the proposed LTP measures do not include the town centre area, as these are deemed to be included in the proposed public realm project.

Where cycle measures are proposed alongside national roads, these will adhere to TII requirements as well as the Design Manual for Roads and Streets.

A full description of the proposed measures included in the Emerging Preferred Strategy are provided in **Appendix B**. As the final strategy measures follow from an initial longlist of options (as described in the Options Assessment section above), not all measure references are sequential, as some measures were discounted during the Options Assessment process.







The key elements of the active travel strategy are summarised in the remainder of this section with the following terminology used to describe proposed interventions:

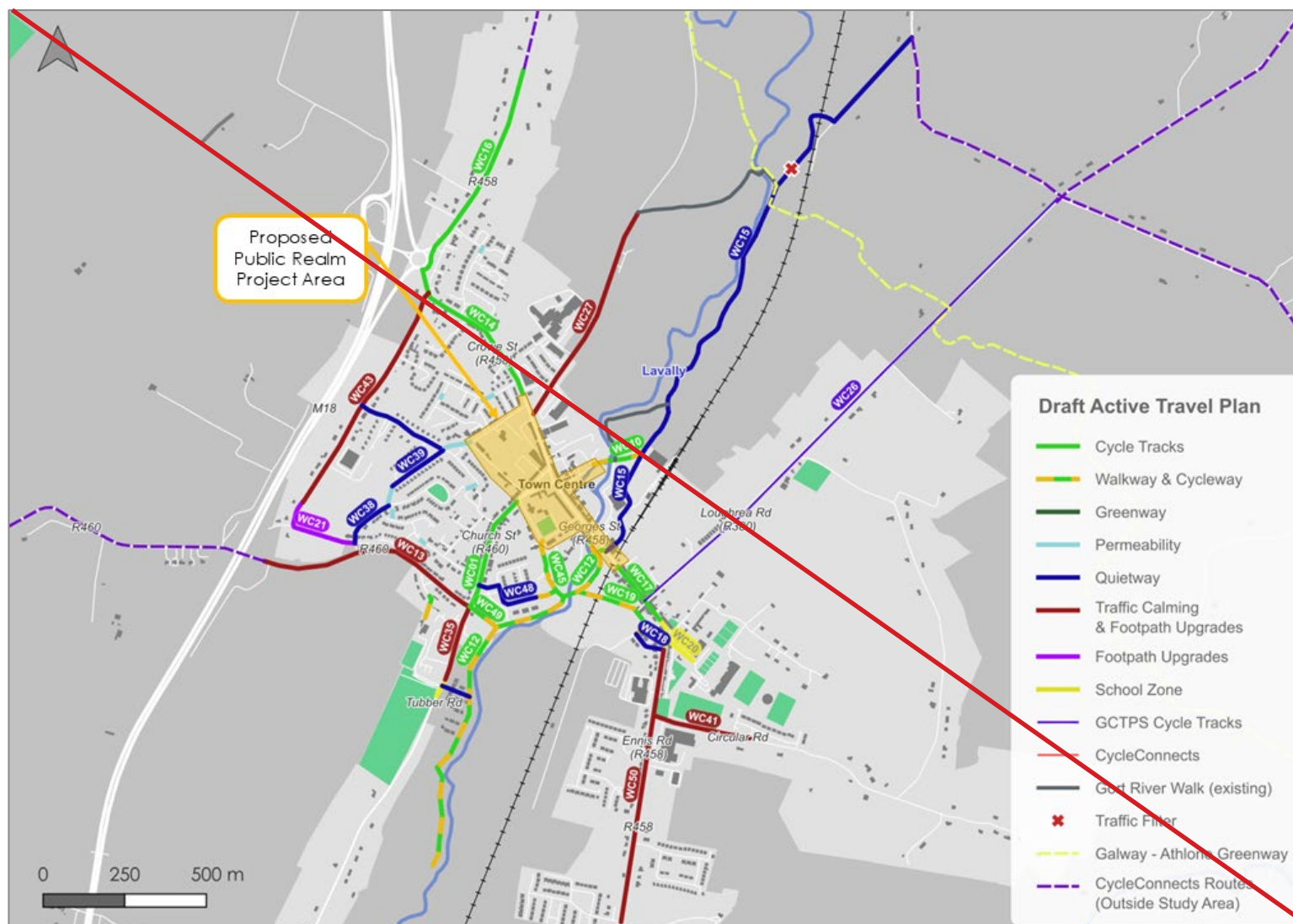
- **Cycle Tracks** = cycle lanes separated from vehicular traffic with a physical barrier. Note that improvements to footpaths are also proposed on all links where cycle tracks are proposed.
- **Walkway and cycleways** = two-way cycle route and separate footpath typically located off-line (away from vehicular carriageway / off road).

- **Traffic Calming** = measures to reduce vehicle speeds and create a safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists. Typical measures include:
 - Narrowing of the traffic lanes to minimum recommended widths.
 - Raised pedestrian crossings to provide priority for pedestrians.
 - Tightening of corner radii at residential estates to reduce crossing distances and improve safety.
 - Reduced speed limits.
 - Surface treatments, streetscape and landscaping enhancements.
- **Quietway** = low-trafficked street (typically <2,000 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)) and low-speeds meaning cyclists can safely share the carriageway. Typical measures include:
 - Traffic calming to enforce low-speeds.
 - Improved public realm to encourage active travel.
 - Improved signage and way-finding to encourage use.
 - Surface treatments and landscaping.
- **Permeability links** = walking and cycling links connecting neighbourhoods and providing greater accessibility along desire lines.
- **Traffic Filter** = interventions that allow through access for pedestrians and cyclists but local access only for vehicles.
- **School Zone** = front of school works to prioritise safe pedestrian and cycle access to the school, improving school visibility through signposting & placemaking, reducing vehicle congestion and preventing illegal parking in the area.

More detail can be found in the Table below.

Table 6-1: Active Travel Terminology

| INTERVENTION | EXAMPLE IMAGE | INTERVENTION | EXAMPLE IMAGE |
|--|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cycle Tracks = cycle lanes separated from vehicular traffic with a physical barrier (e.g. Kerb or bollards). |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Permeability links = short walking and cycling links along desire lines which increase accessibility and reduce active travel distances by providing short-cuts. |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Traffic Calming = measures to reduce vehicle speeds and create a safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists. Typical measures include narrowing traffic lanes, raised pedestrian crossings, and reduced speed limits. |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Quietway = a street with low traffic (less than 200 vehicles in the peak hour) and low-speeds where cyclists can safely share the carriageway. Typical additional measures include traffic calming, landscaping and improved signage. |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Greenway = an off-road trail for use by cyclists, pedestrians and other non-motorised transport, often in scenic surroundings with access to nature and urban areas, connecting residential areas with key destinations. |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ School Zone = front of school works to prioritise pedestrian and cycle safety outside the school gate, improving school visibility through signposting & placemaking, reducing vehicle congestion & preventing illegal parking in the area. |  |



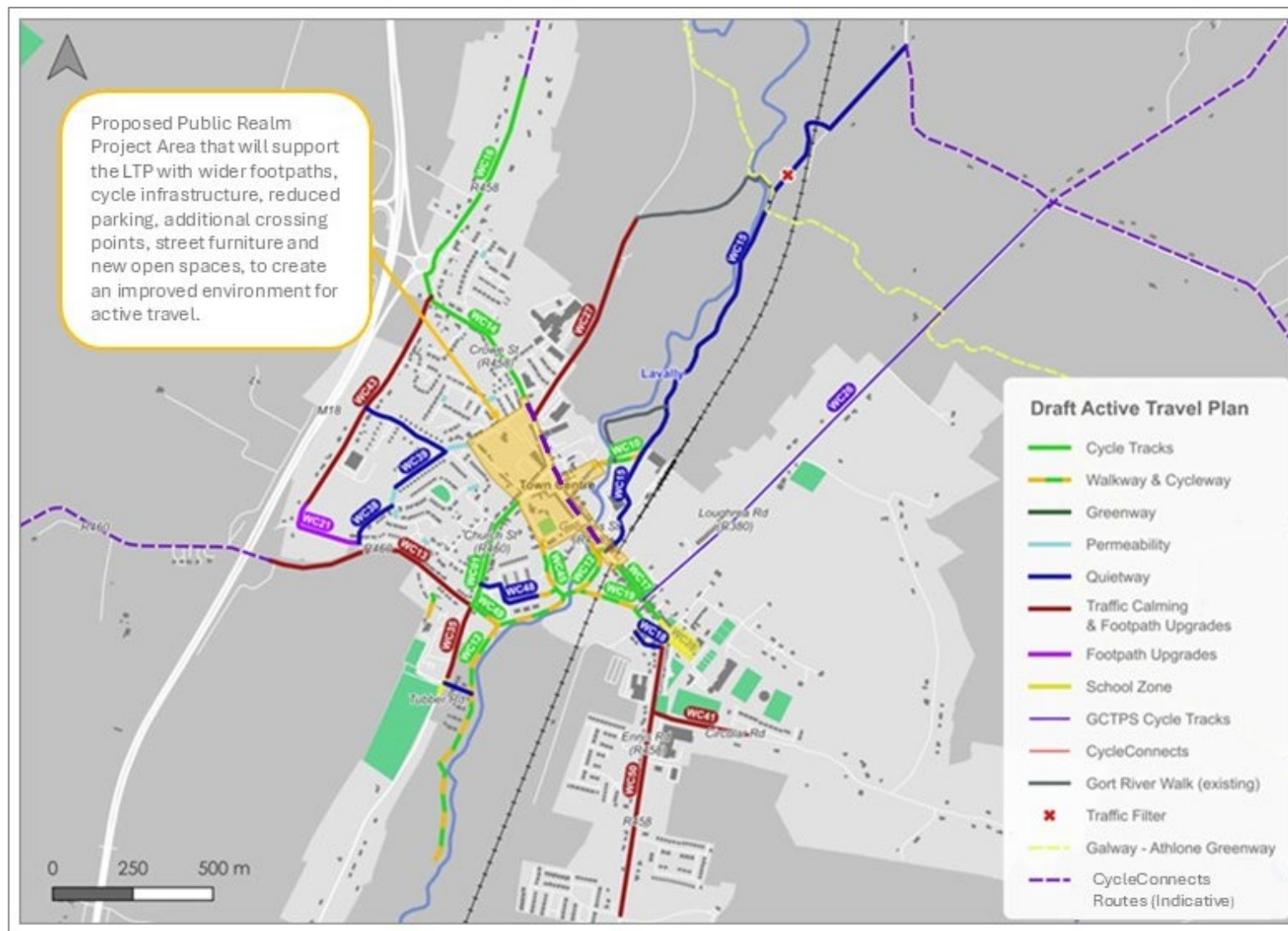
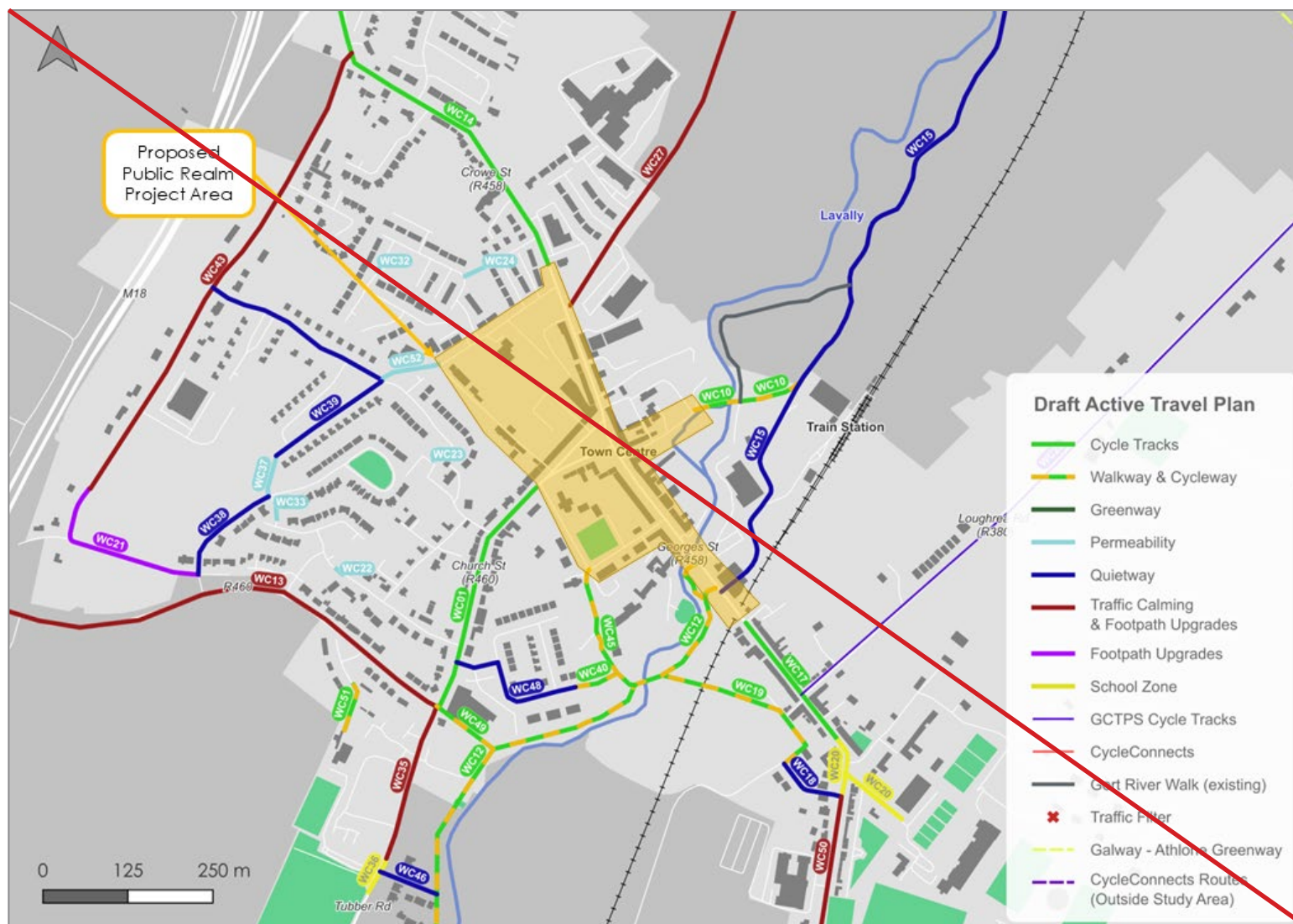


Figure 6-1: Emerging Preferred Strategy: Walking & Cycling Measures – Gort LTP Study Area



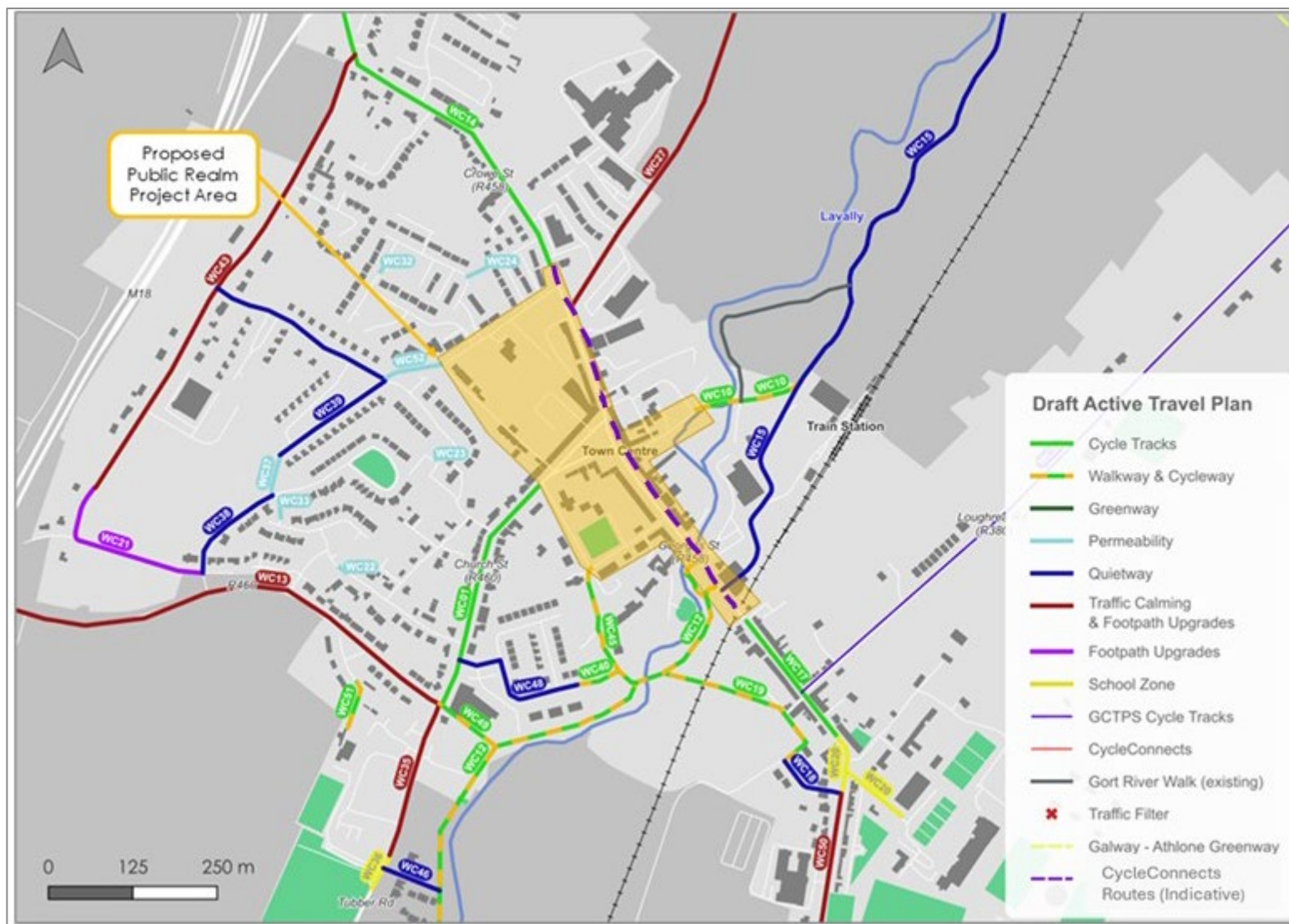


Figure 6-2: Emerging Preferred Strategy: Walking & Cycling Measures – central Gort area

6.2.2 Town Centre Public Realm Improvements and Associated Active Travel Proposals

Funding has recently been secured to appoint a design team to prepare enhancement proposals for the public realm in the centre of Gort, with the most recent designs shown in the figure below. These proposals include revised traffic arrangements, footway improvements, new raised zebra crossings, and on street parking changes on Market Square, Crowe Street, Church Street, Main Street and Bridge Street.

The scheme aims to reduce the impact of heavy traffic and car parking in the square, creating space for a variety of cultural events and markets, and encouraging the use of new off street car parks for longer stay users. Please note that the figure below shows draft proposals and are subject to change following the submission of a Planning Application.



Figure 6-3: Market Square Draft Public Realm Proposals, BDP Architects

As part of the draft Public Realm Enhancement strategy, additional off street car parking is proposed near Market Square and Barrack Street and additional on-street parking is also proposed on Church Street. It is intended as part of these proposals that road carriageway widths on wider streets (such as Bridge Street) will be reduced in width to accommodate wider footways and tree planting. Parallel parking, in place of perpendicular parking which requires more road space, is proposed to achieve this.

The indicative plans also proposed that traffic movement in Market Square is slightly altered with the main movement changed to the southern side of the square in both directions. A service street for the businesses on the northern side of the square would be provided, which will take through traffic.

The proposed Public Realm Enhancement Project includes a wider aspirational active travel network, which will not be delivered as part of the project. These proposals were incorporated into the draft Town Centre First Plan and are included in the Active Travel Network as part of this draft LTP.

It should be noted that as part of the proposed public realm enhancement project proposals, no segregated cycle infrastructure through the town centre is proposed, and cyclists will largely mix with general traffic to access Market Square.

~~In addition, it is proposed to relocate the existing bus stops (used by scheduled services), from their current position along the eastern edge of Market Square, to a new location adjacent to the Station Road junction on Bridge Street to better facilitate inter-modal public transport.~~

6.2.3 Connections to the Proposed Athlone to Galway Cycleway (WC15, WC16, WC26)

The Athlone to Galway Cycleway Preferred Route passes just north of Gort and links to Coole Park. This is a major national proposal with significant recreational and tourism potential. It will be important to designate a signed and safe cycle route from the Athlone to Galway Cycleway into the town centre to take advantage of passing recreational trade and promote tourism. This is proposed through resurfacing Pound Road and Station Road, and filtering traffic at the railway bridge (see WC15, Figure 6-2). This would create a quiet link between the town centre, rail station, and the Cycleway. ~~The development of such connections to the Cycleway will be undertaken in consultation with Galway County Council's internal design teams (to ensure integration of projects) and in partnership with TII (with regards to interfaces with the national road network and in the interests of safeguarding the strategic function of the national road network and the safety of all road users).~~

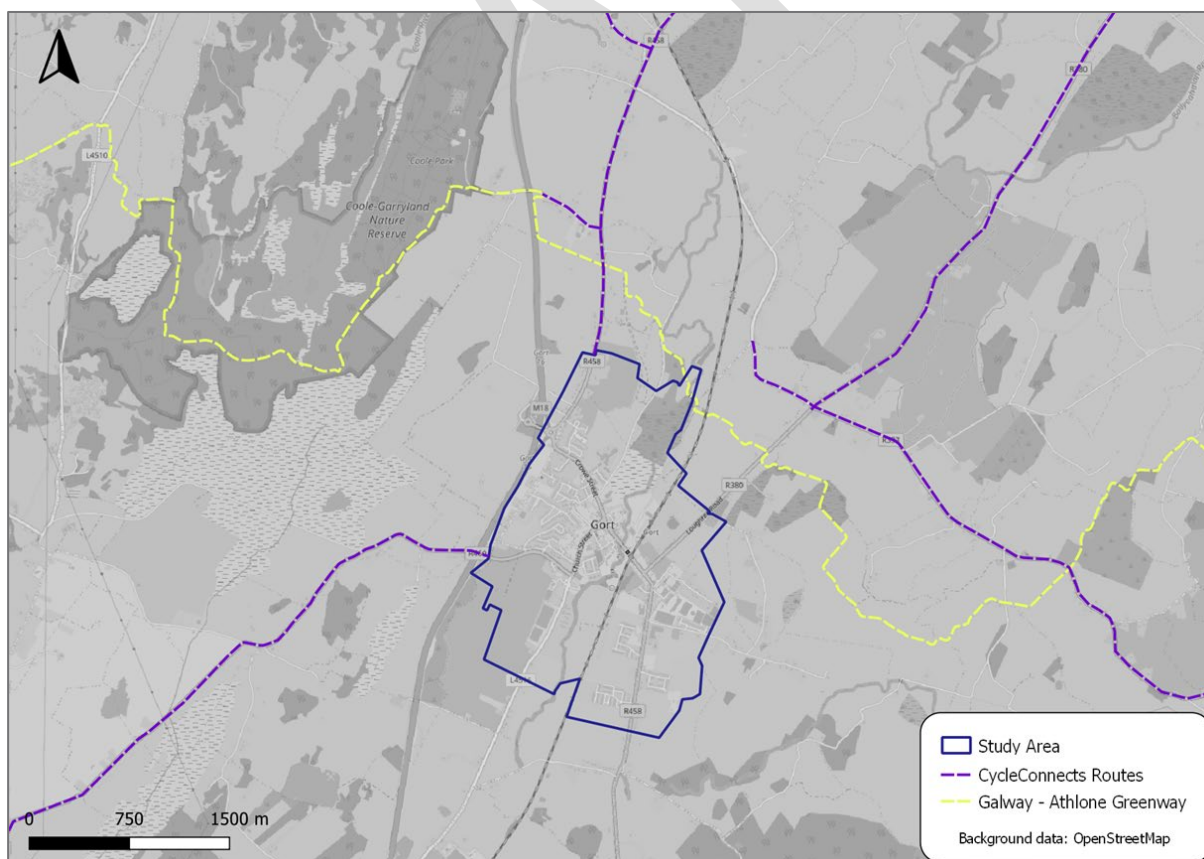


Figure 6-4: Gort with Cycle Connects Network Plan and Galway-Athlone Cycleway

6.2.4 Gort River Walk and Queen Street to Ennis Road Proposal (WC12, WC19, WC27, WC45)

The existing Gort River Walk to the north of Bridge Street is an attractive walking facility developed by the community.

In line with the Gort Inse Guaire Town Centre First proposals, the LTP proposes to support the walk by filtering traffic on Pound Road (WC15), and traffic calming and upgrading footpaths along Kinincha (WC27). It is also proposed to extend the walk south of Gort River bridge as a walkway and cycleway (WC12).

This is a key active travel proposal, and provides connections to nearby roads – and in combination with the Queen Street to Ennis Road Active Travel Proposal in the Town Centre First Plan – connects residential areas, the town centre and schools together (see measures WC19, WC20, WC45).

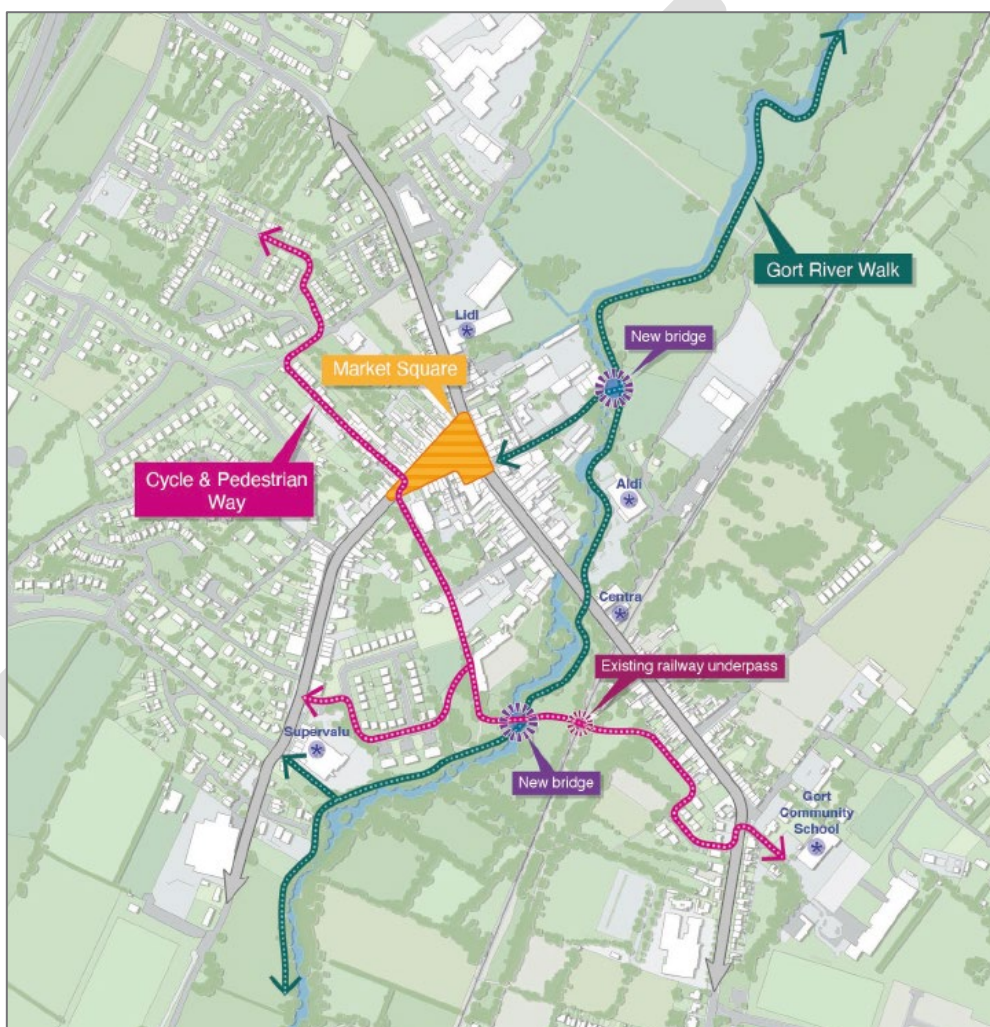


Figure 6-5: Town Centre First Plan for Active Travel Route Connecting Schools and Residential Areas via Queen Street, New Bridge and extended River Walk

6.2.5 R458 & Crowe Street (WC14)

It is proposed to create a segregated cycle way along the R458 (previously the N18) past Glenbrack and along the western end of Crowe Street into the town centre. There is space to achieve a two-way segregated cycle track making use of the shoulder of the R458 and wider sections of Crowe Street. This route will then connect with the proposed Public Realm Enhancement Project.

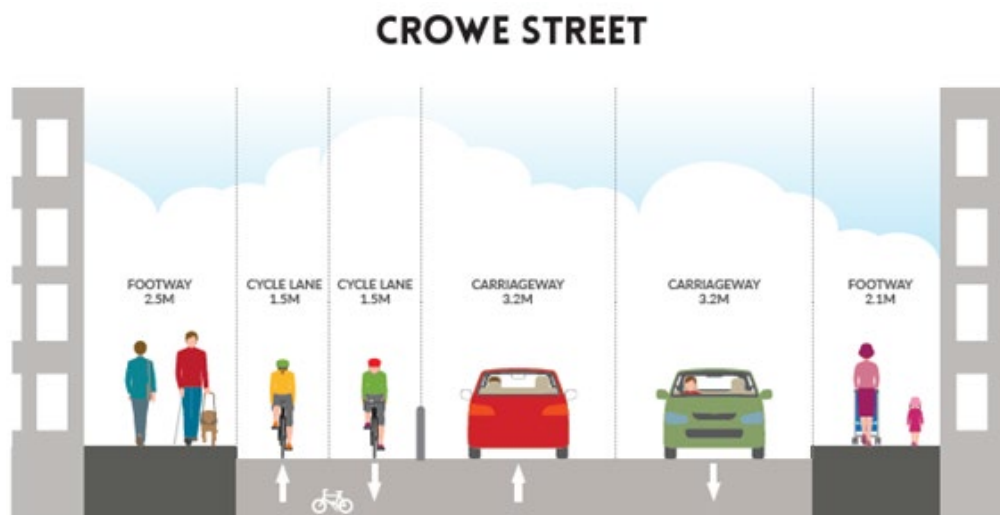


Figure 6-6: Crowe Street Proposed

6.2.6 Gort Boys NS and Gaelscoil na Bhfilí (WC20)

School Zones with appropriate road markings, pedestrian crossings, 20kph speed limits and other safety signage are proposed to create a safer environment for walking and cycling near the school entrances on R460/Tubber Road and on Ennis Road at Georges St junction. These will be developed in line with the NTA's Safe Routes to School Guidance.

6.2.7 R460 and Glenbrack Road (WC13, WC43)

The R460 is relatively narrow and forms one of the Cycle Connects routes into Gort from the Burren area and is an important walking route to the Gort Boys National School (WC13, WC35). Owing to its narrow width and bends, there is little scope to provide segregated cycle tracks without widening the road boundary or changing traffic management arrangements.

A short section of the road has no footpath at Glenbrack which is recognised as insufficient, as can be seen in Figure 6-1, it is proposed to fill this gap in the walking network (WC21). As Glenbrack Road acts as a bypass to the town centre for traffic travelling between Tubber Road and the M18/R458 to the north and it is a residential road, traffic calming measures are also proposed (WC43).

There are opportunities to improve permeability through the housing estates of Gort na Rí and the Maples towards the school and towards Church Street and the town centre, thereby creating a series of Quietways for walking and cycling along residential roads (WC38). These quietways can enable safe

walking and cycling trips for children to school while avoiding busy road and junctions, for example via Boland's Lane and Queen Street.



Figure 6-7: Missing footway along R460 looking towards Tubber Road



Figure 6-8: Missing footway at blind bend on Glenbrack Road

6.2.8 George's Street (WC17)

While the proposed public realm enhancement project area covers Bridge Street, a short section of segregated cycle track along George's Street is proposed to connect the public realm area to the schools off Ennis Road. A School Zone is separately proposed for the entrance to the school.

6.2.9 Loughrea Road (WC26)

Loughrea Road is proposed as an interurban cycle route in the GCTPS. There is a footway to the western side of Loughrea Road which is wide enough to accommodate a shared use cycle track. Although this road has relatively little development along it, new housing is proposed. It is proposed that as development occurs, the road boundary is widened along Loughrea Road to create either a shared use walking and cycle path or footpaths and segregated cycle tracks linking to George's Street.



Figure 6-9: New housing and wide footway on Loughrea Road looking towards Loughrea

6.3 Public Transport

The public transport measures proposed in the plan are focused on medium and longer distance trips to and from the study area. The town was considered too small for the provision of town bus services, with these shorter distance trips better served by active travel.

Gort is strategically located in terms of rail transport on the Western Rail Corridor and there are frequent buses serving Ennis and Galway. These services provide the most significant opportunity for the development of public transport services in the town.

Rail

Currently there is little usage of the rail station in Gort, with just 59 trips on Rail Census day in 2023. The proposed LTP active travel network has also been developed to provide better access for residents of Gort to the train station by walking and cycling. There is a walkway from Station Road directly to the platform, but the footpath on Station Road linking to this walkway is narrow, and there are no pedestrian crossings to access Station Road. This should be combined with additional safe cycle parking facilities at the station to support cycle and rail trips. These measures to increase the accessibility of the station should improve the attractiveness of the rail service for residents.

Improved rail services should also increase usage. The main public transport measures for rail included in the Gort LTP are aligned with the following GCDP 2022-2028 Policy Objective:

- To secure in co-operation with relevant stakeholders (e.g. Iarnród Éireann & NTA) improved rail infrastructure and services on the Western Rail Corridor.

This is supported by the All-Ireland Strategic Rail Review, which proposes extending the Western Rail Corridor to Claremorris and providing increased passing loops and frequency upgrades on the line. The double tracking of the line between Athenry and Galway Ceannt, as also proposed in the GCDP 2022-2028, will increase the number of train paths for trains from Gort towards Galway further, and reduce waiting times in Athenry for both direct trains and trips requiring interchange.

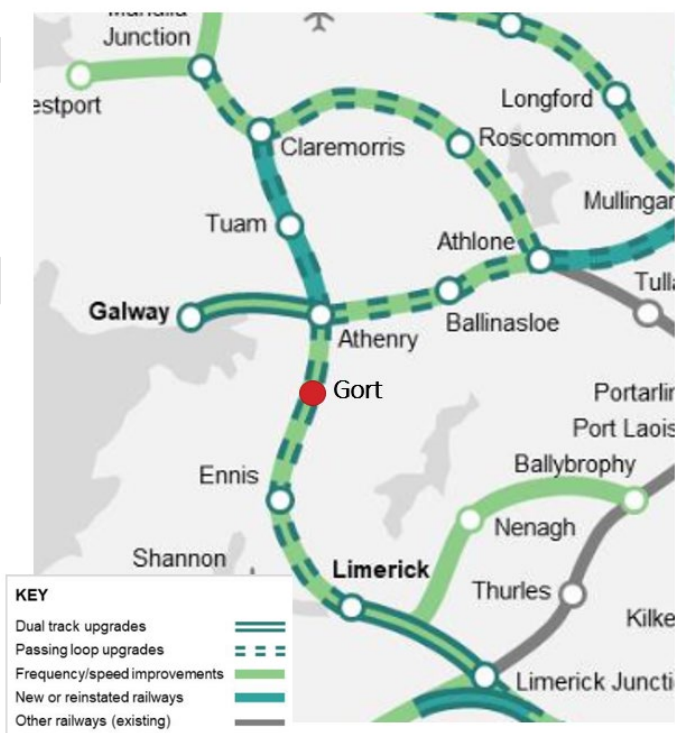


Figure 6-10: All Ireland Strategic Rail Review – Gort

Bus

In terms of bus transport, improvements as part of the NTA Connecting Ireland strategy include increasing the frequency on Corridor 8 (currently route 51) from Cork to Galway to every 30 minutes, and increasing the frequency of the 934 service to Loughrea to three return trips daily.

The LTP supports these service improvements and supports engagement with the NTA in this matter. Further uptake of public transport could be achievable if additional bus services could be provided through enhanced Connecting Ireland and Local Link improvements in order to enhance connections to Gort to surrounding towns and villages not currently served by rail.

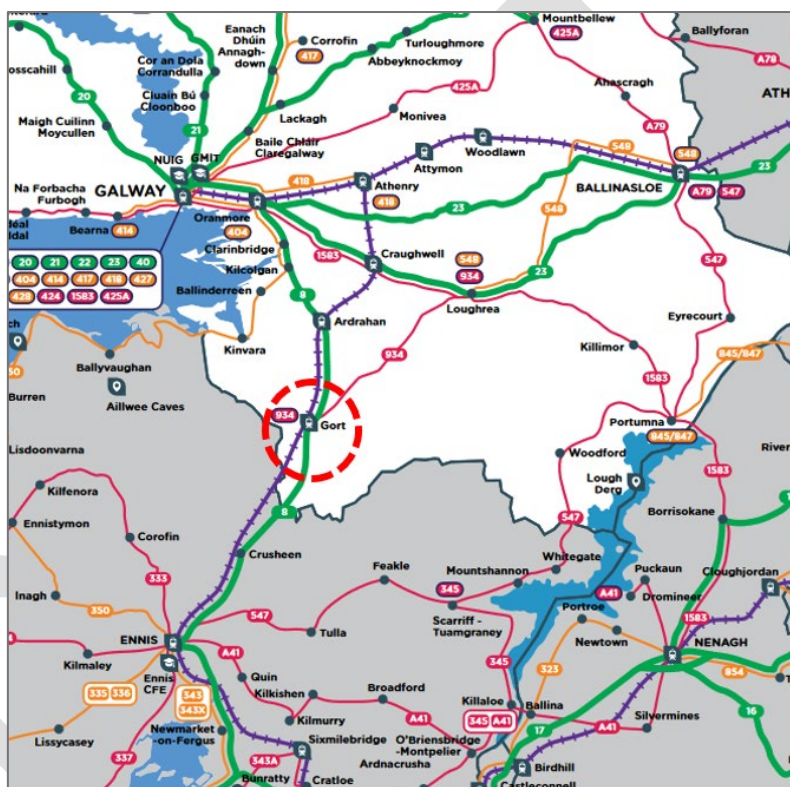


Figure 6-11: Connecting Ireland – Gort

Within the study area, the proposed relocation of the town centre bus stops as part of the draft public realm enhancement project has been noted. Whether or not this proceeds, it is considered that there is a need to provide additional bus stops on either side of the town centre to ensure accessibility to public transport. This would increase the catchment area of bus services in the town and support a modal shift to sustainable travel. Proposed potential locations (indicative only) of these additional bus stops are shown below. The provision of these additional bus stops and the extension of bus routes (e.g. 434) further south may require a new bus turning facility on the Ennis Road to support this route extension. This will be considered in partnership with the NTA and other stakeholders, along with the potential for future expansion of bus services within the Gort area.

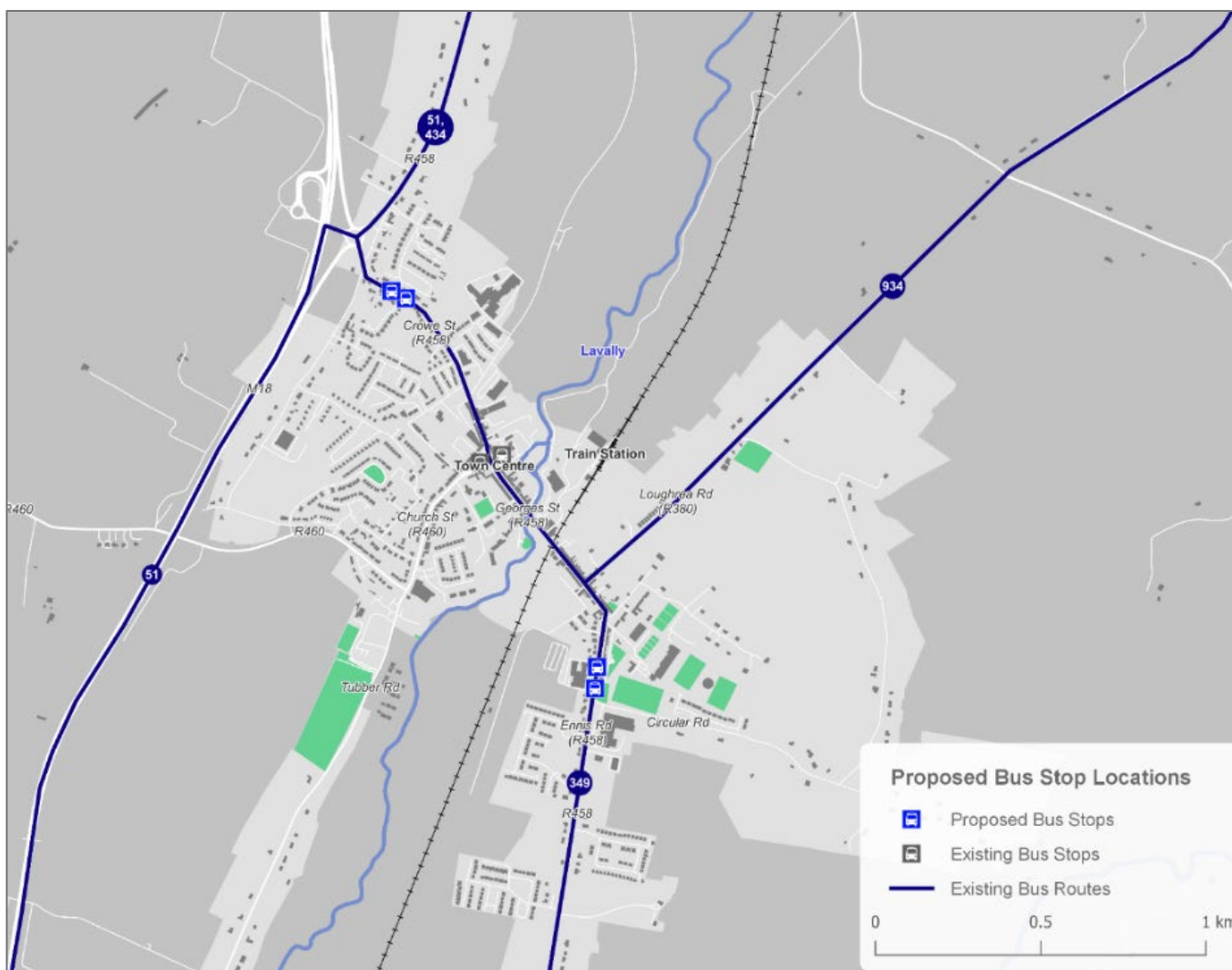


Figure 6-12: Proposed additional bus stops (indicative locations only)

6.4 Road & Traffic Management Options

As outlined above, a number of traffic management arrangements have been proposed within Gort town centre as part of the draft Public Realm project to support walking, cycling and public realm improvements. These include the reallocation of road space at Market Square, Crowe Street, Church Street, Main Street and Bridge Street.

As part of the draft LTP, it is proposed that the corridor link in Figure 6–13 is reserved from development as an infrastructure safeguard.



Figure 6-13: Proposed Road Infrastructure Safeguards – draft LAP 2025-2031

The LTP also proposes the upgrade of a number of junctions throughout the town to improve safety for all road users. The current transport network in Gort is often difficult to traverse for pedestrians and cyclists, with few formal crossings provided in the town and most junctions featuring wide, splayed turns for cars leaving long crossing distances for pedestrians and hazards for cyclists from turning vehicles.

As the active travel measures illustrated in Figure 6.1 are delivered, all junctions along these routes will need to be reviewed and upgraded to provide safe access for pedestrians and cyclists. Exact details on proposed upgrade works will be defined at the individual project level.

6.5 Supporting Measures

A number of supporting measures have been proposed in the LTP to complement the transport network improvements and support modal shift. These measures include:

- The roll out of cycle parking.
- Provision of improved bus stop infrastructure and passenger information.
- A The development of a town parking management strategy, including consideration of both the quantum and cost of parking within the town in the longer term.
- This parking management strategy will also include the development of an EV parking (and pricing) strategy. This will support compliance with the EU Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, which calls for an increase to 20% for the number of parking spaces which should have provision for electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- The development of an integrated Traffic Management Plan.
- A range of behavioural change measures including mobility management plans for workplaces, schools and new housing developments, cycle skills and maintenance training, and a range of school based sustainable travel initiatives and events.

A full list of supporting measures included in the Emerging Preferred Strategy can be found in **Appendix B**.

6.6 KPI Assessment

The draft Emerging Transport Strategy as a whole has been assessed against the objectives and KPIs listed in Table 4-1. The strategy has been assessed against an existing ‘Do Nothing’ scenario using the five-point rating scale outlined in Table 5-1.

The following sections provide an overview of the performance of the draft Emerging Preferred Strategy in meeting the overarching study objectives. It should be noted that (to avoid duplication) the Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement proposals have been considered as a ‘baseline project’ within the draft LTP. Therefore, the Town Centre Public Realm project has not been considered in this KPI assessment.

6.6.1 Accessibility & Social Inclusion

Table 6-2: Emerging Preferred Strategy: Accessibility & Social Inclusion Outcomes

| OBJECTIVE | KPI | SCORE |
|--|--|-------|
| Support and implement transport measures which reduce car dependency and improve access to local services by sustainable modes | Access to key services (ATOS Analysis) | |
| | Access to Public Transport | |

As outlined in Figure 6-1, the Emerging Preferred Strategy for Gort includes the creation of an integrated active travel network providing improved accessibility to key services including the town centre and local schools. Strong pedestrian and cycle linkages are proposed to existing employment locations, as well as future planned employment locations within the town to support sustainable travel to work. Local permeability improvements have been identified, providing connectivity which will substantially reducing access times to key services by walking and cycling. The NTA’s ATOS tool was re-run for the future Emerging Preferred network proposed as part of the LTP and demonstrate an improvement in accessibility to services within Gort as a result of the LTP measures.

The Emerging Preferred Strategy supports improvements to public transport such as frequency increases on existing services, exploration of new bus services, and the addition of new bus stops. Active Travel measures in the strategy will improve walking and cycling accessibility to rail and bus stops. It also includes supporting measures which will improve the quality of bus stop infrastructure in the town and the quantum of cycle parking at public transport stops/stations.

6.6.2 Integration

Table 6-3: Emerging Preferred Strategy: Integration Outcomes

| OBJECTIVE | KPI | SCORE |
|---|---|-------|
| To align and integrate with existing and emerging national, regional, and local planning policy | Compatibility of transport measures with local, regional and national policy - Rating Scale | |

The focus of the Emerging Preferred Strategy on active modes and urban realm enhancements is deemed to comply with national, regional and local planning policy as covered in Chapter 2. In particular, the active travel improvements align with the focus by the Department of Transport on Safe Routes to School.

The overall rebalancing of the transport network towards sustainable modes aligns with the National Planning Framework, the Climate Action Plan 2024, the National Sustainable Mobility Policy, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and the GCDP 2022-2028.

6.6.3 Safety & Physical Activity

Table 6-4: Emerging Preferred Strategy: Safety & Physical Activity Outcomes

| OBJECTIVE | KPI | SCORE |
|--|--|-------|
| Provide safe access to schools for vulnerable road users and ensure a safe front of school environment | Qualitative assessment of walking and cycling infrastructure to schools - Rating Scale | |
| | Reduction in walking/cycling distances to school sites (GIS/ATOS assessment) | |

The Emerging Preferred Strategy has a significant focus on providing safe routes to school by active modes. A number of routes, in particular the delivery of walkway & cycleway routes along and across the Gort River which link to the town's schools. However, it is noted that the town centre will not feature segregated cycle infrastructure due to the proposed public realm project and as such a lower positive grade is given.

In terms of walking/cycling distances to schools, local permeability improvements have been identified, providing connectivity which will substantially reducing access times to key services by walking and cycling. This is particularly true of residential areas east of the M18 which currently feature many cul de sacs, extending walking and cycling distances to schools and the town centre.

The ATOS tool was re-run with the future LTP active travel network to illustrate the impact of the proposed measures on access to schools, and the results highlight a significant increase in accessibility due to the proposed LTP active travel network.

6.6.4 Environment

Table 6-5: Emerging Preferred Strategy: Environment Outcomes

| OBJECTIVE | KPI | SCORE |
|--|---|-------|
| Contribute to achieving Climate Action Plan targets through the creation of an environment which encourages a modal shift from the private car to more sustainable modes | Anticipated change on sustainable mode shares - Rating Scale | |
| | Length of additional / improved walk and cycle infrastructure | |

The Emerging Preferred Strategy will deliver enhanced sustainable connectivity across Gort, supporting environmental improvements through reductions in carbon emissions, improving local air quality and enhancing the public realm to support active travel. The provision of a wider network of safe pedestrian and cycle infrastructure should help encourage a modal shift to active travel, particularly for short distance trips within Gort.

6.6.5 Economy

Table 6-6: Emerging Preferred Strategy: Economy Outcomes

| OBJECTIVE | KPI | SCORE |
|--|--|-------|
| Contribute to Gort's economic vitality through improved connectivity and enhanced public realm | Access to Town Centre | |
| | Quality of Town centre streetscape and public realm – Rating Scale | |
| | Deliverability Rating Scale | |

The Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement project proposals will deliver a greatly enhanced public realm and streetscape in the town centre. This will make Gort a more attractive place to spend time, increasing footfall within the town centre and supporting local businesses. However while walking provision is greatly enhanced through widened footpaths and improved crossings, the lack of segregated cycle infrastructure within the town centre results in a lower grade for access.

The vast majority of measures in the Emerging Preferred Strategy involve reallocation of existing road space to active travel measures and can therefore be delivered in a short to medium timeframe. These short term measures are focussed on providing strong connections from residential areas to key attractions in the town, notably the town centre, schools and employment sites.

Some longer-term proposals will require significant resources in terms of both design and construction. This would include elements such as the new Active Travel bridge over the Gort River to connect the Ennis Road and Queen Street, via an extended Gort River Walk, which will need detailed assessment as part of the scheme development process to determine deliverability.

7. MONITORING STRATEGY & LTP REVIEW

Delivery of the LTP Strategy Measures will be phased over the plan period, and prioritised as part of the LTP implementation phase. It is envisaged that the Measures that will be implemented in the short term will include upgrades to existing permeability links, development of quietways and school zones along with:

- **WC13** – Traffic Calming and filling in footpath gaps along the R460.
- **WC27** – Traffic Calming along the L85314 to connect the town to the Gort River Walk.
- **WC35** - Traffic Calming along Tubber Road to provide safe route to Gort Boys National School.
- **WC50** – Traffic Calming and footpath upgrades along Ennis Road.⁹

The Galway County Council Active Travel Team, Forward Planning Team and the Gort Town Centre First Team, along with key stakeholders, will work together on the delivery of relevant projects.

A Monitoring and Evaluation Plan will be developed and implemented as part of the delivery process for the Gort LTP. This will monitor mode share ambitions and benchmark performance during the plan period.

The NTA guidance recommends undertaking reviews during defined timeframes (e.g. short term 1-2 years; medium 2-5 years; long term 5 to 10 years; future-term 10 to 15 years).

At the end of each timeframe, monitoring can be conducted to establish the following:

- Progress on the implementation of all infrastructure measures for each mode of transport.
- Progress on the implementation of all public transport service measures for each mode of transport.
- Progress on the implementation of all demand management and supporting smarter travel measures.
- Cross-checking of assumptions in the LTP against current transport patterns and population at the time of monitoring.
- Assessment of actual development and land use outcomes within the LTP Study Area at the time of monitoring against the original LAP assumptions related to land use.

Evaluation of the outcomes of the LTP can also be undertaken within similar timeframes including evaluating the following:

- **Sustainable Travel Mode Share** – for example via updated Census POWSCAR data, Employment and School Mobility Management Plan data, local residents' surveys, cycling and walking counts and bus patronage data.
- **Economic Benefits** – for example via town centre footfall and spend surveys, distinguishing between those who travelled to the town centre by car and by sustainable means.
- **Health and Safety Benefits** – for example via analysis of available local road safety statistics.

⁹ Subject to receiving the required funding, consents and approvals.

- **Environmental Benefits** – for example via Air Quality and Noise monitors at key locations within the town centre and usage of public Electric Vehicle car charging and eBike parking facilities. User surveys can also be conducted to determine user satisfaction levels with new active travel infrastructure and public transport services and waiting environments.

Accessibility and Social Inclusion – updated catchment analysis for access into and within town centre, including for those without access to a car.

DRAFT

8. SUMMARY

8.1 Overview

This report outlines the process undertaken to develop the draft Gort Local Transport Plan (LTP) for consultation. The key purpose of the LTP is to guide the future transport and mobility needs of Gort, taking into account the transport demand arising from existing and projected development both within the study area and the wider area of influence.

In developing the DRAFT LTP, SYSTRA have followed guidelines set out in TII/NTA's 'Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) Guidance Notes. A Baseline Assessment was undertaken to understand existing conditions within Gort LTP grounded in National, Regional and Local policy.

Through a review of existing conditions and relevant policies and plans, a long-list of proposed measures were identified to support the future transport needs of Gort. These options were passed through an options assessment process to determine the package of measures that would form the draft Gort LTP for consultation. The full set of draft strategy measures were assessed against the study objectives using identified Key Performance Indicators.

The results indicate that the draft LTP measures score positively in meeting the overarching LTP objectives. The delivery of a safe, integrated walk and cycle network will improve accessibility across Gort, encouraging an increase in sustainable travel. A number of measures have focused on improving safety for access to local schools, supporting active travel and improving the health and wellbeing of children within the town.

The town centre area falls under the aegis of the separate proposed public realm enhancement project proposals, and as such, in consultation with Galway County Council, it falls outside of the scope of the LTP. The public realm project aims to increase the vitality and attractiveness of Gort town centre, encouraging residents and visitors to meet and spend time, and also increase footfall within the town centre.

The Galway County Council Active Travel Team, Forward Planning Team and the Gort Town Centre First Team, along with key stakeholders, will work together on the delivery of relevant projects.

In terms of wider accessibility, the draft LTP supports upgrades to existing public transport services and facilities, including improved frequencies of trains and buses to Galway and Ennis and improved public transport waiting environments.

The draft LTP also includes a range of supporting measures to complement the transport network improvements and support modal shift. These measures include the roll out of cycle parking and a range of behavioural change measures including mobility management plans.

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Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council



SYSTRA

Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

Draft Gort Local Transport Plan

Appendix A – Galway Policy Context Report



SYSTRA



DRAFT GORT LOCAL AREA PLAN 2025-2031

Draft Gort Local Transport Plan

IDENTIFICATION TABLE

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Client/Project owner | Galway County Council |
| Project | Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031 |
| Study | Draft Gort Local Transport Plan – Appendix A Galway Policy Context Report |
| Date | 11/03/2025 |
| Reference number | 300876 |

APPROVAL

| Version | Name | | Position | Date | Modifications |
|---------|-------------|----------------|----------------------|------------|---|
| 1 | Author | Ronan Fallon | Consultant | 19/09/2022 | First draft for client review |
| | Checked by | Alison Pickett | Associate Director | 26/09/2022 | |
| | Approved by | Andrew Archer | Director | 27/09/2022 | |
| 2 | Author | Alison Pickett | Director | 30/01/2023 | Final draft incorporating CAP 23 updates |
| | Checked by | Andrew Archer | Director | 30/01/2023 | |
| | Approved by | Andrew Archer | Director | 30/01/2023 | |
| 3 | Author | Sean Cronin | Assistant Consultant | 22/11/2024 | Updated draft incorporating new policies as of 2024 |
| | Checked by | Ben Healy | Consultant | 27/11/2024 | |
| | Approved by | Alison Pickett | Director | 11/12/2024 | |



APPROVAL

| Version | Name | | Position | Date | Modifications |
|---------|-------------|----------------|----------------------|------------|---|
| 4 | Author | Sean Cronin | Assistant Consultant | 10/03/2025 | Updated draft incorporating new policies as of 2025 |
| | Checked by | Ben Healy | Consultant | 10/03/2025 | |
| | Approved by | Alison Pickett | Director | 11/03/2025 | |

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|------------|--|-----------|
| 1. | INTRODUCTION | 4 |
| 1.1 | BACKGROUND | 4 |
| 1.2 | TECHNICAL NOTE CONTENTS | 4 |
| 2. | POLICY & PLAN REVIEW | 6 |
| 2.1 | INTERNATIONAL | 6 |
| 2.2 | NATIONAL POLICIES & PLANS, GUIDANCE & CONSULTATIONS | 7 |
| 2.3 | REGIONAL POLICIES & PLANS | 23 |
| 2.4 | COUNTY POLICIES & PLANS | 27 |



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- SYSTRA Ltd has been engaged by Galway County Council (GCC) to provide a range of Transport Support for the County. These include the following Workstreams:
 - 1) County Level Transport Modelling Assessment.
 - 2) County Galway Walking & Cycling Strategy.
 - 3) Local Transport Plans (LTPs) for four settlements: Athenry; Gort; Loughrea; and Oranmore/Garraun.
 - 4) Community Transport Studies (CTSs) for six settlements: Clifden; Headford; Kinvara; Oughterard; Portumna; and Maigh Cuilinn.
 - 5) Cycling and Walking Sub-Plans for:
 - The four LTPs and six CTSs settlements listed above in items 3 and 4.
 - Twelve additional settlements:
 - Small Growth Settlements x six: An Spidéal; An Cheathrú Rua; Ballygar; Dunmore; Glenamaddy; and Moylough.
 - Rural Settlements x six: Carna; Clarinbridge; Clonbur; Craughwell; Miltown; and Mountbellow.

These Studies (known as the Galway Transport Support Programme) will guide future transport investment, setting out the County's Walking & Cycling Strategy as well as each settlement's transport strategy for the period to 2028, but also looking beyond to 2040.

1.2 Technical Note Contents

This Technical Note sets out a review of international, national, regional, and county level policies and plans relevant to the Studies outlined above. The development of the Galway Transport Modelling Assessment, Walking and Cycling Strategy and Local Transport Plans / Community Transport Plans will be shaped by and reflect these policies, along with relevant national guidance and current consultations.

This Technical Note summarises the review of policy, plans and guidance relevant to the Galway Transport Support Programme as follows:

- International level
- National level
- Regional level
- County level



This Technical Note will be supplemented by a review of Local Plans and Policies for each of the 22 settlements listed above. These Local Plan and Policy reviews will form part of the Local Transport Plan / Community Transport Plan / Cycling & Walking Sub-Plan reports developed for each of the settlements.



2. POLICY & PLAN REVIEW

2.1 International

Table 1. Policy & Plan Review – International

| POLICY & PLANS | INTERNATIONAL |
|---|--|
| <p>European Union Green Deal (European Commission, 2020)</p> <p>and</p> <p>Fit For 55 Package (European Commission, 2021)</p> | <p>The European Union Green Deal calls for a 90% reduction in transport greenhouse gas emissions in order for the EU to become a climate-neutral economy by 2050.</p> <p>In 2021, the European Commission published its Fit for 55 Package to enable the EU to meet the Paris Agreement carbon targets and achieve net zero by 2050. The Fit for 55 Package encompasses a suite of legislative initiatives across various sectors including energy, transport and buildings. It is intended to fundamentally overhaul the EU’s climate policy framework and put the EU on track to deliver on its climate targets of a 55% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050.</p> <p>Sustainable transport is one of the underscored ways to achieve this target through providing users with more affordable, accessible, healthier and cleaner mobility alternatives.</p> |
| <p>UN Convention for the Rights of People with Disabilities (2019)</p> | <p>In March 2019, Ireland ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. Article 9 of the ‘UNCRPD’ includes the right to transport and creating an accessible end to end journey. Its focus is:</p> <p><i>“To enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas. These measures, which shall include the identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility, shall apply to, inter alia:</i></p> <p><i>Buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including schools, housing, medical facilities and workplaces.</i></p> <p><i>Information, communications and other services, including electronic services and emergency services.”</i></p> <p>Article 9 for the first time enshrines the right to transport within Irish legislation. The focus on Usability and Accessibility has implications and opportunities across transport planning and provision.</p> |

2.2 National Policies & Plans, Guidance & Consultations

Table 2. Policy & Plan Review – National

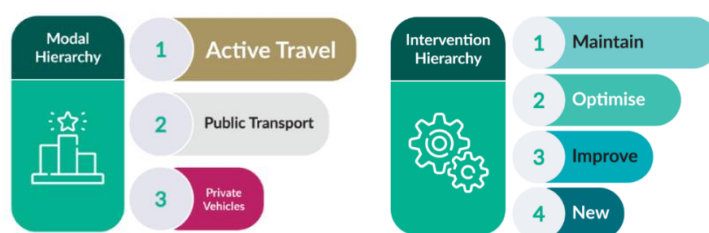
| POLICY & PLANS | NATIONAL |
|---|--|
| <p>Project Ireland 2040</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Planning Framework (NPF) • National Development Plan 2021-2030 (NDP) | <p>Project Ireland 2040 sets out a framework for future national development and investment. It encompasses the National Planning Framework 2040 (NPF) and the National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030. The NPF sets out Ireland’s planning policy up to 2040. The NPF sets the vision and strategy for shaping the future growth and development up to 2040 and is underpinned by National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compact Growth • Enhanced Regional Accessibility • Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities • Sustainable Mobility • A strong Economy supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills • High-Quality International Connectivity • Enhanced Amenity and Heritage • Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society • Sustainable Management of Water, Waste and other Environmental Resources • Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services. <p>The NDP sets out the enabling investment to implement the strategy set out in the NPF. The NPF combines with the National Development Plan to form Project Ireland 2040. Projects of relevance for Galway city and county include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Galway – Dublin Greenway; scheduled for completion in 2026 • N6 Galway City Ring-Road • Feasibility study of a Galway City LRT (2022) • Upgrade works to Galway train stations • Continuing to replace diesel buses with hybrid-electric models. <p>In June 2023 proceedings began to review and update the NPF with a Draft Revised National Planning Framework, recognising the need for accelerated delivery of new homes in line with employment and population growth. On 5th November 2024, Government agreed to progress and publish a draft schedule of amendments to the First Revision to the National Planning Framework (NPF) arising from the public consultation process which took place from 10th July 2024 to 12th September 2024. In order to finalise the Revision of the National Planning Framework, Government will in due course be required to approve a final Revised NPF following the conclusion of the environmental assessments, which will include a Strategic Environmental Assessment, Natura Impact Statement and Appropriate Assessment Determination, and a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.</p> |
| <p>Project Ireland 2040</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Investment Framework for | <p>The Department of Transport issued the National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI) in 2021. It sets out the prioritisation for future investment in the land transport network to support the delivery of the NPF and the NSOs.</p> |

Transport in Ireland 2021 (NIFTI)

A key objective of NIFTI is to protect and renew our existing transport assets to safeguard the value of our past investment and ensure that the **network is resilient to the impacts of climate change** and adaptable to future transport behaviours. NIFTI sets out two hierarchies – travel modes and transport intervention – to enable the delivery of investments that address four investment priorities:

- **Decarbonisation**
- Protection and Renewal
- **Mobility of People and Goods in Urban Areas**
- **Enhanced Regional and Rural Connectivity.**

The NIFTI Modal Hierarchy outlines which modes are to be accommodated and encouraged when investments and other interventions are made.



Climate Action Plan 2024 (2024)

The new Climate Action Plan 2024 (CAP24) is the third annual update to Ireland Climate Action Plan 2019 and calls for transformational change and accelerated action across the transport sector to meet 2030 transport abatement targets. CAP24 sets out a target of a 50% reduction in transport emissions by 2030 to achieve the overall legally binding objective of a 51% reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030 specified in the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 (2022 figures reported in CAP24).

CAP24 includes outcome focussed indicators that convey the highly challenging level of change required in the transport sector to deliver carbon reductions. The policy emphasises the AVOID – SHIFT – IMPROVE framework introduced in CAP 2023, as follows:

- **Avoid** measures which aim to reduce or avoid the need for travel through enhanced spatial planning. Integrated transport and spatial planning are critical for reducing our GHG emissions and will bring significant co-benefits—promoting safer, low-carbon, and more people-focused transport, and ensuring long-term transport sustainability.
- **Shift** measures, encouraging a modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport. These measures can also include those which reduce the private car's 'competitive advantage' by installing bus-gates and reclaiming road-space currently dominated by cars.
- **Improve** measures which typically refer to technology-based measures that improve the GHG efficiency of residual vehicle-based transport or the efficiency of the network itself.

| POLICY & PLANS | | | NATIONAL |
|---------------------------|-----------|------|--|
| All-Ireland Review (2024) | Strategic | Rail | <p>The All-Island Strategic Rail Review, published in July 2024, lays out a strategic vision for the development of Ireland's rail network through 2050, aiming to create a sustainable, efficient, and interconnected transport system across the island. It emphasises the role of rail in achieving decarbonisation goals and promoting regional development. The report identifies key issues with the current rail network, including capacity constraints, slow speeds, and poor connectivity, particularly in certain regions. It proposes a comprehensive set of recommendations to address these challenges, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decarbonisation: The report strongly advocates for the electrification of the island's intercity network as a crucial step towards achieving net-zero emissions targets. It also recommends the procurement of hybrid and electric rolling stock in the medium term. • Intercity Connectivity: A key focus is improving connectivity between major cities, including Dublin, Belfast, Cork, Limerick, and Galway. The report recommends upgrading the cross-country network to dual-track and increasing service frequencies. It also suggests developing short sections of new railways to address congestion on certain corridors. • Regional and Rural Connectivity: The report recognises the need to enhance connectivity in underserved regions, including the West Coast, where Galway is located. It proposes several initiatives, including the reinstatement of the Western Rail Corridor railway between Claremorris and Athenry. This reinstatement would offer several benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved freight transport, enabling a direct route from the northwest to ports on the south coast, bypassing the congested Dublin area. • Reconnection of Tuam to the rail network. • Enablement of direct services between Galway and Mayo. • Sustainable Cities: The report acknowledges the importance of supporting urban transport initiatives in major cities, including Galway, to encourage sustainable mobility and reduce reliance on cars. • Freight Transport: The report aims to revitalise rail freight, recognising its potential to reduce road congestion and emissions. It recommends strengthening rail connectivity to ports, developing inland terminals, and reducing track access charges to improve competitiveness. <p>Additional Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report specifically recommends reinstating the Western Rail Corridor between Claremorris and Athenry. This project would reconnect Galway to Mayo by rail, providing a direct route for both passenger and freight transport, and offer potential economic benefits for Tuam. • The report supports improving service frequencies on existing lines serving Galway, including those connecting Galway to Dublin, Limerick, and Cork. It also |

suggests exploring double-tracking between Athenry and Galway to accommodate increased traffic.

National Roads 2040 Strategy (2023)

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) has a **long term strategy for planning, operating, and maintaining the National Roads network**. National Roads 2040 has been developed to support National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs), with the Strategy's investment priorities developed to align closely to the four NIFTI investment priorities:

- Decarbonisation
- Enhanced regional and rural connectivity
- Protection and renewal
- Mobility of people & goods in urban areas.

TII's vision is for the National Roads to be *"An evolving sustainable transport system focused on safety, innovation, accessibility and mobility of people, goods and services."*

Listed roles for TII includes the delivery of *"active travel infrastructure which contributes to compact growth, sustainable mobility, enhanced regional accessibility and the transition to a low-carbon future"*; and *"encouraging modal shift from car transport to public and active travel modes."* The Strategy states that:

"Where national roads are too dangerous for walkers or cyclists, meaningful interventions should be considered in cooperation with relevant stakeholders and partner agencies.... delivering improved active travel provision in all its projects, such as improving the safety of National Roads for active travel users and reducing the severance caused by some National Roads in urban areas.

***TII will collaborate with other stakeholders to progress the National Cycle Network plan to cater for more active trips and expand the Greenway network nationwide, on behalf of the Department of Transport. Provision of safe, high quality and active travel infrastructure will encourage modal shift and result in reductions in carbon emissions."* (5.1.3 Active Travel)**

And where there is urban congestion, "TII will support the provision of segregated or offline active travel infrastructure adjacent to national roads."

The strategy also defines TII investment portfolios for coming years and provides guidance to Sponsoring Agencies and Local Authorities. TII, through NR2040, will align with the NIFTI Intervention hierarchy and seek to address transport challenges through the use of existing infrastructure before considering the provision of new infrastructure. When developing a project on National Roads, the relevant Local Authority, third party and / or TII department will need to show that the proposed investment aligns with NIFTI and address how potential negative impacts, against one of more of the NIFTI Investment Priorities, will be mitigated.

“NR2040 is not a ‘predict and provide’ exercise, but a proactive policy led strategy to maintain and develop a network that creates opportunities for the country.”

TII National Cycle Network

NTA Cycle Connects (ongoing)

TII’s National Cycle Network (NCN), is a planned **core cycle network of 3,500km that will crisscross the country, connecting more than 200 villages, towns and cities**. The network will include cycling links to transport hubs, education centers, employment centers, leisure and tourist destinations, and support “last mile” bicycle deliveries. The network will make it easier and safer for more people to cycle for commuting, leisure, and tourism, reducing reliance on the car.

The NCN incorporates many existing and planned Greenways as well as a range of proposed new cycle routes, as part of its proposed national cycle corridors. The NCN will also complement and integrate local cycling development projects and Greenways. It will enable people to easily cycle to the centre of villages, towns and cities being developed by the NTA’s Active Travel programme. It is envisaged the most of the NCN will be delivered by local authorities over the coming years.

The NTA’s Cycle Connects programme aims to complement and build upon the core network of the NCN. The Plan includes proposals for additional routes to connect towns, cities and villages across 22 counties and integrate with cycling plans already developed for the Greater Dublin Area (Meath, Kildare, Wicklow and Dublin). The delivery of these strategies in conjunction with the NCN will create a comprehensive network of inter urban, primary, secondary, greenway and feeder routes throughout the country.

For Galway County, towns and settlements will be connected by either inter urban routes of dedicated Greenway routes such as that proposed from Clifden to Galway City that will serve Maigh Cuillin and Oughterard en route. This will allow improved connectivity for commuting trips and leisure activities through the county. More information can be found here: <https://www.nationaltransport.ie/planning-and-investment/transport-investment/active-travel-investment-programme/cycleconnects-irelands-cycle-network-active-travel/>

Connecting Ireland – Rural Mobility Plan (ongoing)

The **Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan** is a major national public initiative developed by the NTA, with the aim of increasing connectivity around the country, particularly for people living outside major cities and towns. The plan aims to **improve mobility in rural areas by providing better connections between villages and towns** by linking these areas with an enhanced regional bus network connecting cities and regional centres nationwide. Connecting Ireland seeks to make public transport for rural communities more useful for more people, and it will do this by:

- Improving existing services
- Adding new services
- Enhancing the current Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) network which meets the transport needs of people who live in remote locations.

Proposals for Galway include:

- Enhanced interurban bus services between Galway City and Ennis, Limerick and Cork.
- Enhanced interurban bus services between Galway City and Castlebar and Westport linking Headford to regional towns and cities.
- Improved interurban bus services from Clifden to Galway City serving Oughterard and Maigh Cuilinn en route.
- Improved local bus services from Galway to Portumna to Nenagh and from Ballinasloe via Portumna to Ennis.
- New local bus routes from Ballygar to Athlone and from Glenamaddy, Mountbellow and Ahascragh to Ballinasloe, coordinated with rail services at Ballinasloe to points east to Dublin.
- New and enhanced connections along the west coast of the county, including between Carraroe and Maam Cross, between Roundstone and Clifden and between Clifden and Westport.

Consultation took place in 2022 on the proposals, with more information available (including mapping and routes) here: <https://www.nationaltransport.ie/connecting-ireland>

National Sustainable Mobility Policy (2022)

The **National Sustainable Mobility Policy** sets out a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport journeys to help Ireland meet its climate obligations. It is accompanied by an Action Plan to 2025 which contains actions to improve and expand sustainable mobility options across the country by providing **safe, green, accessible and efficient alternatives to car journeys**. It also includes demand management and behavioural change measures to manage daily travel demand more efficiently and to reduce journeys taken by car.

In line with the Climate Action Plan, the policy targets 500,000 additional daily active travel and public transport journeys and a 10% reduction in vehicle kilometres by fossil fuelled cars by 2030.

The policy aims to make it easier for people to choose walking, cycling and use public transport daily instead of having to use a petrol or diesel car under the following key themes:

Safe and Green mobility

- Expanding walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure across the country.
- Moving the public transport fleet to low and zero emission vehicles.
- Improving the safety of walking, cycling and public transport networks.

People focused mobility

- Making walking, cycling and public transport more accessible for all users – including those with reduced mobility, disabilities and the elderly.
- Introducing a more attractive fare structure.
- Reallocating road space to prioritise walking, cycling and public transport.

Better integrated mobility

- Adopting a transport-orientated approach to housing development to place new housing close to public transport.
- Making it easier to switch between walking, bike, bus and rail.

OECD Redesigning Ireland's Transport Network for Net Zero (2022)

This report published by the OECD aims to help Ireland redesign its transport system to achieve its climate goals, particularly in the passenger surface transport sector. It analyses Ireland's current car-dependent transport system and its shortcomings in achieving sustainable accessibility and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The report argues that Ireland's current focus on policies like electric vehicle incentives is insufficient for achieving systemic change and instead advocates for transformative policies that focus on shifting away from car dependency and towards a more sustainable transport system. The report presents a number of recommendations for Ireland to prioritise, focusing on:

- Redefining the goal of the transport system as sustainable accessibility.
- Prioritizing policies with high transformative potential.
- Scaling up shared on-demand services.

Additionally, the report emphasises the importance of revising mental models, communication strategies, and governance structures to support the transition to a more sustainable transport system.

Five Cities' Demand Management Study (2021)

This Study, commissioned by the Climate Change Unit of the Dept of Transport as part of the 2019 Climate Action Plan (Action 81) to "Develop a regulatory framework on low emission zones and parking pricing policies, and provide local authorities with the power to restrict access to certain parts of a city or a town to zero emission vehicles only. Examine the **role of demand management measures in Irish cities**, including low emission zones and parking pricing policies." The Study had four key objectives:

- **Reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from road traffic**
- **Address air quality issues due to vehicular traffic emissions**
- **Manage vehicular traffic congestion**
- **Improve the quality of the urban environment**

While the study focused on the five cities, a number of the recommended Transport Demand Management measures are applicable across Galway County such as 1st = **15 Minute Neighbourhoods** and 2nd = **National Planning Framework Delivery Management** along with a range of Transport Demand Management (TDM) measures outlined in the Study's City Toolkit.

Our Journey Towards Vision Zero: Road Safety Strategy 2021 – 2030 (2021)

The Road Safety Authority (RSA)'s Road Safety Strategy has a new ambition at its core of a Vision Zero approach to Road Safety (delivered by the Safe System approach), which is a long-term goal aimed **at eradicating road traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2050**. This is international best practice and has been adopted by the European Commission in its Road Safety Strategy.

Some of the key interventions include **significant investment in the provision of safe, segregated infrastructure to protect those walking and cycling**, along with **initiatives to promote modal shift** from motor vehicle travel to support environmental, safety and health objectives. There are seven Safe System priority intervention areas aims.

- **Safe roads and roadsides.** To improve the **protective quality of our roads** and infrastructure.
- **Safe speeds. To reduce speeds to safe, appropriate levels for the roads being used, and the road users using them.**
- **Safe vehicles.** To enhance the safety features and roadworthiness of vehicles on our roads.
- **Safe road use. To improve road user standards and behaviours** in line with traffic legislation, supported by enforcement.
- **Post-crash response.** To improve the treatment and rehabilitation of collision casualties.
- **Safe and healthy modes of travel. To promote and protect road users engaging in public or active transport.**
- **Safe work-related road use.** To improve safety management of work-related journeys.

Irish Rail Strategy 2027 (2021)

Galway will see improvements to its rail services and infrastructure, as set out in Iarnród Éireann's 2027 Rail Strategy. These include improvements to both regional services and intercity services including:

- Service frequency improvements to/from Dublin
- An upgrade of Ceannt Station in Galway City
- Infrastructure upgrades at Oranmore. This includes a 1KM passing railway loop at the existing Oranmore Train Station, including additional platform and associated infrastructure.
- Double tracking of the Athenry – Oranmore – Galway Line.
- Additional platform at Woodlawn Station on the Galway Line.

National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS) 2017-2022

The National Disability Inclusion Strategy is a whole of Government approach to improving the lives of people with disabilities. The action plan contains a "Transport and Accessible Places" theme which includes a number of actions relevant to transport in Galway County:

- Action 100: Improve the **accessibility and availability of public transport**
- Action 107: Develop **access to outdoor recreation facilities**, in particular footpaths and trails
- Action 108: Implement the programme of **dishing of footpaths in urban areas**, in line with guidance from the National Disability Authority's publication: *Building for Everyone*
- Action 109: Ensure further roll-out of **accessible inter-city coaches and accessible regional / rural coach and bus stops**

The National Disability Inclusion Strategy is currently in the process of being updated with an extensive and targeted consultation period between November 2023 – February 2024 held for individuals and stakeholder groups.

| POLICY & PLANS | NATIONAL |
|---|--|
| Sport Ireland Participation Plan 2021 – 2024 (2021) | <p>This plan is the national framework with ideas and initiatives to increase physical activity in Ireland. It aims to increase physical activity levels across the whole population and to create a society which facilitates people to lead an active way of life, setting targets to increase physical activity by 1% across all ages and decrease inactivity by 0.5%.</p> <p>Action Area Four of the NPAP focuses on the use of the natural and built environment as a way to build in daily physical activity. It recognises that promoting active transport is the most practical and sustainable way to increase physical activity as part of people’s everyday routine. It specifically identifies the role of walking or cycling for utility transport as a means to increase people’s physical activity levels.</p> |
| Housing for All – a New Housing Plan for Ireland (2021) | <p>Housing for All is the new housing plan for Ireland aims to improve the accessibility to affordable and high standard housing for everyone who wishes to purchase or rent a home. The Plan references Urban Development Zones which includes transport-led development, and the promotion of compact, sustainable and liveable settlements.</p> <p>The document states that a well-functioning and sustainable housing system requires strong integration between housing developments and the surrounding transport infrastructure.</p> |
| Travelling in a Woman’s Shoes (2020) | <p>Transport Infrastructure Ireland’s (TII) Travelling in a Woman’s Shoes 2020 study identifies that historically, transport has not been designed with the needs of women in mind. Identifying and supporting the travel needs of women will help Ireland transition to a carbon-neutral transport system. The Study explores the drivers of car dependency for women, including transport infrastructure, significant caregiving responsibilities, safety concerns and equality of access to quality services.</p> <p>The study identifies a range of policy opportunities to address this car dependency and encourage the wider adoption of sustainable transport, including active travel.</p> |
| Transport – Climate Change Sectoral Adaption Plan (2019) | <p>A Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan was prepared for the Transport sector under the National Adaptation Framework. The plan seeks to ensure that the transport sector can continue to fulfil its objectives as the country reckons with ever increasing extreme weather events and rising sea levels due to climate change. The plan lays out a number of actions aimed at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improving understanding of climate change on transport infrastructure. ● Assisting stakeholders in identifying and prioritising climate risks to existing and planned infrastructural assets and enabling them to implement adaptation measures accordingly. ● Ensuring that resilience to weather extremes and longer-term adaptation needs are considered in investment programmes for planned future transport infrastructure. |

| POLICY & PLANS | NATIONAL |
|---|--|
| | <p>A draft update of the plan is currently being undertaken and is expected to undergo consultation in early 2025. The new plan aims to improve on current progress and align with the National Adaptation Framework 2024 and the Climate Action Plan.</p> |
| <p>Get Ireland Walking</p> | <p>Get Ireland Walking is an initiative by Sport Ireland. The core aim of the initiative is to unify and enable the efforts of all agencies interested in promoting walking. It is a nationwide initiative to deliver programmes in conjunction with All Sports Partnerships. The programme hopes to create a vibrant culture of walking throughout Ireland.</p> <p>The initiative highlights how places need to be conducive to walking and that walking needs to be integrated into policies and plans at all scales. It highlights how, in order to increase the numbers of people walking, infrastructure needs to be safe, attractive to walk in and it must cater for all users including those in strollers, wheelchairs and the elderly.</p> |
| <p>Healthy Ireland: A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2019 – 2025 (2019)</p> | <p>A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2019-2025's is a national framework to improve health and wellbeing in Ireland. Its vision is for a healthier Ireland, where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone's responsibility.</p> <p>The Framework identifies a number of broad intersectoral actions, one of which commits to the development of a plan to promote increased physical activity levels.</p> |
| <p>Healthy Ireland: National Physical Activity Plan (2019)</p> | <p>The National Physical Activity Plan (NPAP) recognises that physical inactivity is a demonstrated clear risk to health and wellbeing in Ireland, and aims to increase physical activity levels across the whole population. It aims to create a society which facilitates people to lead an active way of life, setting targets to increase physical activity by 1% across all ages and decrease inactivity by 0.5%.</p> <p>Action Area Four of the NPAP focuses on the use of the natural and built environment as a way to build in daily physical activity. It recognises that promoting active transport is the most practical and sustainable way to increase physical activity as part of people's everyday routine. It specifically identifies the role of walking or cycling for utility transport as a means to increase people's physical activity levels.</p> |
| <p>Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2025</p> | <p>Zero Emission Vehicles Ireland (ZEVI) is a dedicated office within the Department of Transport charged with supporting consumers, the public sector, and businesses to continue to make the switch to zero emission vehicles.</p> <p>ZEVI published the EV Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2025 which sets a roadmap for the delivery of Ireland's EV charging infrastructure by 2025. It outlines a comprehensive plan to integrate EV infrastructure into a broader sustainable transport network. The strategy emphasises inclusivity, ensuring that the charging</p> |

| POLICY & PLANS | NATIONAL |
|---|---|
| <p>National EV infrastructure Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Road Network EV Charging Plan 2024 to 2030 • Regional and Local EV Charging Network Plan 2024- 2030 | <p>infrastructure is accessible to all, regardless of age, health, or income. It acknowledges that home charging will remain the primary solution for most EV users, but also provides options for those unable to charge at home. A key focus is on interoperability and user-friendliness across the charging network.</p> <p>The strategy details various types of charging solutions, including destination charging at leisure and tourism locations, and en-route charging with fast, high-powered stations. It highlights the importance of government support in the form of seed funding to encourage the rollout of these infrastructures. Standards for EV infrastructure are set to ensure ease of payment, accessibility, data sharing, interoperability, smart charging capabilities, and sustainability tracking. The Strategy also outlines existing and new infrastructure supports, such as grants for home and residential charging, and initiatives to promote shared charging solutions.</p> <p>Arising from this Strategy is the National EV infrastructure Plan which is made up of the National Road Network EV Charging Plan 2024 to 2030 and the Regional and Local EV Charging Network Plan 2024- 2030. Both of these plans provide for delivering EV Infrastructure for national roads, at key destinations and neighbourhood locations to provide infrastructure to support the transition to EVs and address user needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Road Network EV Charging Plan is a strategic initiative aimed at enhancing the electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure across the national road network, ensuring comprehensive geographic coverage for light-duty vehicles (LDVs) such as passenger cars. The plan outlines a phased approach to infrastructure delivery and includes provisions for heavy-duty vehicles (HDVs), with specific targets for electric trucks and buses by 2030. It considers factors such as grid connection availability and environmental considerations for optimal site locations. The plan also addresses the need for a robust grid infrastructure to support the development of public EV charging capacity. • The Regional and Local EV Charging Network Plan for 2024-2030 is designed to enhance the accessibility and availability of EV charging infrastructure at a more localised level, focusing on destination and neighbourhood charging. This plan aims to address the diverse needs of EV users by implementing a bottom-up modelling approach, allowing local authorities to estimate infrastructure demand accurately and identify strategic sites for EV charging stations. The plan emphasises flexibility and adaptability to foster widespread EV adoption, ensuring that infrastructure aligns with the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation (AFIR) requirements while also considering potential additional needs. <p>Local Authorities will play a lead role in delivering infrastructure through the Regional and Local EV Charging Network Plan and are currently developing EV Strategies for their Local Authorities to identify Neighbourhood and Destination Charging needs and subsequent implementation plans to ensure delivery of this EV infrastructure.</p> |

Table 3. Policy & Plan Review – National Advice & Guidance Documents

| NATIONAL ADVICE & GUIDANCE | |
|---|--|
| <p>Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) (2019)</p> | <p>DMURS sets out the manner in which roads and streets in urban areas should be designed to prioritise the needs of sustainable travel users in Ireland and reduce the dominance of the private car. The focus of the guidance is the balance between the different modes of transport to ensure that the urban realm is pleasant and safe for all users.</p> <p>Similar to the NIFTI, the guidelines emphasise that sustainable modes of transport should be prioritised in street designs. Active travel is to be considered first, then public transport, and then cars. The guidance also supports a network-based approach to designing streets. The connectivity of the active travel routes and permeability of neighbourhoods are highlighted as important components of the design of Irish streets.</p> <p>The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) Interim Advice Note – Covid-19 Pandemic Response also includes guidance that designers should ensure that measures align with the principles of universal design, consider Government policy on accessibility for people with disabilities and consult people with disabilities to further appraise measures.</p> |
| <p>NTA Greening and Nature-based SuDS for Active Travel Schemes (2023)</p> | <p>The NTA recognises the need to mitigate the impacts of climate change and improve the resilience of towns and cities. The greening of urban spaces with Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) as part of active travel schemes aim to reintroduce nature and biodiversity through use of parklets, planters and rain gardens as part of urban realm enhancements.</p> <p>The guidelines aim to create an attractive and sustainable nature focused urban environment to encourage outdoor living. When new active travel infrastructure is being implemented, green spaces are to be protected or their reductions minimised to maintain adequate levels of permeable surfaces.</p> |
| <p>NTA Rapid Build Active Travel Facilities (2023)</p> | <p>In response to rising construction costs and the Climate Action Plan (CAP) requirement for 1,000km of new active travel infrastructure to be built by 2025, the NTA issued an Active Travel Advice Note in February 2023 concerning rapid build facilities. This note outlines that cost-effective rapid build construction approaches, including road space reallocation, are now required as initial options to be considered when planning for new active travel infrastructure.</p> <p>Rapid build active travel facilities are schemes that utilise cost-effective measures to deliver walking and cycling infrastructure quicker than traditional (full build) construction methods. They do not typically involve major construction works such as full road reconstruction or significant changes to drainage systems or relocation of utilities, however they may involve changes to kerb lines and minor drainage works. The works will also be typically within the boundaries of the existing roadway which can simplify the planning process, with positive impacts on project programme and delivery.</p> |

Permeability Best Practice Guide (2015)

The Permeability Best Practice Guide provides **recommendations on how best to facilitate demand for walking and cycling in existing built-up areas**.

Recommendations include the **retention and creation of linkages within the urban environment** for people to walk and cycle from their homes to shops, schools, local services, places of work and public transport stops and stations.

The Guide also includes recommended **metrics for measuring pedestrian and cycle link Quality of Service**. These key performance indicators (KPIs) include pedestrian route directness (PRD) and the width of the facility.

Universal Design Walkability Audit Tool for Roads and Streets

The Universal Design Walkability Audit Tool is used to capture existing conditions of walking routes in relation to its walkability. The Audit Tool supports the Government's policy of transition to more sustainable forms of transport, with increased levels of walking contributing to a wide range of societal and health benefits including improved levels of fitness, cleaner air, safer environments and better social inclusion.

The aims of the audit tool are to **assess if neighbourhoods and streets are places where people of all ages and abilities can walk safely, conveniently and independently**.

National Cycle Manual

The National Cycle Manual provides **guidance on the design of cycling networks and on engineering design of cycling infrastructure**. The guidance is based on the Five Needs of a Cyclist:

- Safety
- Coherence
- Directness
- Attractiveness
- Comfort

Greenways Guidelines

Rural Cycleway Design (Offline and Greenways)

There are a number of documents which provide **specifications and guidelines for the construction of greenways and cycle routes**. These documents focus mainly on the primary route infrastructure such as the path itself, it's design characteristics such as the width, the gradient, the surface finish etc.

One of these documents is the "Greenways and Cycle Routes Ancillary Infrastructure Guidelines" (2018) which provides suggestions and best practise examples for the construction of new greenways. TII also provides two documents with relevance to the construction of rural cycleways. These are "Rural Cycleway Design (Offline and Greenways)" (2022) and "Rural Road Link Design" (2017). The cycleway manual provides specifications for:

- Planning for Rural Cycleways
- Design considerations
- Road / Cycleway Junctions & Crossings
- Ancillary Infrastructure
- Pavement & Foundation Construction Details

- Monitoring and Evaluation

The road manual instructs Local Authorities as to how they can implement and integrate cycling infrastructure into the rural road network. Some of the major points in the document include:

- Designing for Speed
- Stopping Sight Distance
- Horizontal Alignment
- Edge Treatment
- Drainage

**Traffic Management
Guidelines Manual (2019)**

Prepared in line with current national transport strategy guidelines that promote sustainability and accessibility through improvement to and better management of the transport system, the purpose of the Traffic Management Guidelines Manual is to provide guidance on a variety of issues.

These include traffic planning, traffic calming and management, incorporation of speed restraint measures in new residential designs and the provision of suitably designed facilities for public transport users and for vulnerable road users such as cyclists, motorcyclists and pedestrians (including those with mobility/ sensory impairments). It also focuses on how these issues must be examined and implemented in the context of overall transportation and land use policies.

**TII/NTA Area Based
Transport Assessment
(ABTA) Guidance Notes
(2018)**

AND

**ABTA How to Guide, Pilot
Methodology (2021)**

The intention of the ABTA process is to **ensure that sustainable transport is considered and planned for at the earliest stage**, at every level in the hierarchy of plans and investment programmes, and ultimately in the assessment of the developments' transport requirements and impacts at the local level. The key aims of the ABTA approach are as follows:

- Maximise the opportunities for the integration of land use and transport planning by including the ABTA process as integral to the preparation of the Plan.
- Assess the existing traffic, transport and movement conditions within the Plan area and in its wider context.
- Plan for the efficient movement of people, goods and services within, to and from the Plan area.
- Identify the extent to which estimated transport demand associated with the emerging local development objectives can be supported and managed on the basis of existing transport assets.
- Identify the transport interventions required within the Plan area and in the wider context, to effectively accommodate the anticipated increase in demand.
- Inform Site Specific Transport Assessments for development management applications.

**Safe to School: An Ideas
Document for Safe Access
to School (2020)**

The Safe to School: An Ideas Document for Safe Access to School presents research conducted in the context of social distancing requirements since the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond. It is designed to present ideas for school principals, boards of

management, teachers, parents and students to consider implementing **to address front of school vehicle congestion and enable more journeys by active travel.**

Eight measures are suggested, including widening footpaths, park 'n' stride, preventing illegal parking, informal car-free zone, school streets, visual interventions, cycle bus and separate access.

NTA Safe Routes to School Design Guide (2022)

The Safe Routes to School programme aims to **increase active travel choices to schools and to improve safety and access** for students and their parents and carers on their journeys to/from school. The NTA Design Guide comprises key design principles to create safer, calmer, more attractive routes to school and improve front of school environments.

Spatial Planning and National Roads - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012)

Guidelines for Spatial Planning affecting National Roads were developed to deliver on the National Spatial Strategy. The guidelines make it clear that **government policy no longer support unsustainable urban sprawl or dispersed and car dependent forms of development**, both of which have been accelerated by the location of employment and retail centres near national road junctions.

Moving major inter-urban and inter-regional traffic (i.e. strategic traffic) is the primary purpose of the national road network. Therefore, local authorities must limit development which promotes short trip making on the national road network. There are a number of key messages in the plan regarding development planning and roads:

- Development plans must include **measurable objectives for securing more compact development** that reduces overall demand for transport and encourages modal shift towards sustainable travel modes.
- Development plans must include policies which seek to **maintain and protect the safety, capacity and efficiency of national roads and associated junctions**, avoiding the creation of new accesses and the intensification of existing accesses to national roads where a speed limit greater than 50 kph applies. New accesses to these roads are prohibited bar very exceptional circumstances.
- Planning authorities and the NRA (now TII) must work together during the early stages of plan preparation to identify any areas where a less restrictive approach may apply.
- Development plans must include **clear policies and objectives with regard to planning and reservation of new routes and/or upgrades.**
- Planning authorities should consult at a very early stage with transport infrastructure providers (including the NRA) and, in the Greater Dublin area, with the National Transport Authority.

Table 4. National Consultations

| NATIONAL CONSULTATIONS | |
|--|--|
| Moving Together, Department of Transport 2024 | <p>“Moving Together: A Strategic Approach to the Improved Efficiency of the Transport System in Ireland” is the new national overarching strategy framework for managing transport demand. The draft strategy aims to alleviate the economic and social costs of congestion and car dependency, in tandem with considerable investment in public transport, active travel and electric vehicle infrastructure – working towards the Climate Action Plan target of reducing overall kilometres travelled by 20% by 2030.</p> <p>Whilst these objectives are designed to lower carbon emissions by the transport sector, they will also target congestion, pollution, road safety and maximise the wellbeing utility of public space. Three key approaches are identified:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The leveraging of existing policies, programmes and infrastructures which reduce travel demand. 2. Building an improved evidence base which would inform the identification of any impediments in reducing travel demand, as well as the appropriate ways to address these impediments. 3. Enabling and empowering state and civil society actors at a range of different levels to collaboratively work towards the delivery of the framework’s objectives, through bespoke planning for their communities. |

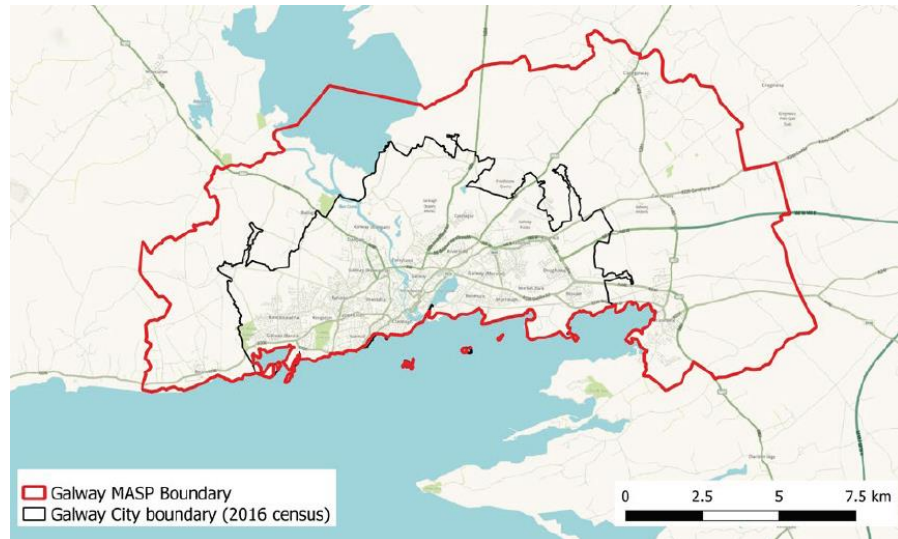
2.3 Regional Policies & Plans

Table 5. Policy & Plan Review – Regional

| POLICY & PLANS | REGIONAL |
|---|---|
| <p>Northern & Western Regional Assembly, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) 2020-2032 (2020)</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (GMASP)</p> | <p>At a regional level, the NPF 2040 recommends the development of Regional Spatial & Economic Strategies (RSESs) to ensure better co-ordination in planning and development across local authority boundaries, providing a link between the NPF, City and County Development Plans and Local Economic and Community Plans.</p> <p>Galway falls under the North and Western RSES, which was issued by the Regional Assembly in 2020. The RSES Vision is <i>‘To play a leading role in the transformation of this region into a vibrant, connected, natural, inclusive and smart place to work and live’</i>.</p> <p>The RSES’s strategic outcomes reflect those of the NPF, including a focus on Compact Growth, Sustainable Mobility, and a Low Carbon, Climate Resilient and Sustainable Society.</p> <p>The region is highly dependent on private car use, with 2016 Census data confirming 70% of commuter trips are made by private car. In response, whilst there are limited opportunities for use of sustainable transport modes in parts of the region, the RSES identifies four high-level transport principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improving strategic and local connectivity. ● Improving access to public transport facilities. ● Catering for the role of the car within the region. ● Ensuring sustainable development to cater for long-term growth through reducing levels of traffic congestion. <p>The priority Core Transport Outcomes to be delivered across the region include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supporting the achievement of compact, smart growth through the achievement of ‘mutual consistency’ between land use and transport planning/investment/service provision. ● Promotion of higher development densities in appropriate locations with an associated consideration being given to reduced constraints on building heights. ● Strengthening inter-regional connectivity through the improvement of inter-urban road and rail connectivity. ● Strengthening public transport connectivity between the Assembly Area’s city and large towns, and between the large towns, with improved services and reliable journey times. ● Providing public transport infrastructure and services to meet the needs of smaller towns, villages and rural areas. ● Developing a comprehensive network of safe cycling routes in the three Regional Growth Centres and providing similar facilities in other towns and villages, where appropriate. <p>The RSES advises the preparation of Local Transport Plans (LTP) for identified key towns to support compact growth and sustainable mobility. LTPs should identify and prioritise objectives in relation to sustainable travel infrastructure and plan for the efficient movement of people within and outside of the area served by the LTP, which</p> |

should **deliver appropriate measures to promote walking, cycling and public transport** use to create accessible spaces (RPO 6.29).

As part of the RSES, a **Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP)** has been prepared for Galway, providing an implementation strategy for development outcomes in the Galway Metropolitan Area, which encompasses Galway City and surrounding parts of the county.

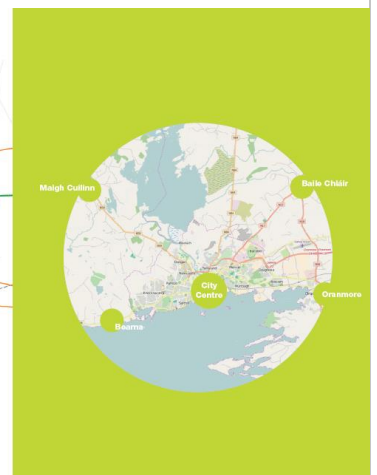


The population of the Metropolitan Area is projected to grow by 27,500 to 2026 and by a further 14,500 to 2031, with the population of the city and suburbs accommodating 23,000 to 2026 and a further 12,000 to 2031. Within Galway County, residential growth areas are identified in Bearnna to the west, Oranmore to the east and Baile Chláir to the northeast, with industrial / technology growth identified in Oranmore and around the former Galway Airport.

The MASP reaffirms projects developed under the Galway Transport Strategy, including the Galway City Ring Road, the Tuam Bus Corridor, the Dublin Road Bus Corridor and a high frequency cross-city bus network as well as provision of active travel infrastructure, Park and Ride sites and the double tracking of the rail line from Ceannt station to Athlone.

Galway Transport Strategy (2017)

The Galway Transport Strategy was developed by Galway City Council, in partnership with Galway County Council and the National Transport Authority, to address current and future identified transport issues and opportunities within Galway City and the surrounding metropolitan area.



In terms of impacts on the wider county, the suite of measures in the strategy includes the construction of the N6 Galway City Ring Road and a revamp of the city and commuter bus networks.

The strategy proposes upgrade of the existing main bus corridors to provide high frequency routes. The Brown bus route would extend to Bearnna to the west and Oranmore to the east, both located within Galway County. The strategy aspires for these routes to operate at a frequency of at least once every 15 minutes, with high frequency to be maintained across the daily period as opposed to just within peak hours.

To complement these services, Park and Ride sites along National Roads are proposed to cater for trips to Galway City originating outside of the metropolitan area.

N6 Galway City Ring Road Project

The N6 Galway City Ring Road (GCRR) is a key measure within the Galway Transport Strategy which realises Galway City and County Council's vision of all elements of transport working together to achieve an integrated sustainable transport solution. Galway City currently experiences significant transport issues such as:

- Peak hour congestion and journey time unreliability
- Over reliance on private cars
- Lack of alternative transport modes
- Lack of road space for the development of Smarter Mobility and Public Transport

The ring-road forms a vital part of the councils strategy to minimise these issues and free up the city centre of freight and private car traffic, as illustrated in the figure below.



Western Rail Corridor Financial and Economic Appraisal (2020)

A Financial and Economic Appraisal of the Western Rail Corridor was undertaken on foot of a commitment in the National Development Plan 2018 – 2027. The aim of this report is to assess whether the investment which would be required to reactivate these two phases can be justified in delivering value for money for the Irish Exchequer.

As part of the appraisal a public survey was undertaken which received over 6,000 responses. The survey showed overwhelming public preference for the alignment to be used as a railway rather than a greenway.

The outcome of the Economic Appraisal was a Benefit to Cost Ratio of 0.21, based on estimated construction costs of €264m excl. VAT. Despite the strong economic benefits that the line delivers, they were not found to be sufficient to justify the large capital costs which would be required to reactivate the line.

JASPERS Project Screening Note: Western Rail Corridor Phase 2/3 (2020)

In 2020, JASPERS undertook an independent review of the proposed investment for reconstruction of the Western Rail Corridor phases 2 and 3. The review examined all material available for the project, with specific reference to the Financial and Economic Appraisal prepared by EY.

The review concluded that the findings of the Financial and Economic Appraisal were not unreasonable, and that the project in its current form is likely to present a very weak justification for investment. Additionally, JASPERS found that to gain EU financing through the European Investment Bank or inclusion in the TEN-T networks would require a strong demonstration of the strategic need for the corridor which is not currently available.

2.4 County Policies & Plans

Table 6. Policy & Plan Review – County

| POLICY AND PLANS | COUNTY |
|--|---|
| Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 | <p>The Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 (CPD) sets out the strategy and methods through which future planning and sustainable development of the county will be achieved for the period to 2028. Preparation of the CDP commenced in June 2020, and was adopted by the elected members of the Council in May 2022, coming into effect in June 2022.</p> <p>Chapter 6 (Transport& Movement) sets out the ways in which appropriate provision for the safeguarding and upgrading of existing transport infrastructure will be ensured. It seeks to build on the existing strengths within the county while also addressing deficiencies in a sustainable manner, including through taking account of climate change and creating more sustainable communities.</p> <p>The CDP looks to:</p> <p><i>‘Encourage investment and improvements across all sectors of transport that will support targeted population, economic growth and more sustainable modes of travel including, walking, cycling and public transport’.</i></p> <p>A number of strategic aims and associated policy objectives are identified to help achieve this, which are outlined below in more detail.</p> |
| Galway County Tourism Strategy 2023 – 2031 (2023) | <p>The strategy aims to promote and capitalise on Galway’s current and ongoing success as a tourist destination through showcasing it’s culture, heritage and natural sites. By developing sites and attractions in a focused manner along patterns of visitors demand and support growth to less known areas, the strategy will help to spread economic gains county wide.</p> <p>The Strategy focuses on sustainable growth and its approach is grounded on a number of key themes, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for the sustainability of rural economies and communities. • A focus on sustainability in all its forms including environmental, social and economic. • Community engagement as a core part of all development. • An emphasis on ‘opening up the outdoors’. • An emphasis on green and blue infrastructure and associated amenities and experiences. |
| Galway County Transport and Planning Study (GCTPS) (2021) | <p>The Galway County Transport and Planning Study (GCTPS) sits alongside and supports the Galway County Development Plan (2022-2028). The strategy supports the councils transport aims <i>‘To encourage investment and improvements across all sectors of transport that will support targeted population, economic growth and more sustainable modes of travel including, walking, cycling and public transport’.</i></p> |

The development process for the GCTPS followed a thorough baseline establishment as well as identification of planned new development in the County Development Plan. The findings of that process were used in an option development process for defined movement corridors across the county. A longlist of options by mode was considered against key objectives for each corridor in order to develop preferred options by corridor. These preferred options were then combined to form county wide mode based strategies to meet relevant mode based policy objectives in the Development Plan.

The GCTPS proposes a range of measures, including transport infrastructure upgrades, support for transport service enhancements, and supporting activities, which will collectively deliver enhancements and changes in travel behaviour within the County which are consistent with the policy objectives defined within Chapter 6 of the County Development Plan (CDP).

In summary, the GCTPS supports the CDP objectives relating to Transport as follows:

- **Integrated Transport Planning:** Support for transition toward active, sustainable and low-carbon modes of transportation, and preparation of Local Transport Plans for the towns of Ballinasloe and Tuam.
- **Walking & Cycling:** Provision of a modern walking and cycling network which gives such infrastructure high priority within street hierarchies, adheres to the design principles and requirements set out in the National Cycle Manual and DMURS, and which provides safe and secure cycle parking as part of new developments and public space regeneration projects.
- **Electric Vehicles:** Support for the roll-out of charging infrastructure and other facilities to encourage the uptake of electric vehicles.
- **Public Transport:** Support for enhanced public transport services, including provision of new and improved public transport infrastructure; advocacy for improvements to public transport services; engagement with the NTA, TII and others with regard to provision for Park and Ride services, and support for the Galway to Athlone rail link and Western Rail Corridor schemes.
- **National Roads:** Protection of the safe and efficient operation of the national road network, support for planned major upgrade schemes, and use of Traffic and Transport Assessments (TTAs) and Road Safety Audits (RSAs) to assess the impacts of proposed development upon the national road network.
- **Non-National Roads:** Safeguarding of capacity on restricted and non-restricted regional roads within the regional and local road networks; management of through-traffic within town and local centres.
- **Supporting Measures;** use of School Travel Plans and Mobility Management Plans to drive and encourage increased use of sustainable modes of travel to education and other significant development sites; and application of car parking standards and associated requirements as set out in Chapter 15 of the CDP.

POLICY AND PLANS

COUNTY

Galway County Walking & Cycling Strategy (2013)

The 2013 Galway County Walking & Cycling Strategy examines and deals with primary walking and cycling aspects of commuting, tourism and community exercise and activities in Galway County. Tuam, Ballinasloe, Oranmore and Clifden are designated as major study towns.

The cycling network in 2013 is described as variable, with the better-quality cycling facilities usually provided as a result of road improvement schemes. The Strategy identifies the Council's goals for walking and cycling as to:

- Encourage **modal shift** for students and workers from cars to walking and cycling.
- **Boost tourism** within the County through the creation of walking and cycling attractions and facilities.
- Develop local walking and cycling facilities to **encourage uptake in local sporting and physical exercise**.
- Raise **public awareness of the benefits** of walking and cycling.

The following targets are set out as part of the Strategy:

- Increase the proportion of people who walk to work within the County from 5% to 20%.
- Increase the mode share for cycling for journeys to work from 1% to 8%.
- Increase the number of children between ages five and twelve who walk to and from school from 13% to 21%.
- Increase the number of children between five and twelve years old who cycle to and from school from 1% to 6%.
- Increase the proportion of students aged 13 to 18 who walk to school / college to match the national average as a minimum.
- Increase the number of students between 13 and 18 years old who cycle to school / college from 1% to 8%.

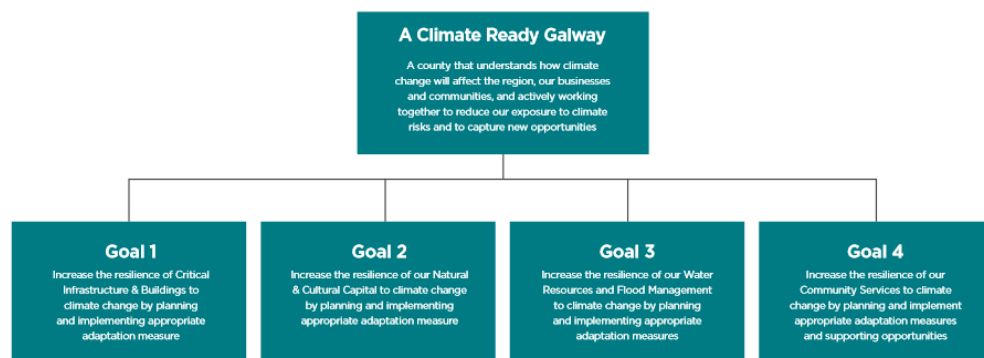
A new County Wide Cycling and Walking Strategy is currently being prepared.

County Galway Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019 – 2024 (2019)

As part of the National Climate Change Action Plan 2019, County Galway produced and adopted its first Climate Adaptation Strategy in August 2019.

The plan takes stock of the policy context, the profile of the city and county area and the impact of climate change observed to date and projected into the future, first at a global level and then focussing on Ireland. A baseline assessment of climate risks for the county analysed a series of past extreme weather events and their effects on the county. Arising from this work, a Climate Risk & Opportunity Register was compiled.

The strategy has four goals towards developing a 'Climate Ready Galway':



Based on these goals, the strategy contains an action plan with four main headings: Infrastructure, Nature and Culture, Water and Flooding and Community Services. Under infrastructure, there is an action to undertake a risk assessment of critical public road infrastructure to identify relevant hazards arising from climate change and extreme weather events.

Galway City and County Age Friendly Programme 2014 – 2019

The strategy aims to make Galway a great place for older people to live, where they can continue to enjoy living within their communities with dignity and respect. Strategic goals are centred on 8 strategic priorities. Strategic Priority 2 is to ensure that “older people can get to where they need to go, when they need to do so”.

Galway County Integration & Diversity Strategy 2013-2017

The strategy was prepared to address “the significant demographic changes that have taken place throughout the County over the past decade or more”. The plan preparation involved detailed collaboration with stakeholders which resulted in the finding of many positives and challenges to be addressed. Based on these findings, the strategy includes an action plan based on four key areas:

- Education and Training
- Employment and Work
- Health and Public Services
- Community Participation.

Draft Gort Local Transport Plan

Appendix B – Strategy Measures



DRAFT GORT LOCAL AREA PLAN 2025-2031

Draft Gort Local Transport Plan

IDENTIFICATION TABLE

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Client/Project owner | Galway County Council |
| Project | Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031 |
| Study | Draft Gort Local Transport Plan – Appendix B Strategy Measures |
| Date | 27/03/2025 |
| Reference number | 300876 |

APPROVAL

| Version | Name | | Position | Date | Modifications |
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| | Approved by | AP | Director | 14/03/2025 | |
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| | Checked by | DB | Associate Director | 26/03/2025 | |
| | Approved by | AP | Director | 27/03/2025 | |

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|------------|---|-----------|
| 1. | APPENDIX B: FULL LIST OF STRATEGY MEASURES BY MODE | 4 |
| 1.1 | ACTIVE TRAVEL | 4 |
| 1.2 | PUBLIC TRANSPORT | 12 |
| 1.3 | ROADS AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT | 14 |
| 1.4 | SUPPORTING MEASURES | 16 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|---|----|
| Figure 1-1: Active Travel Measures Map – Gort LTP Study Area | 6 |
| Figure 1-2: Active Travel Measures Map – central Gort area | 8 |
| Figure 1-3: Proposed Additional Bus Stops (indicative locations only) | 12 |
| Figure 1-4: Proposed Infrastructure Safeguard | 14 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|--|----|
| Table 1-1: Proposed Public Transport Measures | 13 |
| Table 1-2: Proposed Road and Traffic Management Measures | 15 |

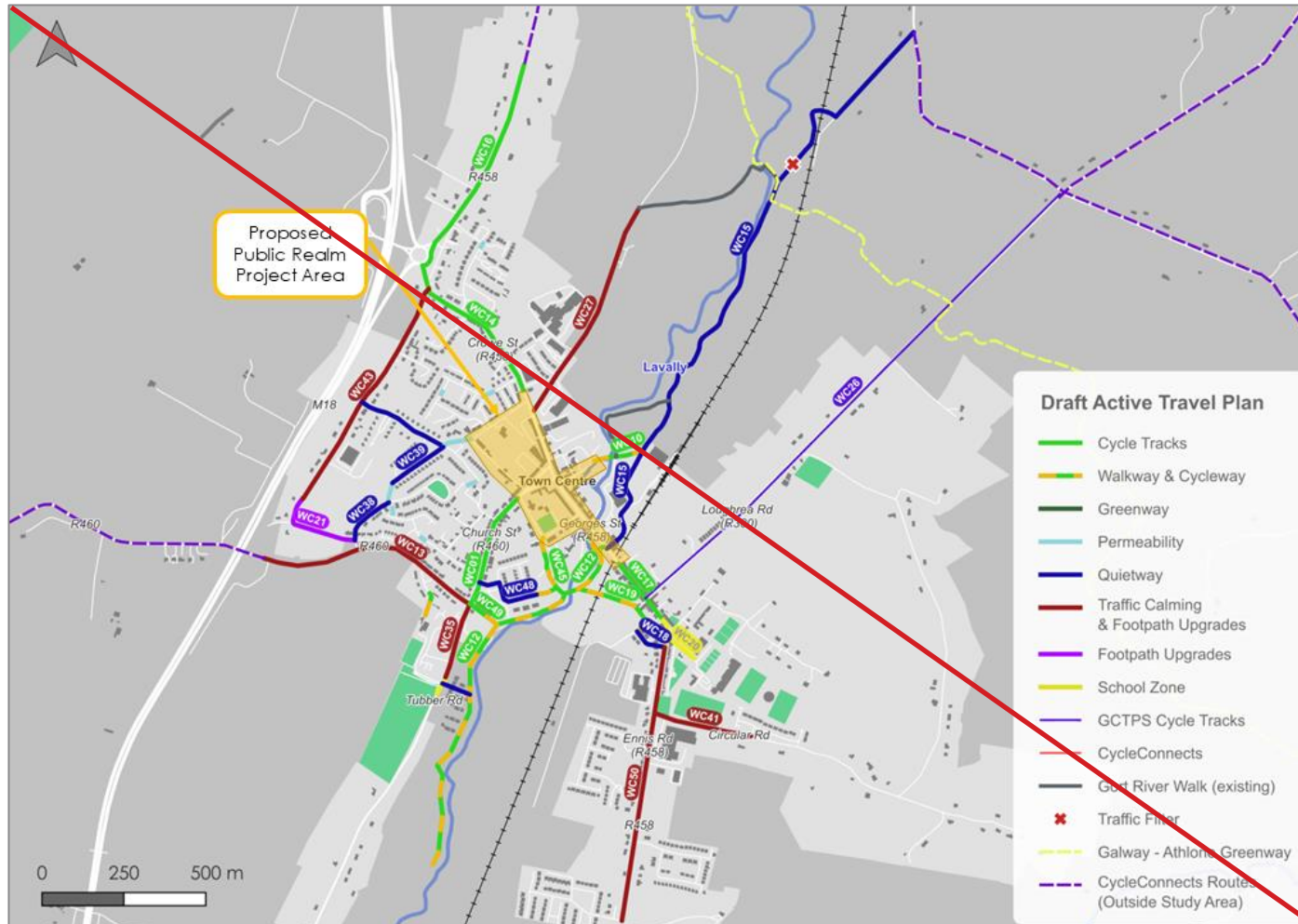
1. APPENDIX B: FULL LIST OF STRATEGY MEASURES BY MODE

This appendix contains maps and tables, with measures presented by mode of transport in separate sections. These correspond to the modal sections in Chapter Six of the main draft Local Transport Plan (LTP) Report.

As the final strategy measures follow from an initial longlist of options (as described in the Options Assessment Chapter of the draft Local Transport Plan), not all measure references are sequential, as some measures were discounted during the Options Assessment process.

1.1 Active Travel

[FROM]



[TO]

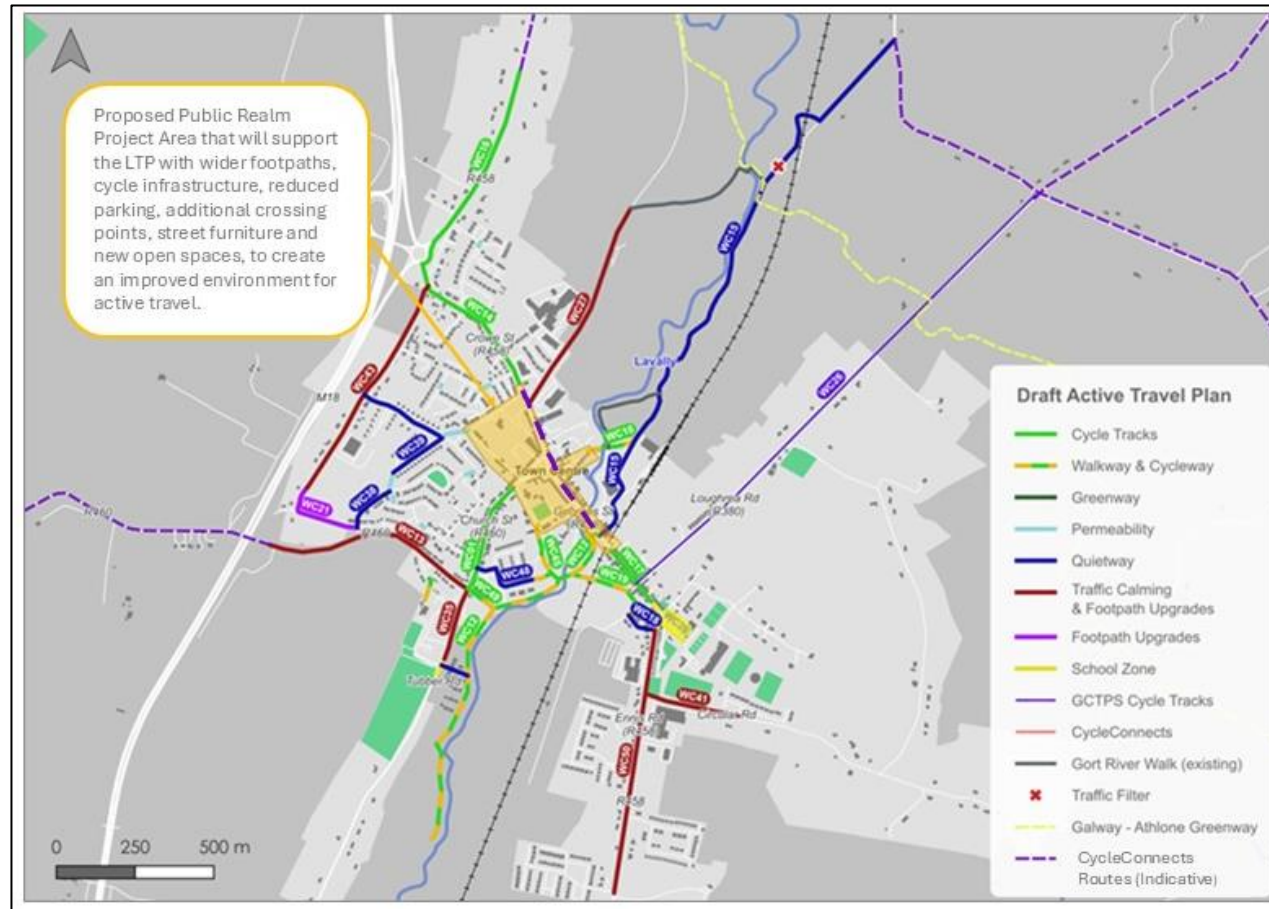
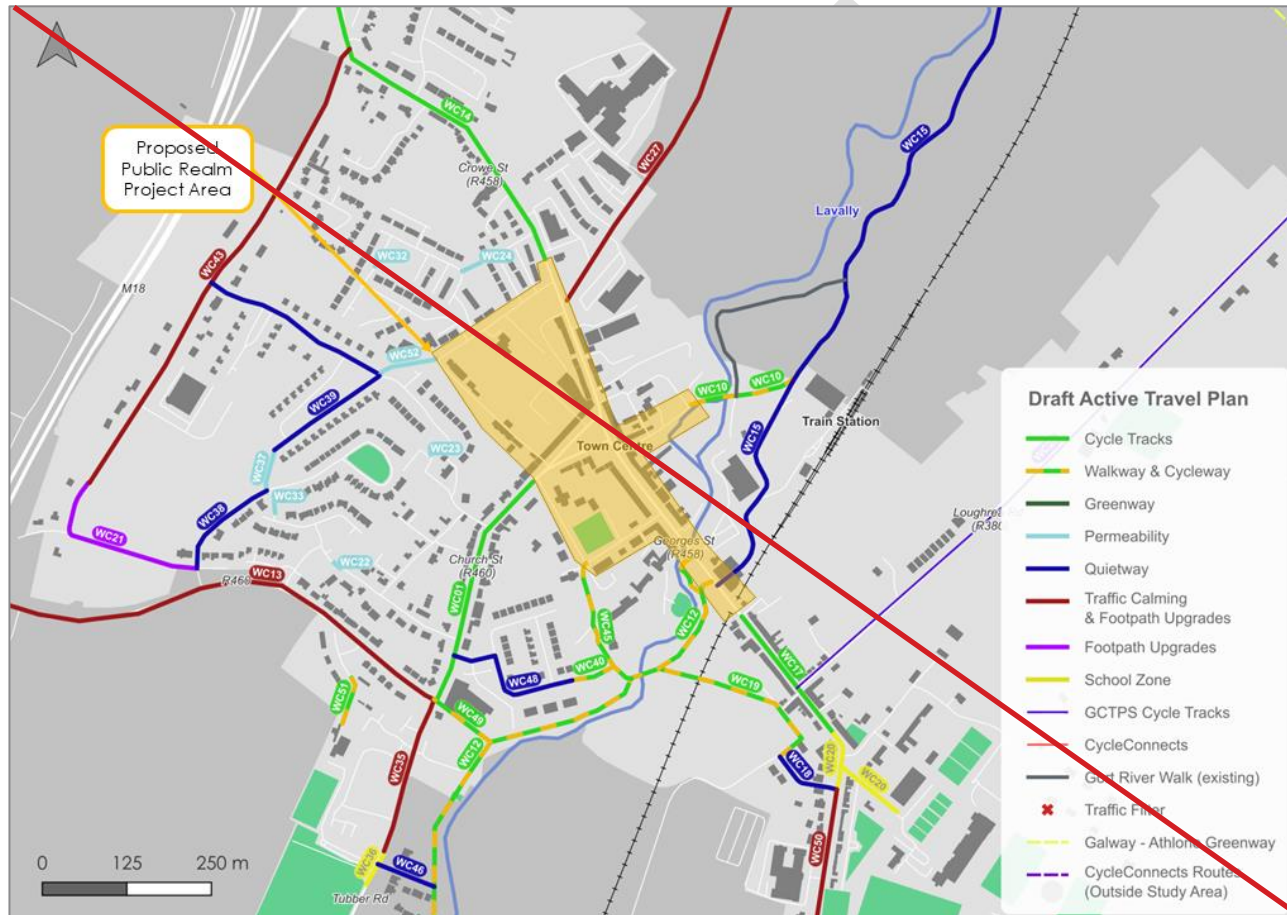


Figure 1-1: Active Travel Measures Map – Gort LTP Study Area

[FROM]



[TO]

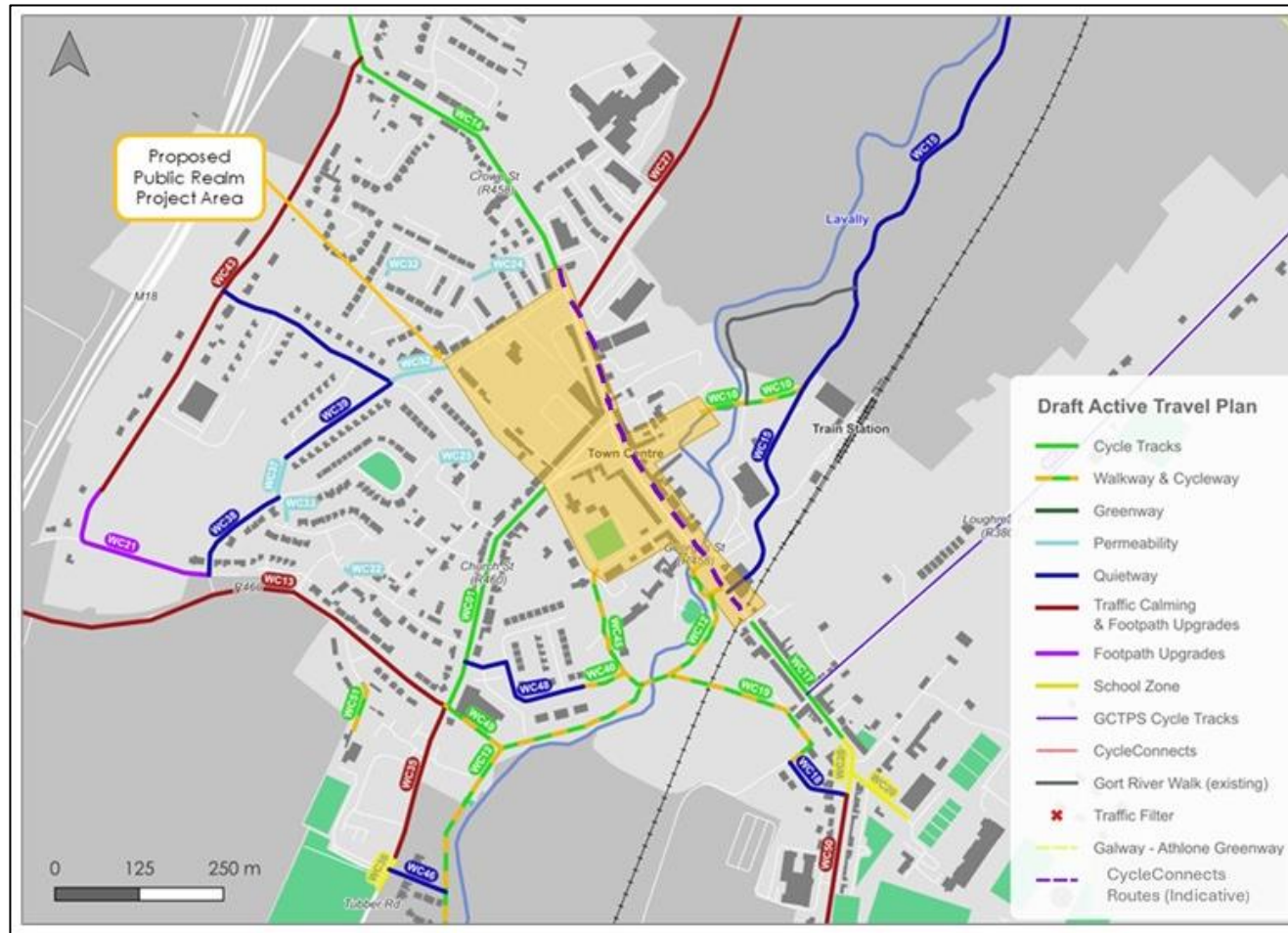


Figure 1-2: Active Travel Measures Map – central Gort area

| Ref | Location | Intervention | Description |
|------|---|------------------------------------|---|
| WC01 | Church Street | Cycle Tracks and Footpath Upgrades | From the junction of Tubber Road (near to Gort National School) provide cycle tracks to edge of the proposed Public Realm Enhancement project area. |
| WC10 | Crowe Street to River Walk over Gort River | Walkway/Cycleway | Walking and cycling connection via new bridge from Crowe Street to the Gort River Walk and to proposed Quietway connection to Galway to Athlone Cycleway WC15. |
| WC12 | Gort River | Walkway/Cycleway | Proposed southern extension of Gort River Walk south of Gort River Bridge through Convent lands to southern extent of study area. This would be a connection for both walking and cycling giving potential to facilitate trips to school. Referenced in Town Centre First Plan. |
| WC13 | R460-R380 | Traffic Calming | Traffic calming and filling in gaps in footpaths network along the R460. |
| WC14 | R458-R380 | Cycle Tracks and Footpath Upgrades | Cycle tracks and footpath upgrades along Crowe Street between roundabout and the proposed Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement project area extent. |
| WC15 | Station Road/Pound Road | Quietway | Quietway along Station Road/Pound Road inclusive of traffic filter south of houses near railway overbridge. This is an important connection to Galway to Athlone Cycleway for leisure and tourism. Placement of traffic filter shows and indicative potential location only. |
| WC16 | R458 | Cycle Tracks and Footpath Upgrades | Continuation of Crowe Street cycle tracks to R458 to northern study area extents, connecting to proposed Cycle Connects Inter Urban cycle route and onwards to Coole Park. |
| WC17 | Georges Street | Cycle Tracks and Footpath Upgrades | Short section of segregated cycle tracks and footpath upgrades connecting the proposed Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement project area to School Zone WC20 to facilitate safe cycle trips to school. |
| WC18 | Springwells | Quietway | Quietway through Springwells as part of Town Centre First proposed walkway and cycleway from Queen Street to Ennis Road. |
| WC19 | Queen Street to Springwells | Walkway/Cycleway | Town Centre First proposed walkway and cycleway from Queen Street to Ennis Road. |
| WC20 | Ennis Road/Georges Street | School Zone | School Zone on Ennis Road/George's Street for Gort Community School and Gaelscoil na bhFilí. |
| WC20 | Entrance to Gort Community School and Gaelscoil na bhFilí | School Zone | School Zone at entrance to Gort Community School and Gaelscoil na bhFilí. |
| WC21 | Glenbrack | Footpath Upgrades | Specific footpath upgrade measures to complete gap in Glenbrack Footpaths, acknowledging infrastructure deficit here to be filled as a priority. |

| Ref | Location | Intervention | Description |
|------|-------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| WC22 | Dún na Rí to Garrabeg | Permeability | Improvement of existing permeability connection between Dún na Rí and Garrabeg to facilitate and improve conditions for cycling, which will facilitate safer and faster trips by cycling as well as walking to schools and to the town centre. |
| WC23 | The Orchard to Nursing Home | Permeability | Connection between The Orchard and Nursing Home, which will facilitate safer and faster trips by walking and cycling to schools and to the town centre. |
| WC24 | Crowe Street | Permeability | Permeability link which will facilitate safer and faster trips by walking and cycling to schools and to the town centre. |
| WC26 | Loughrea Road | GCTPS Cycle Tracks | Cycle track proposed here as an interurban route in the Galway County Transportation Planning Study; cycle tracks to be built out connecting to George's Street as land is developed. |
| WC27 | L85314 | Traffic Calming | Traffic calming from Crowe Street past Wastewater treatment plant and provision of footpaths (as this road is used as part of a loop in the Gort River Walk). |
| WC30 | Cuairt Bhreac to Coole Haven | Permeability | Connection between Cuairt Bhreac and Coole Haven, which will facilitate safer and faster trips by walking and cycling to schools and to the town centre. |
| WC32 | Bolands Court to Crowe Street | Permeability | Connection between Bolands Court and Crowe Street, which will facilitate safer and faster trips by walking and cycling to schools and to the town centre. |
| WC33 | Dún na Rí to Gort na Rí | Permeability | Connection between Dún na Rí and Gort na Rí, which will facilitate safer and faster trips by walking and cycling to schools and to the town centre. |
| WC35 | Tubber Road (L4514) | Traffic Calming | Traffic calming along Tubber Road from Church Street to Gort Boys National School. |
| WC36 | Tubber Road (L4514) | School Zone | School Zone at entrance to School. |
| WC37 | Gort na Rí to The Maples | Permeability | Connection between Gort na Rí and The Maples which will facilitate safer and faster trips by walking and cycling to schools and to the town centre. |
| WC38 | Gort Na Rí | Quietway | Quietway along Gort na Rí via proposed permeability route, which will facilitate safer and faster trips by walking and cycling to schools and to the town centre. |
| WC39 | The Maples to Crowe Street | Quietway | Quietway from the Maples to Crowe Street via proposed permeability route, which will facilitate safer and faster trips by walking and cycling to schools and to the town centre. |
| WC40 | Cemetery | Walkway/Cycleway | Potential connection through cemetery from Church Street to Queen Street as proposed in the draft Gort Town Centre First Plan. |
| WC41 | L8530 | Traffic Calming | Traffic calming and widening of footpaths between Ennis Road and Rinn Dúin entrance, as this is route is currently a 60km/h zone adjacent to a school with a low wall. |
| WC43 | Glenbrack Road | Traffic Calming | Traffic calming and footpath widening along Glenbrack Road. |

| Ref | Location | Intervention | Description |
|------|---|------------------|---|
| WC45 | Queen Street to Gort River | Walkway/Cycleway | Queen Street to Gort River connection as part of the Town Centre First Plan proposed cycleway and walkway via railway underpass. |
| WC46 | Gort River to Tubber Road | Quietway | Short quietway connection between proposed Gort River Walkway/Cycleway and Tubber Road/Gort Boys National School. |
| WC48 | River Walk estate | Quietway | Short quietway from WC40/Queen Street to Church Street. |
| WC49 | Supervalu | Walkway/Cycleway | Connection through SuperValu from Church Street/Tubber Road cross to proposed Gort River Walkway/Cycleway. |
| WC50 | Ennis Road | Traffic Calming | Traffic calming and footpath upgrades along Ennis Road. No space to maintain two-way traffic and provide cycle tracks and no feasible alternative routes for traffic to town along Ennis Road. |
| WC51 | Ballyhugh estate to Gort Boys National School | Walkway/Cycleway | Walkway and cycle way to improve connection to school, shortens travel distances for walking and cycling from Glenbrack which decreases school traffic. |
| WC52 | Bolands Lane to The Maples | Permeability | Improvement of existing connection between Bolands Lane and The Maples to facilitate cycling which will facilitate safer and faster trips by walking and cycling to schools and to the town centre. |

1.2 Public Transport

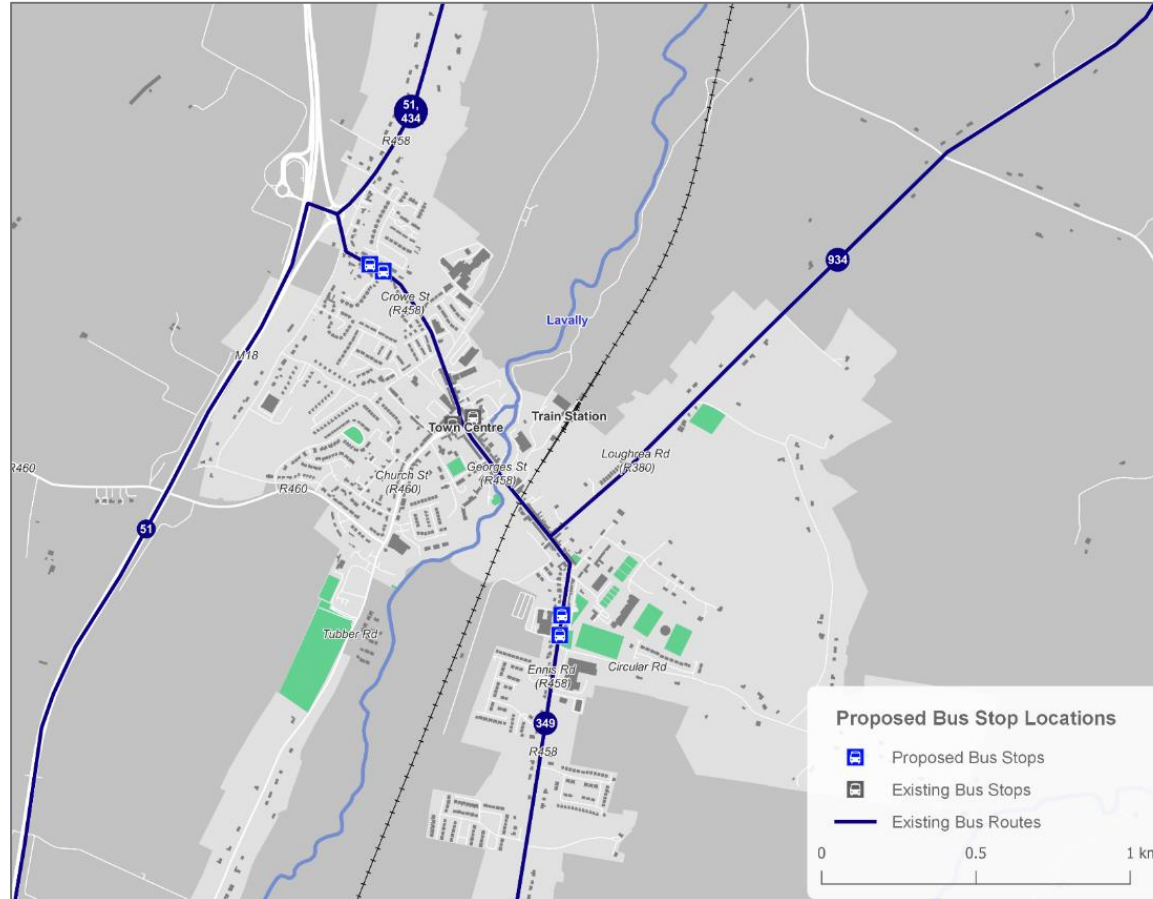


Figure 1-3: Proposed Additional Bus Stops (indicative locations only)

Table 1-1: Proposed Public Transport Measures

| Option Ref. | Location | Description |
|-------------|---|---|
| PTRB01 | Rail and Bus Services towards Limerick | Support the NTA and Irish Rail to increase service frequency, with particular focus on earlier and later services to expand pattern of trips served, in line with the All-Island Strategic Rail Review and Connecting Ireland. |
| PTRB02 | Rail and Bus Services towards Galway | Support the NTA and Irish Rail to increase service frequency, with particular focus on earlier and later services to expand pattern of trips served, in line with All-Island Strategic Rail Review and Connecting Ireland. |
| PTRB03 | Rail and Bus Services towards Dublin | Support the NTA and Irish Rail to increase service frequency, with particular focus on earlier and later services to expand pattern of trips served, in line with All-Island Strategic Rail Review and Connecting Ireland. |
| PTRB07 | Gort Train Station | To Improve the cycling and walking connection from George's Street along Station Road, enabling users to better access the station via the dedicated off-road walkway linking Station Road to the rail station. To provide safe and secure cycle parking at Gort train station. |
| PTB01 | Additional Bus Stops | Work with the NTA and Bus Éireann to provide additional bus stops in safe locations on Ennis Road and Crowe Street and other stakeholders as appropriate, to review bus stop locations and assess the need for bus infrastructure including turning facilities to support bus usage in Gort. |
| PTB02 | Bus Stop Waiting Infrastructure & Passenger Information | Support the NTA in the roll out of Bus Stop Waiting Infrastructure & Passenger Information to support bus patronage increases (timetables, bus poles, shelters, seating, kassel kerbs). |

1.3 Roads and Traffic Management



Figure 1-4: Proposed Infrastructure Safeguard

Table 1-2: Proposed Road and Traffic Management Measures

| Option Ref. | Location | Description |
|-------------|-----------------------|---|
| R01 | Loughrea Road to R458 | Infrastructure safeguard for possible future road |
| R02 | Junctions | Upgrade of junctions as part of active travel measures in line with the Cycle Design Manual 2023 and the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets. |

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1.4 Supporting Measures

| Option Ref. | Location | Description |
|-------------|---|--|
| SM - O1 | 15/10 Minute Town Principles | 15/10 Minute Town Principles - embed within Gort land use planning decisions and development of transport network and transport investment decisions. Under the RSES, the Southern Regional Assembly have developed a framework and methodology to be used by local authorities to integrate the '10 Minute Town Concept' into future Local Development Plans. This approach was developed following assessment of 3 key towns (Carlow, Ennis and Tralee) and aims to support increase in sustainable transport and reduce carbon emissions. |
| SM - O2 | Slow Zones | Slow Zones – introduction of 30kph on town centre streets and on residential streets in the Study Area, supported by traffic calming measures and signage to encourage driver compliance. This will be undertaken in line with the current national speed limit review, which proposes a default speed limit of 30kmh for built up and urban areas, including town centres, residential roads and locations where there is a significant presence of vulnerable/active road users. |
| SM - O3 | Workplace Mobility Management Plans (MMPs) | Workplace Mobility Management Plans (MMPs) – support major employers & business parks/industrial estates with the implementation of MMPs in conjunction with the NTA Smarter Workplaces Team. |
| SM - O4 | Residential Mobility Management Plans (RMMPs) | Residential Mobility Management Plans (RMMPs) - introduce requirement for RMMPs for all new residential developments over a certain size. RMMPs manage transport demand at source and combine hard measures (e.g., access to a car club, pool bikes) and soft measures (e.g., Travel Welcome Packs, PT taster tickets). |
| SM - C1 | Cycle Parking Strategy | Develop and implement a Gort Cycle Parking Strategy Including on-street short-stay parking locations & volume (consistent with development standards); provision of parking for cargo bikes & adapted bikes, etc; longer stay bike parking / mobility hubs (e.g., at rail station, residential areas); eBike public parking Strategy; eScooter public parking strategy. |

| Option Ref. | Location | Description |
|-------------|---|---|
| SM - C3 | Public Bike Repair Stands | Deliver at key locations, e.g., at rail station, schools, town centre, Gort River Walk. |
| SM - C4 | Cycle Skills Training - children and adults | Deliver at schools, workplaces and via community events. |
| SM - C5 | Cycle Maintenance Training & Bike Maintenance Checks | Deliver at schools, workplaces and via community events. |
| SM - C6 | Behavioural change campaigns to tackle speeds, inconsiderate parking & engine idling near schools | Support behavioural change campaigns to tackle speeds, inconsiderate parking & engine idling near schools. |
| SM - S1 | Education Mobility Management Plans (MMPs) | Support An Taisce Green Schools with the development and delivery of Education MMPs for schools in Gort, through Safe Routes to School active travel initiatives and through the planning process. |
| SM - S2 | Bike and scooter parking at schools | Enhancement of existing facilities. |
| SM - S3 | School based Active Travel initiatives & events | Council support for Green School's programme of school based active travel initiatives (e.g. Bike Week, Scoot to School, challenges, curriculum activities). |
| SM - S4 | Walking Bus & Cycling Bus support for local schools | Support for cycle and walking buses to schools. |
| DM - P1 | Town parking management strategy | Development of a town parking management strategy, including consideration of both the quantum and cost of parking within the town in the longer term |
| DM - P2 | EV Parking Strategy | Ensure provision of Electric Vehicle (EV) recharging facilities at new developments, in public car parks, on-street (for rapid charging and those without access to private driveways), taxi ranks, mix of rapid and slow charging, distinguish between O&D charging needs. Expanding on existing EV provision in line with County Development Plan policy objective EV1. Development management standards in the county development plan mandate up to 20% of spaces should provide recharging facilities and all spaces should be easily convertible to provide recharging facilities in the future. In residential developments specifically, 20% of |

| Option Ref. | Location | Description |
|-------------|------------------------------------|---|
| | | spaces should provide recharging facilities and in commercial centres, rapid charge points should be provided. |
| DM – P3 | EV Parking Pricing Strategies | Integration of EV parking pricing over time with Public Parking Pricing policies, balanced to encourage take up of EVs without encouraging unnecessary car trips by providing free parking for EVs. |
| DM – P4 | Parking for new developments | Reduced Residential Parking & Workplace Parking standards for new developments in appropriate locations (e.g., in areas well served by sustainable transport options); Require EV spaces within new residential, workplace and mixed use developments; Require Car Club spaces within new residential, workplace and mixed use developments |
| DM – P5 | Integrated Traffic Management Plan | Development of an integrated Traffic Management Plan to reduce the potential for traffic congestion and associated vehicular emissions, addressing the short, medium and long-term traffic management requirements within the Plan area. |

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