

SEA STATEMENT

FOR

VARIATION No. 2 (B) TO THE GALWAY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2015-2021

GAELTACHT PLAN

(INCLUDING SETTLEMENTS OF AN CHEATHRÚ RUA,
AN SPIDÉAL AND BAILE CHLÁIR)

for: Galway County Council
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JUNE 2018

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Section 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction and Legislative Context

This is the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Statement for the Variation 2 (b) to the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021.

SEA is a systematic process of predicting and evaluating the likely environmental effects of implementing a plan, or other strategic action, in order to ensure that these effects are appropriately addressed at the earliest appropriate stage of decision-making on a par with economic and social considerations.

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, referred to hereafter as the SEA Directive, introduced the requirement that SEA be carried out on plans and programmes which are prepared for a number of sectors, including land use. The SEA Directive was transposed into Irish Law through the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004. The Regulations have been amended by the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011.

1.2 Content of the SEA Statement

Where SEA is undertaken, the Regulations require that a Statement is made available to the public and the competent environmental authorities after the making of the Variation.

This Statement is referred to as an SEA Statement.

The SEA Statement is required to include information summarising:

- a) how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Variation;
- b) how the following have been taken into account during the preparation of the Variation:
 - the environmental report,
 - submissions and observations made to the planning authority on the Proposed Variation and Environmental Report, and
 - any transboundary consultations (these are not relevant to this SEA).
- c) the reasons for choosing the Variation in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and
- d) the measures decided upon to monitor the significant environmental effects of implementation of the Variation.

1.3 Implications of SEA for the Variation

SEA has been undertaken on the Variation and the findings of the SEA are expressed in an Environmental Report, the first published version of which accompanied the Proposed Variation on public display. The Environmental Report was updated in order to take account of:

- Recommendations contained in submissions; and
- Changes to the Proposed Variation that were made on foot of submissions.

Galway County Council have taken into account the findings of SEA output during their consideration of the Proposed Variation and before the Variation was adopted.

Section 2 How Environmental Considerations were integrated into the Variation

2.1 Introduction

Environmental considerations were integrated into the Variation through:

1. Consultations;
2. Communication of environmental sensitivities throughout the SEA process;
3. Appropriate Assessment;
4. Strategic Flood Risk Assessment;
5. Consideration of alternatives;
6. Integration of environmental considerations; and
7. Integration of individual SEA and AA provisions into the Variation.

2.2 Consultations

As environmental authorities identified under the Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations, as amended, the following authorities were sent SEA scoping notices 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 Galway County Council: Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and all adjoining planning authorities.

Detail on submissions made on foot of the SEA scoping notice is provided under Section 3.2.

Further detail is provided on submissions that were made on the Proposed Variation and SEA Environmental Report while they were on public display (see Section 3.3).

2.3 Communication of environmental sensitivities throughout the SEA process

Environmental considerations were integrated into the Variation before it was placed on public display. Individual sensitivities that were

considered by the Planning Team preparing the Variation included the following:

- European Sites (Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas);
- Natural Heritage Areas, proposed Natural Heritage Areas and Margaritifera Sensitive Areas;
- Soil type sensitivities;
- Status of Surface and Ground Waters;
- Various entries to the Water Framework Directive's Register of Protected Areas;
- Groundwater Vulnerability;
- Water Services Capacity, Performance and Demand;
- Landscape sensitivity and Focal Points and Views; and
- Cultural heritage (archaeological and architectural) sensitivities.

A number of these sensitivities are mapped on Figure 2.1, Figure 2.2 and Figure 2.3.

2.4 Appropriate Assessment

Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (AA) has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the Variation. The requirement for AA is provided under the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 1992/43/EEC).

The AA concluded that the Variation will not affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 network¹.

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

2.5 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the Variation. The requirement for SFRA is

¹ Except as provided for in Section 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.

provided under 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DEHLG and OPW, 2009).

The preparation of the Variation, SEA and SFRA has taken place concurrently and the findings of the SFRA have informed both the Variation and the SEA. The SFRA has facilitated the integration of flood risk management considerations into the Variation.

2.6 Consideration of Alternatives

Consideration of the environmental effects arising from different alternatives for the Plan (see Section 4) has helped to facilitate the selection of an alternative that contributes towards the protection and management of the environment.

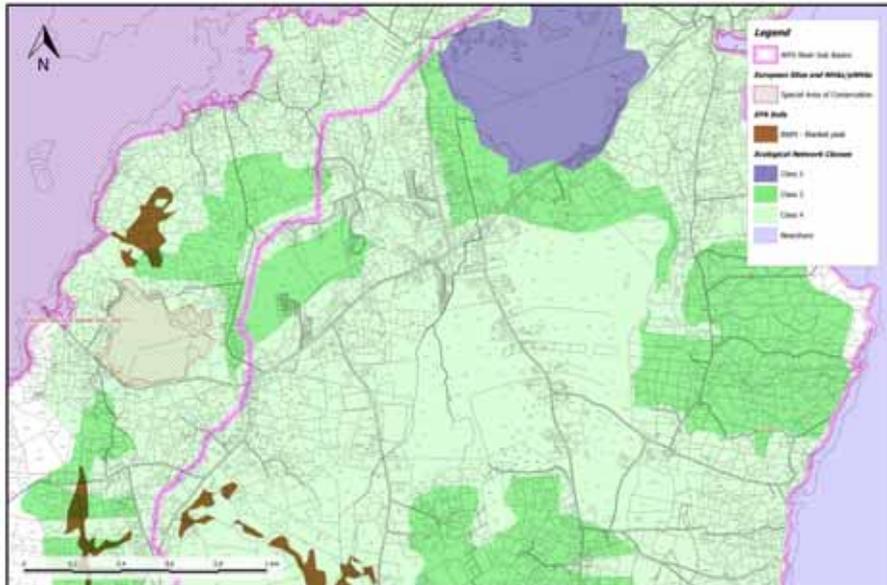
2.7 Integration of individual SEA and AA provisions into the Variation

All recommendations made by the SEA, AA and SFRA processes were integrated into the Plan (as varied).

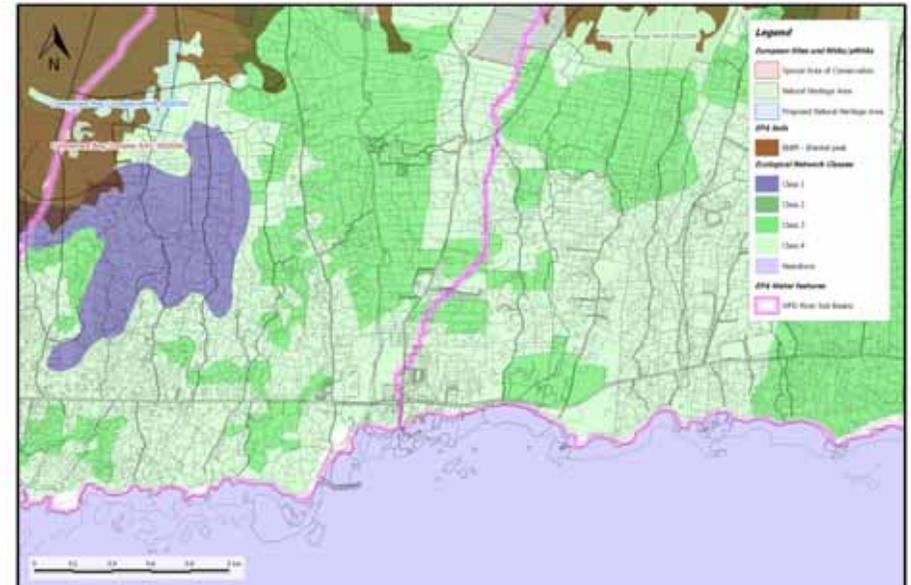
Table 2.1 links key mitigation measure(s) - which have been integrated into the Plan (as varied) and the Variation - to the likely significant effects of implementing the Plan, if unmitigated. The integration of these measures into the Variation occurred over a number of iterations and was informed by, inter alia, various communications through the SEA, AA and SFRA processes.

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.

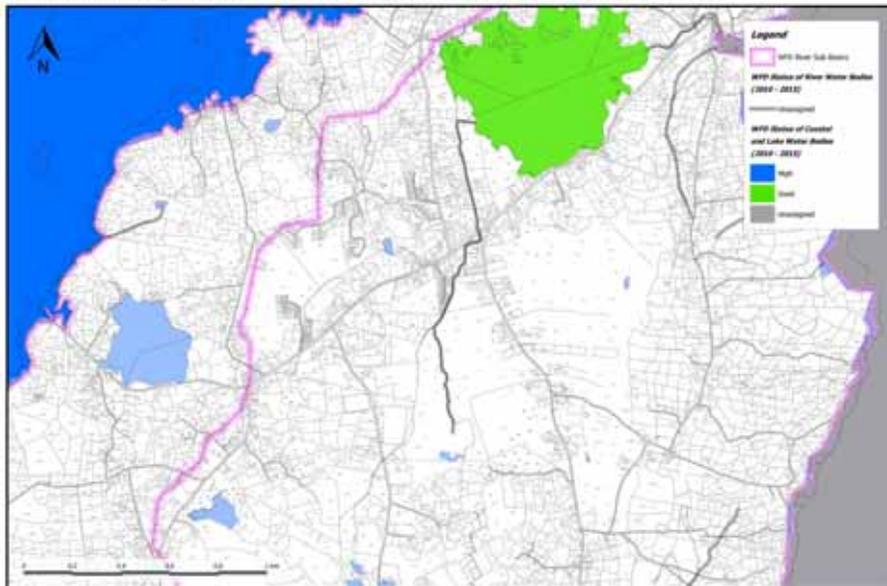
The reference codes are those that accompany the relevant measures in the Plan and Variation.



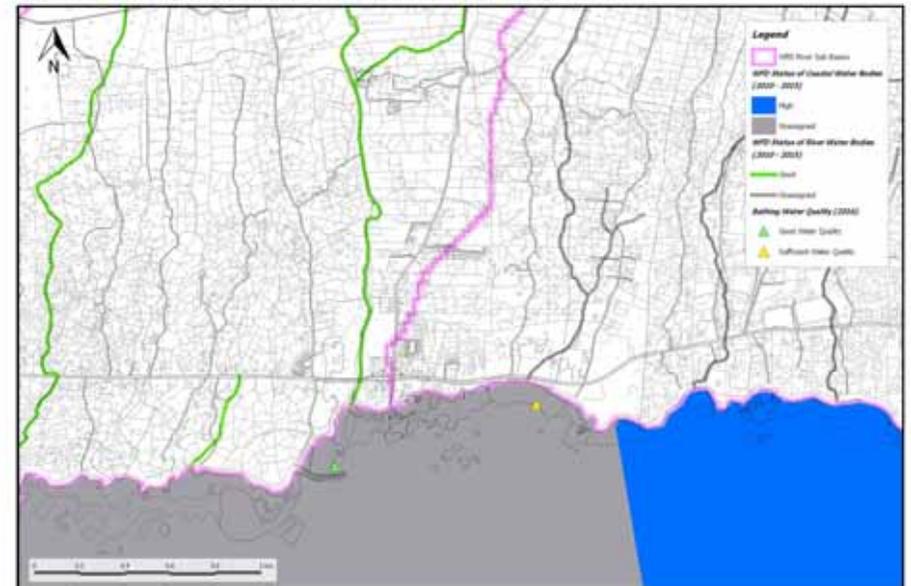
Biodiversity Flora and Fauna at An Cheathrú Rua



Biodiversity Flora and Fauna at An Spidéal



Water Quality Status An Cheathrú Rua

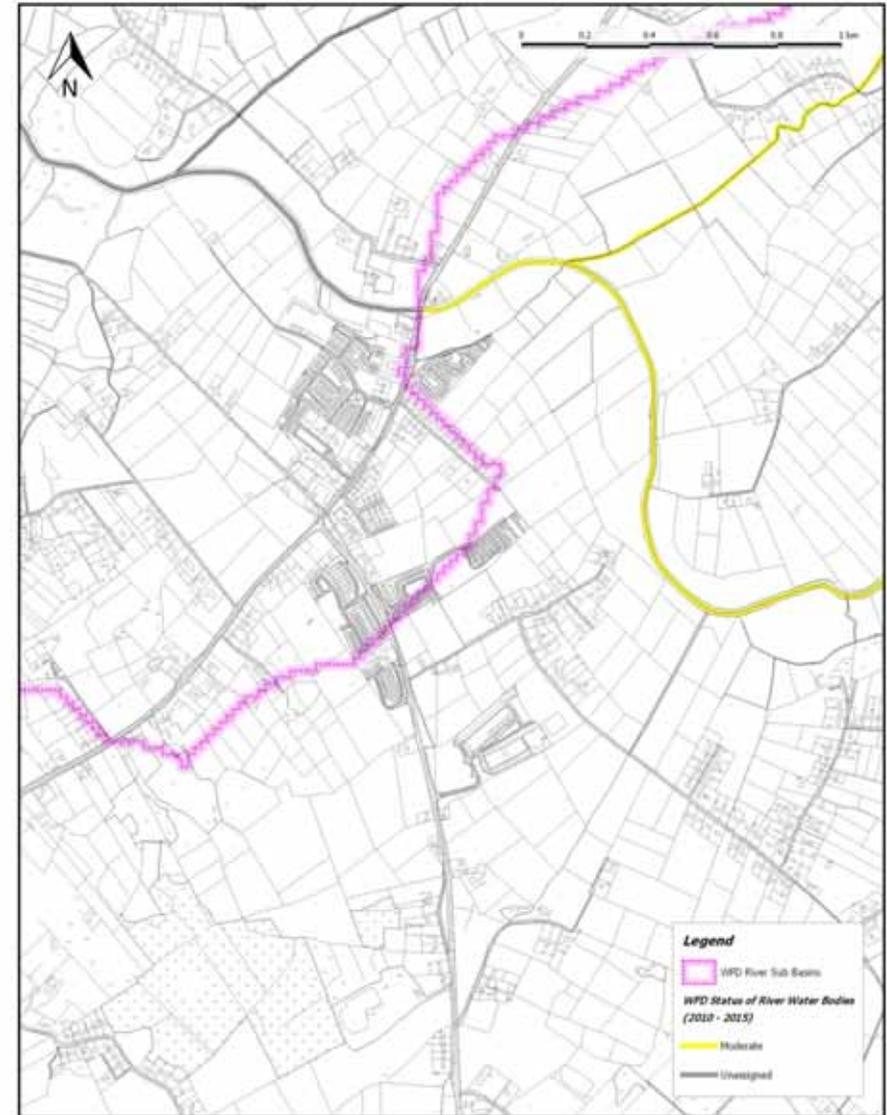


Water Quality Status An Spidéal

Figure 2.1 Selection of Individual Environmental Sensitivities taken into account (1 of 3)

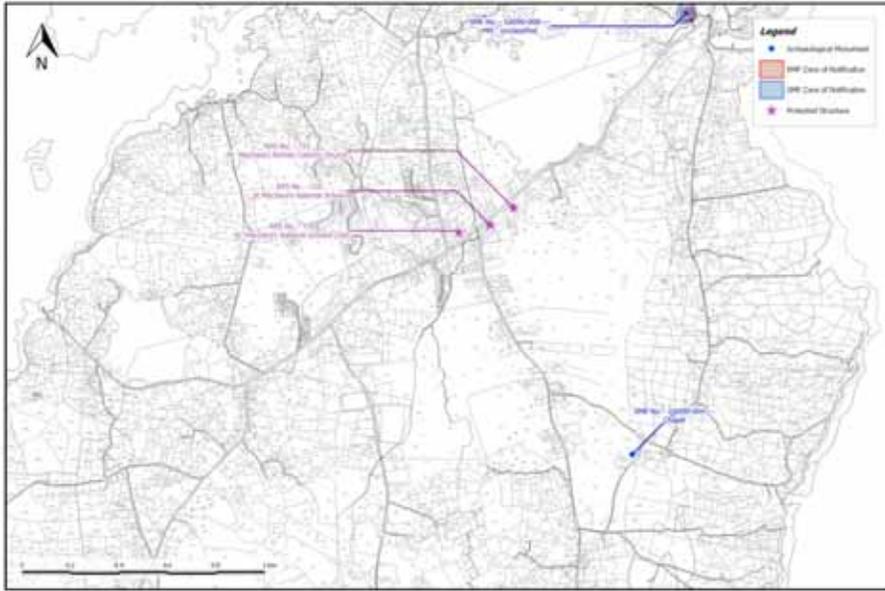


Biodiversity Flora and Fauna at Baile Chláir

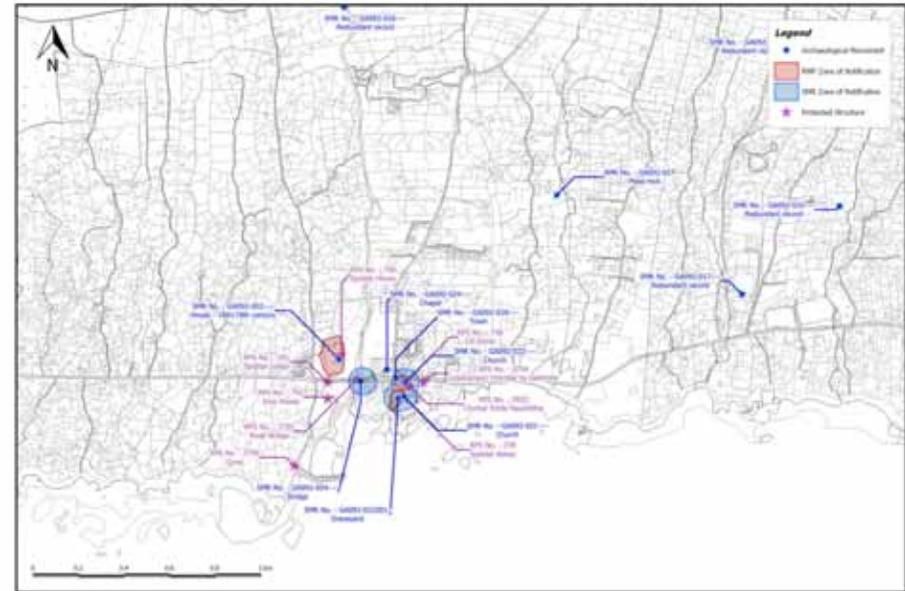


Water Quality at Baile Chláir

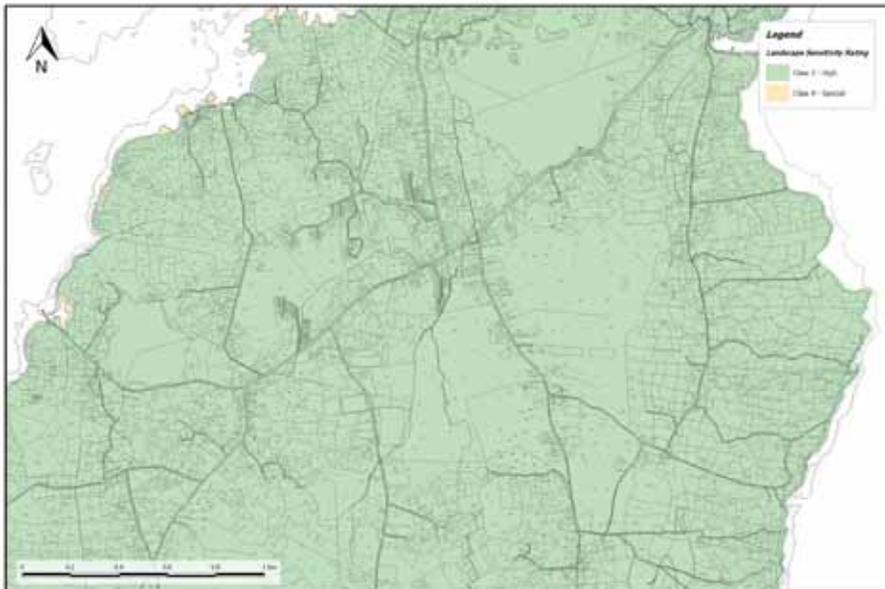
Figure 2.2 Selection of Individual Environmental Sensitivities taken into account (2 of 3)



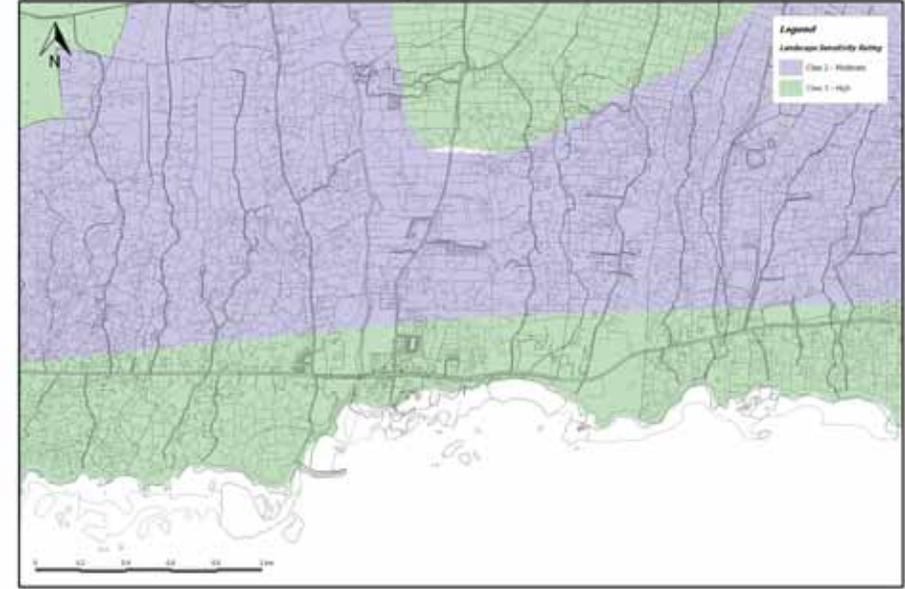
An Cheathrú Rua Cultural Heritage



An Spidéal Cultural Heritage



An Cheathrú Rua Landscape Sensitivity



An Spidéal Landscape Sensitivity

Figure 2.3 Selection of Individual Environmental Sensitivities taken into account (3 of 3)

Table 2.1 Integration of Environmental Considerations

Likely Significant Effect, if unmitigated	Mitigation Measures, including:
<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. 	<p>Measures from the Proposed Variation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective GL2 Tourism Developments in the Gaeltacht • Objective GL8 Natural Heritage in the Gaeltacht • Objective DO 10 An Spidéal Demesne <p>Measures from the Plan as varied</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies NHB 1, NHB 2, NHB 3, NHB 5, NHB 6, NHB 7 and NHB 8 • Objectives DS 6, DS 9, EQ1, EQ 4, ICT 1, NHB 1, NHB 2, NHB 4, NHB 5, NHB 6, NHB 7, NHB 8, NHB 10, NHB 11, NHB 13, AFF 6 and DS10 • Also see various measures providing for populations in rural and supporting areas.
<p>Potential interactions if effects upon environmental vectors such as water and air are not mitigated</p>	<p>Measures from the Proposed Variation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective CSB 8– Public Utilities <p>Measures from the Plan as varied</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy CC 8 • Objectives TI 12 and EQ 2 • Also see measures related to soil, water quality, flooding, waste water treatment and drinking water supply and quality.
<p>Damage to the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource</p>	<p>Measures from the Plan as varied</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective NHB12 • Also see measures related to water quality and waste water treatment.
<p>Adverse impacts upon the status of water bodies arising from changes in quality, flow and/or morphology</p> <p>Increase in the risk of flooding</p>	<p>Measures from the Proposed Variation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective CSB10– Constrained Land Use Zone • Objective CSB 11 – Flood Risk Areas and Land Use Zones • Objective DO 6 – Flood Risk Management and Assessment • Objective DO 7 – Flood Zones and Appropriate Land Uses • DM Guideline CSB 3 – Flood Zones and Appropriate Land Uses <p>Measures from the Plan as varied</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies NHB 4, AFF 5, FL 1, FL 2, FL 3, FL 4 and FL 5 • Objectives NHB 3, NHB 8, NHB 10, NHB12, EQ1, AFF 5, AFF 6, AFF9, CS 4, WS 1, WS 2, WS 7, WS 9, WS 11, WW 1, FL 1, FL 2, FL 3, FL 4, FL 5, FL 6, DS 7, DS 8 and DS 9 and RA 1
<p>Failure to provide adequate and appropriate waste water treatment (water services infrastructure and capacity is needed to ensure the mitigation of potential conflicts)</p> <p>Failure to comply with drinking water regulations and serve new development with adequate drinking water that is both wholesome and clean (water services infrastructure and capacity is needed to ensure the mitigation of potential conflicts)</p> <p>Increases in waste levels</p>	<p>Measures from the Proposed Variation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective GL9 Infrastructure in the Gaeltacht • Objective DO 9 - Infrastructure <p>Measures from the Plan as varied</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies WS 1 WS 2 WS 3 WS 4 WS 5 WS 6 WW 1 WM1 WM2 • Objectives WS 1, WS 2, WS 3, WS 4, WS 5, WS 6, WS 7, WS 8, WS 9, WS 10, WS 11, WS 12, WS 13, WS 14, WS 15, WW 1, WW 2, WW 3, WW 4, WW 5, WW 6, WW 7, WW 8, WW 10, WM 1, WM 2, WM 3, WM 4, WM 5, WM 6, CS 4, RHO -5 and EDT 5

Likely Significant Effect, if unmitigated	Mitigation Measures, including:
<p>Emissions to air including greenhouse gas emissions and other emissions.</p> <p>Climate adaptation interactions</p>	<p>Measures from the Proposed Variation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective GL4 Brownfield Development and Vacancy • Objective CSB 9 – Transport Infrastructure • DM Guideline CSB 2 – Development Densities <p>Measures from the Plan as varied</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Aims 6, 7 and 11 • Policies CC 1, CC2, CC3, CC4, CC5, CC6, CC 7, TI 1, TI 2, TI 3 and TI 4 • Objectives DS 1, DS 2, DS 3, DS 8, CS 3, CS 5, TI 1, TI 2, TI 3, TI 4, TI 16, TI 17, TI 18, TI 19, TI 20, TI 21, DS 8, CC1, CC 2, CC3, CC 4 and CC5
<p>Effects on entries to the Record of Monuments and Places and other archaeological heritage</p> <p>Effects on entries to the Records of Protected Structures, Architectural Conservation Areas and other architectural heritage</p>	<p>Measures from the Proposed Variation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective GL7 Built Heritage in the Gaeltacht <p>Measures from the Plan as varied</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies AH 1, AH 2, ARC 1, ARC 2, ARC 3, ARC 4 and ARC 5 • Objectives AH 1, AH 2, AH 3, AH 4, AH 5, AH 6, AH 7, AH 8, AH 9, AH 10, AH 11, ARC 1, ARC 2, ARC 3, ARC 4, ARC 5, ARC 6 and ARC 7
<p>Occurrence of adverse visual impacts</p>	<p>Measures from the Plan as varied</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy LCM 1 • Objectives LCM 1, LCM 2, LCM 3, FPV 1 and WH 1

Section 3 Environmental Report and Submissions/ Observations

3.1 Introduction

This section details how both the Environmental Report and submissions and observations made to Galway County Council on the Environmental Report and SEA process have been taken into account during the preparation of the Variation.

3.2 SEA Scoping Submissions

As part of the scoping process for preparation of the Variation, environmental authorities² were notified that a submission or observation in relation to the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the environmental report could be made to the Council.

SEA scoping submissions were made by the Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Culture, Heritage and Gaeltacht. These submissions influenced the scope of the assessments and were taken into account during the undertaking of the SEA, SFRA and AA.

The submission from the EPA provided specific comments and advice covering the following issues:

- EPA's State of the Environment report - Ireland's Environment – An Assessment 2016;
- Critical Service Infrastructure;
- Water Related Considerations;
- Flooding;
- SUDS;
- Biodiversity;
- Fisheries;
- Green Infrastructure/Habitat Mapping;
- Landscape;
- Relationship with Key Plans/Programmes;
- Climate Adaptation / Climate Mitigation;

² The following authorities were notified: Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and all adjoining planning authorities.

- Scoping Process Guidance;
- SEA WebGIS Search and Reporting Tool; and
- Environmental Authorities.

The submission from the Department of Culture, Heritage and Gaeltacht provided specific comments and advice covering the following issues:

- Archaeology - compliance with the National Monuments Acts, and amendments, 1930 to 2004;
- Archaeology - references to national archaeological legislation and policy documents; and
- Archaeology - General Guidance.

3.3 Submissions on the Environmental Report

Various submissions were made on the Proposed Variation and associated environmental assessment documents while these documents were on public display and these resulted in updates being made to the Variation, SEA and AA documents.

The SEA Environmental Report was updated on foot of a submission from the EPA to include the following plans and programmes as part of Appendix I of the SEA Environmental Report:

- Maritime Spatial Planning Directive;
- Draft National Adaptation Framework;
- Draft National Planning Framework – Ireland 2040;
- National Water Resources Plan;
- Draft National River Basin Management Plan for Ireland;
- Draft Forestry and Freshwater Pearl Mussel Plan;
- Fáilte Ireland Plans;
- Action Plan for Rural Development; and
- Dublin to Galway Greenway.

A submission from the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht on the AA led to additional detail being provided in the final AA document.

A number of submissions were made on the SFRA; however, these did not change the findings or recommendations of that assessment process.

3.4 SEA documents including SEA Environmental Report

The Proposed Variation and accompanying documents (including SEA Environmental Report, AA Natura Impact Report and SFRA) were placed on public display in December 2017, having integrated all recommendations arising from the SEA and AA processes.

Responses to submissions made on the SEA Environmental Report, AA Natura Impact Report and SFRA during the period of public display were integrated into a Chief Executive's Report and considered by Galway County Council.

17 changes to the original Proposed Variation that was placed on public display (Proposed Material Alterations) were subject to SEA and AA Screening under Section 13 (6) (aa) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended).

The SEA Screening Report for the Proposed Material Alterations concluded that:

"Taking into account the measures that have already been integrated into the Proposed Variation 2(b) and associated County Development Plan that contribute towards environmental protection, environmental management and sustainable development, it is determined that all potential effects arising from all Proposed Material Alterations will be mitigated so as not to be significant."

The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) process that was undertaken alongside the preparation of the Variation and associated SEA informed the analysis contained in the SEA Screening Report for the Proposed Material Alterations.

The AA Screening Report for the Proposed Material Alterations concluded that:

"...the Proposed Material Alterations to Variation No. 2(b) to the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021 are not foreseen to give rise to any significant adverse effects on designated European sites³, alone or in-combination with other plans or projects. This evaluation is made in view of the conservation objectives of the habitats or species for which these sites have been designated. Consequently, a Stage 2 AA is not required for the Proposed Material Alterations."

Notwithstanding these conclusions, further commentary is provided here on Material Alterations No. MA1, MA3 and MA4, all of which relate to An Spidéal. The lands subject to these Material Alterations were zoned, taking into account proper planning and sustainable development, and included within Proposed Variation No. 2 that was placed on public display in December 2017. After public display, the Elected Members decided to propose, inter alia, Material Alterations to the land use zoning objectives for MA1, MA3 and MA4 lands contrary to the recommendations of the Chief Executive. The Proposed Material Alterations were subject to SEA and AA Screenings⁴ and placed on public

³ Except as provided for in Section 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.

⁴ The SEA Screening Report analyses each of the Material Alterations and provides detailed commentary on how potential conflicts will be mitigated. For each of Proposed Material Alterations MA1, MA3 and MA4, the SEA Screening Report identifies that "All developments would be required to comply with the other provisions already included in the existing Plan and in the Proposed Variation..." These measures include extensive provisions contained within both the Proposed Variation and the County Development Plan relating to the protection of archaeological and architectural heritage, landscape and ecology and flood risk management.

The Land Use Zoning Objectives at Plan level indicate the Council's intention for land uses at different locations, subject to compliance with other Plan provisions. Land Use Zoning Objectives relate to the land use zoning matrix that details the suitability of various uses tender each Objective – for example: both "Apartments" and "Recreational/Cultural Activities" are "Open for Consideration" under the "Residential" Land Use Zoning Objective; and both "Buildings for the Health, Safety & Welfare of the Public" and "Cultural/Recreational Building" are "Open for

display alongside the findings of the screening exercises.

In the interests of the proper planning and sustainable development of An Spidéal, it was recommended to make the Variation with zonings for MA1, MA3 and MA4 lands as provided for by the original Proposed Variation that was placed on public display in December 2017. The Variation was made with zonings for MA1 lands as provided for by the original Proposed Variation that was placed on public display in December 2017 and with zonings for MA3 and MA4 lands as per the Proposed Material Alterations.

On making of the Variation, the original Environmental Report which had been placed on public display alongside the Proposed Variation, was updated to become a final Environmental Report which is consistent with the adopted Variation, taking into account recommendations included in the submissions as well as changes that were made to the original Proposed Variation that was placed on public display.

Consideration" under the "Open Spaces/Recreation & Amenity" Land Use Zoning Objective.

At project level, proposals for development that satisfy the relevant Land Use Zoning Objective must demonstrate compliance with the written provisions contained within both the Variation (the Gaeltacht Plan) and the Plan to which the Variation is being made. These written provisions include those relating to the protection and management of biodiversity and flora and fauna, including designated and non-designated habitats, and flood risk.

Section 4 Summary of Description and Evaluation of Alternatives

4.1 Introduction

As per the requirements of the SEA Directive, this SEA considers reasonable alternatives, which are capable of being implemented for the Proposed Variation 2 (b), taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the Plan (as varied).

Available alternatives are limited by the scope of the Proposed Variation. Focus is given to the land use zoning provisions relating to three settlements - An Cheathrú Rua, An Spidéal and Baile Chláir - that is provided for by the Variation.

Galway County Council in preparing the Variation 2b developed three alternatives for each of the settlements in An Cheathrú Rua, An Spidéal and Baile Chláir.

4.2 Description of Alternatives

4.2.1 Alternative 1: Even Development

- Achieving the population targets: All three settlements to reach the population targets by 2021, resulting in balanced orderly development and implementation of the core strategy as contained in Chapter 2 of the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021;
- The infrastructure required to be in place to achieve the growth targets is already in place;
- Residential Development to take place on R1 lands in the lifetime of the Gaeltacht Plan, unless a comprehensive justification is provided for alternative residential lands;
- Community development facilities to be developed in tandem with the targeted growth of the settlements;
- Village Centre developments would be developed in a planned and coordinated manner;
- Opportunity sites identified with clear design and proposed uses identified;
- Open Space and Recreational Lands would be preserved.

Points of note for An Cheathrú Rua Alternative 1 (see Figure 4.1)

- This scenario provides Village Centre/Mixed Uses/Brownfield Development within and around the existing centre
- Phase I Residential Expansion Areas are provided at four areas within the town

Points of note for An Spidéal Alternative 1 (see Figure 4.3)

- This scenario provides Village Centre/Mixed Uses/Brownfield Development within and around the existing centre
- Two Phase I Residential Expansion Areas are provided – both to the north along Baile Árd. These areas would allow for an additional population of 25 persons that would be able to be accommodated by the existing waste water treatment plant

Points of note for Baile Chláir Scenario 1 (see Figure 4.5)

- This scenario provides Village Centre/Mixed Uses/Brownfield Development within and around the existing centre
- Phase I Residential Expansion Areas are provided at three areas within the town

4.2.2 Alternative 2: Sporadic Development

- Achieving the population targets: All three settlements to reach the population targets by 2021, resulting in the implementation of the core strategy as contained in Chapter 2 of the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021;
- Additional infrastructure would be required to accommodate sporadic development, more than would be required for Scenario 1 'Even Development';
- Residential Development to take place on R1 and R2 lands in the lifetime of the Gaeltacht Plan, unless a evidence based justification is provided for alternative residential lands;
- Village centre development would be sporadic and uncoordinated around the village centre zonings;
- Opportunity sites are identified but no clear guidance on the design parameters or uses identified.

Points of note for An Cheathrú Rua Alternative 2 (see Figure 4.2)

- This scenario provides Village Centre/Mixed Uses/Brownfield Development within and around the existing centre
- Phase I Residential Expansion Areas are provided at seven areas within the town

Points of note for An Spidéal Alternative 2 (see Figure 4.4)

- This scenario provides Village Centre/Mixed Uses/Brownfield Development within and around the existing centre
- Four Phase I Residential Expansion Areas are provided. These areas would allow for a population in excess of 25 persons that would not be able to be accommodated by the existing waste water treatment plant

Points of note for Baile Chláir Alternative 2 (see Figure 4.6)

- This scenario provides Village Centre/Mixed Uses/Brownfield Development within and around the existing centre
- Phase I Residential Expansion Areas are provided at five areas within the town

4.2.3 Alternative 3: Haphazard Development

- Achieving the population targets-Development in the three settlements to reach the population targets by 2021, resulting in the implementation of the core strategy as contained in Chapter 2 of the Galway County Development Plan;
- Additional infrastructure would be required to accommodate sporadic development, more than would be required for Scenario 1 'Even Development' or Scenario 2 'Sporadic Development', development would have to be serviced by private wastewater treatment systems which would have to be properly maintained;
- Residential development would occur on a piecemeal and haphazard basis within the three settlements;
- Ribbon and backland development would be a dominant feature within the settlements;
- Village centre development would be permitted on a number of different zonings and not concentrated on the village centre;
- No opportunity sites identified-laissez faire attitude in relation to development
- Each application would be considered on its own merits and no land use zoning is provided for.

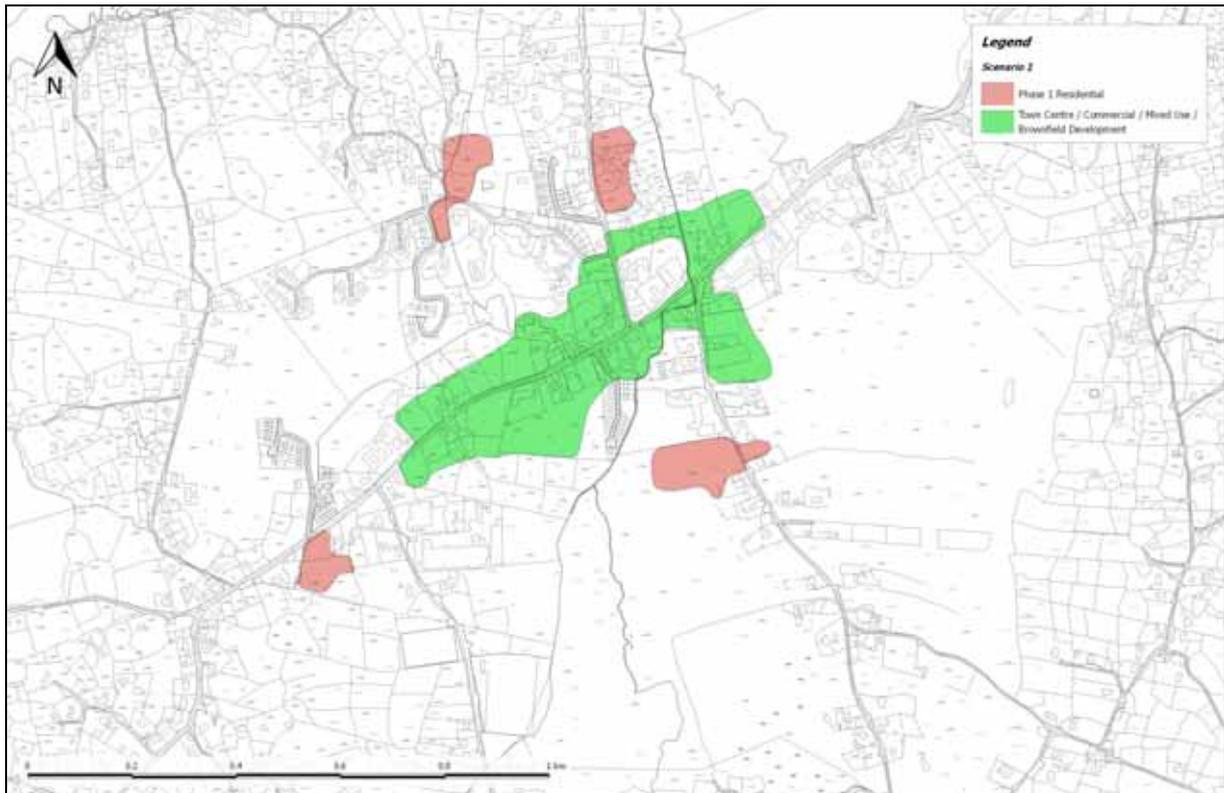


Figure 4.1 An Cheathrú Rua Alternative 1

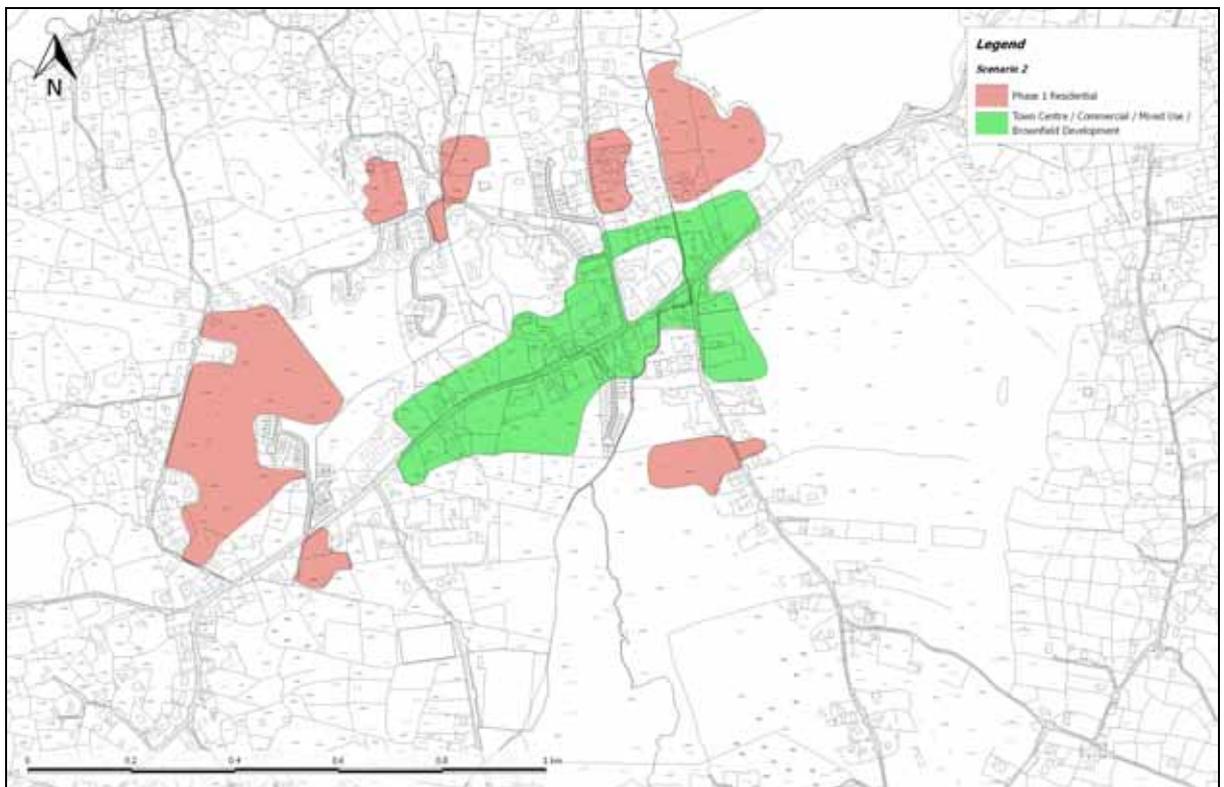


Figure 4.2 An Cheathrú Rua Alternative 2

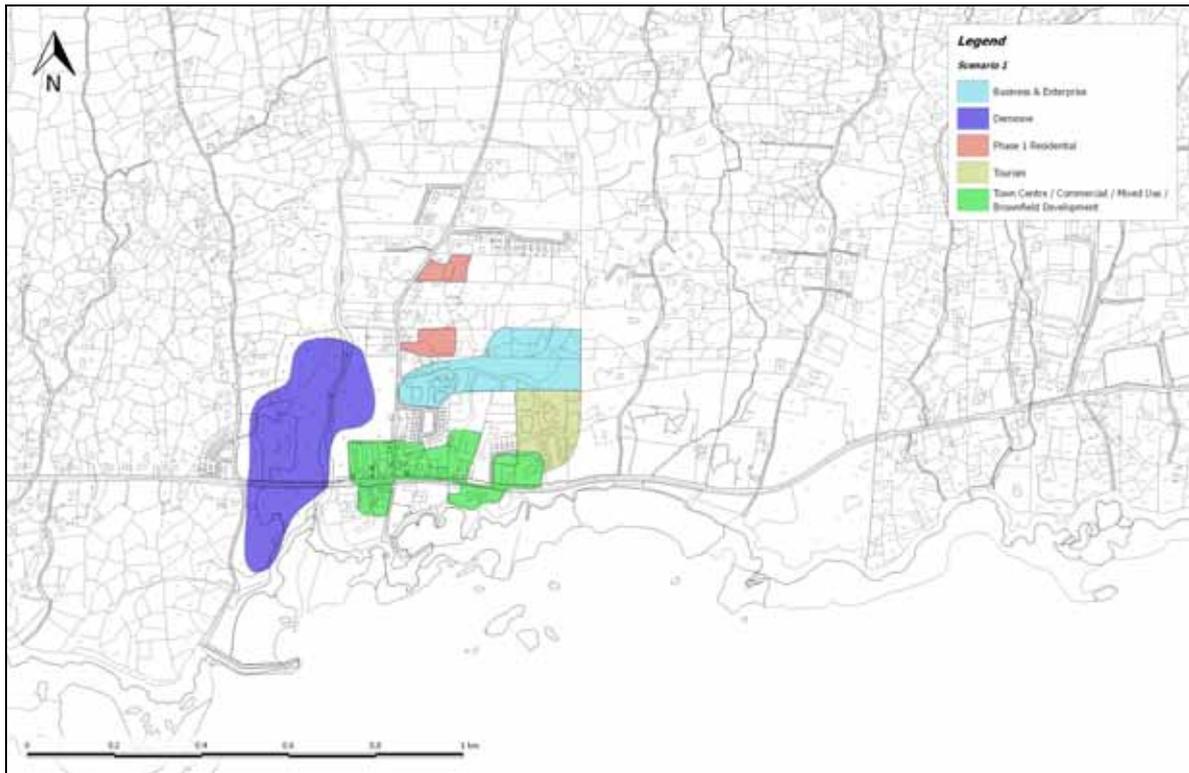


Figure 4.3 An Spidéal Alternative 1

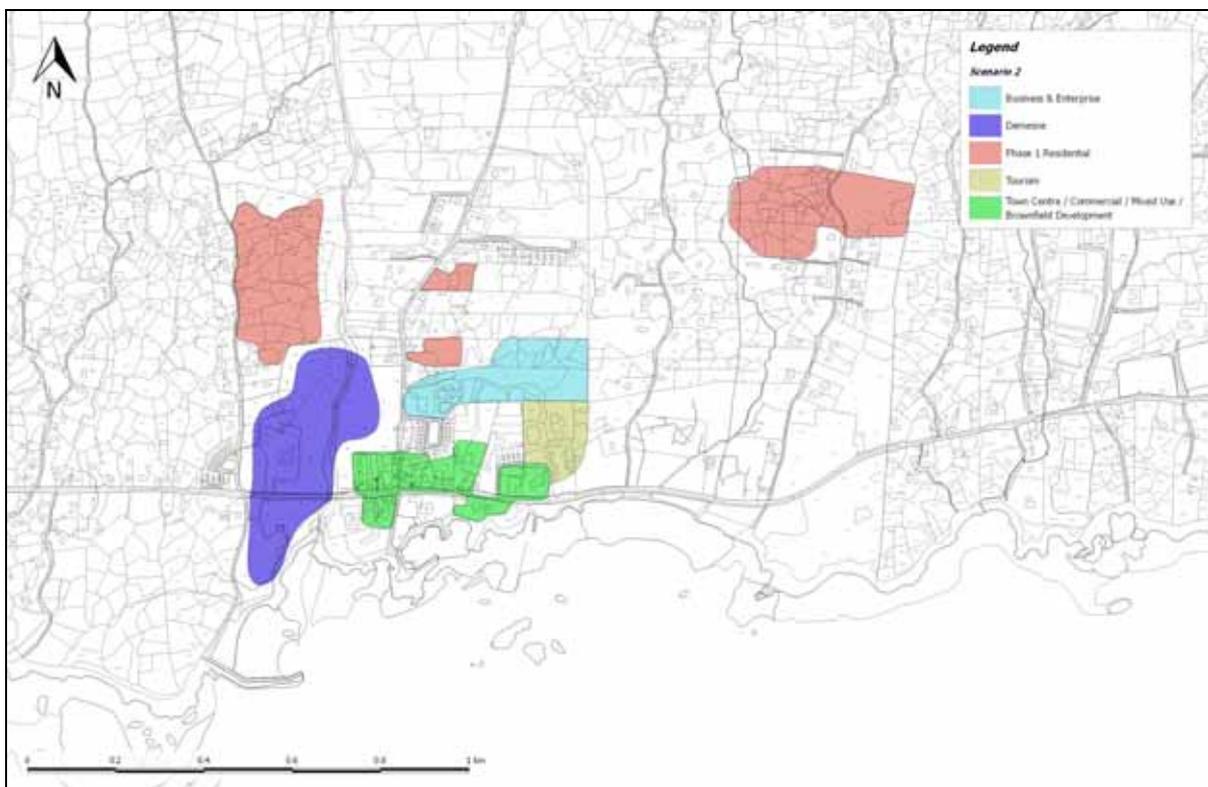


Figure 4.4 An Spidéal Alternative 2

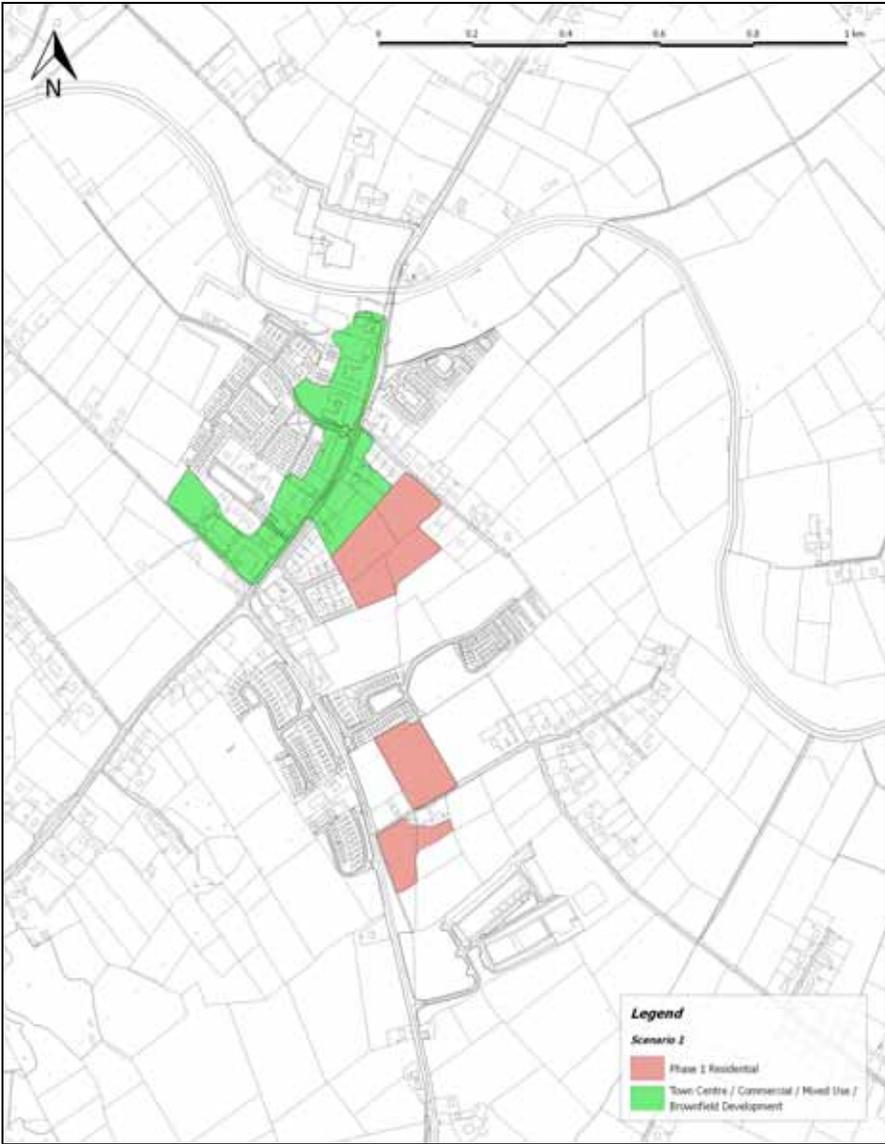


Figure 4.5 Baile Chláir Alternative 1

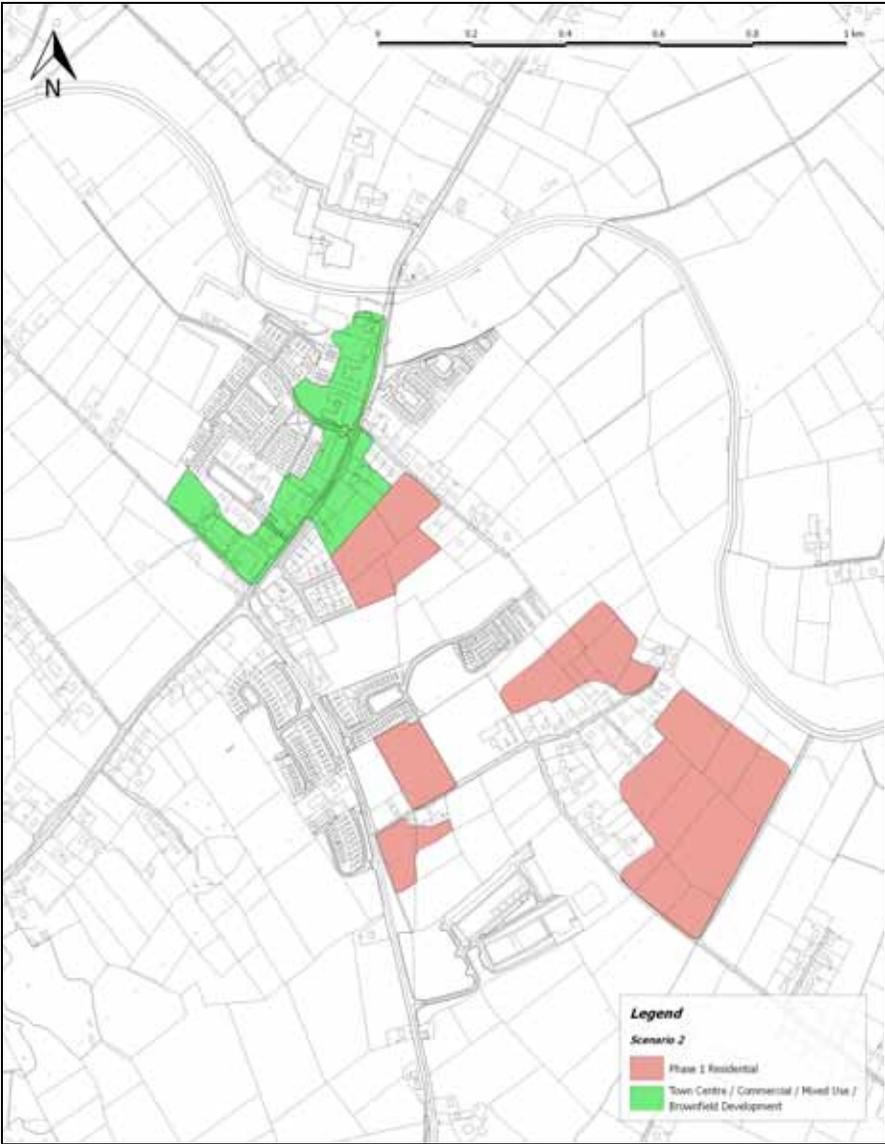


Figure 4.6 Baile Chláir Alternative 2

4.3 Evaluation of Alternatives

Significant Positive Effects Common to all Alternatives

By providing for development within existing development boundaries and facilitating the use of existing utilities and brownfield sites, all alternatives would be likely to contribute towards a reduced need to develop more sensitive, undeveloped areas elsewhere in the wider Gaeltacht area that are further from established settlements and less well serviced. This would be likely to result in significant positive environmental effects on environmental components as indicated on Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Significant Positive Effects common to all Alternatives

Environmental Component	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur
Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes towards protection of ecology (including designated sites, ecological connectivity, habitats) – due to increased utilisation of lands within existing development boundaries and use of existing utilities and brownfield sites. • Contributes towards protection of ecology with respect to the provision of water services. • Contributes towards protection of ecology as a result of contributing towards the protection of environmental vectors, including air and water. • Is consistent with approach provided by the existing Plan, to sustain 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
Population and Human Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes towards protection of human health with respect to the provision of water services and the provision of transport infrastructure integrated with land use planning – and associated interactions with sustainable mobility, emissions and energy usage. • Contributes towards protection of human health as a result of contributing towards the protection of environmental vectors, including air and water.
Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes towards protection of soil – due to increased utilisation of lands within existing development boundaries and use of existing utilities and brownfield sites. • Contributes towards protection of soil with respect to the provision of water services.
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes towards protection and management of ground and surface waters due to facilitating development within established and serviced settlement centres.
Material Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows for use of planned infrastructure including water services infrastructure and transport infrastructure. • Makes use of existing water services and drainage infrastructure.
Air and Climatic Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitates contribution towards a shift from car to more sustainable and non-motorised transport modes. • Facilitates contribution towards reducing congestion and associated adverse effects on air quality. • Facilitates contribution towards reductions in travel related greenhouse gas and other emissions to air.
Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes towards protection of cultural heritage in wider region by facilitating development within existing settlements.
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes towards protection of wider landscape by facilitating development within existing settlements.

Although significant positive environmental effects would occur under each of the alternatives, the extent to which they would occur varies across each of the alternatives and this is addressed under the evaluation of each of the alternatives below.

Potentially Significant Adverse Effects Common to all Alternatives

All of the alternatives provide for development of the relevant settlements. Such development would have the potential to conflict with environmental components – to different degrees. Potentially significant adverse environmental effects arising from this conflict are common to all alternatives and are described on Table 4.2. For the Variation, these effects will be mitigated by both provisions integrated into the Variation and existing provisions already in force through the County Development Plan.

Although potentially significant adverse environmental effects would occur under each of the alternatives, the extent to which they would occur varies across each of the alternatives and this is addressed under the evaluation of each of the alternatives below.

Table 4.2 Potentially Significant Adverse Environmental Effects, if unmitigated, common to all alternatives

Environmental Component	Potentially Significant Adverse Environmental Effects, if unmitigated
Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Arising from both construction and operation of development and associated infrastructure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 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; o Habitat loss, fragmentation and deterioration, including patch size and edge effects; and o Disturbance (e.g. due to noise and lighting along transport corridors) and displacement of protected species.
Population and Human Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Potential interactions if effects upon environmental vectors such as water and air are not mitigated.
Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Damage to the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource.
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Adverse impacts upon the status of water bodies arising from changes in quality, flow and/or morphology. o Increase in the risk of flooding.
Material Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Failure to provide adequate and appropriate waste water treatment (water services infrastructure and capacity is needed to ensure the mitigation of potential conflicts). o Failure to comply with drinking water regulations and serve new development with adequate drinking water that is both wholesome and clean (water services infrastructure and capacity is needed to ensure the mitigation of potential conflicts). o Increases in waste levels.
Air and Climatic Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Emissions to air including greenhouse gas emissions and other emissions.
Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Potential effects on protected and unknown archaeology and protected architecture arising from construction and operation activities.
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Occurrence of adverse visual impacts and conflicts with the appropriate protection of designations relating to the landscape, especially with regard to the County's landscapes which are most valuable and most sensitive to change and protected focal points and views.

Evaluation Against SEOs

By:

- Concentrating Village Centre/Mixed Uses/Brownfield Development within and around existing village centres and
- Providing for new Residential Expansion Areas over a relatively small number of sites that are already or most easily served by infrastructure and could serve demand for new development

Alternative 1 'Even Development' would result in the greatest degree of significant positive effects (see Table 4.1) and least degree of potential conflicts (see Table 4.2). Development would be most likely to occur within or closest to existing settlement centres on serviced sites.

By:

- Concentrating Village Centre/Mixed Uses/Brownfield Development within and around existing village centres and
- Providing for new Residential Expansion Areas over a greater number of sites that could serve demand for new development

Alternative 2 'Sporadic Development' would result in a relatively moderate degree of significant positive effects (see Table 4.1) and a relatively moderate degree of potential conflicts (see Table 4.2). In comparison to Alternative 2, development would be spread out over a greater number of sites, some not currently serviced and some further from settlement centres.

Additional infrastructure would be required to accommodate sporadic development, more than would be required for Scenario 1 'Even Development'. In An Spidéal, for example, Alternative 2 would allow for a population in excess of 25 persons that would not be able to be accommodated by the existing waste water treatment plant.

By:

- Not identifying opportunity sites; and
- Following a ‘laissez faire’ approach in relation to development, with each application considered on its own merits and no land use zoning would be provided for

Alternative 3 ‘Haphazard Development’ would result in the least degree of significant positive effects (see Table 4.1) and greatest degree of potential conflicts (see Table 4.2). Development would be spread out over the entire area associated with each settlement with ribbon and backland development a dominant feature within the settlements. Although existing Plan provisions – including those relating to environmental protection/management and sustainable development – would have to be complied with, the potential for cumulative adverse effects would be significantly higher with this alternative.

All of the alternatives are consistent with approach provided by the existing Plan, to sustain 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.

Table 4.3 identifies an assessment of alternatives against the Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) detailed under Table 4.4.

Table 4.3 Assessment of Alternatives against Strategic Environmental Objectives

Alternative	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 fully mitigated
	to the Greatest degree	to Moderate degree ^a	to a Lesser degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Greater degree	
Alternative 1: Even Development	B1 B2 B3 PHH1 S1 W1 W2 W3 M1 M2 M3 C1 CH1 CH2 L1	B4		B1 B2 B3 PHH1 S1 W1 W2 W3 M1 M2 M3 C1 CH1 CH2 L1	B4		
Alternative 2: Sporadic Development		B1 B2 B3 B4 PHH1 S1 W1 W2 W3 M1 M2 M3 C1 CH1 CH2 L1			B1 B2 B3 B4 PHH1 S1 W1 W2 W3 M1 M2 M3 C1 CH1 CH2 L1		
Alternative 3: Haphazard Development		B4	B1 B2 B3 PHH1 S1 W1 W2 W3 M1 M2 M3 C1 CH1 CH2 L1		B4	B1 B2 B3 PHH1 S1 W1 W2 W3 M1 M2 M3 C1 CH1 CH2 L1	

Table 4.4 Strategic Environmental Objectives

Environmental Component	Strategic Environmental Objective(s)
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	B1: To ensure compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to the protection of European Sites and Annexed habitats and species ⁵
	B2: To ensure compliance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive with regard to the management of features of the landscape which - by virtue of their linear and continuous structure or their function act as stepping stones (designated or not) - are of major importance for wild fauna and flora and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species
	B3: To avoid significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites and to ensure compliance with the Wildlife Acts 1976-2010 with regard to the protection of species listed on Schedule 5 of the principal Act
	B4: To sustain 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
Population & Human Health	PHH1: To protect populations and human health from exposure to incompatible landuses
Soil	S1: To avoid damage to the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource in County Galway
Water	W1: To maintain and improve, where possible, the quality and status of surface waters
	W2: To prevent pollution and contamination of ground water
	W3: To comply as appropriate with the provisions of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG and OPW, 2009)
Material Assets	M1: To serve new development with adequate and appropriate waste water treatment
	M2: To serve new development with adequate drinking water that is both wholesome and clean
	M3: To reduce waste volumes, minimise waste to landfill and increase recycling and reuse.
Air & Climatic Factors	C1: To reduce travel related emissions to air and to encourage modal change from car to more sustainable forms of transport
Cultural Heritage	CH1: To protect archaeological heritage including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places and/or their context
	CH2: To protect architectural heritage including entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context
Landscape	L1: To avoid significant adverse impacts on the landscape - especially with regard to the County's landscapes which are most valuable and most sensitive to change and protected focal points and views.

4.4 The reasons for choosing the Variation in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with

The Selected Alternative for the Variation that emerged from the planning/SEA process is Alternative 1: Even Development.

This alternative has been selected and developed by the Planning Team and placed on public display by the Council having regard to both:

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

Land use zoning maps for the three settlements that evolved from the selection of Alternative 1 'Even Development' are provided at Figure 4.7, Figure 4.8 and Figure 4.9.

⁵ 'Annexed habitats and species' are those listed on EU Habitats Directive Annex I, II & IV and EU Birds Directive Annex I

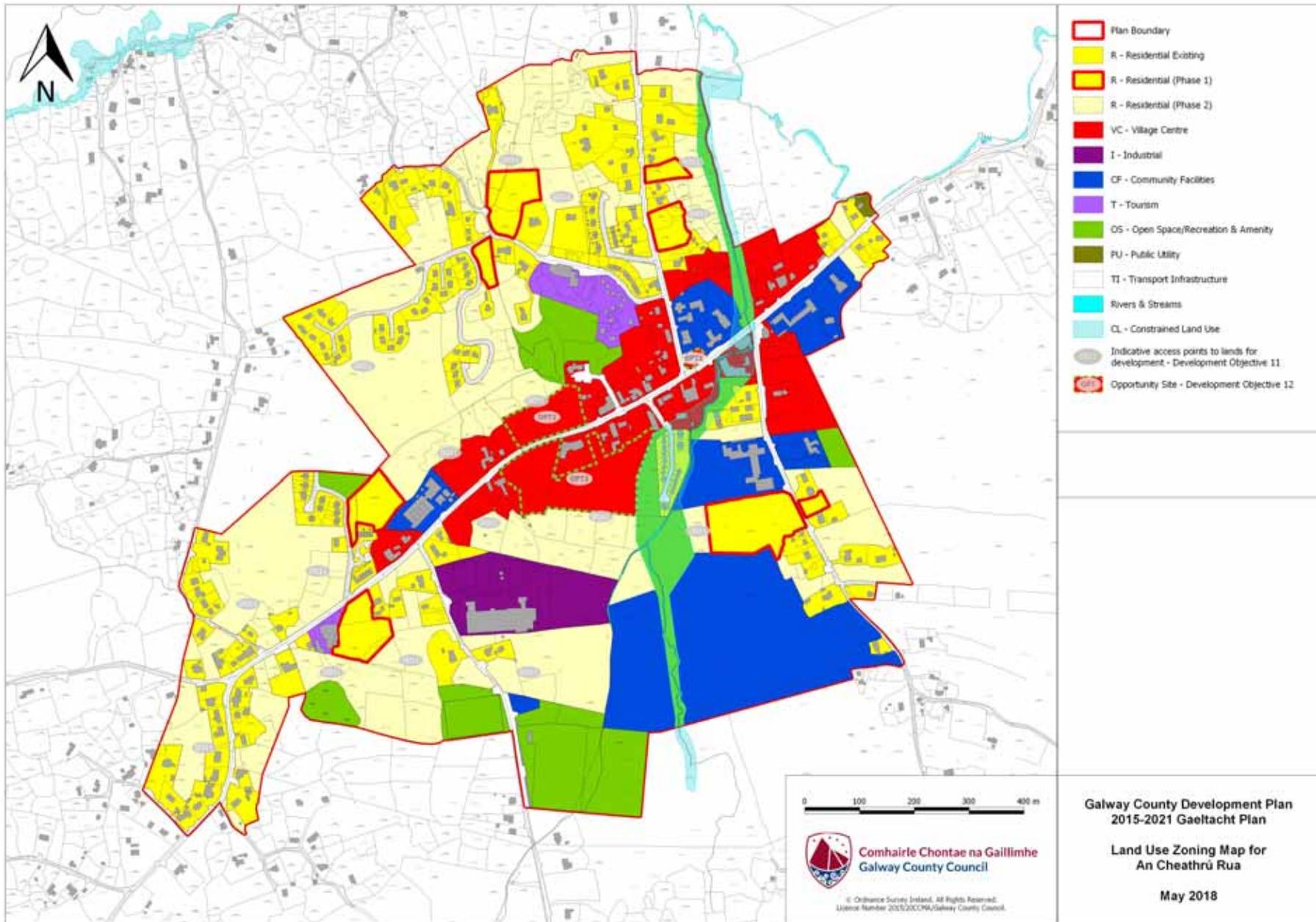


Figure 4.7 Land Use Zoning An Cheathrú Rua

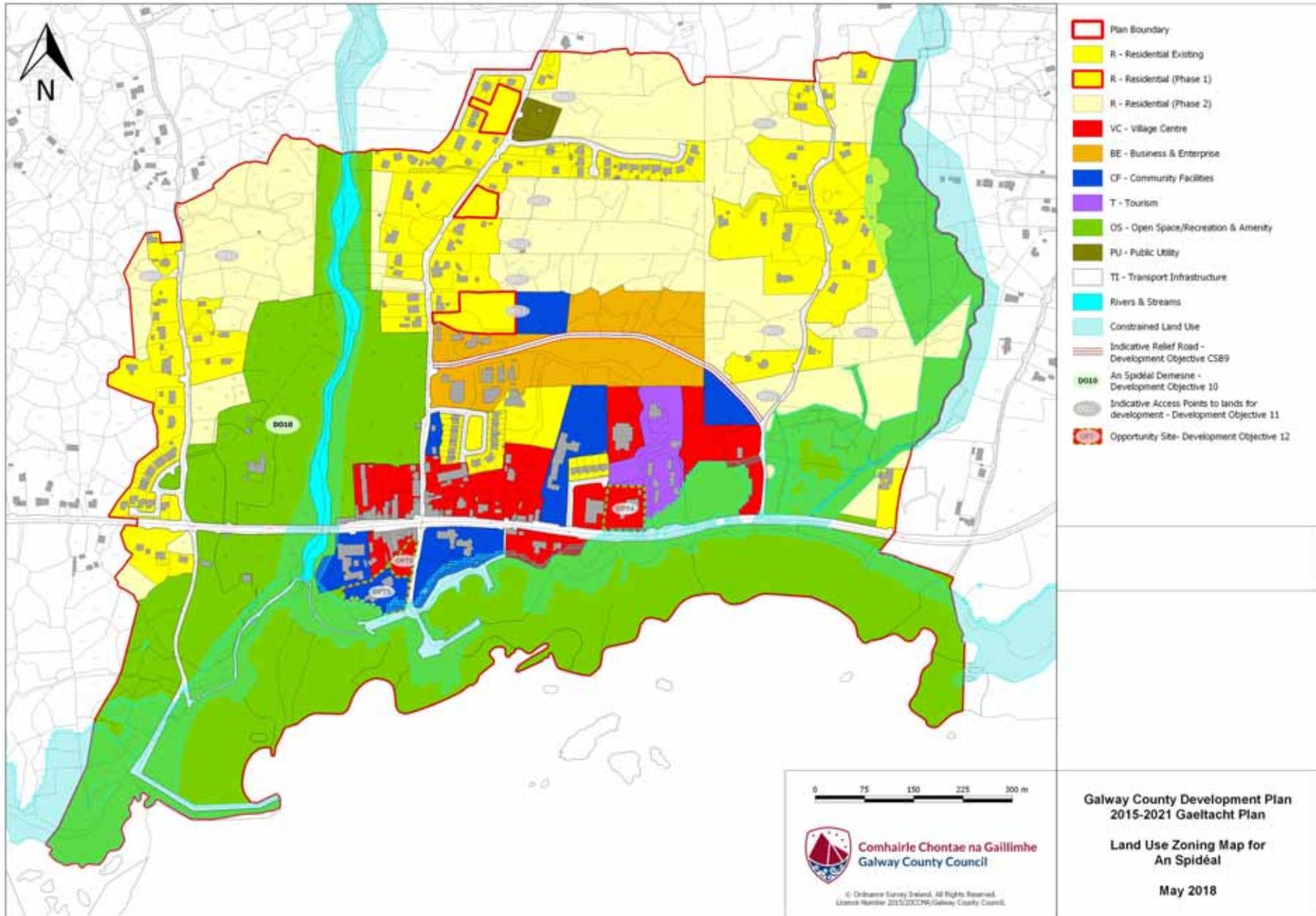


Figure 4.8 Land Use Zoning An Spidéal

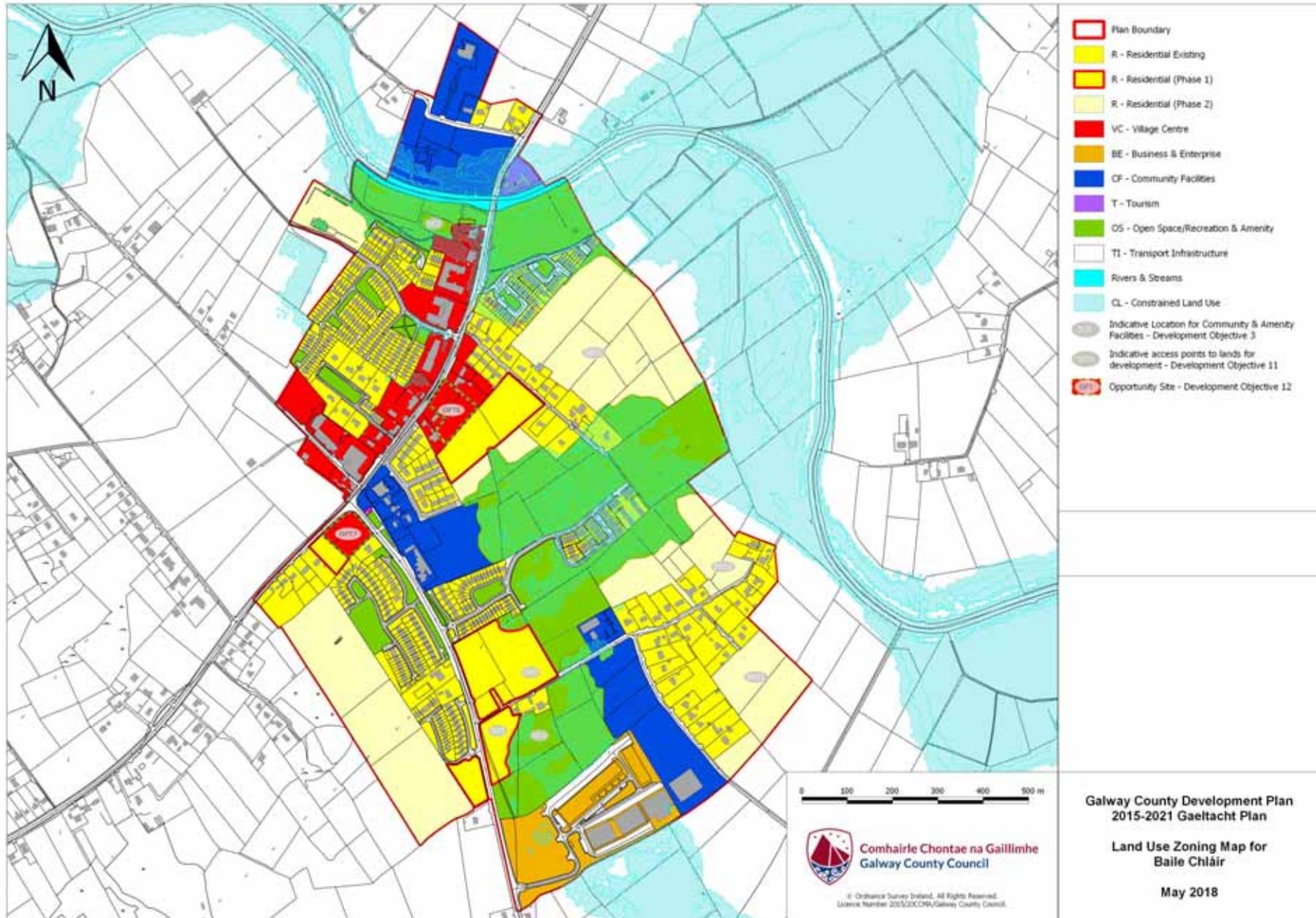


Figure 4.9 Land Use Zoning Baile Chláir

Section 5 Monitoring Measures

5.1 Introduction

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

Monitoring can enable, at an early stage, the identification of unforeseen adverse effects and the undertaking of appropriate remedial action.

5.2 Indicators and Targets

Monitoring is based around indicators that allow quantitative measures of trends and progress over time relating to the Strategic Environmental Objectives identified on Table 4.4 and used in the evaluation. Each indicator to be monitored is accompanied by the target(s) that were identified with regard to the relevant strategic actions.

Table 5.1 overleaf shows the indicators and targets which have been selected for monitoring the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan as varied, if unmitigated.

The Monitoring Programme may be updated to deal with specific environmental issues - including unforeseen effects - as they arise. Such issues may be identified by the Council or identified to the Council by other agencies.

5.3 Sources

Measurements for indicators generally come from existing monitoring sources. Existing monitoring sources include those maintained by the relevant authorities including the Council, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Central Statistics Office.

Internal monitoring of the environmental effects of grants of permission in the Council will provide monitoring of various indicators and targets on a *grant of permission* basis.

The likely significant effects of development proposals on environmental sensitivities are further determined during the development management process. By documenting this determination - e.g. whether a proposed development will impact upon a Protected Structure, for example - while granting permissions, or at a later date, the requirement to monitor the effects of implementing the Plan as varied can be achieved.

Where significant effects - including positive, negative, cumulative and indirect - have the potential to occur upon, for example, entries to the RMP, entries to the RPS or ecological networks as a result of the undertaking of individual projects or multiple individual projects such instances should be identified and recorded and should feed into the monitoring evaluation.

5.4 Reporting

Article 10 of the SEA Directive requires Member States to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans "*in order, inter alia, to identify at an early stage unforeseen adverse effects and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action.*" Existing monitoring arrangements may be used if appropriate, to avoid duplication of monitoring [Source: Chapter 7 Implementation of SEA Directive (2001/42/EC): Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment Guidelines for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities. DoEHLG 2004].

A stand-alone Monitoring Report on the significant environmental effects of implementing the County Development Plan (including the Variation) will be prepared in advance of the review of the County Development Plan.

5.5 Thresholds

Thresholds at which corrective action will be considered include:

- The occurrence of flood events;
- Court cases taken by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht regarding impacts upon archaeological heritage including entries to the RMP;
- Complaints received from statutory consultees regarding avoidable environmental impacts resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan as varied; and
- Fish kills.

Table 5.1 Selected Indicators, Targets and Monitoring Sources

Environmental Component	Selected Indicator(s)	Selected Target(s)	Source (Frequency)
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	B1: Conservation status of habitats and species as assessed under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive	B1: Maintenance of favourable conservation status for all habitats and species protected under national and international legislation to be unaffected by implementation of the Plan (as varied) ⁶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of environmental likely significant effects of grants of permission (grant by grant). Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht report of the implementation of the measures contained in the Habitats Directive - as required by Article 17 of the Directive (every 6 years). National Monitoring Report under Article 12 of the Birds Directive. Consultations with the NPWS (at monitoring evaluation - see Section 5.4).
	B2: Percentage loss of functional connectivity without remediation resulting from development provided for by the Plan (as varied)	B2: No significant ecological networks or parts thereof which provide functional connectivity to be lost without remediation resulting from development provided for in the Plan (as varied)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant). CORINE mapping resurvey (every c. 5 years).
	B3i: Number of significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites resulting from development provided for by the Plan (as varied)	B3i: Avoid significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites resulting from development provided for by the Plan (as varied)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant). Consultations with the NPWS (at monitoring evaluation - see Section 5.4).
	B3ii: Number of significant impacts on the protection of species listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife Act 1976.	B3ii: No significant impacts on the protection of species listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife Act 1976	
	B4: Population of the county involved in land management	B4: Sustain the population of the county involved in land management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO Population Data (every c. 5 years).
Population and Human Health	PHH1: Occurrence (any) of a spatially concentrated deterioration in human health arising from environmental factors resulting from development provided for by the Plan, as identified by the Health Service Executive and Environmental Protection Agency	PHH1: No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of implementing the Plan (as varied)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultations with EPA and Health Service Executive (at monitoring evaluation - see Section 5.4).
Soil	S1: Soil extent and hydraulic connectivity	S1: To minimise reductions in soil extent and hydraulic connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant).

⁶ Except as provided for in Section 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.

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Environmental Component	Selected Indicator(s)	Selected Target(s)	Source (Frequency)
Water	W1i: Classification of Overall Status (comprised of ecological and chemical status) under the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (SI No. 272 of 2009)	W1i: Not to cause deterioration in the status of any surface water or affect the ability of any surface water to achieve <i>good status</i> ⁷	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant). Data issued under the Water Framework Directive Monitoring Programme for Ireland. EPA Quality of Bathing Water in Ireland reports.
	W1ii: Mandatory and Guide values as set by the EU Bathing Water Directive and transposing Bathing Water Quality Regulations (SI No. 79 of 2008)	W1ii: To achieve - as a minimum - Mandatory values and, where possible, to achieve Guide values as set by the EU Bathing Water Directive and transposing Bathing Water Quality Regulations (SI No. 79 of 2008)	
	W2: Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC	W2: Not to affect the ability of groundwaters to comply with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant). Data issued under the Water Framework Directive Monitoring Programme for Ireland (multi-annual).
	W3: Number of incompatible developments granted permission on lands which pose - or are likely to pose in the future - a significant flood risk	W3: Minimise developments granted permission on lands which pose - or are likely to pose in the future - a significant flood risk in compliance with <i>The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant).
Material Assets	M1: Number of new developments granted permission which can be adequately and appropriately served with waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan (as varied)	M1: All new developments granted permission to be connected to and adequately and appropriately served by waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan (as varied)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant).
	M2: Number of non-compliances with the 48 parameters identified in the European Communities (Drinking Water) Regulations (No. 2) 2007 which present a potential danger to human health as a result of implementing the Plan (as varied)	M2: No non-compliances with the 48 parameters identified in the European Communities (Drinking Water) Regulations (No. 2) 2007 which present a potential danger to human health as a result of implementing the Plan (as varied)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPA The Provision and Quality of Drinking Water in Ireland reports (multi-annual). EPA Remedial Action List (every quarter).
	M3i: Total collected and brought household waste M3ii: Packaging recovered (t) by self-complying packagers	M3i: Minimise increases in and, where possible, reduce household waste generation M3ii: Maximise increases in packaging recovered (t) by self-complying packagers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPA National Waste Reports EPA Ireland's Environment Reports
Air and Climatic Factors	C1: Percentage of population travelling to work, school or college by public transport or non-mechanical means	C1: An increase in the percentage of the population travelling to work, school or college by public transport or non-mechanical means	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO Population Data (every c. 5 years).

⁷ Good status as defined by the WFD equates to approximately the following in the current national schemes of classification as set out by the EPA:

- *Q4* in the biological classification of *rivers*;
- *Mesotrophic* in the classification of *lakes*; and
- *Unpolluted status* in the Assessment of Trophic Status of Estuaries and Bays in Ireland (ATSEBI).

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Environmental Component	Selected Indicator(s)	Selected Target(s)	Source (Frequency)
Cultural Heritage	CH1: Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places - including Zones of Archaeological Potential (and the context of the above within the surrounding landscape where relevant) – protected from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan (as varied)	CH1: Protect entries to the Record of Monuments and Places - including Zones of Archaeological Potential (and their context of the above within the surrounding landscape where relevant) from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan (as varied)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant). • Consultation with Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (at monitoring evaluation - see Section 5.4).
	CH2: Percentage of entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan (as varied)	CH2: Protect entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan (as varied)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant). • Consultation with Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (at monitoring evaluation - see Section 5.4).
Landscape	L1: Number of complaints received from statutory consultees regarding avoidable impacts on the landscape - especially with regard to the County's landscapes which are most valuable and most sensitive to change and protected focal points and views - resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan (as varied)	L1: No developments permitted which result in avoidable impacts on the landscape - especially with regard to the County's landscapes which are most valuable and most sensitive to change and protected focal points and views - resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan (as varied)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant).