



Loughrea Local Area Plan

2012 -2018

Natura Impact Report

Stage 1 Screening and Stage 2
Appropriate Assessment of the Loughrea
Local Area Plan

11th October, 2012

Summary

In May 2012 Galway County Council published a draft Loughrea Local Area Plan (LAP). The purpose of this Plan is to provide direction for the future growth, development and land use of the town of Loughrea from 2012 to 2018. The draft Plan included land use zonings that aim to direct appropriate development to relevant zonings within the lifetime of the Plan.

As part of the preparation of the draft LAP a Habitat Directive Assessment was undertaken. Initially a Stage 1 Screening Assessment was undertaken to evaluate whether or not the implementation of the plan without mitigation, was likely to result in significant effects to European Sites.

As part of this process all European Sites occurring within a 15km radius of the Plan area were identified. Once identified an assessment was undertaken to determine which of these Sites were located within the sphere of influence of the draft LAP. This was based upon identifying impact pathways linking the LAP to qualifying features of the European Sites. In total 11 European Sites were identified as occurring within a 15km radius of the LAP area and four of these (i.e. Loughrea SAC & SPA and Rahasane Turlough SAC & SPA) were identified as occurring within the sphere of influence of the Plan. Once the European Sites occurring within the Plan's sphere of influence were identified the remainder of the Screening Assessment focused on establishing, in detail, how the Plan could potentially affect the qualifying features and conservation status of these four European Sites.

The principal impacts identified include perturbations to the water quality of Lough Rea and the St Cleran's River; abstraction of water from Lough Rea; and disturbance of Lough Rea and its qualifying features and key species as a result of human activity and particularly water-based activities on the lake.

The Screening Assessment concluded that, without mitigation, these potential impacts would have the potential to result in likely significant effects to the integrity and conservation status of European Sites.

The Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment followed on from the Screening Assessment by identifying which specific Policies and Objectives were likely to result in the types of negative impacts outlined in the Screening Assessments. Subsequent to this, other Policies and Objectives of the Plan whose function is to ensure that likely significant effects to the environment are avoided were outlined. These are referred to as Mitigatory Policies and Objectives and their presence in the draft LAP from the outset underpinned the precautionary approach that sought to avoid significant environmental effects during the development of the draft Plan. These mitigatory policies and objectives were reviewed to identify any gaps in the Plan where insufficient environmental safeguards were associated with potentially negative policies and objectives. Once reviewed, recommendations were made for the inclusion of further environmental safeguards within the Plan. These safeguards included recommended re-wording of existing mitigatory policies/objectives to further strengthen their protective environmental role or the recommendation of additional mitigatory measures in the form of new policies or objectives. Furthermore, recommendations were also made to re-word potentially negative policies and objectives so that their implementation would be subject to suitable environmental safeguards.

Upon completion of the draft Plan and supporting environmental assessments the Plan was put on public display in late May 2012. Following the period of public display submissions were received from statutory consultees, private organisations and the general public. The issues raised during the submissions were considered and where appropriate recommended changes to the draft Plan and the NIR were outlined.

Following the review of submissions and the completion of the Manager's Report, Material Alterations to the draft Plan were proposed by Galway County Council. The Material Alterations were Screened for likely significant effects to the conservation status of European Sites. The Screening Assessment of the Material Alterations is provided in Appendix 4 of this report.

The results of the Habitats Directive Assessment of the Material Alterations and the final Loughrea LAP concluded that the Plan will not result in likely significant effects to the conservation status of European Sites. Galway County Council's approach to land use in the Plan area, its commitment to the Habitats Directive and a range of mitigatory policies and objectives which form an integral part of the Plan provide sufficient environmental safeguards to ensure that the implementation of the adopted Loughrea LPA will not result in likely significant effects to European Sites or the environment in general.

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Part 1: Introduction

Doherty Environmental has been appointed by Galway County Council to undertake a Habitats Directive Assessment of the Loughrea Local Area Plan (LAP). This Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA) has been undertaken in conjunction with a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the LAP and should be read in combination with the LAP and the associated Strategic Environmental Assessment.

The purpose of this Habitats Directive Assessment is to assess whether the LAP has the potential to result in likely significant effects to the integrity and conservation status of European Sites. This Natura Impact Report outlines the results of the HDA of the Loughrea Local Area Plan and has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive, Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011.

1.1 Habitats Directive Assessment

The Habitats Directive Assessment is an assessment of the potential effects of a development plan or project on one or more Natura 2000 (N2K) sites. It is noted that a Habitats Directive Assessment is commonly referred to as an “Appropriate Assessment” (Dodd *et al*, 2007). However “Appropriate Assessment” forms only one stage of the HDA process (all stages making up the assessment process are outlined in detail below). The EU Habitats Directive provides the legislative framework for the protection of habitats and species throughout Europe through the establishment of a network of designated conservation areas known as the N2K network. The N2K network includes sites designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), under the EU Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the EU Birds Directive. SACs are designated in areas that support habitats listed on Annex I and/or species listed on Annex II of the Habitats Directive. SPAs are designated in areas that support: 1% or more of the all-Ireland population of bird species listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive; 1% or more of the population of a migratory species; and more than 20,000 waterfowl. The EU Habitats Directive has been transposed into Irish law through the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997 – 2011 (referred to as the Habitat Regulations) and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

Articles 6(1) & (2) of the Habitats Directive set out provisions for the conservation management of N2K sites. Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of this Directive set out a series of procedural steps that test whether or not a plan or project is likely to affect an N2K site. Article 6(3) also establishes the requirement for a HDA: *“any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the (Natura 2000) site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, shall be subjected to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implication for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public”*.

Therefore, the objective of this HDA is to conclude whether or not the LAP will adversely affect the integrity of an N2K site. Such a conclusion will be arrived at by assessing the implications of the LAP for each N2K site's "qualifying interests" (i.e. those Annex I habitats, Annex II species, and Annex I bird species and populations for which the site has been designated).

The HDA is underpinned by the precautionary principle. Therefore, if the risk of adverse impacts to the conservation objectives of a N2K cannot be ruled out it is assumed that an adverse impact may exist. Where such uncertainties are identified during the assessment, measures will be proposed to avoid or mitigate the risk of adverse impacts occurring.

The HDA was undertaken with reference to the following guidance documents on Habitats Directive Assessments:

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities (2009). DEHLG.
- Managing European Sites – The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats directive 92/43/EEC. European commission (2000). (To be referred to as MN 2000).
- Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting European Sites – Methodological Guidance of the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission (2001). (To be referred to as the APP Guidelines).
- Guidance on Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC – Clarification of the Concepts of: Alternative Solutions, Imperative reasons of Overriding Public Interest, Compensatory Measures, Overall coherence, Opinion of the Commission. European Commission (2007).
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans. Scott Wilson, Levett-Therivel sustainability Consultants, Treweek Environmental Consultants and Land Use Consultants (2006).
- Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government (DEHGL) Circular letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08 dated 15 February, 2008.

1.2 Stages of the Habitats Directive Assessment

European Guidance¹ has outlined a staged process for the completion of a HDA.

- Stage 1 – Screening: This stage defines the proposed plan, establishes whether the proposed plan is necessary for the conservation management of the European Site and assesses the likelihood of the plan to have a significant effect, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, upon a European Site.
- Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment: If a plan or project is likely to have a significant effect an Appropriate Assessment must be undertaken. In this stage the impact of the plan or project to

¹ European Commission Environment DG 2001: Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura

the Conservation Objectives of the European Site is assessed. The outcome of this assessment will establish whether the plan will have an adverse effect upon the integrity of the European Site.

- Stage 3 – Assessment of Alternative Solutions: If it is concluded that, subsequent to the implementation of mitigation measures, a plan has an adverse impact upon the integrity of a European Site it must be objectively concluded that no alternative solutions exist before the plan can proceed.
- Stage 4 – Where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain but imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) exist for the implementation of a plan or project an assessment of compensatory measures that will effectively offset the damage to the Natura site 2000 will be necessary.

The remainder of this document sets out the Methodology and Results of the Stage 1 Screening Assessment and Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment of the Loughrea Local Area Plan. It is structured as follows:

Part 2: Stage 1 Screening Assessment

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Screening Methodology
- Chapter 3: Loughrea LAP & Natura 2000 Baseline
- Chapter 4: Likely Significant Effects to European Sites
- Chapter 5: Assessment of Effects
- Chapter 6: Screening Assessment Conclusion

Part 3: Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment

- Chapter 7: European Sites brought Forward for Stage 2 Assessment
- Chapter 8: Interaction between LAP Policies and Objectives and European Sites
- Chapter 9: Evaluation of Mitigation Measures to ensure Potential Negative Impacts of Certain Policies and Objectives are Avoided; and
- Chapter 10: Natura Impact Report Conclusion

Part 2: Stage 1 Screening Assessment

1 Introduction

The function of the Screening Assessment is to identify whether or not policies, objectives and specific zonings associated with the LAP will have a likely significant effect on N2K sites. In this context “likely” means any effect that may be reasonably predicted and “significant” means not trivial or inconsequential but an effect that is potentially relevant to the site’s conservation objectives². Any effect, which would compromise the functioning and viability of a site and interfere with achieving the conservation objectives of the site, would constitute a significant effect.

The nature of the likely interactions between the LAP and the integrity of N2K sites will depend upon the sensitivity of the site’s qualifying features to potential impacts associated with LAP policies; the current conservation status of the site; and the likely changes that will result from the implementation of the LAP, in combination with other plans and projects.

2 Screening Methodology

The APP Guidelines (2001) outline the stages involved in undertaking a Screening assessment of a plan or project that has the potential to have likely significant effects on N2K sites. The methodology adopted for the Screening assessment of this LAP is informed by these guidelines and was undertaken in the following stages:

1. Define the LAP and determine whether it is necessary for the conservation management of the European Sites;
2. Identification of European Sites occurring within the sphere of influence of the LAP. ;
3. Review the policies and objectives within the LAP to determine which have the potential to affect N2K sites and determine whether the N2K sites are vulnerable to the effects. A Source-Pathway-Receiver model of assessment will be used to determine whether or not Policies/Objectives with the potential to result in negative impacts will affect European Sites; and
4. Identification of other plans or projects that, in combination with the policies and proposals of the LAP, have the potential to affect N2K sites.

2.1 Consultation & Review

Initial scoping consultation was undertaken with the Department of the Arts, Heritage & Local Government, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources during the development of the Loughrea LAP and the SEA and HDA of the LAP.

² See English Nature’s Habitat Regulations Guidance Note No. 3, 1999.

The development of the Loughrea Local Area Plan is an iterative process, and similarly, the Habitats Directive Assessment is an iterative process, and assessed the Plan at pre-draft, draft and final stages. All statutory and non-statutory consultees were afforded the opportunity to review the LAP, SEA and HDA at all pre-draft and draft stages prior to the adoption of the Plan. As a result of the consultation process and specific comment made in reference to the LAP and HDA changes were made to these documents.

Any changes made to the draft LAP were listed as Material Alterations to the draft Plan. All Material Alterations to the draft Plan under-went a Habitats Directive Stage 1 Screening Assessment. The details and results of this Screening Assessment are provided in Appendix 4.

Changes have also been made to this HDA as a result of submissions received during the consultation process. These changes relate, in the main to additional information outlining in detail to likely affects to qualifying features of the various potential impacts associated with the implementation of the adopted Plan.

3 Loughrea LAP & Natura 2000 Baseline

3.1 Summary Description of Loughrea LAP

The Loughrea LAP aims to provide a statutory framework for the future growth, development and improvement of Loughrea that is consistent with the policies and objectives contained in *the Galway County Development Plan (GCDP) 2009-2015* including its *Core Strategy/Settlement Strategy* and which addresses the needs and requirements of the local community, service providers and other stakeholders.

The purpose of the Local Area Plan is to guide future development within the town of Loughrea, in a sustainable and equitable manner and to inform members of the public, the local community, stakeholders, developers and the Planning Authority regarding policies and objectives for the development of the town, including provisions in relation to land use management, community facilities and amenities, transport and infrastructure, urban design, heritage and the environment. In order to facilitate proper development within the Plan area a series of LAP land use maps are provided as part of the LAP. These maps, which are reproduced in Appendix 1A of this document, illustrate the location of land use zoning, specific zoning objectives, flood zones and flood risk areas.

The overall strategic vision for Loughrea as set out in the LAP aims to establish Loughrea as “A Key Town” that will reflect the needs and aspirations of the local community, businesses and other interested groups while promoting the sustainable land use and transport within the town area. Maintaining a strong and vibrant town centre, fostering economic development and employment creation and providing a range of facilities, amenities and supporting services underpin the strategic vision for Loughrea.

3.2 Loughrea LAP and Nature Conservation Management

The Plan sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of Loughrea. It is clear from this definition of the Plan that it is not necessary for the management of any European Site for nature conservation purposes. Therefore consideration was given to the Plan and whether it was

likely to have a significant effect on European Sites and if so what the implications would be for the Conservation Objectives of these Sites.

3.3 Summary of Elements of the Loughrea LAP that Could Negatively Affect European Sites

The elements of the Plan that have the potential to negatively affect European Sites are outlined in full in Appendix 2 of this NIR. The main elements of the Plan with the potential to result in such impacts relate to the zoning of development land-use in undeveloped sites adjacent to the St Cleran's River, the development of infrastructure such as the Eastern Relief Road or energy infrastructure and the pressures associated with the adequate supply of water throughout the lifetime of the Plan.

The general impacts to the qualifying interests of European Sites associated with elements of the Plan will include:

- A reduction in water quality in Lough Rea associated with the construction phase of new developments, surface water runoff from impermeable surfaces and the use of the lake as a tourist and amenity attraction.
- Inadequate wastewater (i.e. sewer) collection system resulting in pollution of surface watercourses and Lough Rea.
- Unsustainable abstraction of water from Lough Rea leading to the drawdown of baseline lake levels.
- Disturbance to qualifying habitats and species from increased human presence, particularly associated with water-based tourism and amenity activity on Lough Rea.

Section 3.4 below lists the European Sites occurring within or surrounding the Plan area and identifies which European Sites are at risk of experiencing likely significant effects as a result of the Plan.

3.4 European Sites occurring within a 15km Buffer of the Loughrea LAP

In order to identify the European Sites that could be significantly affected by the implementation of the Loughrea LAP an initial long-list of sites occurring within 15km of the LAP area (to be referred to as the study area) has been compiled. The establishment of a 15km buffer area surrounding the LAP area is in line with recommended procedures for identifying sites, as outlined in Scott Wilson *et al.* (2006).

A total number of 8 SACs and 3 SPAs were identified within the 15km buffer area surrounding the LAP boundary (see Appendix 1B: Figure 1).

Appendix 3 provides a brief description of these sites with regard to the following elements:

- Qualifying interests;
- Site sensitivity/vulnerability;
- Current Conservation Status; and
- Threats.

The qualifying interests are the features for which the site has been designated as an N2K Site under the EU Habitats and Birds Directives.

Site sensitivity/vulnerability is based on the sensitivities of the qualifying interests for which the site is designated. For instance Lough Rea SAC is designated for the occurrence of oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara species. This habitat is dependent on low nutrient levels and high levels of water clarity and is highly sensitive to changes in water turbidity or nutrient status.

As conservation management plans have not been published for the majority of these European Sites the current conservation status and known threats to qualifying interests described in Appendix 3 were sourced from a review of the NPWS Article 17 Report to the European Commission “Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland” (NPWS, 2008). However, this report assesses the conservation status and associated threats to Annex-listed habitats and species on a countrywide basis, and therefore, the status and threats to specific sites in the study area were not available at the time of writing. There is no similar information collated for SPAs.

3.5 Conservation Management Objectives for European Sites

At the time of writing specific Conservation Management Plans were unavailable for all European Sites listed in Appendix 3. For sites lacking a published Plan, a list of generic conservation management objectives (CMOs) have been provided by the NPWS. These are:

For SACs

- To maintain the Annex I habitats for which the SAC has been selected at favourable conservation status;
- To maintain the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected at favourable conservation status;
- To maintain the extent, species richness and biodiversity of the entire site; and
- To establish effective liaison and co-operation with landowners, legal users and relevant authorities.

For SPAs

- To maintain the bird species of special conservation interest, for which the SPA has been designated, at favourable conservation status.

Since the conservation management objectives for the N2K sites focus on maintaining the favourable conservation status of the qualifying interests of each site, the Screening process concentrated on assessing the potential implications of the Plan against the qualifying interests of each site.

4 Likely Significant Effects to European Sites

Table 4.1 provides an assessment of the Plans influence on each site listed in Appendix 3 and determines which Sites are at risk of experiencing negative impacts as a result of implementing the Loughrea LAP.

As outlined in Section 2.1 a Source-Pathway-Receiver model was used to determine which N2K Sites are at risk of being negatively impacted by the Plan. In this model the Source represents the Policies/Objectives with the potential to result in negative impacts. The pathway represents the process by which such impacts might negatively affect the Receiver i.e. European Sites.

The types of Pathways that will link Sources to Receivers are divided into two categories:

1. Direct Impacts; and
2. Indirect Impacts.

Direct Impacts are impacts which occur within or immediately adjacent to European Sites and result in the:

- Physical loss of Qualifying Interests through habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, species disturbance or mortality; and
- Physical damage to Qualifying Interests through habitat degradation, habitat fragmentation, severance/barrier effects and edge effects.

As two European Sites (Lough Rea SAC and SPA) occur within the Plan area, the land-use measures proposed in the Plan will have the potential to directly impact these Sites. The following Sections of this Screening Assessment will present a determination as to whether these potential impacts are likely to result in significant effects to European Sites.

Indirect Impacts are impacts which occur as result of direct impacts, the interaction of effects or off-site from a project/ land use zoning area. Examples of indirect impacts include: the effects of displaced species on the occupancy of alternative habitats; the effects of habitat degradation on species; and the downstream effects of reduced water quality on riparian, lotic or transitional habitats.

Indirect impact pathways include:

- Physical proximity
- Hydrological linkages
- Mobile species linkages
- Aerial deposition

The potential for Loughrea LAP to indirectly influence or impact other European Sites will depend on whether these pathways link impact sources (i.e. policies/objectives/land use zonings) with the receiver (i.e. European Sites).

Where no such impact pathways link policies/objectives/land use zonings and European Sites then it is concluded that the European Sites do not occur within the sphere of influence of the Loughrea LAP and are not considered further.

Table 4-1: European Sites within 15km of the Loughrea LAP that could be Influenced by the Plan

European Site	Distance from Loughrea LAP	Direct Impacts	Does the Plan have the Potential to Influence N2K Sites through			Potential for Likely Significant Effect exists?
			Hydrological Pathway	Aerial Pathway	Disturbance to Species	
000304 – Lough Rea SAC	0km. Within plan area.	Yes. Policies and Objectives of the Plan will have the potential to result in direct impacts to this cSAC	Yes. Policies and Objectives of the Plan will have the potential to affect the water quality of watercourses flowing through the LAP area. Reductions in water quality could result in indirect impacts to qualifying interests of the coastal and transitional zone downstream.	Yes. Developments resulting from Policies and Objectives of the Plan could have the potential to result in the deposition of aerial contaminant with the potential to affect qualifying interests in the surrounding area.	Yes. Developments resulting from Policies and Objectives of the Plan will have the potential to result in indirect disturbance to qualifying interests of this cSAC.	Yes
004134 – Lough Rea SPA	0km. Within plan area	Yes. Policies and Objectives of the Plan will have the potential to result in direct impacts to this SPA	Yes. Policies and Objectives of the Plan will have the potential to affect the water quality of watercourses flowing through the LAP area. Reductions in water quality could result in indirect impacts to qualifying interests associated with the coastal and transitional zone	Yes. Developments resulting from Policies and Objectives of the Plan could have the potential to result in the deposition of aerial contaminant with the potential to affect qualifying interests in the surrounding area.	Yes. Developments resulting from Policies and Objectives of the Plan will have the potential to result in indirect disturbance to qualifying interests of this SPA	Yes

			downstream.			
004168 – Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA	2.6km to the south of the Plan area.	No. This SPA is located 2.6km to the south of the Plan and will not be directly impacted by the policies and objectives of the Plan.	No potential impacts. There are no hydrological linkages between this cSAC and the LAP boundary.	No potential impacts. Any significant effects associated with aerial emissions arising from industrial development, increase traffic etc. within the Plan area will be restricted to the local area surrounding the Plan area and will not affect this Site located 2.6km to the south.	No potential impacts. This site is located at a remote distance from the LAP area where Policies and Objectives of the Plan will not result in negative impacts to qualifying species.	No
001913 – Sonnagh Bog SAC	7.1km to the south of the Plan area.	No. This cSAC is located 7.1km to the south of the Plan and will not be directly impacted by the policies and objectives of the Plan.	No potential impacts. There are no hydrological linkages between this cSAC and the LAP boundary.	No potential impacts. Any significant effects associated with aerial emissions arising from industrial development, increase traffic etc. within the Plan area will be restricted to the local area surrounding the Plan area and will not affect this Site located 7.1km to the south.	No potential impacts. This site is located at a remote distance from the LAP area where Policies and Objectives of the Plan will not result in negative impacts to qualifying species.	No
000322 – Rahasane Turlough SAC	10km to the west of the Plan area.	No. This cSAC is located 10km to the west of the Plan and will not be directly impacted by the policies and objectives of the	Rahasane Turlough is located to the west of Craughwell along the Dunkellin River. The St Cleran River, which flows from Lough Rea and through the LAP area	No impacts. Any significant effects associated with aerial emissions arising from industrial development, increase traffic etc. within the Plan area will be restricted to the	No impacts. This site is located at a remote distance from the LAP area where Policies and Objectives of the Plan will not result in negative impacts to qualifying species.	Yes

		Plan.	is discharges to the Craughwell River which in turn discharges to the Dunkellin River to the west of Craughwell. Therefore a hydrological pathway links to the Plan area with this SAC. While this SAC is located 17km downstream of the Plan area significant adverse affects to the water quality of the St Cleran River could result in negative impacts to this SAC.	local area surrounding the Plan area and will not affect this Site located 10km to the west.		
004089 - Rahasane Turlough SPA	10km to the west of the Plan area.	No. This SPA is located 10km to the south of the Plan and will not be directly impacted by the policies and objectives of the Plan.	See comment of Rahasane Turlough SAC above.	No impacts. Any significant effects associated with aerial emissions arising from industrial development, increase traffic etc. within the Plan area will be restricted to the local area surrounding the Plan area and will not affect this Site located 10km to the west.	Yes. Water quality impacts arising from St Cleran's River could negatively affect the water quality and those habitat of over-wintering wildfowl for which this SPA is designated.	Yes
000318 Peterswell Turlough	10.5km to the southwest	No. This cSAC is located 10.5km to the southwest of	No potential impacts. There are no hydrological linkages	No potential impacts. Any significant effects associated with aerial	No potential impacts. This site is located at a remote distance from	No

	of the Plan area.	the Plan and will not be directly impacted by the policies and objectives of the Plan.	between this SAC and the LAP boundary.	emissions arising from industrial development, increase traffic etc. within the Plan area will be restricted to the local area surrounding the Plan area and will not affect this Site located 10.5km to the southwest.	the LAP area where Policies and Objectives of the Plan will not result in negative impacts to qualifying species.	
000242 – Castletaylor Complex SAC	13.6km to the west of the Plan area.	No. This cSAC is located 13.6km to the west of the Plan and will not be directly impacted by the proposed development	No potential impacts. There are no hydrological linkages between this cSAC and the LAP boundary.	No potential Impacts. This site is located at a remote distance from the LAP area where such impacts will not result in LSEs	No potential Impacts. This site is located at a remote distance from the LAP area where such impacts will not result in LSEs to qualifying species.	No
002117 – Lough Coy SAC	14km to the southwest of the Plan area.	No. This cSAC is located 14km to the southeast of the Plan and will not be directly impacted by the proposed development.	No potential Impacts. There are no hydrological linkages between this cSAC and the LAP boundary.	No potential Impacts. This site is located at a remote distance from the LAP area where such impacts will not result in LSEs	No potential Impacts. This site is located at a remote distance from the LAP area where such impacts will not result in LSEs to qualifying species.	No
002293 – Carrowbaun, Newhall and Ballylee Turloughs SAC	14.7km to the southwest of the Plan area.	No. This SAC is located 14.7km to the southeast of the Plan and will not be directly impacted by the proposed development.	No potential Impacts. There are no hydrological linkages between this SPA and the LAP boundary.	No potential Impacts. This site is located at a remote distance from the LAP area where such impacts will not result in LSEs	No potential Impacts. This site is located at a remote distance from the LAP area where such impacts will not result in LSEs to qualifying species.	No

002244 – Ardrahan Grassland SAC	14.9km to the west of the Plan area.	No. This cSAC is located 14.9km to the west of the Plan and will not be directly impacted by the proposed development	No potential Impacts. There are no hydrological linkages between this cSAC and the LAP boundary.	No potential Impacts. This site is located at a remote distance from the LAP area where such impacts will not result in LSEs	No potential Impacts. This site is located at a remote distance from the LAP area where such impacts will not result in LSEs to qualifying species.	No
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As outlined in Table 4.1 four European Sites occur within the sphere of influence of the Loughrea LAP and are potentially at risk of experiencing likely significant effects. The Lough Rea cSAC, the Lough Rea SPA (to be referred to as the Lough Rea European Sites), the Rahasane SAC and the Rahasane SPA (to be referred to as the Rahasane European Sites) represent the European Sites that occur within the sphere of influence of Loughrea LAP. Appendix 1B: Figure 3 shows the relationship between these European Sites and the Plan area.

Both direct and indirect impacts will have the potential to result in likely significant effects to Lough Rea European Sites.

Indirect impacts arising from downstream hydrological effects will have the potential to result in likely significant effects to the Rahasane European Sites.

To determine whether the LAP will result in likely significant effects to the above European Sites occurring within the sphere of influence of the Plan, it is necessary to assess in more detail the interaction between the LAP Policies and Objectives with the potential to result in negative ecological effects and these European Sites.

Section 5 below presents an assessment of the likelihood of these impacts negatively affecting the Loughrea and Rahasane European Sites. This assessment follows the Assessment Criteria outlined in the APP Guidelines (2002).

5 Assessment of Effects

Describe the individual elements of the plan (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the European Site.

The elements of the plan that will have the potential to give rise to impacts on the Lough Rea and Rahasane Turlough European Sites relate to land use change, development and human presence within and adjacent to Lough Rea and St Cleran's River. The development of undeveloped land adjacent to St Cleran's River will have the potential to result in perturbations to the water quality of this river, which is already of poor water quality status downstream of the existing Loughrea WWTP.

The development of such undeveloped land will also result in site clearance and construction activity adjacent to St Cleran's River while the Loughrea Eastern Relief Road will require the construction of a road bridge over a tributary of St Cleran's River.

Continued abstraction of water from Lough Rea to meet the requirements of future populations and development throughout the lifetime of the Plan will also have the potential to negatively affect the conservation status of qualifying habitats of Lough Rea SAC and SPA.

In the absence of mitigation measures the elements of the Plan that have the potential to give rise to these impacts will have the potential to negatively affect the conservation status of the above listed European Sites.

Table 5-1: Assessment of Likely Significant Effects to the European Sites occurring within the Sphere of Influence of the Plan Area

Assessment Criteria																																	
<i>Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the European Sites by virtue of:</i>																																	
Size and Scale	<p>The Loughrea Plan area is approximately 768.05ha in size. The undeveloped land zoned for future development within the LAP amounts to approximately 476ha. The following development zonings within the Plan contribute to this total:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr style="background-color: #4f81bd; color: white;"> <th>Zoning</th> <th>AREA</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Residential (Phase 1)</td><td style="text-align: right;">32.89</td></tr> <tr><td>Residential (Phase 2)</td><td style="text-align: right;">62.52</td></tr> <tr><td>Open Space / Recreation & Amenity</td><td style="text-align: right;">52.31</td></tr> <tr><td>Residential (Existing)</td><td style="text-align: right;">100.48</td></tr> <tr><td>Agricultural</td><td style="text-align: right;">215.80</td></tr> <tr><td>Public Utilities</td><td style="text-align: right;">0.26</td></tr> <tr><td>Industrial</td><td style="text-align: right;">33.90</td></tr> <tr><td>Environmental Management</td><td style="text-align: right;">13.76</td></tr> <tr><td>Community Facilities</td><td style="text-align: right;">37.17</td></tr> <tr><td>Town Centre / Commercial</td><td style="text-align: right;">28.27</td></tr> <tr><td>Business & Enterprise</td><td style="text-align: right;">14.66</td></tr> <tr><td>Commercial /Mixed Use</td><td style="text-align: right;">6.04</td></tr> <tr><td>Transport Infrastructure</td><td style="text-align: right;">63</td></tr> <tr><td>Lake</td><td style="text-align: right;">107</td></tr> <tr style="font-weight: bold;"> <td>Total</td> <td style="text-align: right;">768.05</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Zoning	AREA	Residential (Phase 1)	32.89	Residential (Phase 2)	62.52	Open Space / Recreation & Amenity	52.31	Residential (Existing)	100.48	Agricultural	215.80	Public Utilities	0.26	Industrial	33.90	Environmental Management	13.76	Community Facilities	37.17	Town Centre / Commercial	28.27	Business & Enterprise	14.66	Commercial /Mixed Use	6.04	Transport Infrastructure	63	Lake	107	Total	768.05
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Land-take	The Loughrea LAP will not involve any land-take from lands included within European Sites.																																
Distance from European Sites or key features of the Plan area	<p>Sections of the Lough Rea cSAC, Lough Rea SPA are located within the Plan area.</p> <p>Rahasane Turlough SPA and SAC are located 17km downstream of the Plan area.</p>																																

Resource requirements	<p>Water Abstraction</p> <p>Lough Rea supplies water for the Loughrea Plan area.</p> <p>Policy UI 1 of the LAP supports the provision of an adequate water supply to service the development of Loughrea.</p> <p>The continued abstraction of water from Lough Rea to meet the needs of future development during the lifetime of the Plan will have the potential to result in the drawdown of lake levels. Such an impact will have the potential to negatively affect the qualifying habitat of the Lough Rea SAC and the distribution of stoneworts (Charophytes) which are a key component of the SAC qualifying habitat.</p> <p>A lowering of lake levels resulting from increased abstraction pressure will also have the potential to alter shoreline wetland habitats which are listed as qualifying habitats for the Lough Rea SPA and are important for providing shelter to qualifying bird species of the Lough Rea SPA.</p>
Emissions	<p>Surface Water Run-off and Pollution Events during the Construction of Lands Zoned for Development Adjacent to St Cleran’s River</p> <p>Storm water runoff from roads in Loughrea town has been highlighted by the Western Regional Fisheries Board as an issue for receiving watercourses throughout the town of Loughrea. High levels of siltation have been recorded in these watercourses and de-silting operations have been undertaken in the past. These watercourses are already suffering from urban stream syndrome, as described by Walsh <i>et al.</i> (2005). Impacts associated with urban stream syndrome include:</p> <p>Changes to the hydrological regime resulting from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in surface water flow rates; and • Changes in sediment transport. <p>A reduction in water quality resulting from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases in nutrients leading to eutrophication, reduced dissolved oxygen and increased biological oxygen demand (BOD); • Contamination from toxic substances such as metals including lead, zinc, copper etc.; and • Increases in suspended solids. <p>Surface water runoff from urban impervious areas can lead to inputs of a variety of pollutants such as metals and hydrocarbons which may be dissolved in water or form high levels of siltation from the deposition of particulate matter. Even low levels of catchment urbanisation have been shown to result in increased concentrations of several chemical pollutants in streams (Hatt <i>et al.</i>, 2004). The increased urbanisation of lands with the establishment of impermeable surfaces in development land-use zonings adjacent to watercourses will have the potential to exacerbate existing pressures associated with stormwater runoff to these watercourses.</p> <p>During submissions to the EPA regarding the wastewater discharge license application for the Loughrea WWTP the Western Regional Fisheries Board recommended that the implementation of a storm water management plan should form a condition of the wastewater discharge authorisation license for the Loughrea agglomeration.</p> <p>Surface water run-off from construction site areas adjacent to St Cleran’s River will have the potential to result in perturbations to the water quality of this surface watercourse. Significant perturbations to the water quality of this watercourse will contribute to an overall deterioration</p>

in the water quality of higher order rivers downstream. Adverse impacts to the Dunkellin River downstream will have the potential to adversely affect the water quality of the Rahasane Turlough SAC and SPA.

The storage of fuels, lubricants and other polluting materials on construction sites within or adjacent to hydrological pathways (e.g. groundwater, surface watercourses) will present a risk of pollution to surface waters and groundwater. The ingress of such polluting materials to hydrological pathways will have the potential to affect the conservation status of qualifying habitats and species downstream at Lough Rea and Rahasane Turlough.

Wastewater

Should inadequate wastewater treatment infrastructure accompany new developments there will be a risk of pollution to Lough Rea and St Cleran's River and downstream at higher order watercourses associated with this river catchment and the Rahasane Turlough.

Previous pollution events to Lough Rea arising from sewage pump malfunctions have been reported in the past by Inland Fisheries Ireland.

Noise Emissions and Human Presence

No new development land zonings are situated adjacent to Lough Rea. Due to the absence of development zonings fringing the lake, future land use within the town is not likely to result in significant changes to baseline noise levels along the lakeshore.

However Objective ED4 sets out support for the development of water-based recreational facilities and activities. While the Plan aims to ensure that any water-based development will be undertaken in an environmentally sustainable manner, the increased leisure activity on the lake, especially during the over-wintering bird season will have the potential to disturb bird species for which the lake has been designated an SPA. It is also noted that the NPWS Site Synopsis for Loughrea SPA and SAC states "boating activities may have some impact upon the site and may need to be monitored". Further assessment of the potential effects of disturbance to qualifying bird species are outlined under the section "Disturbance to Key Species" below.

Due to the remote location of Rahasane Turlough no noise emissions associated with developments supported by the Plan will have the potential to affect this European Site.

Air

Considering:

- the scale of industrial land use zoned within the Plan area;
- the IPPC licensing requirements for any industry emitting to air;
- and the distance of 650m from the nearest industrial zoned area to Lough Rea;

air emissions associated with industrial development within the Plan area will not result in likely significant effects to the trophic status or water quality of Lough Rea.

Increases in traffic associated with the projected population increase is not likely to result in emissions with the potential to significantly effect the trophic status or water quality of Lough Rea.

	<p>Visual</p> <p>No lands fringing Lough Rea have been zoned for future development. All greenfield lands zoned for future development are set back from the lake shore and generally associated with the existing built-land fabric of the town. The maintenance of the existing shoreline and the set back of development land zonings from the lakeshore will ensure that visual impacts with the potential to disturb bird species associated with Lough Rea are avoided.</p>
Excavation requirements	<p>The catchment area surrounding Loughrea is predominantly carboniferous with springs and groundwater feeding the lake. Any excavations occur within the zone of contribution of the lake will have the potential to adversely affect groundwater through perturbations to the water quality or the blocking of groundwater channels feeding Loughrea.</p> <p>As Lough Rea is a predominantly spring-fed lake the disruption of groundwater sources will have the potential to significantly affect the status of the lake.</p>
Transportation requirements	<p>The Loughrea Plan includes Specific Objectives to support the development of an Eastern Relief Road. Considering the carboniferous nature of the surrounding area (including the presence of springs in the vicinity of the proposed route) the development of this road will have the potential to adversely affect groundwater feeding Lough Rea.</p>
<p>Describe any likely changes to the N2K site arising as a result of:</p>	
Reduction of habitat area	<p>There will be no direct loss of any European Site qualifying habitats as a result of the adoption of the Loughrea LAP. The implementation of the Environmental Management Area Zoning Objective will ensure that the existing footprint of qualifying habitats occurring within European Sites is protected.</p> <p>However indirect loss of habitat could arise through the abandonment of feeding grounds by qualifying species as a result of disturbance brought about by noise and human presence.</p> <p>The unsustainable abstraction of water from Lough Rea will have the potential to result in a contraction of the range of habitat available for stoneworts (<i>Chara</i> species).</p> <p>Adverse impacts to the source groundwater feeding Lough Rea will have the potential to negatively affect the trophic status of the lake, which is a key feature of the qualify habitat for which the SAC is designed.</p>
Disturbance of key species	<p>Elements of the proposed plan that will have the potential to result in water pollution and human disturbance, both of which could negatively affect key qualifying bird species that are sensitive to changes in water quality and disturbance. The potential effects of water pollution to key species have been outlined under Emissions above.</p> <p>Disturbance to Qualifying Bird Species</p> <p>Disturbance can be defined as any human activity that influences a bird's behaviour or survival. Reaction to disturbance will vary depending on the type of disturbance, the circumstance in which the disturbance occurs and the particular bird species being disturbed.</p> <p>Numerous studies of disturbance have shown behavioural effects, such as birds changing their feeding behavior, taking flight or being more vigilant. Other studies have focused on physiological impacts, such as demonstrating changes in the levels of stress hormones or monitoring changes in heart rate. The majority of these reactions will confer some form of energetic cost to the affected species. Stillman et al. (2009) list a number of studies that</p>

demonstrated the above effects of disturbance.

Stillman et al. (2009) state that “while behavioural and physiological studies show an impact of disturbance, it is usually difficult to understand whether the disturbance does actually have an impact on the population size of the species in question. For example, the fact that a bird takes flight when a person approaches is to be expected and a short flight is unlikely to have a major impact on the individual in question, let alone the population as a whole”. However, while few studies have explored the population effects of disturbance to birds, it is likely that disturbance which result in mortality (Yasue and Dearden, 2006, Liley, 1999), a reduction in breeding success (Arroyo and Razin, 2006, Ruhlen et al., 2003,) or the avoidance of suitable habitat (Liley et al., 2006a, Liley and Sutherland, 2007) will have the potential to negatively affect bird populations.

Reactions to disturbance vary depending on the source of the disturbing activity. The most disturbing activities are generally associated with irregular and unpredictable loud noises, vibration or movements that occur over a prolonged period of time. In contrast birds are less likely to be disturbed by sources of disturbance that result in regular, predictable and quite sound or movement or minimal vibration. Birds are also likely to habituate to such sources of disturbance and can do so over a relatively short time frame (e.g. Rees et al., 2005). The frequency of the disturbance event will determine the extent to which birds can become habituated, and therefore the distance at which they respond. In general, the greater the distance of a disturbance from bird species the less significant the effect of the disturbance to these species. The main factors that influence a response to disturbance include sensitivity, proximity and timing/duration of the source of disturbance.

The sensitivity of birds to disturbance can be defined by the tolerance distance of a species or the distance at which a species responds to a source of disturbance. A recent review of the literature, undertaken by Scot Wilson (2010) outlined the tolerance distance of various water bird species. This review showed that the principal qualifying species of Lough Rea, namely coot and shoveler displayed a respective tolerance distance of 5 – 50m and 200 – 400m to sailing boats. (Note that canoeing, sailing and angling – season open from mid-March to September – are likely to represent the principal lake based activities referred to under Objective ED4 of the LAP). The tolerance distances, based on the results of research undertaken by Tydeman (1978) were lowest for shoveler out of 12 water bird species assessed as part of this research. The tolerance distance for coot was second highest. This research indicates a high degree of sensitivity to disturbance from sailing boats for shoveler and relatively low sensitivity for coot. Such tolerance distances have been used by some authors in the establishment of minimum set-back distance beyond which disturbance will not occur. However Stillman et al. (2009) contend that such an “approach is flawed and will not necessarily ensure disturbance effects are avoided. Rather than rely on set distances, it is instead necessary to consider the species’ ecology, use of an area and other factors that may influence the scale of the disturbance. This information can then be used to identify what kinds of disturbance, at which locations, are likely to have an impact”

It is also noted that as the qualifying species associated with Lough Rea are over-wintering, disturbance to these species will be restricted to the winter/non-breeding season. Furthermore it is likely that lake-based human activity (such as angling, sailing and canoeing) will be at its lowest during the winter season, reducing the potential of disturbance to these species. Interruption to foraging and, to a lesser extent, roosting (Woodfield and Langston, 2004) is likely to represent the principal effects of human disturbance to over-wintering qualifying species at Lough Rea. The extent to which disturbance affects the actual distribution of birds within Lough Rea will vary according to the species (see the results of Tydeman, 1978 referred to above), the availability of other resources and the birds’ own

state. For example, if birds are under stress during cold winter weather when food resources are scarce, they may be less easily disturbed than at other times (Burton, 2007, Stillman and Goss-Custard, 2002) and they may simply not be able to afford to stop feeding.

Disturbance to Stoneworts (Charaphytes)

Changes in lake water levels or clarity will have the potential to negatively affect the range of stoneworts occurring within the lake. The Plan will have the potential to result in the lowering of lake water levels through unsustainable abstraction of water to meet the future demands of the town within the lifetime of the Plan.

Water clarity in the lake will be affected in the event of significant wastewater or stormwater inputs. The input of significant levels of wastewater, which could arise as a result of inadequate wastewater infrastructure, will have the potential to increase the nutrient status of the lake causing algal growth and diminishing water clarity.

Introduction of Alien Species

A range of invasive, non-native species currently threaten aquatic habitats. These include the fishes – Chub and Dace, the macroinvertebrates – Zebra mussel and Chinese mitten crab, the riparian plants – Giant hogweed, Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam, and the aquatic plants – African curly leaved waterweed, Parrot’s feather, Fringed water lily, Water fern, Nuttall’s waterweed and New Zealand pigmyweed.

Many of the above aquatic plant species out-compete native aquatic species. For instance the African curly leaved waterweed is known to occur in Lough Corrib and is have a significant negative impact on native macrophytes communities. In areas it has resulted in the loss of extensive stonewort meadows. Such meadows are an important source of food for waterbirds and the presence of such invasive species will adversely affect waterbirds by interfering with foraging as well as reducing food supplies such as stoneworts. Furthermore such invasive species will have the potential to negatively affect the Annex 1 listed oligo-mesotrophic lake habitat of Lough Rea. Changes in the trophic status of lakes infested with these species from oligo/mesotrophic to eutrophic have been documented in past. Such a change in trophic status to Lough Rea will have significant negative implications for the ecological integrity of the lake.

Water-based recreational activities, particularly those involving watercrafts such as boats, canoes, kayaks etc., have the potential to transport invasive species from contaminated sites to Loughrea. The use of illegal live bait for angling will have the potential to introduce non-native fish species. The Biosecurity Plan for Lough Mask (RPS, 2009) suggested that this might have been the vector responsible for introducing roach into Lough Mask.

The introduction of such species to Loughrea will have the potential to result in significant negative impacts to stonewort meadows, the macrophyte community in general and the food supply for qualifying waterbird species.

Habitat or species fragmentation	The Loughrea LAP will not result in the direct fragmentation of qualifying habitats or the fragmentation of habitats upon which qualifying species sites rely.
Reduction in species density	Disturbance of qualifying bird species will have the potential to reduce the densities of these species supported by Lough Rea Changes to the water clarity or water levels of Lough Rea will have the potential to reduce the

	density of stoneworts occurring within the lake.
Changes in key indicators of conservation status	<p>The European Commission (2006) Explanatory Notes and Guidelines for the Assessment, Monitoring and Reporting under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive outlines key indicators for assessing the conservation status of designated sites. The key indicators for assessing the conservation status of key species are:</p> <p><i>Range:</i> disturbance impacts associated with the Plan could result in a reduction in range for qualifying bird species supported by Lough Rea;</p> <p><i>Population:</i> disturbance impacts associated with the Plan could result in a reduction in population densities of qualifying bird species and stoneworts;</p> <p><i>Habitat for the species:</i> Water abstraction and impacts to water quality and disturbance potentially arising from water-based recreational activity and development in carboniferous areas could negatively affect habitats supporting qualifying bird species and stoneworts within Lough Rea;</p> <p><i>Future Prospects:</i> The interaction of the above effects could adversely affect the future prospects of qualifying bird species and stoneworts supported by Lough Rea.</p> <p>The key indicators for assessing the conservation status of Annex 1 qualifying habitats are:</p> <p><i>Range:</i> Water abstractions and reductions in lake water clarity and quality will have the potential to affect the range of hard oligo to mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation supporting <i>Chara</i> species.</p> <p><i>Area covered by habitat type within range:</i> Similar to the reasons outlined above the area covered by hard oligo to mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation supporting <i>Chara</i> species could be reduced as a result of the Plan.</p> <p><i>Specific structures and functions:</i> The structure and function of hard oligo to mesotrophic waters supported by Lough Rea and turloughs supported by Rahasane Turlough downstream could be negatively affected by future development supported or facilitated by the Loughrea Plan. For instance perturbations to groundwater and surface water quality arising from elements of the Plan could interfere with the trophic structure of the hard mesotrophic waters associated with Lough Rea and the baseline trophic structure associated with Rahasane Turlough.</p> <p><i>Future prospects:</i> The interaction of the above effects could negatively affect the future prospects of qualifying habitats, particularly oligo to mesotrophic waters associated with Lough Rea.</p>
Climate change	There is currently insufficient information to predict the effects of climate change on the proposed site. It is predicted that on a national level winters will become wetter and summers drier but the effect on local precipitation is unknown.
Describe any likely impacts on the European Site as a whole in terms of:	

<p>Interference with key relationships that define the structure and function of European Sites</p>	<p>The qualifying habitat hard oligo to mesotrophic waters supported by Lough Rea are dependent on a high base content with low to moderate nutrient levels. A relatively high pH along with other features such as high water clarity, depth and substrate type combine to define the structure of this habitat.</p> <p>Excessive abstraction and/or prevention of groundwater recharge of the lake will have the potential to interfere with the key relationships that define the structure of this habitat.</p> <p>As outlined above water abstraction from the lake to meet the need of Loughrea and environs throughout the lifetime of the Loughrea Plan will have the potential to result in excessive abstraction and the drawdown of lake water levels.</p> <p>Developments on carboniferous areas in the vicinity of the lake supported and/or facilitated by the land use zonings of the Plan will have the potential to interfere with groundwater and subterranean channels.</p> <p>The seasonal flooding of turlough basins through groundwater recharge and the presence of swallets or estavelles to allow water drainage are key features that define the structure of the Rahasane Turlough. This turlough is also influenced by the Dunkellin River, which inflows to groundwater thus influencing groundwater recharge. While flow rates of the Dunkellin river and recharge of the turlough are not likely to be affected by elements of the proposed plan, adverse impacts to the water quality of St Cleran’s River will have the potential to negatively affect the Dunkellin River and the Rahasane Turlough.</p>
<p>Describe from the above the elements of the project or plan or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale of magnitude of impacts is not known.</p>	
<p>The evaluation of the Plan against the assessment criteria outlined in this Table shows that the Plan, in the absence of appropriate mitigation measures, will have the potential to result in likely significant effects to European Sites.</p>	

6 Screening Assessment Conclusion

This Stage 1 Screening Assessment of the Loughrea LAP has identified potential significant adverse effects to European Sites that may arise in the absence of appropriate mitigation measures. As these adverse effects will have the potential to undermine the conservation status and integrity of European Sites it is necessary to undertake a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment to further evaluate the potential risks to European Sites. The Stage 2 assessment will also outline measures to avoid, reduce and mitigate likely significant effects to European Sites.

Part 3: Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment

7 European Sites brought Forward for Stage 2 Assessment

The Lough Rea SAC and SPA and the Rahasane Turlough SAC and SPA are the four European Sites brought forward for Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment. The qualifying habitats at risk of likely significant effects from the Plan include

For Lough Rea

- Hard oligo to mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of *Chara* spp.; and
- Primary qualifying bird species (i.e. Shoveler and Coot), wetlands and waterbirds supported by Lough Rea.

For Rahasane Turlough

- Turlough; and
- Qualifying bird species (Whooper swan, Widgeon, golden Plover, Black-tailed Godwit, Greenland White-fronted geese and wetland and waterbirds) support by Rahasane Turlough.

7.1 Detailed Description of European Sites and the Plan Zonings

A brief summary description of the four European Sites brought forward to Stage 2 is provided in Appendix 3 to this NIR. A more detailed description of Lough Rea and Rahasane Turlough is provided in this Section.

7.1.1 Lough Rea

Lough Rea is a medium-sized lake lying just south of Loughrea town. The lake is underlain by Carboniferous limestone and is moderately hard and has a high water transparency. It is fed by a stream and by springs, and its outflow ultimately joins the Dunkellin River. Its maximum depth is up to 15 m. Lough Rea is classified as an oligotrophic system and has a benthic vegetation typical of hard oligo-mesotrophic waters. Charophytes (commonly referred to as stoneworts) are well-represented, along with pondweeds and other aquatics. The lake supports the Red Data Book charophyte *Chara tomentosa*. Reeds, wet grassland and wet woodland occur on the sheltered western and south-eastern shores. There are several very small islands. Apart from the northern shore towards the town, the lake is surrounded by fairly intensive agricultural land.

The status of Lough Rea has been classed as good by the Environmental Protection Agency. High water clarity is essential for supporting stoneworts, which have colonised the substrate of this lake. Stoneworts are a unique form of algae and are in themselves an important regulator of the lake ecosystem at Lough Rea.

Stoneworts grow on silt, mud, peat or sand substrates of lakes, ponds, ditches and streams. They often form a dense carpet, known as a charophyte meadow, which restricts colonisation by other

macrophytes. The more common species do not die down in winter. They have been recorded growing sown to 60m deep in clear water, but generally prefer depths between 1 and 10m.

Stoneworts absorb most of their nutrients through the surface of the plants rather than through a root system. This makes them particularly vulnerable to the quality of the water around them. They are therefore good indicators of water quality, particularly in connection with nutrient pollution from nitrates and phosphates. They can also help to provide clear water. Stonewort beds are extremely dense with the potential to exclude all other species, and sometimes the biomass per unit area can be 10 times that of an equivalent flowering plant bed. This helps to stabilise lake beds but also absorbs nutrients from the water that could be used by algal blooms. For these reasons stoneworts are generally considered to be an important part of the aquatic ecosystem. Furthermore their dense structure provides shelter from predators for small invertebrates and fish, and the lime encrustation is a source of calcium carbonate for molluscs and other shell-bearing animals (SNH, 2010). The plants themselves are also an important food source for wildfowl, including coots, which are a qualifying interest of Lough Rea SPA.

Lough Rea is one of the most important waterfowl sites in the western region and is designated as an SPA primarily for its role in supporting over-wintering populations of shoveler *Anas clypeata* and coot *Fulica atra*. Habitats supported by the site are of good quality, with both feeding and roost areas present. It is of national importance for shoveler and coot, with 8.8% and 5.2% of the respective national totals. Population numbers for both shoveler and coot are 266 and 1656 respectively. It also supports a range of other wetland species, including widgeon *Anas penelope*, common pochard *Aythya ferina* and tufted duck *Aythya fuligula*. The over-wintering populations associated with these other wetland species are outlined below.

Widgeon *Anas Penelope* – 134;

European Teal *Anas crecca* – 144;

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* – 121;

Common pochard *Aythya ferina* – 99;

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* – 128;

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* – 105;

Curlew *Numenius arquata* – 34;

Black-headed gull *Larus ridibundus* – 182; and

Little grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* – 18.

Other species commonly recorded at low numbers at Lough Rea include smew *Mergellus albellus*, lesser scaup *Aythya affinis* and ring-necked duck *Aythya collaris*.

Fish stock surveys undertaken by Inland Fisheries in 2010 recorded six species of fish in Lough Rea. These include brown trout, three-spined stickleback, rudd, perch, European eel and pike.

Potential threats to Lough Rea include agricultural runoff and boating activities on the lake. Nutrient inputs from the town of Loughrea have also been cited as a threat to the status of Lough Rea (see NPWS SAC Site Synopsis) and significant pollution events have been noted in the past by the Western Regional Fisheries Board.

7.1.2 **Rahasane Turlough**

The Rahasane Turlough is approximately 4km in length and lies in gently undulating land and consists of two basins that are connected at times of flood but separated as the waters decline (Drew & Daly, 1996). It is considered to be one of the largest turloughs in Europe and is of major ecological significance as one of only two large turloughs that still function naturally.

The turlough is influenced by both groundwater and surface waters. During periods of high flow, the Dunkellin River overflows its banks and floods the adjoining lands to form the Rahasane Turlough. Drew & Daly (1993) noted that for 75% of the year on average inflows to the turlough basin exceeded outflows. While groundwaters are generally the dominant source of water influencing turloughs, the influence of the surface water i.e. the Dunkellin River is considered to be more pronounced at Rahasane Turlough as it is inflowing to groundwater with sections of the river becoming completely dry during times of the year (Drew, 2010). The importance of the Dunkellin River as a source of recharge water for the turlough also increases the vulnerability of the turlough to any negative water quality or flow regime impacts upstream along the Dunkellin River.

Rahasane Turlough is the most important turlough in the country for bird species. It supports internationally important populations of Whooper Swans, Golden Plover, Wigeon and Shoveler. Nationally important numbers of 12 other species are also supported by the Turlough.

7.1.3 **St Cleran's River**

St Cleran's River is located within the River Clarin and River Kilcolgan Water Management Unit. The Clarin and Kilcolgan Water Management Unit Action Plan classed the upper stretches of the St Cleran River as being of good status, while downstream of the Loughrea Waste water treatment plant to the north of the site it has been classed as poor.

The outflow of the river is considered by Inland Fisheries Ireland to be the principal spawning ground for the trout population supported by Lough Rea. Frequent concerns have arisen in the past over the water quality of St Cleran's River and the impact of such poor quality on the trout populations in Lough Rea. Dunkellin River, downstream of Lough Rea, is also of major importance as a spawning and nursery area for Lough Rea's trout population and the poor quality of the St Cleran River between the Dunkellin River and Lough Rea has been highlighted as an issue for the lake's trout populations.

Impacts from wastewater discharges (such as that which arose as a result of sewerage pump malfunctions) and stormwater runoff have been identified in the past as factors leading to a deterioration in water quality and aquatic habitats along St Cleran's River.

7.1.4 Description of Habitats occurring in Greenfield Development Land Use Zoning

Table 7.1 below provides a summary description of the habitats occurring within the LAP's greenfield areas zoned for development land use. These areas are also identified in Appendix 1B: Figure 6, while the LAP land-use zoning maps are shown in Appendix 1A. This summary description is based on the results of field observations and a review of 2010 Orthophotography of the Plan area. It is noted that detailed habitat surveys and mapping was not undertaken during field visits associated with this assessment and that much of the information describing habitats in Table 7.1 is based on a review of 2010 Orthophotography. It is recommended that detailed habitat surveys be undertaken in advance of development where likely significant impacts to biodiversity may arise.

Table 7.1 outlines the potential significance of impacts to the habitats occurring in these areas as a result of development.

Mitigatory Policies and Objectives of the Plan that aim to avoid such negative impacts to habitats and biodiversity are contained in the Plan and are outlined and evaluated in detail in Section 7.2 below. Examples of mitigatory Policies and Objectives that have direct relevance to the potential impacts outlined in Table 7.1 below include: Policy UI 3; NH1: Objective UI 9; UI 11; UI 10; NH 2; NH4; NH 6; NH 9; NH 10; and NH11: DM Guideline UI 1.

Table 7-1: Description of Greenfield lands zoned for Development within the Loughrea LAP

Type of Land Use Zoning	Area Number*	Description of Existing Greenfield Habitats	Implications
Residential (Phase 1)	Area 1	Improved agricultural grassland (GA1)/calcareous grassland (GS1). Established mature broadleaved treelines (WL2)	Improved agricultural grassland is generally of low ecological value and the loss of this type of habitat is unlikely to represent a significant negative impact to local biodiversity. Calcareous grassland supporting species rich sward is of high ecological value. The loss of such examples of calcareous grassland, should they occur will have the potential to represent a significant negative impact to biodiversity. Mature broadleaved treelines support a range of fauna and are generally considered to be of moderate ecological value or higher. The loss of such treelines will reduce available shelter for fauna and the presence of wildlife corridors providing connectivity between different locations within the Plan area.
	Area 2	Spoil and bare ground (ED2) Buildings and artificial surfaces. A construction site is depicted at this located in the 2010 Orthophotography.	These habitats are generally considered to be of low ecological value and the loss of such habitats is unlikely to represent a significant negative impact to local biodiversity.
	Area 3	Spoil and bare ground (ED2) A construction site is depicted at this located in the 2010 Orthophotography.	These habitats are generally considered to be of low ecological value and the loss of such habitats is unlikely to represent a significant negative impact to local biodiversity.
	Area 4	Improved Agricultural grassland (GA1)	See a description for GA1 above.
	Area 5	Improved Agricultural grassland (GA1) with short isolated stretches of hedgerow (WL1) not connected to the wider countryside.	See a description for GA1 above. Isolated and short stretches of hedgerow are generally considered to be of low ecological value and the loss of such hedgerows is not likely to represent a significant negative impact to local biodiversity.

	Area 6	Improved agricultural grassland (GA1) Small patches of rank wet grassland (GS4)	See a description for GA1 above. Rank wet grassland is generally species-poor and considered to be of low ecological value, the loss of which is unlikely to represent a significant negative impact to local biodiversity.
	Area 7	Recently development residential housing (BL3) and construction areas for ongoing development (ED2).	The habitats occurring in this area are representative of built and disturbed ground and are generally considered to be of low ecological value.
	Area 8	Recently development residential housing (BL3) and areas currently under construction for additional residential development (ED2).	The habitats occurring in this area are representative of built and disturbed ground and are generally considered to be of low ecological value.
	Area 9	Improved agricultural grassland (GA1) with established mature broadleaved treeline (WL2).	See a description for associated habitats above.
	Area 10	Improved agricultural grassland (GA1) with established mature broadleaved treeline (WL2).	See a description for associated habitats above.
	Area 11	Recently developed residential housing (BL3) with areas currently under construction (ED2).	See a description for associated habitats above.
	Area 12	Recently developed residential housing (BL3)	See a description for associated habitats above.
Residential (Phase 2)	Area 1	Improved agricultural grassland (GA1) with hedgerow (WL1) field boundaries and established mature broadleaved treelines (WL2).	See a description for associated habitats above.
	Area 2	Improved agricultural grassland and stonewall field boundaries (BL1) to the south of the R446 road which bisects this area. To the north improved agricultural grassland (GA1), existing one-off residential houses (BL3) and wet grassland (GS4) occur. A drainage ditch (FW4) occurs along the northern boundary.	See a description for GA1 above. As outlined above rank wet grassland is not of significant ecological value and its loss is generally not considered to be significant for the biodiversity of a local area. However species-rich wet grassland occurring on calcareous substrates is of high ecological value and its loss will have negative implications for the biodiversity of a local area. Drainage ditch are generally considered to be of moderate ecological value. There loss can have negative impacts for local biodiversity.
	Area 3	Bare ground and spoil (ED2) and recolonizing bare ground	See a description for associated habitats above.

	(ED3) characterise this small area of R2 zoning. It is located adjacent to a recently constructed residential estate and is likely to have been used as a materials depot during the construction of this estate.	
Area 4	Improved agricultural grassland with stonewall field boundaries (BL1) and small patches of wet grassland (GS4). Some minor field boundary hedgerows (WL1) also occur.	See a description for associated habitats above.
Area 5	The majority of this area is adjacent to a newly constructed residential estate and was used during the construction stage of this estate and is thus best described as disturbed ground (ED2/ED3).	See a description for associated habitats above.
Area 6	The majority of this area is adjacent to a newly constructed residential estate and was used during the construction stage of this estate and is thus best described as disturbed ground (ED2/ED3). Some patches of scrub (WS1) occur along the western boundary of this area adjacent to the road.	See a description for ED2/ED3 habitats above. The small patches of scrub occurring within this area are not likely to be of significant ecological value.
Area 7	This area contains a mix of habitats including disturbed ground (ED2/ED3), calcareous/neutral grassland (GS1), scrub (WS1) and a pond. It is buffered from the St Cleran's River by 10m. Two drainage ditches (FW4) occur at the southern end of this area.	See a description for associated habitats above.
Area 8	This area is bordered to the east and west by the St Cleran's River and a drainage ditch (FW4) flowing into this river. It consists of improved agricultural grassland (GA1) and wet grassland (GS4). Minor, box-cut hedgerows (WL1) also occur.	See a description for associated habitats above.
Area 9	This area is dominated by a series of farm fields (GA1) along the northern boundary of the LAP. Some disturbed ground (ED2/ED3) occurs along the southern boundary and to the northeast corner of this area. Minor hedgerow (WL1) field boundaries occur within the field.	See descriptions for associated habitats above.
Area 10	This area includes two existing detached houses (BL3) and a series of farmed fields (GA1) with minor hedgerow (WL1) field boundaries.	See descriptions for associated habitats above.

	Area 11	This area consists of pasture grassland (GA1) and is bordered to the north and south by existing roadways.	See descriptions for associated habitats above.
Town Centre (C1)	Area 1	This area is characterised by calcareous/neutral grassland, mature broadleaved treelines (WL2) and drainage ditches (FW4) which flow into the St Cleran's River immediately to the west. The river is buffered from this area by a 10m buffer strip.	See descriptions for associated habitats above.
	Area 2	This area includes improved agricultural grassland and mature broadleaved treeline (WL2) boundaries.	See descriptions for associated habitats above.
Commercial/Mixed Use (C2)	Area 1	This area consists of rank wet grassland (GS4), hedgerow field boundaries and a drainage ditch that flows east to join the St Cleran's River.	See descriptions for associated habitats above.
Business & Enterprise (BE)	Area 1	Improved agricultural grassland (GA1) with stonewall (BL1) and hedgerow (WL1) field boundaries. Galway County Council annotated orthophotography notes the presence of a cave (EU1) at the southeast corner of this area. See Appendix 1B: Figure 7 for the approximate location of the cave as shown on Galway County Council Orthophotography, 2010.	See descriptions for GA1, BL1 and WL1 above. The cave (EU1) identified on orthophotography adjacent to the BE zoning is likely to correspond to the EU Habitats Directive Annex 1 Habitat " <i>caves not open to the public</i> " and is therefore considered to be of international conservation importance. Any negative impacts to the cave occurring adjacent to this area will have the potential to result in significant negative effects to this habitat. It is also noted that subterranean cavities associated with this cave may occur under this area zoned for BE development.
	Area 2	This area, located immediately to the south of the Monearmore Roundabout consists of grassland (GA1/GS1) with established hedgerows (WL1) and treelines (WL2) occurring within and bordering the area.	See descriptions for associated habitats above.
Industrial (I)	Area 1	Improved agricultural grassland with larger area of wet grassland (GS4) accounting for approximately 33% of this area. A drainage ditch (FW4) flows west to east through this area and joins a natural spring fed watercourse at the eastern boundary. A calcareous spring (FP1) and pond are situated immediately adjacent to the eastern boundary of this area. See Appendix 1B: Figure 7 for the approximate location of springs as shown on Galway County Council Orthophotography, 2010.	See description of GS4 and FW1 above. Calcareous springs are generally considered to be of high ecological value. Calcareous springs supporting tufa formations and brown mosses such as <i>Pallustriella</i> species are representative of the EU Habitats Directive Annex 1 listed and priority habitat Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Crataneurion). Industrial development in the vicinity of the spring to the eastern

			boundary of this area will have the potential to result in significant negative impacts to this spring. Negative water quality impacts to the spring will also have the potential to adversely affect the water quality of Lough Rea into which the spring flows downstream.
	Area 2	This area is located immediately to the west of the St Cleran's River, buffered by a 10m riparian strip. It consists of disturbed ground (ED2) and calcareous/neutral grassland (GS1). A drainage ditch (FW4) passes through the northern section of this area to merge with the St Cleran's River.	See descriptions for associated habitats above.
	Area 3	This consists of improved agricultural grassland (GA1) and arable fields (BC1) with managed, box-cut hedgerows (WL1).	See a description of GA1 and WL1 above. Arable land is generally considered to be of low ecological value.
	Area 4	This consists of improved agricultural grassland (GA1) with managed, box-cut hedgerows (WL1).	See descriptions for associated habitats above.
Community Facilities (CF)	Area 1	Improved agricultural grassland dominates this area. A small patch of wet grassland (GS4) occurs to the north while hedgerows (WL1) and mature treelines (WL2) form field boundaries.	See descriptions for associated habitats above.
	Area 2	This area consists of a field of improved agricultural grassland (GA1) surrounded by hedgerows (WL1).	See descriptions for associated habitats above.
	Area 3	This area is characterised by grassland (GA1/2) surrounding an existing community facility.	See descriptions for associated habitats above.
	Area 4	Improved agricultural grassland (GA1) and wet grassland (GS4) with stonewall field boundaries (BL1).	See descriptions for associated habitats above.
	Area 5	This area consists of disturbed ground (ED2/ED3) adjacent to a roadway.	See descriptions for associated habitats above.
	Area 6	An existing facility is located at this site. The undeveloped land associated with this area is representative of disturbed ground (ED2) and improved/amenity grassland (GA1/2).	See descriptions for associated habitats above.

*See Appendix 1B Figure 6 for map showing labelled Area numbers for land use zonings

8 Interaction between LAP Policies and Objectives and European Sites

8.1 Potential Negative Impact of Certain Policies and Objectives

Appendix 2 lists the Policies and Objectives of the Loughrea LAP and the potential impact they will have on the Lough Rea and Rahasane European Sites. The majority of the Policies and Objectives set out in the Plan will have a neutral impact on these European Sites.

As outlined in Appendix 2 certain Policies and Objectives will have the potential to result in negative impacts to Lough Rea and Rahasane Turlough downstream. These negative impacts principally relate to perturbations to the water quality of Lough Rea and the St Cleran River and disturbance to qualifying species of Lough Rea SPA and Rahasane Turlough SPA downstream. Section 3.3 summarised these potential impacts while Table 5.1 outlined in more detail the potential affects of these impacts to qualifying features. The specific policies and objectives that have the potential to give rise these impacts are now outlined in Table 8.1 below.

A number of land use zonings, including Industrial and Town Centre are located in green-field sites immediately adjacent to the St Cleran River. These green-field sites are characterised by improved and unimproved agricultural grassland habitats. The construction of new developments in such area will have the potential to result in adverse impacts to the water quality of this river.

Table 8-1: Policies and Objectives of the Loughrea LAP with the Potential to Result in downstream impacts to Galway Bay European Sites

Policy/Objective	Description of Potential Negative Impact
<p>Objective LU 1 – Town Centre/Commercial (C1) (refer to Map 1)</p> <p>Promote the development of the Town Centre as an intensive, high quality, well-landscaped, human-scaled and accessible environment with an appropriate mix of uses, including residential, commercial, service, tourism, enterprise, public and community uses as appropriate, that provide a range of retail, services, facilities and amenities to the local community and visitors to the town. The town centre and associated main streets shall remain the primary focus for retail and service activity in Loughrea.</p>	<p>The zoning of lands as Town Centre immediately adjacent to the St Cleran River will have the potential to adversely affect the water of this river. Adverse impacts to the water quality of this river could negatively affect the Rahasane Turlough European Sites occurring approximately 17km downstream.</p>
<p>Objective LU 3 – Residential (R) (refer to Map 1 and Objective RD1)</p> <p>Promote the development of appropriate and serviced lands to provide for high quality, well laid out and well landscaped sustainable residential communities with an appropriate mix of housing types and densities, together with complementary land uses such as community facilities, local services and public transport facilities, to</p>	<p>While all Residential Phase 1 zonings are buffered from Lough Rea and St Cleran’s River Residential Phase 2 zonings occur adjacent o St Cleran’s River towards the north of the Plan area (see Residential R2 parcels labelled R2 Area 6 & 7 in Appendix 2: Figure 6).</p> <p>Adverse impacts to the water quality of this river could negatively affect the Rahasane Turlough European</p>

<p>serve the residential population of the area.</p> <p>Protect existing residential amenities and facilitate compatible and appropriately designed new infill development, in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.</p> <p>A Phasing Scheme will apply to residential uses on Residential (R) zoned lands, as set out under Objective RD1 in Section 3.2.2.</p>	<p>Sites occurring approximately 17km downstream.</p>
<p>Objective LU 4 –Industrial (I) (Refer to Map 1)</p> <p>Promote the development of industrial and industrial related uses, including manufacturing, processing of materials, warehousing and distribution, on suitable lands with adequate services and facilities and a high level of access to the major road network and public transport facilities.</p> <p>Adequate edge treatment and/or screening will be required to ensure high quality interfaces with public spaces and any adjoining residential areas or other sensitive land uses, as appropriate.</p>	<p>An area of Industrial zoning is proposed to the north of the town centre within close proximity of the St Cleran River. The construction and operation of an industrial facility at this location will have the potential to result in adverse impacts to the water of this river. Any adverse impacts to this watercourse could negatively affect the Rahasane Turlough European Sites occurring approximately 17km downstream.</p>
<p>Objective LU 11 – Transport Infrastructure (TI) (Refer to Map 1)</p> <p>Facilitate the provision and maintenance of essential transportation infrastructure, including public roads, footpaths, cycle ways, bus stops and landscaping, together with any necessary associated works, as appropriate.</p>	<p>The development of new transport infrastructure, specifically the Eastern Relief Road will have the potential to adversely affect the water quality of Lough Rea and St Cleran’s River during the construction and operation of this road.</p> <p>The proposed route for the Eastern Relief road will cross a watercourse draining into the upper stretch of the St Cleran River with the Lough Rea European Sites. Adverse impacts to this un-named watercourse could negatively affect the water quality of St Cleran’s River downstream.</p>
<p>Policy ED – Economic Development</p> <p>It is the policy of Galway County Council to support economic development and employment creation in Loughrea through the identification of appropriately located and adequately serviced lands for business and enterprise, retail, industrial, commercial and tourism developments, the promotion of investment in transportation and other support infrastructure and the creation of a high quality environment to encourage economic investment. The promotion of economic development and employment creation will be appropriately guided to ensure the protection of residential amenities, built and natural heritage, landscape/townscape/streetscape character and the vitality and viability of the town centre. Support the</p>	<p>While this Objective states that the economic development of Loughrea will be promoted in an appropriate manner that ensures the protection of the natural heritage, including European Sites, its aim to identify lands for a range of land uses will have the potential to result in negative impacts to European Sites. The types of impacts associated with this Objective are outlined above by the assessment of potential impacts relating to LU 4.</p>

<p>aims, objectives and recommendations, where appropriate in the context of Loughrea, of the following (and any updated/superseding documents).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Galway County Development Board Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development entitled Working Together, shaping our Future 2002-2012 Galway City and County Development Board Tourism Strategy entitled Development Sustainable Tourism in Galway: A framework for Action 2003-2012 <p>West Regional Authority Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 - 2022</p>	
<p>Objective ED 4 – Tourism Development</p> <p>Encourage and facilitate the development of the tourism potential of Loughrea in a manner that respects, builds on, protects and enhances the cultural, built and natural heritage for the town and the local amenities within the Plan Area. Key Projects and initiatives that will be supported will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect and enhance the quality and amenity of the blue flag beach and public amenity area at Long Point, Loughrea Support the development of water based recreational facilities and activities that will benefit the local community and visitors to the area and enhance the tourism infrastructure in an environmentally sustainable manner Seek to develop a strategy for information signage to structures or buildings of historical importance and tourism value and investigate the provision of a tourist/information centre within the town centre. 	<p>Potential pressures associated with boating activities on the lake have previously been noted by the NPWS. The increased use of the lake as a recreational amenity, specifically for boating will have the potential to adversely affect the qualifying interests of the Lough Rea SPA & SAC through disturbance and the introduction of invasive species. The potential effects of disturbance and invasive species to the lake and key species have been outlined in Table 5.1 above.</p>
<p>Objective TI 15 – Transport Network Improvements (refer to Map 2)</p> <p>Support the improvement of the road and street network in and around the Plan Area, subject to normal planning and environmental considerations. This will include the following new routes and projects and any other appropriately approved transport schemes/improvements to roads and streets in and around the Plan Area:</p> <p>a) A new relief road/street connecting the northeastern approach road (R446) to the southeastern approach road (L4213) in the eastern portion of the Plan Area. This new route should be designed to provide adequate access points to adjacent lands with adjacent street-oriented development and will provide opportunities for smarter</p>	<p>See LU 11 above.</p>

<p>travel improvements within the town.</p> <p>b) The proposed western bypass of the town connecting the N66/R446/R349 junction in the northwest of the plan area to the N66 route to the southwest of the Plan Area.</p> <p>c) Carry out road improvement, widening and realignment of the Coarsing Field road, which links the Portumna road and the existing N6 Dublin road.</p> <p>d) Acquire the lands of the old railway line, used as a link road between Bride Street and the Loughrea/New Inn road.</p> <p>e) Improve culverts and all roadside drainage, maintain and renew pavements, widen and improve existing roads, improve road signage and facilitate the provision of new roads/streets within Loughrea, as the need arises and as resources permit.</p> <p>Require proposed developments to incorporate provisions for busways, footpaths and cycleways where properties bound main arterial routes, new link routes or other routes determined by the NRA. Prohibit development on lands that are reserved for proposed road/street corridors and associated buffers and where development would affect a route, line, level or layout of any proposed new roadway or any junction required between a proposed and existing road.</p>	
<p>Policy UI 1 – Water Supply, Wastewater Disposal And Surface Water Drainage Infrastructure</p> <p>It is the policy of Galway County Council to support the provision and maintenance of adequate wastewater disposal, water supply and surface water drainage infrastructure, to service the development of Loughrea in accordance with EU Directive, national legislation and applicable standards. This will include the provision of adequate capacity in the public wastewater sewer network, wastewater treatment plant and storm water sewer network, an adequate quantity and quality of water supply and the promotion of Sustainable Drainage System approaches and techniques within the Plan Area.</p>	<p>While the provision of adequate wastewater infrastructure will ensure avoidance of adverse impacts to surface water, the continued abstraction of water from Lough Rea could have the potential to exert pressure on the ecological status of Lough Rea. Such effects could also restrict the range of suitable habitat to support stoneworts (<i>Chara spp.</i>), the presences of which are key reasons for the designation of Lough Rea as an SAC.</p> <p>Stoneworts are macrophyte species that colonise lake substrates. They are dependent on a range of abiotic factors for the maintenance of favourable habitat conditions. Light penetration is a key requirement for this species with greater water clarity potentially increasing the range of habitat available for this species. While they have been recorded to depths of 60m they are generally found in shallow water to depths of 1 to 10m.</p> <p>Considering the general restriction of this species to shallower waters, any reductions in lake levels as a result of water abstraction could potentially restrict the range of habitat available for stoneworts.</p>

<p>Objective UI 1 – Water Services Infrastructure (refer to Map 2) Support the maintenance, improvement and monitoring of the public water supply, wastewater disposal and surface water drainage infrastructure, as necessary to address any deficiencies in infrastructure capacity and/or service the development needs of the town. This will include the following and any other projects approved during the period of the Plan:</p> <p>a) Progress the upgrading of the existing wastewater sewer network for the town.</p> <p>b) Progress the Loughrea Regional Water Supply Scheme in order to improve the quality of supply to consumers within the town and extend supply to surrounding areas.</p> <p>c) Continue to carry out improvements to the existing infrastructure and quality of the town’s water supply system, including the provision of an upgraded water treatment plant, additional storage and the connection of the Loughrea pump station with the Long point pump station.</p> <p>d) Monitor the capacity of the updated wastewater treatment plant as development takes place.</p> <p>e) Improve and maintain an adequate surface water drainage system throughout the Plan Area.</p>	<p>See Policy UI 1 above.</p>
<p>Objective UI 3 – Water Supply & Water Conservation</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>See Policy UI 1. The servicing of new developments with an adequate quantity of water will have the potential to result in pressures for Lough Rea and the qualifying habitats and species it supports.</p>
<p>Policy UI 5 – Energy and Communications</p> <p>It is the policy of Galway County Council to support the provision of adequate energy and communications infrastructure to service developments including gas, electricity, broadband, and telephone services. In particular, the Council supports the increased development and use of renewable energy and the aims of sustainable energy use and conservation in building design and construction.</p>	<p>The development of energy and/or communications infrastructure in areas adjacent to European Sites will have the potential to result in negative impacts.</p>
<p>Objective UI 14— Electricity & Gas Supply</p> <p>Facilitate the provision of an adequate supply of electricity and gas to developments in the Plan Area, to the requirements of the relevant service provider, and in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.</p>	<p>See Policy UI 5 above.</p>
<p>Objective UI 16 – Broadband & Telecommunications</p> <p>Facilitate the provision of adequate telecommunication</p>	<p>See Policy UI 5 above.</p>

<p>infrastructure within the Plan Area, including telephone 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>Objective UI 17-- Renewable Energy</p> <p>Promote and facilitate the development of renewable sources of energy within the Plan area and encourage the integration of micro-renewable energy sources into the design and construction of new developments, as appropriate.</p>	<p>See Policy UI 5 above.</p>

8.2 Mitigation Measures

From the outset, the drafting Plan has sought to provide a template for the sustainable development of the Plan area while at the same time protecting the integrity of European Sites. As outlined in Section 1 of the Plan, a key consideration during its preparation has been the statutory provisions of the EU Habitats Directive. The Strategic Vision Statement of the Plan aims to balance the promotion of a sustainable and vibrant town that offers a pleasant environment for a growing community, for living, shopping, business, recreation and tourism against the need to safeguard and enhance the environmental sensitivities of the Plan area.

The preferred development strategy option is for a Local Area Plan that is informed by Environmental Assessment and Development Strategy Objective DS 3 sets out the intention of the Plan to protect European Sites. This Objective sets out a firm commitment to ensure that the provisions of Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive are fully implemented. Further strengthening of this Objective is outlined in Section 5.4.1 to ensure compliance with regard to Article 6(4) and the protection of priority habitats.

Appendix Two of this NIR presents all the Policies and Objectives contained in the Plan and assesses their potential impact on European Sites. A summary list of all Policies and Objectives affording protection to European Sites is provided in Section 8.2.1: Table 8.2 below. Where necessary, recommendations for the strengthening of these Policies and Objectives are outlined.

8.2.1 Mitigatory Policies and Objectives in the Plan

The Loughrea LAP contains a number of measures to ensure the protection of European Sites, St Cleran's River and the natural environment in general. Policy NH1; Objectives DS3, NH1, NH2, NH4, NH7, NH11 specifically aim to ensure that the conservation status and integrity of European Sites occurring within the sphere of influence of the LAP is maintained and protected throughout the lifetime of the Plan.

The land use Objective LU 9 – Environmental Management Area and the resulting zoning of all European Sites as Environmental Management Areas will limit direct impacts to European Sites and ensure that the range and extent of their qualifying habitats are not lost to the footprint of proposed developments.

The wording of Objective LU 9 and the Development Management Guidance LU 2 outlined in Section 3.1.3 of the Plan will ensure that all lands occurring within European Sites are protected from potential direct impacts associated with development. This is achieved by restricting land use types within Environmental Management zonings. No land uses are defined within this zoning as Permissible in Principle, while only one land use type, Utilities Infrastructure and Public Service Installation, being listed as Open for Consideration. Thus all potential future developments associated with this land use type will only be permitted where Galway County Council is satisfied that the development will be compatible with the policies and objectives for the zone, will not conflict with permitted uses and conforms to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, including the policies and objectives set out in the Local Area Plan. All other land use types have been classed as Not Normally Permitted within the Environmental Management Zoning.

Other mitigatory Policies and Objectives specifically aim to ensure that the water quality of Lough Rea and St. Cleran's River is protected, maintained and improved upon throughout the lifetime of the Plan.

Policy UI 2; Objectives UI 5; UI 11; NH 6; and NH7 in particular will ensure that the water quality of Lough Rea and St Cleran's River is protected. Furthermore the implementation of an Environmental Management Buffer along St Cleran's River and its tributary to the east of the Plan area provide additional protection to the riparian and lotic habitats supported by these watercourses.

The mitigatory Policies and Objectives of the Plan are outlined in Table 8.2 below. An assessment of how these Policies and Objectives will ensure the protection of European Sites is provided along with a record of the recommended changes to the policies and objectives that aimed to strengthen their environmental safeguards. Recommended additional measures or changes to the original wording of the draft LAP Policies and Objective are shown in blue text while any original text recommended for deletion are shown in red strike-through text. All recommended changes outlined in Table 8.2 have been accepted for the adopted Plan.

In addition Appendix 2 contains a number of recommendations to reword a number of specific Policies/Objectives listed in Table 8.1 with the potential to result in negative impacts. The rewording of these Policies/Objectives seeks to specifically target and annul their potential negative environmental implications. All recommended re-wording of these potentially negative policies and objectives have also been accepted for the adopted Plan.

Table 8-2: Mitigatory Policies and Objectives outlined in the Loughrea LAP

Mitigation Policy/Objective Original Policy or Objective in LAP	Description of how Mitigatory Policy/Objective will Protect N2K Sites	Recommended Changes to Policies/Objectives	Accepted Wording of Mitigatory Policy/Objective for the Adopted Plan
<p>Policy DS 1 – Development Strategy</p> <p>It is the overarching policy of Galway County Council to support and facilitate the sustainable development of the Plan Area in line with the preferred development strategy option, Option 2-Consolidate Existing Town Centre, Sequential Development around Established Urban Core and Controlled Eastward Expansion, and in a manner that maintains and enhances the quality of life of local communities, promotes opportunities for economic development, social integration and sustainable transport options, protects the cultural, built and natural heritage and environment and complies with relevant statutory requirements.</p>	<p>It is the overarching policy of the Council to support and facilitate the sustainable development of the Plan Area which furthers the development of Loughrea in a manner that maintains, enhances and protects the natural heritage and environment and complies with relevant statutory requirements.</p>	<p>No recommended changes to this Policy</p>	<p>As Original Policy</p>
<p>Objective DS 3 – Natura 2000 Network and Habitats Directive Assessment</p> <p>Protect European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network (including Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation) in accordance with the requirements in the EU <i>Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)</i>, EU <i>Birds Directive (2009/147/EC)</i>, the <i>Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010</i>, the <i>European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011)</i> (and any subsequent amendments or updated legislation) and having due regard to the guidance in the <i>Appropriate Assessment Guidelines 2010</i> (and any updated/superseding guidance). A plan or project (e.g. proposed development) within the Plan Area will only be authorised after the competent authority (Galway County Council) has ascertained, based on scientific evidence and a Habitats Directive Assessment</p>	<p>This Objective directs the Development Strategy for the Loughrea LAP to ensure that the conservation management objectives, conservation status and integrity of European Sites will not be negatively impacted by elements of the LAP</p>	<p>No recommended changes to this Policy</p>	<p>As Original Policy</p>

<p>where necessary, that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The plan or project will not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of any European Site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects); or 2. The plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of any European Site (that does not host a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000; or 3. The plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of any European Site (that hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, restricted to reasons of human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000. 			
<p>Objective DS 5 – Service Led Development</p> <p>Ensure that development is preceded by sufficient capacity in the public waste water and potable water infrastructure.</p>	<p>This Objective will ensure that adequate wastewater services are in place prior to permitting new development. This approach will avoid a potential scenario where wastewater treatment</p>	<p>No recommended changes to this Policy</p>	<p>As Original Policy</p>

	services cannot adequately treat the hydraulic loads being received, resulting in the discharge of polluting wastewater to Galway Bay and potential impacts to water quality and qualifying habitats of Galway Bay cSAC and SPA.		
<p>Policy LU 1 – Land Use Management</p> <p>It is the policy of Galway County Council to provide a land use zoning framework for the Plan Area, to direct the type, density and location of development, in a manner that contributes to the consolidation of the town centre, and is in compliance with the statutory requirements of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 (as amended).</p> <p>The land use zoning framework is supported by a residential phasing scheme to ensure compliance with the Core Strategy and to promote the orderly and sequential development of the town.</p>	<p>The Policy sets out an approach to land use management which will in itself have a neutral effect on European Sites.</p> <p>The measures within this Policy to protect and enhance the existing landscape setting and environmental quality of the Plan area will have a positive effect for European Sites.</p>	No changes required or proposed	As Original Policy
<p>Objective LU 9 – Environmental Management Area (EM) (Refer to Map 1)</p> <p>Protect lands and sites with high biodiversity value and/or environmental sensitivity and promote their sustainable management and use. This will include the protection of the integrity of European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network, in particular Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation, in accordance with the conservation management objectives for these sites and the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).</p>	The aim of this land use zoning is to support the protection of the conservation status and integrity of European Sites.	No changes required or proposed	As Original Policy
<p>Objective LU13 – Land Use Zoning Matrix (refer to DM Guideline</p>	The Land Use Zoning Matrix restricts	No changes required or	As Original Policy

<p>LU2)</p> <p>Direct different land uses into the appropriate land use zone/s in accordance with the land use zoning objectives and the land use zoning matrix set out under DM Guideline LU2. Ensure that proposed land uses are compatible with existing land uses and in keeping with the character of the area.</p>	<p>development within European Sites zoned as Environmental Management Areas.</p>	<p>proposed</p>	
<p>Objective LU14 – Development Densities (refer to DM Guideline LU1)</p> <p>Ensure that the density of new development is appropriate to the land use zone and site context, is in keeping with the development pattern of the area, does not unduly impact on the amenities of the area and that it results in a positive relationship between new developments and any adjoining public spaces. Promote the development of higher density development in appropriate locations, such as suitable sites within the town centre and adjacent to public transport facilities, where such development is compatible with heritage and urban design objectives and infrastructure capacity. The density of developments will generally be in accordance with the guidance set out under DM Guideline LU1, although the Planning Authority may consider higher density developments where this is considered appropriate to secure the urban design or other objectives of the Plan.</p>	<p>This objective seeks to control the density of development and direct higher density developments to suitable locations where it is compatible with natural heritage.</p>	<p>Recommend inserting the following words:</p> <p>built and natural</p> <p>after:</p> <p>.....where such development is compatible with built and natural heritage and urban.....</p>	<p>Objective LU14 – Development Densities (refer to DM Guideline LU1)</p> <p>Ensure that the density of new development is appropriate to the land use zone and site context, is in keeping with the development pattern of the area, does not unduly impact on the amenities of the area and that it results in a positive relationship between new developments and any adjoining public spaces. Promote the development of higher density development in appropriate locations, such as suitable sites within the town centre and adjacent to public transport facilities, where such development is compatible with built and natural heritage and urban design objectives and infrastructure capacity. The density of developments will generally be in accordance with the guidance set out under DM Guideline LU1, although the Planning Authority may consider higher density developments where this is considered appropriate to secure the urban design or other</p>

			objectives of the Plan.
<p>Policy RD 2 – Phased Development on Residential Zoned Lands</p> <p>It is the policy of Galway County Council to encourage orderly, sequential and phased residential development in accordance with the Preferred Development Strategy and the land use management and zoning provisions set out in this Local Area Plan. This shall include a positive presumption in favour of the sequential development of suitably serviced Residential (Phase 1) lands in order to align the Local Area Plan with the Core Strategy/Settlement Strategy in the current Galway County Development Plan, subject to compliance with the policies and objectives in this Local Area Plan and the principles of proper planning and sustainable development. There will be a general presumption against residential development on lands zoned Residential (Phase 2) within the lifetime of the Local Area Plan, subject to the exceptions provided for under the Residential Development Objective RD1.</p>	<p>The phasing of residential development which will ensure development is prioritised in suitably serviced lands will reduce the likelihood for potential indirect impacts (as outlined for Objective LU3 above) associated with residential development from occurring.</p>	<p>No changes required or proposed</p>	<p>As Original Policy</p>
<p>Objective CF 9 – Amenity Network</p> <p>Support the establishment of an accessible network of greenway linkages and amenities that provide safe and attractive circulation routes for pedestrians and cyclists for the enjoyment and recreational use of the entire community. This network will link together community facilities, amenities and built heritage features in the Plan area and surrounding areas and will help to reinforce the ecological network and support the ecological biodiversity and functioning of the natural environment.</p>	<p>Reinforcing and supporting an ecological network and biodiversity will have a positive impact on the natural environment of the Plan area.</p>	<p>Recommend a change of wording to this Objective so that the final sentences read as follows:</p> <p>..... features in the Plan Area and surrounding areas and will help to reinforce the ecological network and support the ecological biodiversity and functioning of the natural environment. The</p>	<p>Objective CF9 – Amenity Network (refer to Map 2) Support the establishment of an accessible network of greenway linkages and amenities that provide safe and attractive circulation routes for pedestrians and cyclists for the enjoyment and recreational use of the entire community. This network will link together community facilities, amenities and built heritage features in the Plan Area and surrounding areas. The council will seek to promote the functioning of greenway networks as wildlife corridors and habitats to enhance biodiversity and the natural environment.</p>

		<p>council will seek to promote the functioning of greenway networks as wildlife corridors and habitats to enhance biodiversity and the natural environment.</p>	
<p>Objective UI 2 – Water Services for New Developments Require all new developments to be adequately serviced with water supply, wastewater disposal and surface water drainage in accordance with applicable legislation, standards and guidelines and to submit the necessary documentation with their planning applications to confirm same. Encourage only as much development, both in terms of quantity and type of development, that can be provided for based on the utility services available and prohibit any proposed development that cannot be adequately serviced, that would lead to significant environmental effects or that would pose an unacceptable threat to the capacity of water, wastewater or surface water infrastructure in the Plan Area.</p>	<p>This objective is underpinned by a sustainable approach to development that aims to avoid exerting undue environmental pressures to Lough Rea in terms of water abstraction (which has specific mitigatory consequences for Policy UI 1 above) and the towns wastewater and water supply infrastructure.</p>	<p>Recommended insertion of the following text: including the conservation objectives of the Loughrea European Sites after: that cannot be adequately serviced, that would lead to significant environmental effects including the conservation objectives of the Loughrea European Sites.....</p>	<p>Objective UI2 – Water Services for New Developments Require all new developments to be adequately serviced with water supply, wastewater disposal and surface water drainage in accordance with applicable legislation, standards and guidelines and to submit the necessary documentation with their planning applications to confirm same. Encourage only as much development, both in terms of quantity and type of development, that can be provided for based on the utility services available and prohibit any proposed development that cannot be adequately serviced, that would lead to significant environmental effects including the conservation objectives of the Loughrea European Sites or that would pose an unacceptable or that would pose an unacceptable threat to the capacity of water, wastewater or surface water infrastructure in the Plan Area.</p>

<p>Objective UI 4 – Wastewater Disposal.</p> <p>New developments shall only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that they can be serviced and that there is adequate capacity in the wastewater disposal infrastructure in accordance with applicable requirements and standards, including urban wastewater treatment disposal standards, in order to protect the Galway Bay Complex and its qualifying interests.</p>	<p>This approach which is consistent with the approach to new development outlined in the Galway County Development Plan will ensure wastewater generated during the construction and operation of new developments will not result in a deterioration of water quality within Lough Rea or the St Cleran’s River, thus ensuring impacts to associated European Sites are avoided.</p>	<p>No changes are proposed for this Objective.</p>	<p>No changes required or proposed</p>
<p>Objective UI 5 – Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems</p> <p>Maintain, and enhance as appropriate, the existing surface water drainage system throughout the Plan Area and ensure that new developments are adequately serviced with surface water drainage infrastructure and promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems in new developments. Surface water runoff from development sites will be limited to pre-development levels and planning applications for new developments will be required to provide details of surface water drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems proposals.</p>	<p>This Objective will ensure that surface water drainage from existing and new developments will not result in adverse impacts to the water quality of waterbodies occurring within the Plan area.</p>	<p>No changes are proposed for this Objective.</p>	<p>No changes required or proposed</p>
<p>Objective UI 6 – St. Cleran’s River Tributary and Drainage Catchment (refer to Map 2) Require new development proposals within the catchment of the St. Cleran’s River tributary or that potentially drain towards this tributary to include full details of proposals to address the high probability of flooding associated with the tributary and the need to provide adequate surface water drainage, including the incorporation of Sustainable Drainage</p>	<p>This Objective will ensure that development will not result in alterations to the baseline flow conditions of St Cleran’s River during the lifetime of the Plan.</p>	<p>No changes are proposed for this Objective.</p>	<p>No changes required or proposed</p>

Systems.			
<p>Objective UI 8-- Flood Zones and Appropriate Land Use(Refer to Map3)</p> <p>Protect Flood Zone A and Flood Zone B from inappropriate development and direct developments/land uses into the appropriate Flood Zone in accordance with <i>The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009</i> (or any superseding document) and the guidance contained in DM Standard UI1 – Flood Zones and Appropriate Land Uses. Where a development/land use is proposed that is inappropriate within the Flood Zone, then the development proposal will need to be accompanied by a Development Management Justification Test and Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment in accordance with the criteria set out under <i>The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009</i>.</p>	<p>The restriction of development in flood risk areas will ensure no artificial impermeable surfaces installed in such areas. This will ensure natural surface runoff characteristics are maintained adjacent to Lough Rea and the St Cleran’s River.</p>	<p>No changes are proposed for this Objective.</p>	<p>No changes required or proposed</p>
<p>Objective UI 9--Waterbodies and Watercourses</p> <p>Protect waterbodies and watercourses within the Plan Area from inappropriate development, including the lake, rivers, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains. This will include a 10 metre environmental management buffer on either side of St Cleran’s River and its tributary in the east of the Plan Area, measured from the near river bank. Promote the sustainable management and uses of watercourses and avoid the culverting or realignment of these features.</p>	<p>The implementation of this buffer area will protect the water quality of rivers and streams and minimise disturbance to fauna supported by watercourses within the Plan area.</p>		
<p>Policy UI 3 – Water Quality</p> <p>It is the policy of Galway County Council to protect and improve water quality in conjunction with other agencies and stakeholders and in accordance with the EU <i>Water Framework Directive (2006/60/EC)</i>, EU <i>Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC)</i> and associated national legislation and to support the implementation of the Western River Basin District Management Plan, including the actions and measures that form part of the Clarin/Kilcolgan Water</p>	<p>This implementation of this Policy will facilitate the improving/maintaining good water quality and good ecological status within Lough Rea and the St Cleran’s River.</p>	<p>No changes are proposed for this Policy.</p>	<p>No changes required or proposed</p>

Management Unit Action Plan. Galway County Council will take account of the above requirements to protect and improve water quality when considering new development proposals.			
<p>Objective UI 10 – Western River Basin District Management Plan and Protection of Waters</p> <p>Support the protection of water quality in accordance with the EU <i>Water Framework Directive (2006/60/EC)</i> and the <i>European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (SI No. 722 of 2003)</i> (as amended) (or any updated legislation), including the implementation of the relevant recommendations and measures as outlined in the <i>Western River Basin District Management Plan 2009-2015</i>, including the <i>Clarin/Kilcolgan Water Management Unit Action Plan</i> (and any updated/ superseding documents). Development will only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on the water environment, including surface water, groundwater quality and quantity, river corridors and associated wetlands. Galway County Council is statutorily obliged to protect the existing good quality status of the waters in Loughrea (including Lough Rea, St. Cleran’s River and tributary and the Clarin/Kilcolgan drainage area).</p>	Supporting the recommendations and measures of the Western River Basin District Management Plan and associated management plans such as the Clarin/Kilcolgan Water Management Unit Action Plan will ensure that the good water quality and ecological status of Lough Rea and St Cleran’s River is improved maintained over the lifetime of the Plan.	No changes are proposed for this Objective.	No changes required or proposed
<p>Objective UI 11 – Groundwater & Aquifers</p> <p>Support the protection of groundwater resources and dependent wildlife/habitats in accordance with the EU <i>Groundwater Directive 2006/118/EC</i> and the <i>European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations, 2010 (S.I. No. 9 of 2010)</i> (or any updated legislation). Protect the locally important aquifer that under lays the Plan Area from risk of environmental pollution and have regard to any groundwater protection schemes and groundwater source protection zones where data has been made available by the Geological Survey of Ireland.</p>	Implementing this Objective will support the protection of groundwater and associated groundwater influenced habitats such as turloughs.	No changes are proposed for this Objective.	No changes required or proposed
<p>Policy UI 4 – Waste Management</p> <p>It is the policy of the Galway County Council to support sustainable waste management through the prevention, reduction and recycling of waste and by facilitating the provision of adequate waste infrastructure, such as bring banks, at locations that will not</p>	This Policy will have a positive impact for the environment.	No changes are proposed for this Objective.	No changes required or proposed

adversely affect residential amenities.			
<p>Objective UI 12 – Waste Prevention, Reduction & Recycling</p> <p>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 with their planning applications.</p>	See Policy UI 4 above.	No changes are proposed for this Objective.	No changes required or proposed
<p>Objective UI 15 – Energy Conservation & Efficiency</p> <p>Continue to implement Galway County Council’s Energy Action Plan regarding energy efficiency and conservation in existing and future residential, commercial and industrial buildings within Loughrea. Ensure that new buildings are sustainable in their siting, orientation, design and construction. Passive solar design techniques, high energy efficiency, low impact construction methods and the use of local/sustainable building materials, recycling aggregates and local craftsmanship will be encouraged to ensure that new developments minimise their environmental impacts and long term costs.</p>	This Objective will have a positive impact for the environment.	No changes are proposed for this Objective.	No changes required or proposed
<p>Policy UI 16 – Climate Change & Air Quality</p> <p>It is the policy of Galway County Council to support and promote, in conjunction with other agencies, local, national and international initiatives for limiting/reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and encouraging the development of renewable energy sources in accordance with The ‘National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012’, the EU Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFÉ) Directive (2008/50/EEC) and the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (SI No180 of 2011) (or any updated/superseding documents).</p>	Implementing this Objective will support a reduction in greenhouse gas emission and encourage the development of renewable energy.	No changes are proposed for this Objective.	No changes required or proposed
<p>Objective UI18 Climate Change</p> <p>Support the implementation of the National Climate Change Strategy 2007 -2012 (or any updated/superseding document) and continue to implement Galway County Council’s Energy Action Plan regarding energy efficiency and conservation in existing and future buildings, in energy use and procurement activities and in raising</p>	See Policy UI 16 above.	No changes are proposed for this Objective.	No changes required or proposed

awareness and stimulating action within local communities			
<p>Objective UI 19 –Air Quality</p> <p>Promote the preservation of best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development throughout the Plan Area in accordance with the EU Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFÉ) directive (2008/50/EC) by seeking to protect and maintain the regulatory standards contained with the EPA’s Air Quality in Ireland 2009 <i>Key Indicators of Ambient Air Quality 2010</i> (or any updated/superseding document) and by ensuring 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>	Positive – See Policy UI 16 above.	No changes are proposed for this Objective.	No changes required or proposed
<p>Objective UI 20 – Air Purification</p> <p>Encourage landscaping and deciduous tree planting in an environmentally sensitive manner within the Plan Area as a means of air purification, the filtering of suspended particles and the improvement of Loughrea’s micro- climate.</p>	The planting of deciduous trees and associated landscaping will have the potential to provide habitat for a range of fauna as well as functioning as an air purifiers in the Plan area.	No changes are proposed for this Objective.	No changes required or proposed
<p>DM Guideline UI2 – Waterbodies and Watercourses</p> <p>Require all relevant applications, which are located in close proximity to waterbodies or watercourses (including Lough Rea, St.Cleran’s River and tributaries), to submit measures to reduce and prevent pollution to the waterbody/watercourse, both during construction and after completion of the scheme.</p>	This Objective will ensure that projects and developments occurring within the Plan area avoid negative impact to the water quality of Lough Rea and St Cleran’s River.	No changes are proposed for this Objective.	No changes required or proposed
<p>Objective UD 4 – Green Network and Landscaping</p> <p>Support the development of a network of amenities, open spaces and natural areas that support biodiversity, that incorporate existing landscape features such as local rivers, streams, trees, stone walls and hedgerows, that provide pedestrian and cycling</p>	The Objective will enhance connectivity between habitats facilitates the dispersal of flora and fauna.	No changes are proposed for this Objective.	No changes required or proposed

<p>linkages and active and passive recreation opportunities, that help to structure and provide relief from the built environment and that can provide areas for surface water attenuation and flood risk management.</p>			
<p>Policy NH 1 – Natural Heritage, Landscape and Environment</p> <p>It is the policy of Galway County Council, to support the conservation and enhancement of natural heritage and biodiversity, including the protection of the integrity of European Sites, the protection of Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas and the promotion of the development of a green/ecological network within the Plan Area, in order to support ecological functioning and connectivity, create opportunities in suitable locations for active and passive recreation and to structure and provide visual relief from the built environment. The protection of natural heritage and biodiversity, including European Sites, will be implemented in accordance with relevant EU environmental directives and applicable national legislation, policies, plans and guidelines, including the following (and any updated/superseding documents):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU Directives, including the <i>Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)</i>, the <i>Birds Directive (2009/147/EC codified version of Directive)</i>, the <i>Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (85/337/EEC)</i>, the <i>Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)</i> and the <i>Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC)</i>. • National legislation, including the <i>Wildlife Act 1976</i>, the <i>European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1989 (SI No. 349 of 1989)</i> (as amended), the <i>Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000</i>, the <i>European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2003</i> (as amended), the <i>Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010</i> and the <i>European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011)</i>. • National policy guidelines, including the <i>Landscape and Landscape Assessment Guidelines 2000</i>, the <i>Environmental Impact Assessment Sub-Threshold Development Guidelines</i> 	<p>This Policy aims to support the protection of the conservation status and integrity of European Sites.</p>	<p>No changes are proposed for this Objective.</p>	<p>No changes required or proposed</p>

<p>2003, <i>Strategic Environmental Assessment Guidelines 2004</i> and the <i>Appropriate Assessment Guidelines 2010</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catchment and water resource management plans, including the <i>Western River Basin District Management Plan 2009-2015</i>. • Biodiversity plans and guidelines, including <i>Actions for Biodiversity 2011-2016: Ireland's National Biodiversity Plan</i>, the <i>Biodiversity Action Plan for County Galway 2008-2013</i> and the <i>Biodiversity Guidelines</i> produced by Galway County Council. 			
<p>Objective NH 1 – European Sites (refer to Map 2)</p> <p>Protect European 2000 sites, (including Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation), that form part of the Natura 2000 network, in accordance with the requirements in the EU <i>Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)</i>, EU <i>Birds Directive 2009/147/EC</i>-codified version of Directive), the <i>Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010</i>, the <i>European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011</i> (S.I. No. 477 of 2011) (and any subsequent amendments or updated legislation) and having due regard to the guidance in the <i>Appropriate Assessment Guidelines 2010</i> (and any subsequent or updated guidance). A plan or project (e.g. proposed development) within the Plan Area will only be authorised after the competent authority (Galway County Council) has ascertained, based on scientific evidence and a Habitats Directive Assessment where necessary, that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The plan or project will not give rise to adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of any European Site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects); or 2. The plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of any European Site (that does not host a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the 	<p>Positive – See Objective DS 3</p>	<p>No changes are proposed for this Objective.</p>	<p>No changes required or proposed</p>

<p>protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000; or</p> <p>3. The plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of any European Site (that hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, restricted to reasons of human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000.</p>			
<p>Objective NH 2 – Protected Habitats and Species</p> <p>Support the protection of protected habitats and species listed in the annexes to the EU <i>Habitats Directive 1992</i> (92/43/EEC) and the <i>Birds Directive (2009/147/EC-codified version of Directive)</i>- This includes the protection of bats and their roosts, and the maintenance of woodland, hedgerows, treelines, ecological networks and corridors which serve as feeding areas, flight paths and community routes for bats.</p>	<p>See Policy NH 1 and Objective DS 3 and NH 1 above.</p> <p>It is also noted that this Objective will provide protection for Annex 1 Habitats such as caves not open to the public which occur in the vicinity of new land use zonings.</p>	<p>No changes are proposed for this Objective.</p>	<p>No changes required or proposed</p>
<p>Objective NH 3 –Natural Heritage Areas and Proposed Natural Heritage Areas</p> <p>Protect Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas in accordance with the requirements of the <i>Wildlife Act 1976</i>, the <i>Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000</i> and the <i>Planning and Development Act 2000</i> (as amended). Where a proposed development within the Plan Area may give rise to likely significant effects on any Natural Heritage Area or proposed Natural Heritage Area an Ecological Impact Assessment or an Environmental Impact Assessment, as appropriate, may be required.</p>	<p>This objective provides protection for NHAs & pNHAs.</p>	<p>No changes are proposed for this Objective.</p>	<p>No changes required or proposed</p>

<p>Objective NH 4 – Impact Assessments</p> <p>Ensure full compliance with the requirements of the EU <i>Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)</i>, <i>SEA Directive (2001/42/EC)</i> and <i>EIA Directive (85/337/EEC)</i>, and the associated <i>European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011)</i>, <i>European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004-2011</i>, <i>Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004-2011</i> and the <i>European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1989-2011</i> (or any updated/superseding legislation). Planning applications for proposed developments within the Plan Area that may give rise to likely significant effects on the environment and/or any designated site may need to be accompanied by one or more of the following: an Environmental Impact Statement, an Ecological Impact Assessment Report, a Habitats Directive Assessment Screening Report or a Natura Impact Statement, as appropriate. Ensure that Natura Impact Statements and any other environmental or ecological impact assessments submitted in support of proposals for development are carried according to best practice methodologies and contain all necessary baseline assessments.</p>	<p>These measures will ensure all proposed developments with the potential to result in likely significant effects to the environment and/or natural heritage will be identified, assessed and mitigated where necessary.</p>	<p>No changes are proposed for this Objective.</p>	<p>No changes required or proposed</p>
<p>Objective NH 5 – Biodiversity & Ecological Networks (refer to Map 2)</p> <p>Support the protection of biodiversity and ecological connectivity within the Plan area including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, rivers, streams, natural springs, wetlands, stone walls, geological and geomorphological systems, other landscape features and associated wildlife, where these form part of the ecological network.</p> <p>a) Seek to retain and incorporate these natural features into developments, in order to avoid ecological fragmentation and maintain ecological corridors and stepping stones.</p> <p>b) Protect and enhance the water quality and ecology of St Cleran’s River and its tributary to the east, and their function as ecological</p>	<p>The implementation of this Policy will support the enhancement of natural habitats providing shelter and resources for a range of flora and fauna including Qualifying Species of the Loughrea SPA.</p>	<p>No changes are proposed for this Objective.</p>	<p>No change required or proposed</p>

<p>corridors, by maintaining the existing banks and channel and ensuring that new developments are set back at least 10m from the top of the bank of the stream</p> <p>c) Ensure greater biodiversity through the appropriate planting of native trees, shrubs and hedgerow indigenous to the Loughrea area in public and private areas and new developments.</p>			
<p>Objective NH 6 – Water Resources</p> <p>Protect all water resources in the Plan Area, including Lough Rea, St Cleran’s River, its tributaries and downstream waterbodies, other streams, springs, surface water and groundwater quality, in accordance with the requirements and guidance in the EU <i>Water Framework Directive 2000 (2000/60/EC)</i>, the <i>European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (as amended)</i> and the <i>Western River Basin Management Plan 2009-2015</i> (including any superseding versions of same). Support the application and implementation of a catchment planning and management approach to development and conservation, including the implementation of Sustainable Drainage System techniques for new development in the Plan Area.</p>	<p>See Policy UI 2 and Objective UI 9 and UI 10 above.</p>	<p>No changes are proposed for this Objective.</p>	<p>No change required or proposed</p>
<p>Objective NH 7 – Environmental Management Area (refer to Map 2)</p> <p>Ensure that new development proposals on the lakeshore and around the lake that may impact on the Lough Rea SAC/SPA/pNHA are adequately assessed and any impacts identified can be avoided, reduced and/or mitigated, as appropriate, in accordance with applicable environmental legislation and policy prior to any consent being given. This will include any amenity proposals on open space lands around the lake and development proposals on zoned lands around the lake or that drain towards the lake.</p>	<p>Positive – the implementation of this Objective will ensure developments occurring in the vicinity of Lough Rea do not result in adverse impacts to the Lough Rea European Sites.</p>	<p>No changes are proposed for this Objective.</p>	<p>No change required or proposed</p>
<p>Objective NH 8 – Trees, Parkland/Woodland and Hedgerows</p> <p>Protect important tree clusters and hedgerows in the Plan Area and ensure that development proposals take cognisance of significant</p>	<p>Positive – the protection of these features will provide shelter and refuge for a range of fauna and</p>	<p>No changes are proposed for this Objective.</p>	<p>No change required or proposed</p>

<p>trees/tree stands. Seek to retain natural boundaries including stonewalls, hedgerows and tree boundaries, wherever possible and replace with a boundary type similar to the existing boundary where removal is unavoidable.</p>	<p>facilitate the dispersal of flora and fauna.</p>		
<p>Objective NH 9 – Geological and Geomorphological Systems</p> <p>Protect and conserve geological and geomorphological systems, sites and features from inappropriate development that would detract from their heritage value and interpretation and ensure that any plan or project affecting karst formations are adequately assessed with regard to their potential geophysical, hydrological, hydrogeological or ecological impacts on the environment.</p>	<p>This Objective will ensure that groundwaters and associated features such as springs will be protected and conserved within the Plan area.</p>	<p>No changes are proposed for this Objective.</p>	<p>No change required or proposed</p>
<p>Objective NH10 – Control of Invasive and Alien Invasive Species</p> <p>Seek to prevent the spread of invasive and alien species and promote measures to achieve this objective. Require a landscaping plan to be produced for developments near waterbodies and ensure that such plans do not include alien invasive species.</p>	<p>Positive – This Objective has particular implications for waterbodies whose ecology and conservation status are at risk from the spread of invasive and alien species.</p>	<p>No changes are proposed for this Objective.</p>	<p>No change required or proposed</p>
<p>Objective NH 11 – Consultation with Environmental Authorities</p> <p>Ensure that all development proposals are screened to determine whether they are likely to have a significant direct, indirect or cumulative effect on the integrity or conservation objectives of any European Site and, where significant effects are likely or uncertain, there will be a requirement for consultation with the relevant environmental authorities as part of any Habitats Directive Assessment that may be required.</p>	<p>Positive – this Objective will ensure that the relevant environmental authorities responsible for protecting and enhancing the natural environment are afforded an opportunity to advise Galway County Council on the implications of developments that may have the potential to result in likely significant effects to European Sites.</p>	<p>No changes are proposed for this Objective.</p>	<p>No change required or proposed</p>

9 Evaluation of Mitigation Measures to ensure Potential Negative Impacts of Certain Policies and Objectives are Avoided

Table 9.1 below sets out the again the Policies and Objectives that were identified in Table 8.1 as having the potential to result in negative impacts to European Sites. In Table 9.1 the relevant mitigation measures identified in Table 8.2 are outlined for each potentially negative Policy/Objective along with an evaluation of mitigatory measures to ensure negative impacts are avoided.

Table 9-1: Evaluation of Mitigatory Measures of the Loughrea LAP

Potential Negative Policy/Objective	Description of Potential Negative Impact	Relevant Mitigatory Measures	Evaluation of Mitigatory Measures capacity to Avoid Negative Impacts
<p>Objective LU 1 – Town Centre/Commercial (C1) (refer to Map 1)</p> <p>Promote the development of the Town Centre as an intensive, high quality, well-landscaped, human-scaled and accessible environment with an appropriate mix of uses, including residential, commercial, service, tourism, enterprise, public and community uses as appropriate, that provide a range of retail, services, facilities and amenities to the local community and visitors to the town. The town centre and associated main streets shall remain the primary focus for retail and service activity in Loughrea.</p>	<p>The zoning of lands as Town Centre immediately adjacent to St Cleran’s River will have the potential to adversely affect the water of this river. Adverse impacts to the water quality of this river could negatively affect the Rahasane Turlough European Sites occurring approximately 17km downstream.</p>	<p>Policy DS1; UI3; NH1</p> <p>Objective: DS3; UI4; UI5; UI6; UI9; UI10; UI11; NH1; NH5; NH6; NH11.</p> <p>DM Guideline: UI2</p>	<p>A number of the policies and objectives place restrictions on any developments occurring with the potential to result in negative impacts to European Sites. These include Policy NH1 and Objectives DS3 and NH1.</p> <p>Therefore, where developments in town centre zoning are likely to have a significant effect on the water quality of the St Cleran’s River and downstream along the Dunkellin River and Rahasane Turlough, such developments will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that negative impacts can be avoided.</p> <p>In addition to the protection of European Sites at Rahasane Turlough, downstream the remaining mitigatory measures prioritise the protection of the water quality of St Cleran’s River. Any proposed development in the town centre land use zonings will have to demonstrate at the Planning Application Stage that no elements of the proposed development will conflict with the aims of these mitigatory Policies and Objectives.</p>
<p>Objective LU 3 – Residential (R) (refer to Map 1 and Objective RD1)</p> <p>Promote the development of appropriate and serviced lands to provide for high quality, well laid out and well landscaped sustainable residential communities with an appropriate mix of housing types and densities, together with complementary land uses such as</p>	<p>While all Residential Phase 1 zonings are buffered from Lough Rea and St Cleran’s River Residential Phase 2 zonings occur adjacent o St Cleran’s River towards the north of the Plan area.</p>	<p>Policy: DS1; UI3; NH1</p> <p>Objective: DS3; UI4; UI5; UI6; UI9; UI10; UI11; NH1; NH5; NH6;</p>	<p>See Evaluation for Objective LU 1 above.</p>

<p>community facilities, local services and public transport facilities, to serve the residential population of the area.</p> <p>Protect existing residential amenities and facilitate compatible and appropriately designed new infill development, in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.</p> <p>A Phasing Scheme will apply to residential uses on Residential (R) zoned lands, as set out under Objective RD1 in Section 3.2.2.</p>	<p>Adverse impacts to the water quality of this river could negatively affect the Rahasane Turlough European Sites occurring approximately 17km downstream.</p>	<p>NH11. DM Guideline: UI2</p>	
<p>Objective LU 4 –Industrial (I) (Refer to Map 1)</p> <p>Promote the development of industrial and industrial related uses, including manufacturing, processing of materials, warehousing and distribution, on suitable lands with adequate services and facilities and a high level of access to the major road network and public transport facilities.</p> <p>Adequate edge treatment and/or screening will be required to ensure high quality interfaces with public spaces and any adjoining residential areas or other sensitive land uses, as appropriate.</p>	<p>An area of Industrial zoning is proposed to the north of the town centre within close proximity of the St Cleran River. The construction and operation of an industrial facility at this location will have the potential to result in adverse impacts to the water of this river. Any adverse impacts to this watercourse could negatively affect the Rahasane Turlough European Sites occurring approximately 17km downstream.</p>	<p>Policy: DS1; UI3; NH1 Objective: DS3; UI4; UI5; UI6; UI9; UI10; UI11; NH1; NH5; NH6; NH11. DM Guideline: UI2</p>	<p>See Evaluation for Objective LU 1 above.</p>
<p>Objective LU 11 – Transport Infrastructure (TI) (Refer to Map 1)</p> <p>Facilitate the provision and maintenance of essential transportation infrastructure, including public roads, footpaths, cycle ways, bus stops and landscaping, together with any necessary associated works, as appropriate.</p>	<p>The development of new transport infrastructure, specifically the Eastern Relief Road will have the potential to adversely affect the water quality of Lough Rea and St Cleran’s River during the construction and operation of this road.</p>	<p>Policy: DS1; UI3; NH1 Objective: DS3; UI4; UI5; UI9; UI10; UI11; NH1; NH5; NH6; NH9; NH11</p>	<p>See Evaluation for Objective LU 1 above.</p>

	<p>The proposed route for the Eastern Relief road will cross a watercourse draining into the upper stretch of the St Cleran River with the Lough Rea European Sites. Adverse impacts to this un-named watercourse could negatively affect the water quality of St Cleran's River downstream.</p>	<p>DM Guideline: UI2</p>	
<p>Policy ED – Economic Development</p> <p>It is the policy of Galway County Council to support economic development and employment creation in Loughrea through the identification of appropriately located and adequately serviced lands for business and enterprise, retail, industrial, commercial and tourism developments, the promotion of investment in transportation and other support infrastructure and the creation of a high quality environment to encourage economic investment. The promotion of economic development and employment creation will be appropriately guided to ensure the protection of residential amenities, built and natural heritage, landscape/townscape/streetscape character and the vitality and viability of the town centre. Support the aims, objectives and recommendations, where appropriate in the context of Loughrea, of the following (and any updated/superseding documents).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Galway County Development Board Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development entitled Working Together, shaping our Future 2002-2012 Galway City and County Development Board Tourism Strategy entitled Development Sustainable Tourism in Galway: A framework 	<p>While this Objective states that the economic development of Loughrea will be promoted in an appropriate manner that ensures the protection of the natural heritage, including European Sites, its aim to identify lands for a range of land uses will have the potential to result in negative impacts to European Sites. The types of impacts associated with this Objective are outlined above by the assessment of potential impacts relating to LU 4.</p>	<p>Policy: DS1; UI3; NH1</p> <p>Objective: DS3; DS5; LU1; LU9; LU13; LU14; UI2; UI4; UI5; UI9; UI10; UI11; UI4; UI12; UI15; UI19; UI10; UD4; NH1; NH2; NH3; NH4; NH5; N6; NH7; NH8; NH9; NH10; NH11</p> <p>DM Guidelines: UI2</p>	<p>The mitigatory Policies and Objectives will ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No developments will be permitted where they represent a threat to the future conservation status and integrity of European Sites and their qualifying interests. That development will only be permitted where adequately serviced sites are available. <p>The range of mitigatory Objectives listed in column 3 will require future developments in the Plan area to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect water quality and ensure adverse impacts to water are avoided; Ensure that adverse impacts to groundwater and geological/geomorphological features of interest are not adversely affected; Ensure that species and habitats and

<p>for Action 2003-2012 West Regional Authority Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 - 2022</p>			<p>especially those of conservation concern protected under European and National legislation are not adversely affected;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that an adequate assessment of the potential negative impacts of a development is undertaken; • Ensure that consultation is undertaken with relevant environmental statutory organisations.
<p>Objective ED 4 – Tourism Development</p> <p>Encourage and facilitate the development of the tourism potential of Loughrea in a manner that respects, builds on, protects and enhances the cultural, built and natural heritage for the town and the local amenities within the Plan Area. Key Projects and initiatives that will be supported will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and enhance the quality and amenity of the blue flag beach and public amenity area at Long Point, Loughrea • Support the development of water based recreational facilities and activities that will benefit the local community and visitors to the area and enhance the tourism infrastructure in an environmentally sustainable manner • Seek to develop a strategy for information signage to structures or buildings of historical importance and tourism value and investigate the provision of a tourist/information centre within the town centre. 	<p>Potential pressures associated with boating activities on the lake have previously been noted by the NPWS. The increased use of the lake as a recreational amenity, specifically involving water-crafts will have the potential to adversely affect the qualifying interests of the Lough Rea SPA & SAC through disturbance and the introduction of invasive species.</p>	<p>The recommended re-wording for this Objective (see Objective ED4 Appendix 2 for re-wording) will ensure that no water-based recreational facilities will be undertaken that are in conflict with the objectives of the WFD and the conservation management objectives for the Lough Rea European Sites.</p> <p>Policy: UI3; NH1</p> <p>Objective: DS3; LU9; UI9; UI10; UI11; NH1; NH2;</p>	<p>The Policy NH1 and Objective DS3 and NH1 will ensure that no development of water-based activities will take place where there will be a threat to the conservation status and integrity of the Lough Rea SAC & SPA and associated qualifying interest. Examples of such threats have been outlined in detail in Table 5.1.</p> <p>The Plan also contains Objectives to ensure that the water quality of the lake is protected (UI9 and UI10) along with the species and habitats supported by it (NH6 and NH7).</p> <p>Any proposal for future water-based activity on the lake will be required to undergo adequate environmental impact assessment and Habitats Directive Assessment (NH4). These assessments will need to consider how water-based activity will affect waterbird species' ecology, their use of the lake and other factors that may influence the scale of the disturbance, if any, associated with such activities. During such assessments, proponents of a development will be required</p>

		<p>NH4; NH6; NH7; NH11.</p> <p>DM Guidelines: UI2</p>	<p>to consult with statutory environmental organisations, identify the potential impacts arising from such developments and prescribe measures that will ensure adverse impacts are avoided. Only where adverse impacts can be avoided will the developments associated with water-based activities be permitted.</p> <p>The Plan itself also establishes a requirement to consult with statutory environmental authorities where significant likely effects to the environment are likely to arise as a result of a proposed development.</p> <p>Objective NH10 aims to control the spread of alien invasive species. As part of this Objective the Council will seek to prevent the spread of invasive species into Loughrea. Under this Objective (and the other mitigatory policies and objectives listed in Column 3 opposite) the Council may, where deemed necessary, apply conditions to proposed water-based activities that present a risk of spreading invasive species.</p> <p>Such conditions may vary depending on the proposed activity involved but may include approaches such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • restricting access to Lough Rea to a selected number of launch sites; • implementing a boat inspection and registration system to identify resident (i.e. boats used on Lough Rea only) and guest boats. <p>Overall the implementation of this Objective will aim to ensure that no water-based activities result in the spread of invasive</p>
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			species to Lough Rea.
<p>Objective TI15 – Transport Network Improvements (refer to Map 2)</p> <p>Support the improvement of the road and street network in and around the Plan Area, subject to normal planning and environmental considerations. This will include the following new routes and projects and any other appropriately approved transport schemes/improvements to roads and streets in and around the Plan Area:</p> <p>a) A new relief road/street connecting the northeastern approach road (R446) to the southeastern approach road (L4213) in the eastern portion of the Plan Area. This new route should be designed to provide adequate access points to adjacent lands with adjacent street-oriented development and will provide opportunities for smarter travel improvements within the town.</p> <p>b) The proposed western bypass of the town connecting the N66/R446/R349 junction in the northwest of the plan area to the N66 route to the southwest of the Plan Area.</p> <p>c) Carry out road improvement, widening and realignment of the Coarsing Field road that links the Portumna road and the existing N6 Dublin road.</p> <p>d) Acquire the lands of the old railway line, used as a link road between Bride Street and the Loughrea/New Inn road.</p> <p>e) Improve culverts and all roadside drainage, maintain and renew pavements, widen and improve existing roads, improve road signage and facilitate the provision of new roads/streets within Loughrea, as the need arises and as resources permit.</p> <p>Require proposed developments to incorporate provisions for busways, footpaths and cycleways where properties bound main arterial routes, new link routes or other routes determined by the NRA. Prohibit</p>	See Objective LU 11 above.	See Objective LU 11 above.	See Objective LU 11 above.

<p>development on lands that are reserved for proposed road/street corridors and associated buffers and where development would affect a route, line, level or layout of any proposed new roadway or any junction required between a proposed and existing road.</p>			
<p>Policy UI 1 – Water Supply, Wastewater Disposal And Surface Water Drainage Infrastructure</p> <p>It is the policy of Galway County Council to support the provision and maintenance of adequate wastewater disposal, water supply and surface water drainage infrastructure, to service the development of Loughrea in accordance with EU Directive, national legislation and applicable standards. This will include the provision of adequate capacity in the public wastewater sewer network, wastewater treatment plant and storm water sewer network, an adequate quantity and quality of water supply and the promotion of Sustainable Drainage System approaches and techniques within the Plan Area.</p>	<p>While the provision of adequate wastewater infrastructure will ensure adverse impacts to surface water resulting from inadequate wastewater treatment or surface water drainage are avoided the continued abstraction of water from Lough Rea to provide an adequate water supply for the future needs of the Plan area could have the potential to exert pressure on the ecological status of Lough Rea and restrict the range of suitable habitat to support stoneworts (<i>Chara spp.</i>), the presence of which are a key feature of the principal qualifying habitat for which Lough Rea is designated an SAC.</p> <p>Stoneworts are macrophyte species that colonise lake substrates. They are dependent on a range of abiotic factors for the maintenance of favourable habitat conditions. Light penetration is a key</p>	<p>Policy: NH1</p> <p>Objective:</p> <p>DS3; UI2; UI9; UI10; NH1; NH2; NH4; NH6; NH11</p>	<p>Specific Policies and Objectives listed will ensure that unsustainable levels of water abstraction from Lough Rea are avoided during the lifetime of the Plan. The recommended change in wording to UI 3 establishes a commitment to ensure water abstraction is undertaken at sustainable levels that will not result in likely negative effects to the qualifying interests of the Lough Rea SAC and SPA.</p> <p>Other Policies and Objectives of Plan seeking to protect water bodies will establish a precautionary approach to the abstraction of water from Lough Rea.</p> <p>Galway County Council’s commitment to implementing the aim and objectives of the WFD and the Clarin and Kilcolgan Water Management Unit Action Plan will also require strict protection of Lough Rea in terms of baseline water levels so that Good Ecological status can be maintained/achieved.</p>

	<p>requirement for this species with greater water clarity potentially increasing the range of habitat available for this species. While they have been recorded to depths of 60m they are generally found in shallow water to depths of 1 to 10m.</p> <p>Considering the general restriction of this species to shallower waters any reductions in lake levels as a result of water abstraction could potential restrict the range of habitat available for stoneworts.</p>		
<p>Objective UI1 – Water Services Infrastructure (refer to Map 2) Support the maintenance, improvement and monitoring of the public water supply, wastewater disposal and surface water drainage infrastructure, as necessary to address any deficiencies in infrastructure capacity and/or service the development needs of the town. This will include the following and any other projects approved during the period of the Plan:</p> <p>a) Progress the upgrading of the existing wastewater sewer network for the town.</p> <p>b) Progress the Loughrea Regional Water Supply Scheme in order to improve the quality of supply to consumers within the town and extend supply to surrounding areas.</p> <p>c) Continue to carry out improvements to the existing infrastructure and quality of the town’s water supply system, including the provision of an upgraded water treatment plant, additional storage and the connection of the Loughrea pump station with the Long point</p>	<p>See Policy UI 1 above.</p>	<p>Policy: NH1</p> <p>Objective:</p> <p>DS3; UI2; UI9; UI10; NH1; NH2; NH4; NH6; NH11</p>	<p>See Policy UI 1 above.</p>

<p>pump station. d) Monitor the capacity of the updated wastewater treatment plant as development takes place. e) Improve and maintain an adequate surface water drainage system throughout the Plan Area.</p>			
<p>Objective UI 3 – Water Supply & Water Conservation</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>See Policy UI 1. The servicing of new developments with an adequate quantity of water will have the potential to result in pressures for Lough Rea and the qualifying habitats and species it supports.</p>	<p>Policy: NH1</p> <p>Objective:</p> <p>DS3; UI2; UI9; UI10; NH1; NH2; NH4; NH6; NH11.</p> <p>Amend the wording of this Objective to include the text “...a sustainably sourced...” so that this objective reads:</p> <p>Ensure that new developments are adequately serviced with a suitable quantity and quality of a sustainably sourced drinking water supply, promote water conservation to reduce the overall level of water loss in the public supply and require that new domestic</p>	

		developments provide for water supply metering.	
<p>Policy UI 5 – Energy and Communications</p> <p>It is the policy of Galway County Council to support the provision of adequate energy and communications infrastructure to service developments including gas, electricity, broadband, and telephone services. In particular, the Council supports the increased development and use of renewable energy and the aims of sustainable energy use and conservation in building design and construction.</p>	Negative - the development of energy and/or communications infrastructure in areas adjacent to European Sites will have the potential to result in negative impacts.	<p>Policy: DS1; NH1</p> <p>Objective: DS3; NH1; NH2; NH4; NH11</p>	<p>Policy NH1 and Objectives DS3 and NH1 will ensure that energy or communication developments will not be permitted where there will be a risk of likely significant effects to Natura 2000 unless such developments are required for imperative reasons of overriding public interest.</p> <p>Furthermore, other Objectives (NH4, NH11) will require adequate impact assessment and consultation with statutory environmental organisations to be undertaken for any energy/communications project that is likely to result in significant environmental effects.</p>
<p>Objective UI 14– Electricity & Gas Supply</p> <p>Facilitate the provision of an adequate supply of electricity and gas to developments in the Plan Area, to the requirements of the relevant service provider, and in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.</p>	See Policy UI 5 above.	<p>Policy: DS1; NH1</p> <p>Objective: DS3; NH1; NH2; NH4; NH11</p>	See Policy UI 5 above.
<p>Objective UI 16 – Broadband & Telecommunications</p> <p>Facilitate the provision of adequate telecommunication infrastructure within the Plan Area, including telephone and broadband services, to the requirements of the relevant service providers and in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.</p>	See Policy UI 5 above.	<p>Policy: DS1; NH1</p> <p>Objective: DS3; NH1; NH2; NH4; NH11</p>	See Policy UI 5 above.
<p>Objective UI 17– Renewable Energy</p>	See Policy UI 5 above.	Policy:	See Policy UI 5 above.

<p>Promote and facilitate the development of renewable sources of energy within the Plan area and encourage the integration of micro-renewable energy sources into the design and construction of new developments, as appropriate.</p>		<p>DS1; NH1</p> <p>Objective:</p> <p>DS3; NH1; NH2; NH4; NH11</p>	
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10 Natura Impact Report Conclusion

This NIR has reviewed the impacts arising from the Plan and found following a Stage 1 Screening Assessment that, without the implementation of mitigation measures, significant effects will have the potential to impact upon the integrity of four European Sites, namely the Lough Rea SAC and SPA; and the Rahasane Turlough SAC and SPA.

These potential impacts have been outlined in detail in Stage 1 & Stage 2 of this NIR along with the commitments within the Plan that aim to ensure these potential impacts are avoided.

The requirement of the Plan to ensure Habitats Directive Screening and where necessary Appropriate Assessment of any future Plans or Projects which, alone or in combinations with other plans and project, are likely to have a significant direct or indirect impact on any European Sites will protect these Sites from potential adverse impacts.

Other measures within the Plan such as the zoning of European Sites as Environmental Management Areas with the objective to support the conservation management objectives of European Sites are examples of additional commitments to ensure the provisions of the Habitats Directives are fully implemented during the lifetime of the Plan.

The measures and the requirements for all new developments with the potential to adversely affect European Sites to undertake thorough assessments to inform the conclusions of Habitats Directive Assessment will ensure adverse impacts to the integrity of these Sites will be identified in advance of receiving planning permission. Such developments will only be permitted where it can be shown that such adverse impacts can be mitigated or minimised so that likely significant effects will be avoided.

In summary and in light of the:

- original approach of the LAP and the zoning of all European Sites as Environmental Management Areas (EMA);
- requirement as set out in Objectives DS 3 and NH 1 to undertake project-level HDA wherever the possibility of likely significant effects cannot be excluded; and
- plan-level mitigation measures as outlined in Table 8.2 and evaluated in Table 9.1 of this NIR and incorporated into the LAP;

It is considered that the adoption of the LAP will not result in likely significant effects to the conservation management objectives or integrity of European Sites, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects.

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Appendix 1A:

Land Use Zoning Maps of the Loughrea LAP

Figure 1: Land Use Zoning

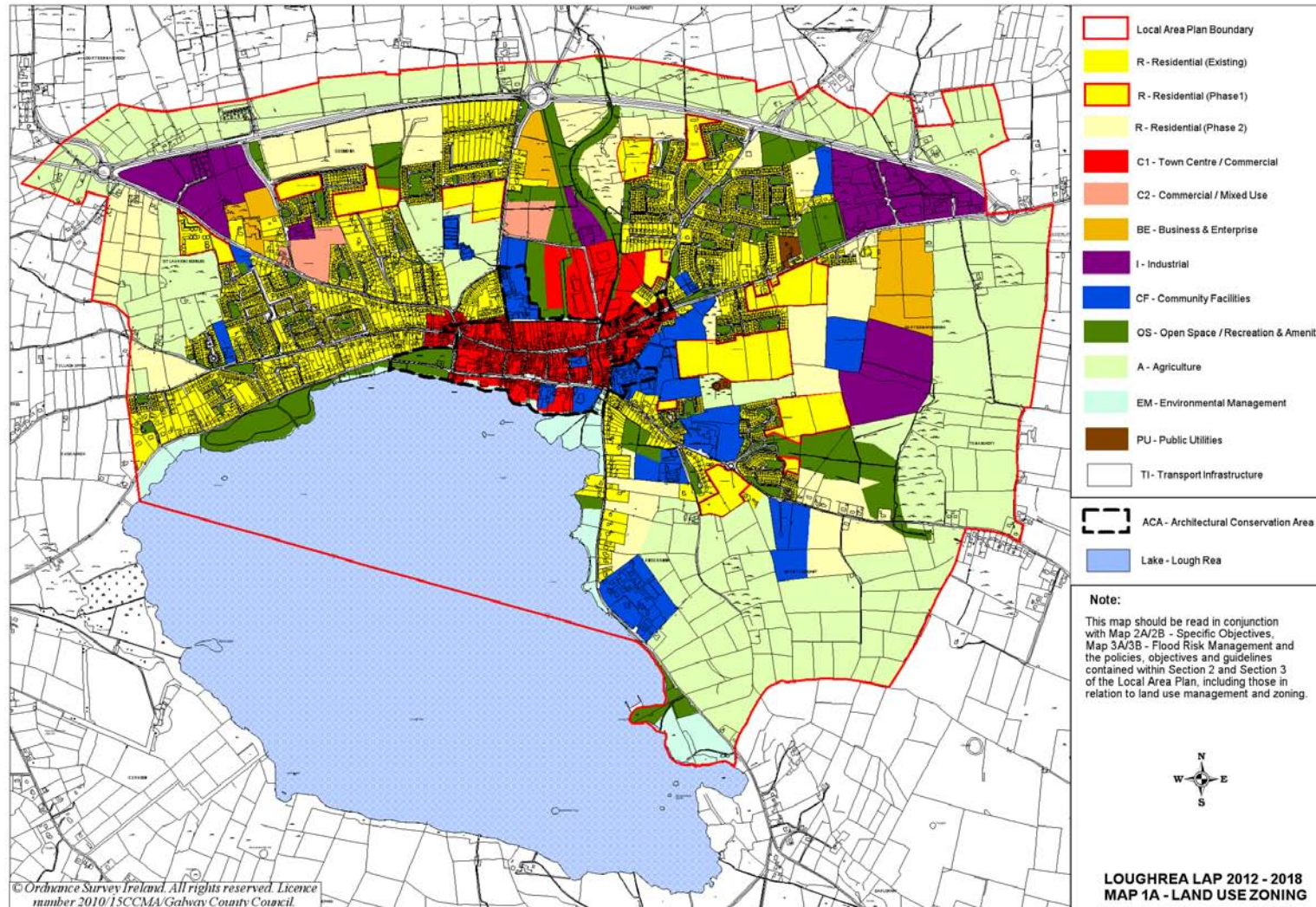


Figure 1B: Land Use Zoning (Town Centre)

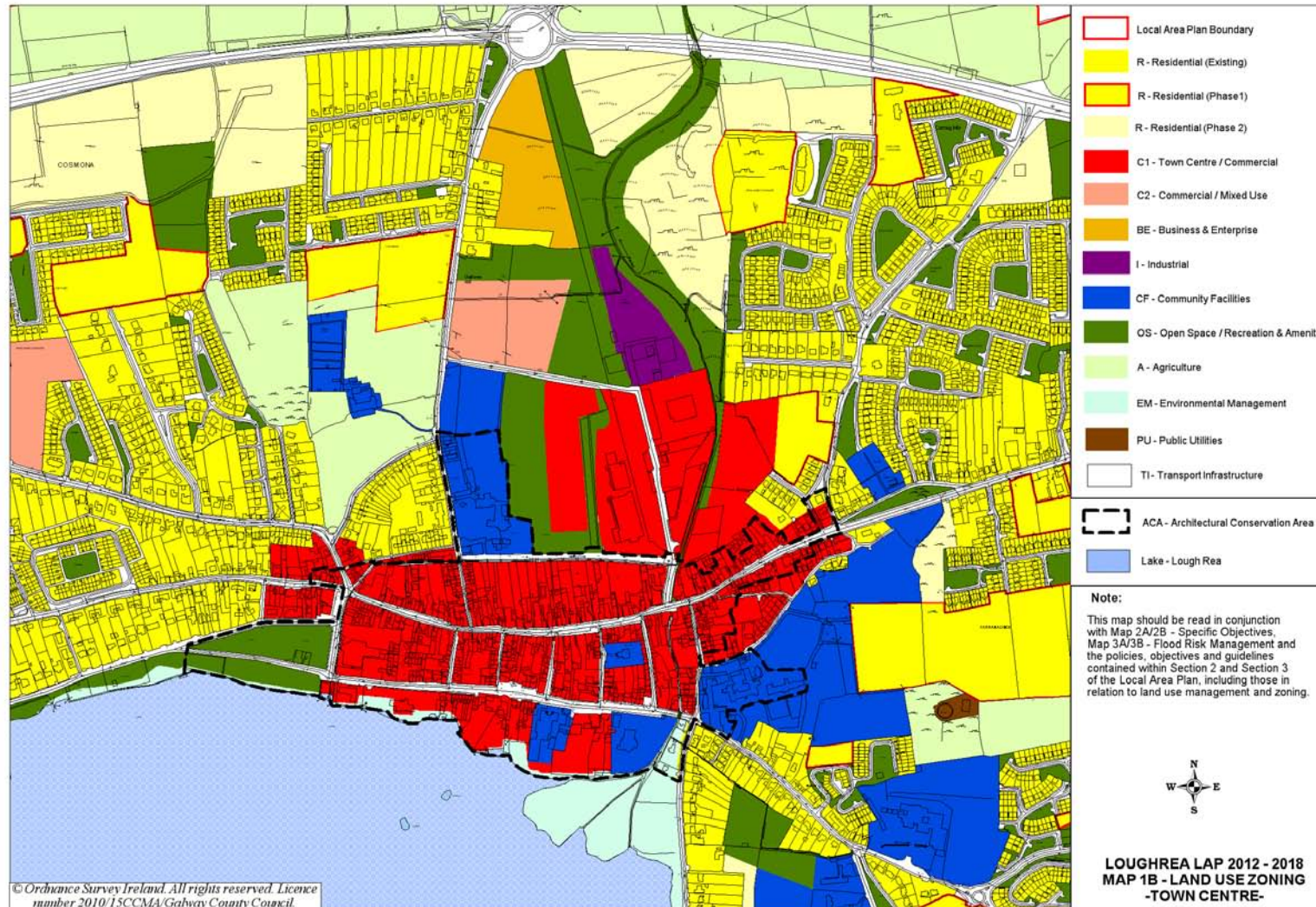


Figure 2: Specific Objectives

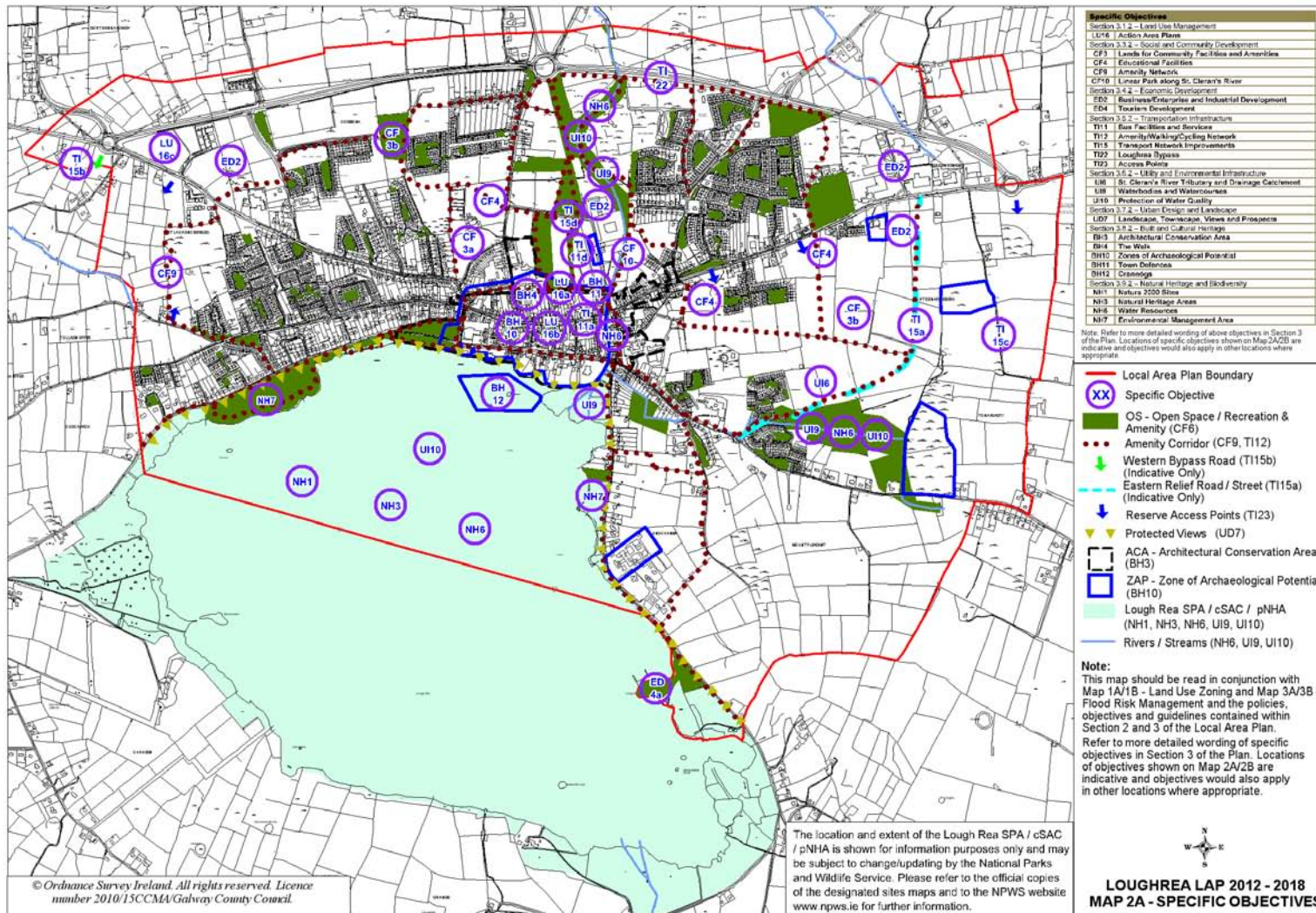


Figure 2B: Specific Objectives (Town Centre)

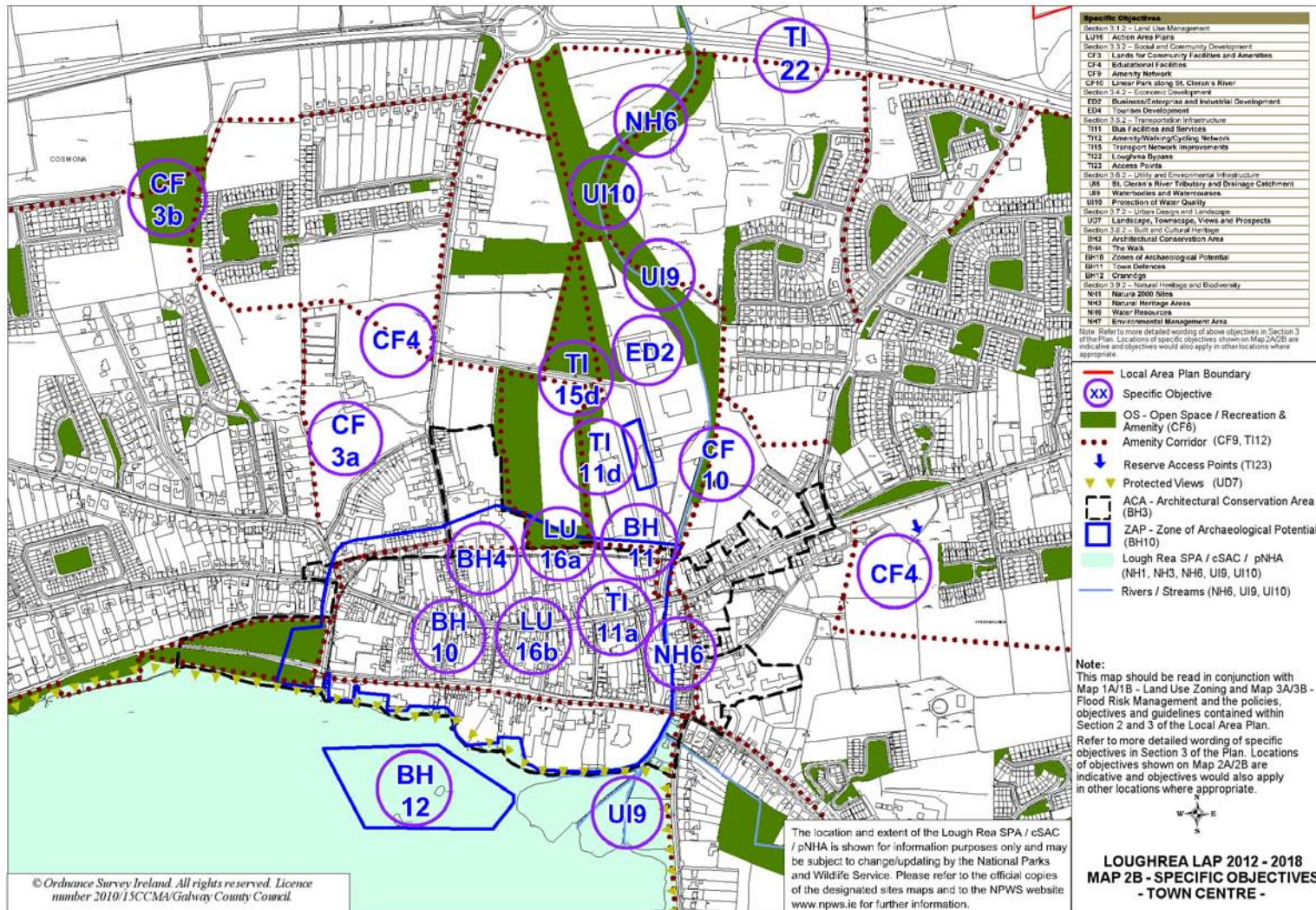


Figure 3: Flood Zones & Flood Risk Areas

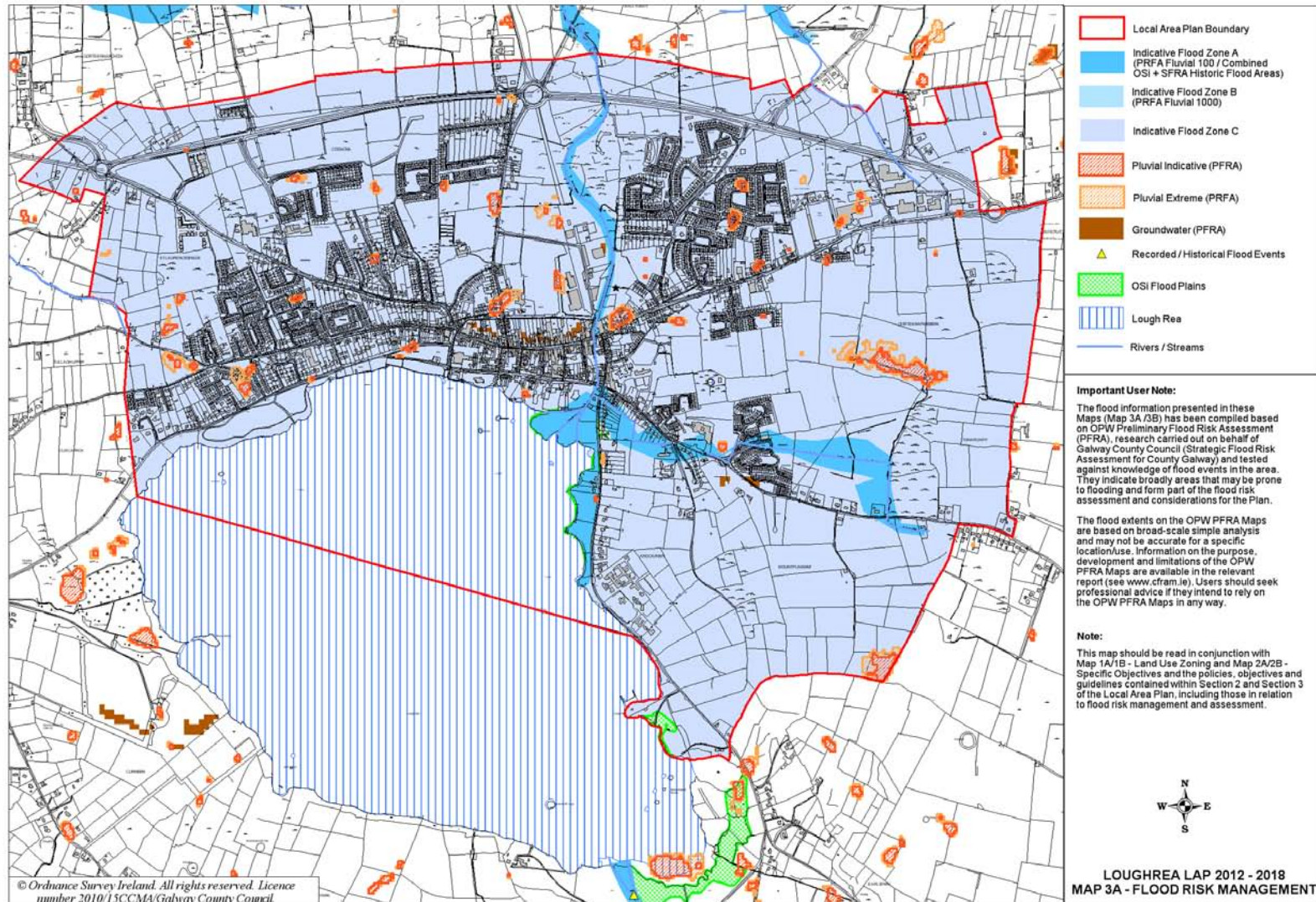
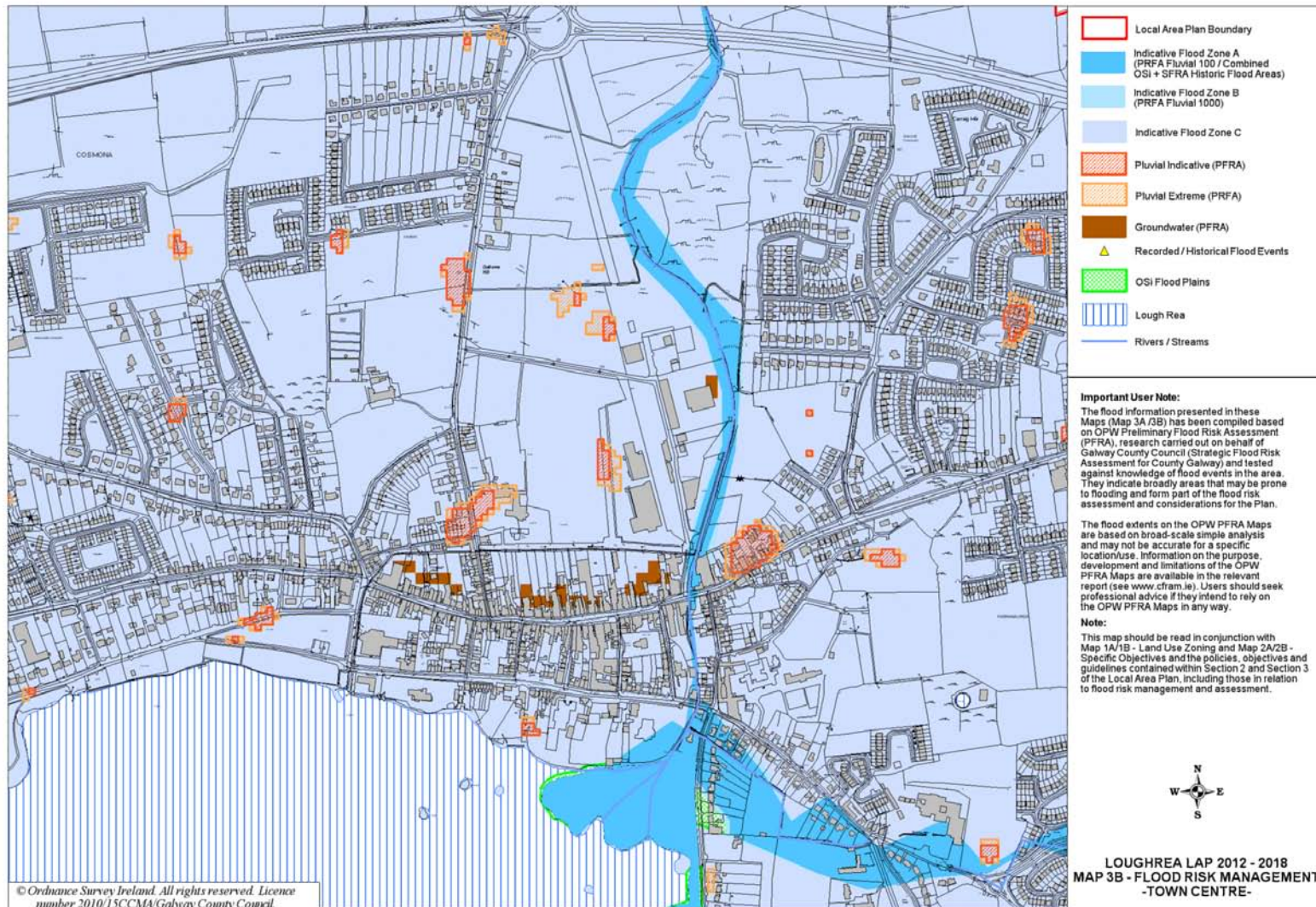


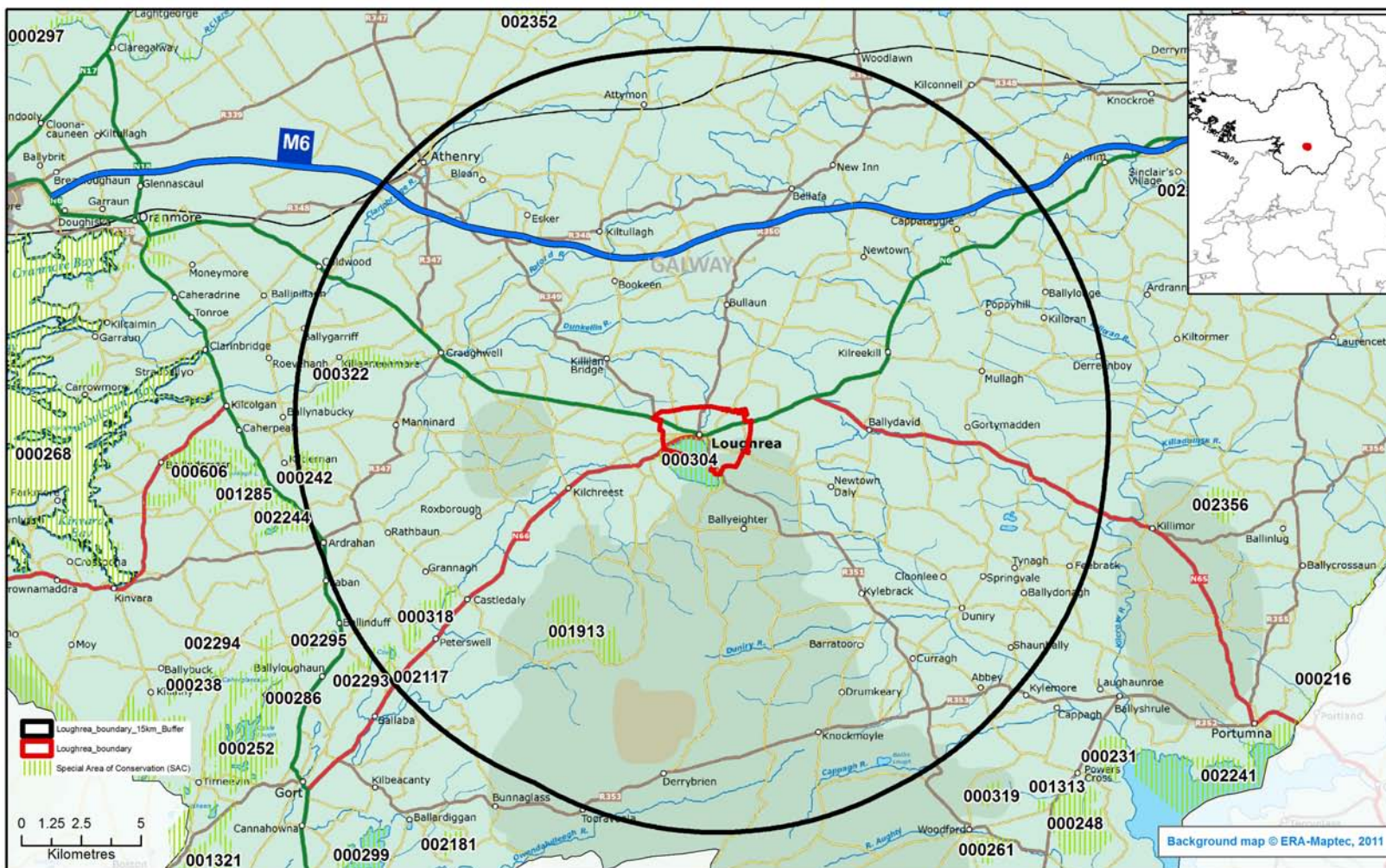
Figure 3B: Flood Zones & Flood Risk Areas (Town Centre)



Appendix 1B:

**Map of European Sites,
Greenfield Areas of the Plan
& Important Terrestrial
Habitats**

Figure 1: SACs within 15km of the Plan Area



DATE: 2/4/2012	SCALE: 1:200,000
REF:	SIZE: A4
DRAWN: MFC	APPROVED: RM

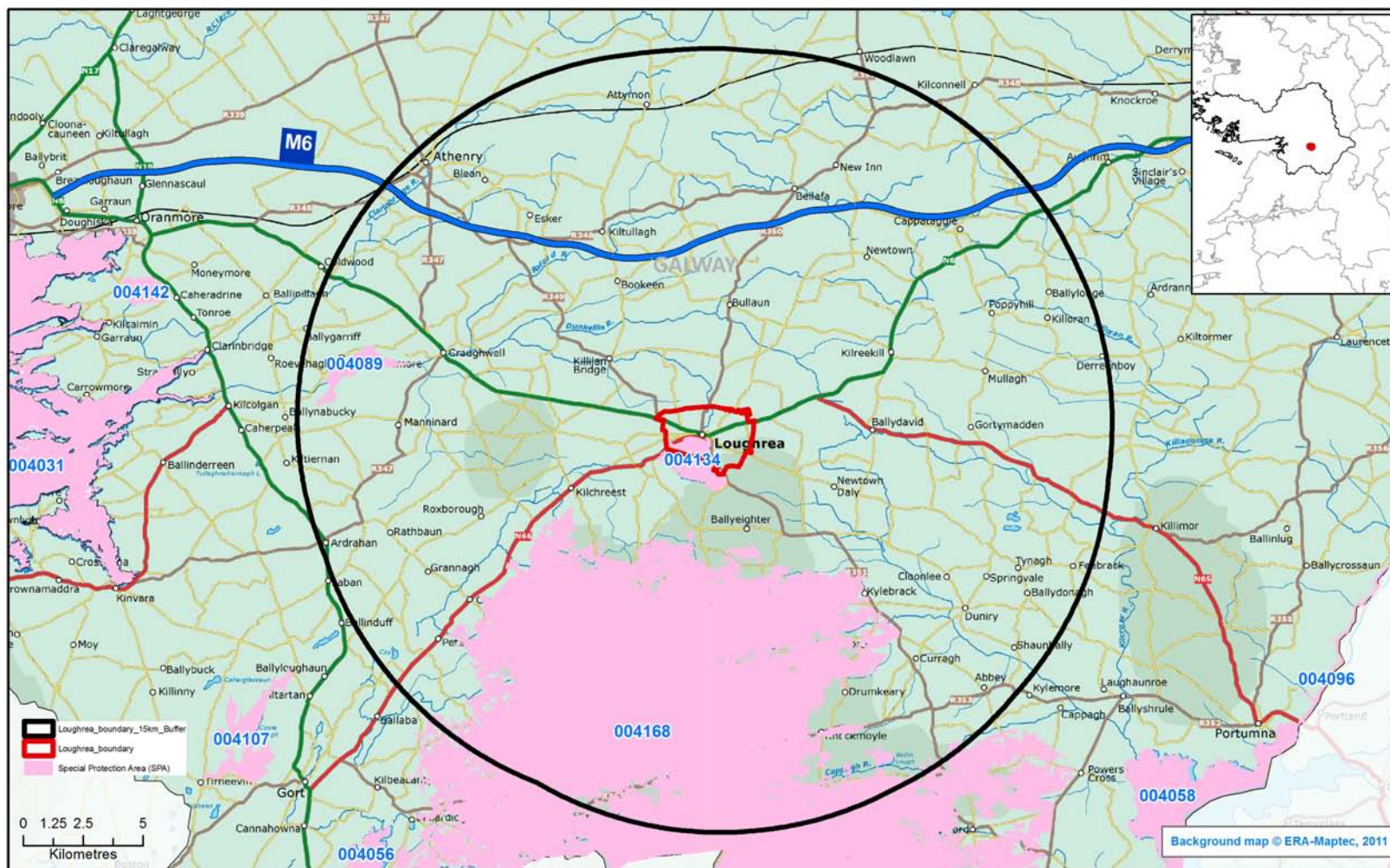
Fig 1: SAC Sites

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 www.minogueandassociates.com

ERA-MAPTEC
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 Dublin 1 www.era.ie

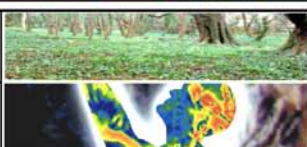
Figure 2: SPAs within 15km of the Plan Area



DATE: 2/4/2012	SCALE: 1:200,000
REF:	SIZE: A4
DRAWN: MFC	APPROVED: RM

Fig 2: SPA Sites

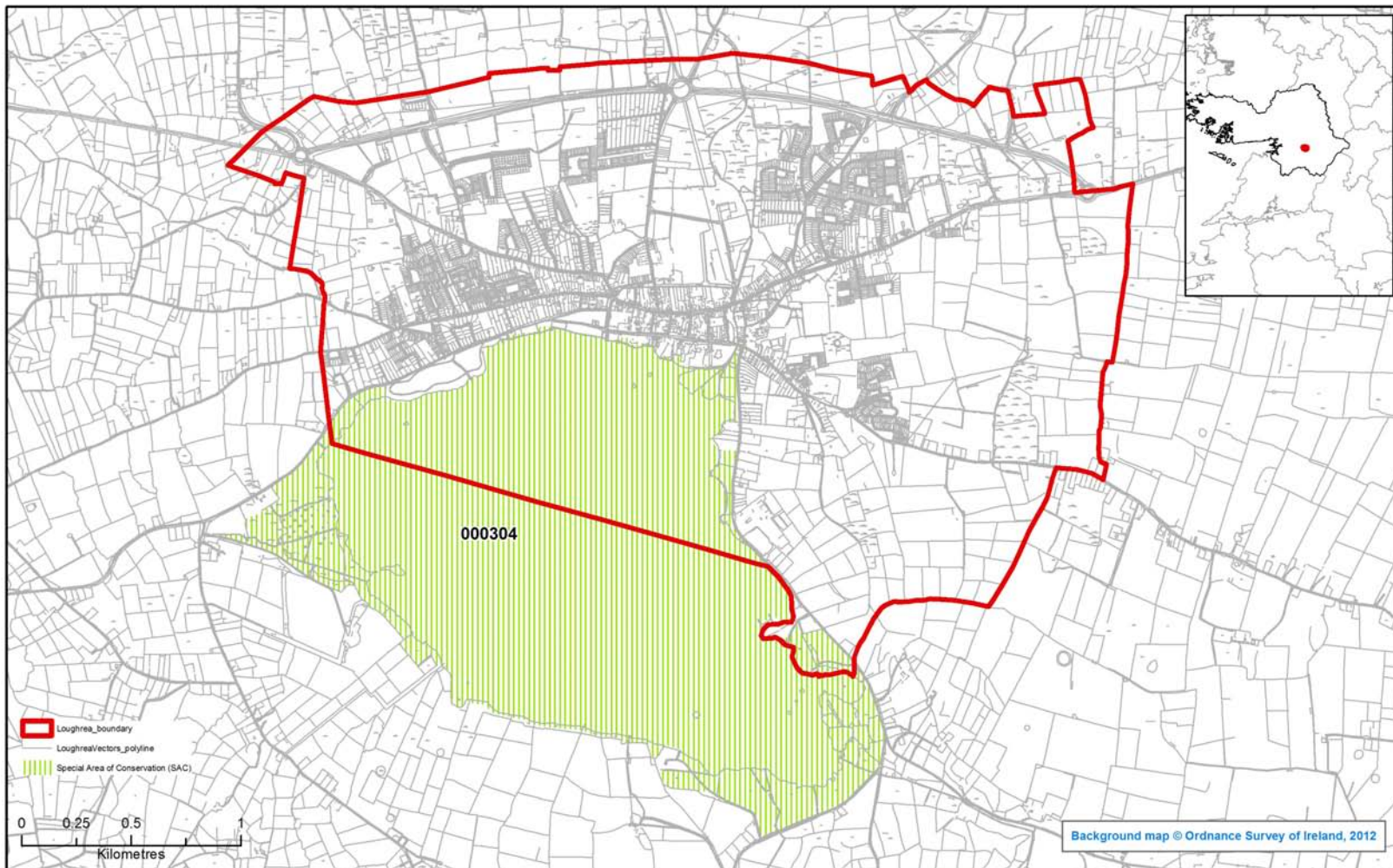
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Figure 3: Lough Rea SAC in relation to the Plan Area




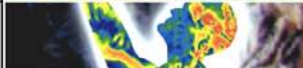
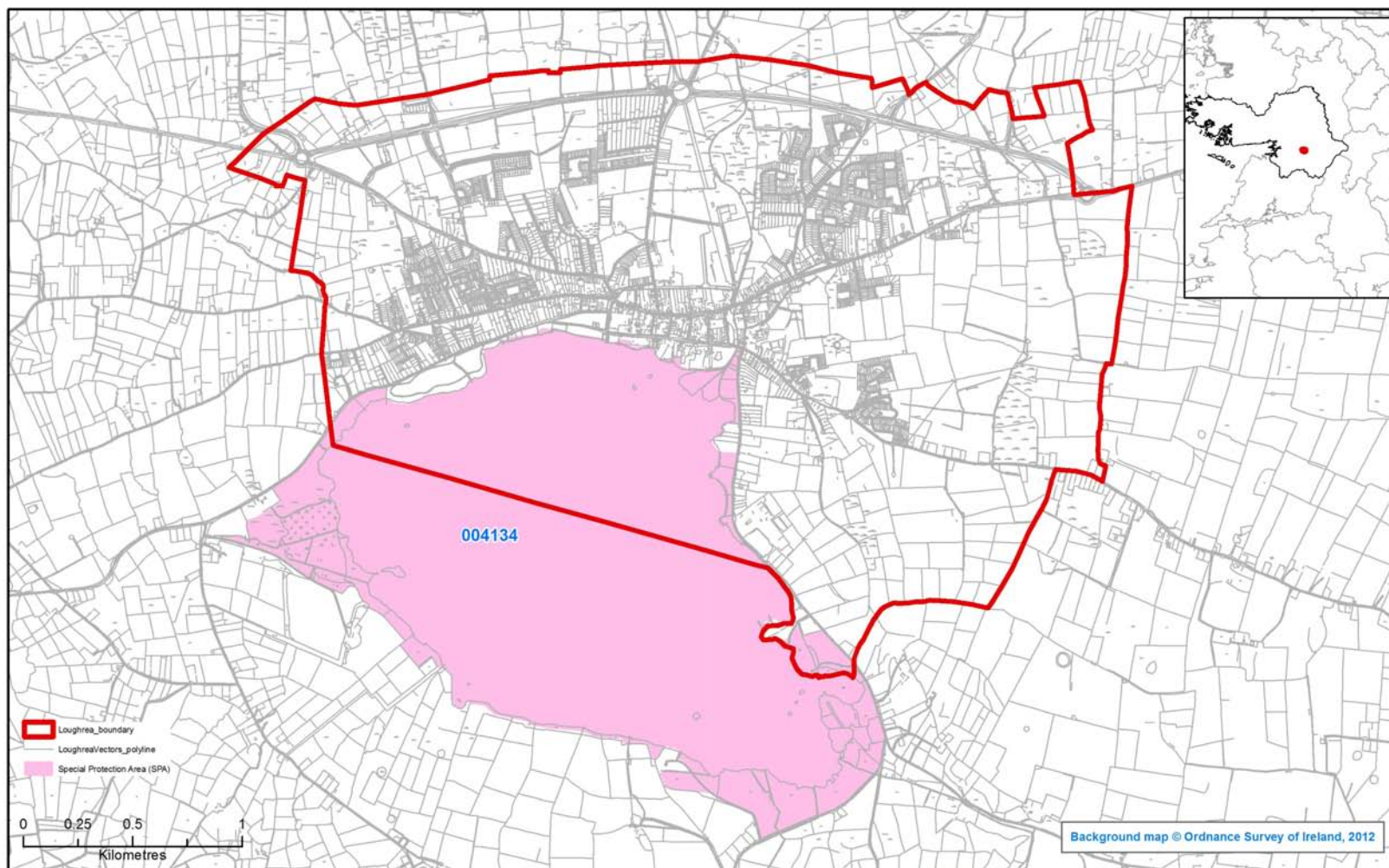
DATE: 2/4/2012	SCALE: 1:200,000	Fig 3: Lough Rea SAC	 minogue & associates Tuamgraney, County Clare www.minogueandassociates.com ERA-MAPTEC 40 Lwr. O'Connell St. Dublin 1 www.era.ie
REF:	SIZE: A4		
DRAWN: MFC	APPROVED: PD	Galway County Council Loughrea Local Area Plan SEA	

Figure 4: Lough Rea SPA in relation to the Plan Area




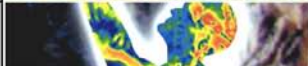
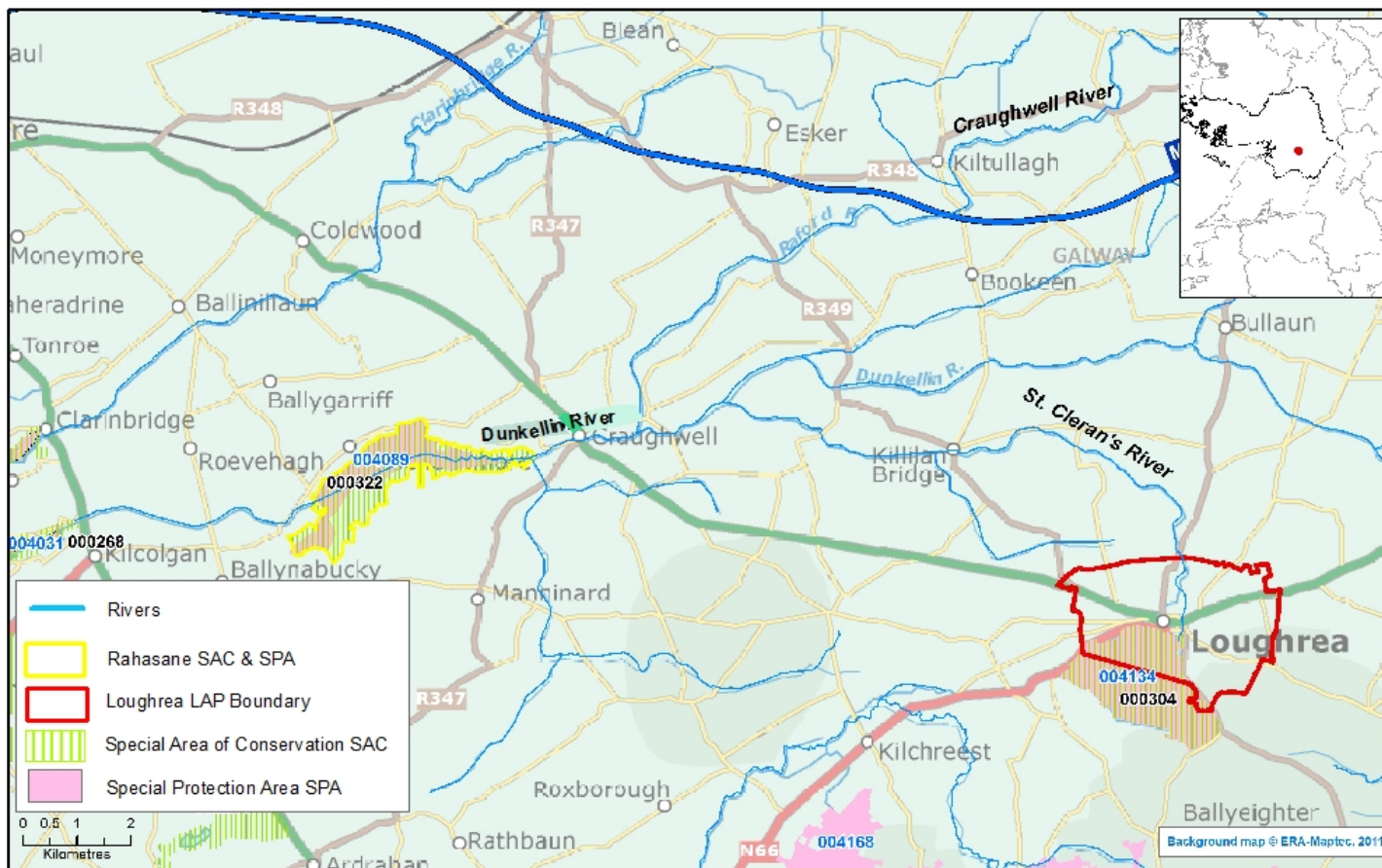
DATE: 2/4/2012	SCALE: 1:200,000	Fig 4: Lough Rea SPA	 minogue & associates Tuamgraney, County Clare www.minogueandassociates.com ERA-MAPTEC 40 Lwr. O'Connell St. Dublin 1 www.era.ie
REF:	SIZE: A4		
DRAWN: MFC	APPROVED: PD	Galway County Council Loughrea Local Area Plan SEA	

Figure 5: Location of Rahasane Turlough SPA and SAC in relation to the Plan area




DATE: 2/4/2012	SCALE: 1:200,000	Fig 5: Rahasane SAC/SPA and water courses		minogue & associates Tuamgraney, County Clare www.minogueandassociates.com ERA-MAPTEC 40 I wr. O'Connell St. Dublin 1 www.era.ie
REF.	SIZE: A4			
DRAWN: MFC	APPROVED: PD			

Figure 6: Greenfield Areas Zoned for Development Landuse. Labelling follows Section 7.1.4: Table 7.1

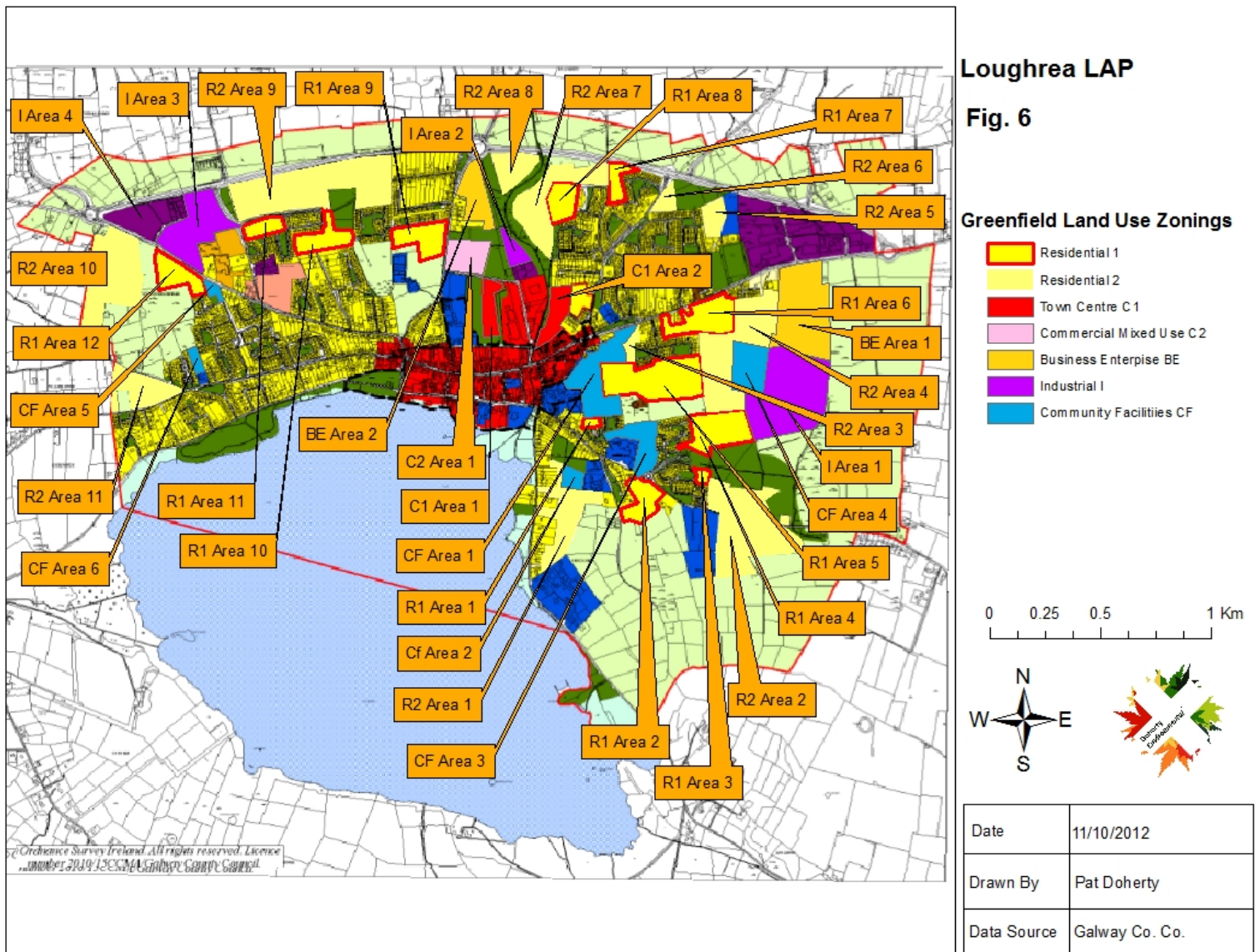
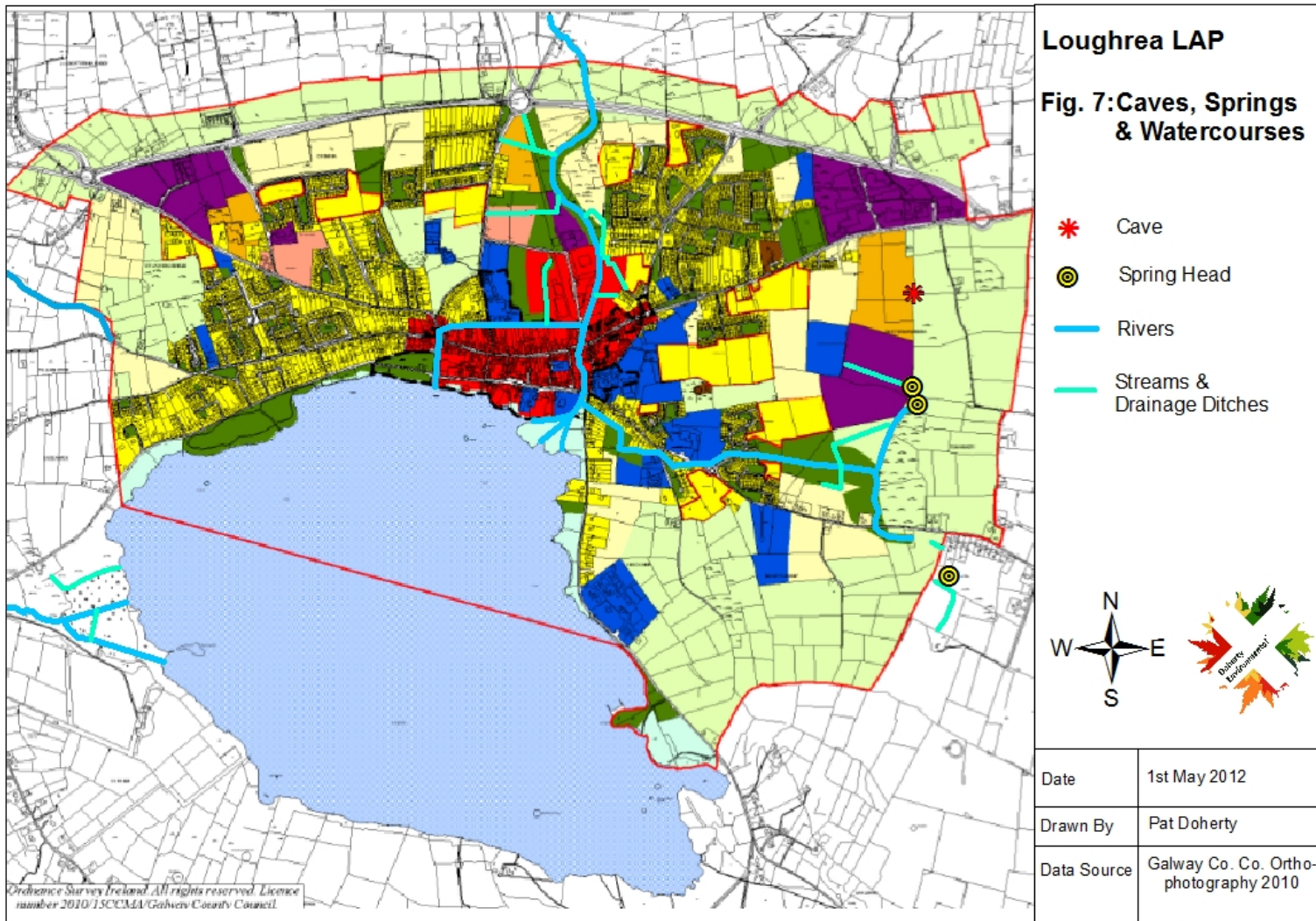


Figure 7: Location of Caves, Springs and Watercourses within the LAP Area



Appendix 2:

**Interaction Between Plan
Policies and Objectives and
European Sites within the
Sphere of Influence of the
Loughrea LAP**

Appendix 2 outlines the Policies and Objectives of the Loughrea LAP and how each of these will interact with the conservation objectives and integrity of European Sites. In this Table recommended changes to the original wording of Policies and Objectives are outlined. Additional recommended wording to the final Policy/Objective is shown in Blue-coloured Font while recommended deletions from the original Policy/Objective is shown in Red-coloured Font. These changes were recommended as result of the Habitat Directive Assessment and aim to ensure potential likely significant effects arising from the relevant Policy/Objective are avoided.

LAP Policies & Objectives	Potential Impact	Avoidance/ Mitigation Measures	Residual Impact
Development Strategy - Policy & Objectives			
<p>Policy DS – Development Strategy</p> <p>It is the overarching policy of Galway County Council to support and facilitate the sustainable development of the Plan Area in line with the preferred development strategy option, Option 2 – Consolidate Existing Town Centre, Sequential Development around Established Urban Core and Controlled Eastward Expansion, and in a manner that maintains and enhances the quality of life of local communities, promotes opportunities for economic development, social integration and sustainable transport options, protects the cultural, built and natural heritage and environment and complies with relevant statutory requirements</p>	Positive. It is the overarching policy of the Council to support and facilitate the sustainable development of the Plan Area which furthers the development of Loughrea in a manner that maintains, enhances and protects the natural heritage and environment and complies with relevant statutory requirements.		No
<p>Objective DS1 – Orderly and Sequential Development Support the orderly and sequential development of the Plan Area, focusing on the consolidation and continued vitality and viability of the town centre and the protection and enhancement of the existing landscape setting, character, heritage and unique identity of the town</p>	Neutral		No
<p>Objective DS2 – Consistency with Core Strategy (refer to Galway County Development Plan) Ensure that developments permitted within the Plan Area are consistent with the zoned land allocations in the Core Strategy and associated provisions in the Galway County Development Plan</p>	Neutral		No

<p>Objective DS3 – Natura 2000 Network and Habitats Directive Assessment (refer to Map 2 and 4) Protect European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network (including Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation) in accordance with the requirements in the EU <i>Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)</i>, EU <i>Birds Directive (2009/147/EC)</i>, the <i>Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010</i>, the <i>European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011)</i> (and any subsequent amendments or updated legislation) and having due regard to the guidance in the <i>Appropriate Assessment Guidelines 2010</i> (and any subsequent or updated guidance). A plan or project (e.g. proposed development) within the Plan Area will only be authorised after the competent authority (Galway County Council) has ascertained, based on scientific evidence and a Habitats Directive Assessment where necessary, that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The plan or project will not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects); or 2. The plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000 site (that does not host a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000; or 3. The plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000 site (that hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, restricted to reasons of human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000. 	Positive. This Objective directs the Development Strategy for the Loughrea LAP to ensure that the conservation management objectives, conservation status and integrity of European Sites will not be negatively impacted by elements of the LAP		No
Objective DS4 – Development Management Standards and Guidelines (refer to Galway County Development Plan) Ensure that the general development management	Neutral		No

standards and guidelines set out in the Galway County Development Plan are applied as appropriate in the Plan Area. In addition, any specific development management guidelines set out in Section 3 of this Local Area Plan shall also be applied, as appropriate, to development proposals in the Plan Area.			
<p>Objective DS5 – Service Led Development</p> <p>Ensure that development is preceded by sufficient capacity in the public waste water and potable water infrastructure.</p>	Positive. This Objective will ensure that adequate wastewater services are in place prior to permitting new development. This approach will avoid a potential scenario where wastewater treatment services cannot adequately treat the hydraulic loads being received, with the potential to inadvertently result in the discharge of polluting wastewater to Lough Rea or the St Cleran River and potential impacts to water quality and qualifying habitats supported by the Lough Rea and Rahasane Turlough European Sites.		No
<p>Objective DS6 – Residential Development Phasing (refer to Map 1) Direct residential development into appropriately zoned and serviced areas in accordance with the phased development framework set out in Section 3.1 and 3.2 and shown on Map 1 – Land Use Zoning.</p>	Neutral. All residential zonings are buffered from Lough Rea and the St Cleran River.		No
<p>Objective DS7 – Flood Risk Management and Assessment (refer to Map 3) Ensure that proposals for new developments located within identified or potential flood risk areas, or which may exacerbate the risk of flooding elsewhere, are assessed in accordance with the provisions of the <i>Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009</i> (or any updated/superseding document) and the relevant policies, objectives and guidelines in this Plan.</p>	Neutral		No

Land Use Management – Policy, Objectives & Guidelines			
<p>Policy LU – Land Use Management (refer to Map 1) It is the policy of Galway County Council to provide a land use zoning framework for the Plan Area to direct the type, density and location of development in a manner that contributes to the consolidation of the town centre, that allows for the orderly and sequential development of the town, that protects and enhances the existing landscape setting, character and unique identity of the town and that complies with the statutory requirements in the <i>Planning and Development Act 2000</i> (as amended). The land use zoning framework is supported by a residential phasing scheme to ensure compliance with the Core Strategy and to promote the orderly and sequential development of the town</p>	<p>Neutral/Positive - The Policy sets out an approach to land use management, which will in itself have a neutral effect on European Sites. The measures within this Policy to protect and enhance the existing landscape setting and environmental quality of the Plan area will have a positive effect for European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective LU1 – Town Centre/Commercial (C1) (refer to Map 1)</p> <p>Promote the development of the Town Centre as an intensive, high quality, well-landscaped, human-scaled and accessible environment with an appropriate mix of uses, including residential, commercial, service, tourism, enterprise, public and community uses as appropriate, that provide a range of retail, services, facilities and amenities to the local community and visitors to the town. The town centre and associated main streets shall remain the primary focus for retail and service activity in Loughrea.</p>	<p>Negative – the zoning of lands as Town Centre, immediately adjacent to the St Cleran’s River will have the potential to adversely affect the water of this river. Adverse impacts to the water quality of this river could negatively affect the Rahasane Turlough European Sites occurring approximately 17km downstream.</p>	<p>Policy DS1; UI3; NH1</p> <p>Objective: DS3; UI4; UI5; UI9; UI10; UI11; NH1; NH5; NH6; NH11.</p> <p>DM Guideline: UI2</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Objective LU2 – Commercial and Mixed Use (C2) (refer to Map 1) Promote the development of commercial and complementary mixed uses on suitable lands that can provide focal points for the provision of services to surrounding neighbourhoods/areas and opportunities for commercial enterprises, retail developments and employment creation and which do not undermine the vitality and viability of the town centre.</p>	<p>Neutral. All Commercial/Mixed Use zonings are buffered from Lough Rea and the St Cleran River.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective LU3 – Residential (R) (refer to Map 1 and Objective RD1) Promote the development of appropriate and serviced lands to provide for high quality, well laid out and well landscaped sustainable residential communities with an appropriate mix of housing types and densities together with complementary land uses, such as community facilities, local services and public transport facilities, to serve the</p>	<p>Negative. While all Residential Phase 1 zonings are buffered from Lough Rea and St Cleran’s River Residential Phase 2 zonings occur adjacent o St</p>	<p>Policy DS1; UI3; NH1</p> <p>Objective: DS3; UI4; UI5;</p>	<p>No</p>

<p>residential population of the area. Protect existing residential amenities and facilitate compatible and appropriately designed new infill</p> <p>development in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. A phasing scheme will apply to residential uses on Residential (R) zoned lands, as set out under Objective RD1 in Section 3.2.2.</p>	<p>Cleran’s River towards the north of the Plan area.</p> <p>Adverse impacts to the water quality of this river could negatively affect the Rahasane Turlough European Sites occurring approximately 17km downstream.</p>	<p>UI9; UI10; UI11; NH1; NH5; NH6; NH11.</p> <p>DM Guideline: UI2</p>	
<p>Objective LU4 – Industrial (I) (refer to Map 1) Promote the development of industrial and industrial-related uses, including manufacturing, processing of materials, warehousing and distribution, on suitable lands with adequate services and facilities and a high level of access to the major road network and public transport facilities. Adequate edge treatments and/or screening will be required to ensure high quality interfaces with public spaces and any adjoining residential areas or other sensitive land uses, as appropriate.</p>	<p>Negative – An area of Industrial zoning is proposed to the north of the town centre within close proximity of the St Cleran River. The construction and operation of an industrial facility at this location will have the potential to result in adverse impacts to the water of this river. Any adverse impacts to this watercourse could negatively affect the Rahasane Turlough European Sites occurring approximately 17km downstream.</p>	<p>Policy: DS1; UI3; NH1</p> <p>Objective: DS3; UI4; UI5; UI9; UI10; UI11; NH1; NH5; NH6; NH11.</p> <p>DM Guideline: UI2</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Objective LU5 – Business & Enterprise (BE) (Refer to Map 1)</p> <p>Promote the development of business and enterprise uses, light industry/warehousing and the facilitation of enterprise park/office park type uses, incubation/start-up units and Small, Medium Enterprises, on suitable lands with adequate services and facilities and with a high level of access to the major road networks and to public transport facilities.</p>	<p>Neutral – Business & Enterprise zonings are located at a remote distance from Lough Rea and the St Cleran River.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective LU6 – Community Facilities (CF) (Refer to Map 1)</p> <p>Promote the development of community facilities on suitable lands, with a high level of</p>	<p>Neutral – Two community facilities are zoned immediately adjacent to the Lough Rea. However these are existing</p>		<p>No</p>

<p>access to the local community, including educational, community, civic, public, institutional, recreational, cultural and other complementary uses, as appropriate.</p>	<p>developments and are not known to represent a threat to the conservation status of the Lough Rea European Sites.</p> <p>All other lands zoned for this land use are not located within the vicinity of Lough Rea or the St Cleran River and will not represent a threat to the conservation status of the Lough Rea and Rahasane Turlough European Sites.</p>		
<p>Objective LU7 – Open Spaces/Recreation and Amenity (OS) (refer to Map 1 and Map 3) Promote the development of open spaces and recreational activities in accordance with best practice and on suitable lands with adequate access to the local community and retain existing open space and recreational facilities unless it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of Galway County Council that these uses are no longer required by the community. Ensure that any flood risk areas within the OS zone are appropriately managed to avoid, reduce and/or mitigate, as appropriate, the risk and potential impact of flooding.</p>	<p>Neutral – No additional i.e. new areas of open space have been zoned in areas adjacent to Lough Rea. The open space zonings shown on Map 1A of the LAP adjacent to Lough Rea are existing areas of open space for used for passive recreation such as walking, running, cycling, dog walking, sun bathing and swimming.</p> <p>Current recreational activities undertaken in these areas are not known to negatively affect the conservation status of the Lough Rea European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective LU8 – Agriculture (A) (refer to Map 1) Protect the rural character of the area from inappropriate development and provide for agricultural and appropriate non –urban uses.</p>	<p>Neutral – Agricultural land use is zoned for existing areas of agricultural land. While previously runoff from agricultural land as a result of nutrient application was</p>		<p>No</p>

	identified as a potential threat to Loughrea the implementation of and adherence to the Good Agricultural Practices Regulations 2010 and the WFD Programme of Measures for the Clarin and Kilgolgan Water Management Unit will ensure that future agricultural practices in these areas do not adversely affect the Lough Rea European Sites.		
<p>Objective LU 9 – Environmental Management Area (EM) (Refer to Map 1)</p> <p>Protect lands and sites with high biodiversity value and/or environmental sensitivity and promote their sustainable management and use. This will include the protection of the integrity of European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network, in particular Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation, in accordance with the conservation management objectives for these sites and the requirements of the <i>EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)</i>.</p>	Positive - The aim of this land use zoning is to support the protection of the conservation status and integrity of European Sites.		No
<p>Objective LU 10 –Public Utilities (PU) (Refer to Map 1)</p> <p>Facilitate the provision and maintenance of essential public utility infrastructure, together with necessary ancillary facilities and uses, as appropriate.</p>	Neutral – the provision of public utilities such as wastewater and water supply infrastructure will not negatively affect European Sites.		No
<p>Objective LU 11 – Transport Infrastructure (TI) (Refer to Map 1)</p> <p>Facilitate the provision and maintenance of essential transportation infrastructure, including public roads, footpaths, cycle ways, bus stops and landscaping, together with any necessary associated works, as appropriate.</p>	Negative: The development of new transport infrastructure, specifically the Eastern Relief Road will have the potential to adversely affect the water quality of Lough Rea and St Cleran’s River during the construction and operation of	<p>Policy: DS1; UI3; NH1</p> <p>Objective: DS3; UI4; UI5; UI9; UI10; UI11; NH1; NH5; NH6; NH9;</p>	No

	<p>this road.</p> <p>The proposed route for the Eastern Relief road will cross a watercourse draining into the upper stretch of the St Cleran River with the Lough Rea European Sites. Adverse impacts to this un-named watercourse could negatively affect the water quality of St Cleran's River downstream.</p>	NH11 DM Guideline: UI2	
<p>Objective LU12 – Flood Risk Areas and Land Use Zones (Refer to Map and Map 3)</p> <p>Ensure that any proposed development that may be compatible with the land use zoning objectives/matrix but which includes a use that is not appropriate to the Flood Zone (as indicated on Map 3 – Flood Risk Management) and/or that may be vulnerable to flooding is subject to flood risk assessment, in accordance with <i>Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009</i> and the relevant policies, objectives and guidelines of this Plan.</p>	Neutral		No
<p>Objective LU13 – Land Use Zoning Matrix (refer to DM Guideline LU2)</p> <p>Direct different land uses into the appropriate land use zone/s in accordance with the land use zoning objectives and the land use zoning matrix set out under DM Guideline LU2. Ensure that proposed land uses are compatible with existing land uses and in keeping with the character of the area.</p>	Positive – The Land Use Zoning Matrix restricts development within European Sites zoned as Environmental Management Areas.		No
<p>Objective LU14 – Development Densities (refer to DM Guideline LU1)</p> <p>Ensure that the density of new development is appropriate to the land use zone and site context, is in keeping with the development pattern of the area, does not unduly impact on the amenities of the area and that it results in a positive relationship between new developments and any adjoining public spaces. Promote the development of higher density development in appropriate locations, such as suitable sites within the town</p>	Positive: this objective seeks to control the density of development and direct higher density developments to suitable locations where it is compatible with natural heritage.		No

<p>centre and adjacent to public transport facilities, where such development is compatible with built and natural heritage and urban design objectives and infrastructure capacity. The density of developments will generally be in accordance with the guidance set out under DM Guideline LU1, although the Planning Authority may consider higher density developments where this is considered appropriate to secure the urban design or other objectives of the Plan.</p>			
<p>Objective LU 15– Residential Densities</p> <p>Promote a range of residential densities within the Plan Area appropriate to the prevailing development pattern, supporting infrastructure, urban character and heritage resources in accordance with the guidance in <i>'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines 2009 (or any updated/superseding document)</i>. Higher residential densities should be encouraged at locations where it is appropriate to the existing context and density of the Plan Area, for example around the town centre and within convenient walking distance of public transport facilities, and where it will not unduly impact on built or natural heritage or impact adversely on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites. The density of residential developments will generally be in accordance with the guidance set out under DM Guideline LU1, although the Planning Authority may consider higher residential densities where this is considered appropriate to the context and necessary to secure the urban design or other objectives of the Plan. Development will only be permitted where there is capacity and/or adequate services can be made available.</p>	<p>Neutral - This Policy will not in itself result in likely significant effects to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective LU 16- Action Area Plans (refer to Map 2)</p> <p>Require the preparation of Action Area Plans for the development of strategic or significant lands. This will include development proposals in the following areas and other locations where the Planning Authority considers it necessary or appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) An Action Area Plan for the sensitive development of land in the vicinity and to the west of the north mound, the rear of main street, the mart and to the eastern end of the Carmelite fathers in consultation with landowners and relevant stakeholders. b) Action Area Plans for the integrated development of backlands to the rear of 	<p>Neutral - No details have been provided at the Plan stage of Area Action Plans. Where necessary such plans will be screened for likely significant effects and appropriately mitigated prior to implementation wherever required.</p>		<p>No</p>

<p>the primary streets of Loughrea.</p> <p>Action Area Plans may be subject to Habitats Directive Assessment where appropriate, depending on the scale and intensity of development proposed and the likelihood of significant effects on the Lough Rea SPA/SAC or any other Natura 2000 site.</p>			
<p>DM Guideline LU1 – Development Densities</p> <p>The development of higher densities will need to be appropriate to the context and will be assessed based on the merits of the proposal and subject to good design, compliance with both qualitative and quantitative standards, location, capacity of the site and infrastructure to absorb development, existing character of the area, established densities on adjoining sites, protection of residential amenities, proximity to public transport, etc. The Planning Authority may use its discretion in varying these density standards.</p> <p>The development density guidance in the tables below indicate the range of densities generally considered appropriate in the various land use zones and in different residential locations within the Plan Area.</p>	See LU 14 above		No
<p>DM Guideline LU2 – Land Use Zoning Matrix</p> <p>The land use zoning matrix indicates the types of land uses that are Permitted in Principle (P), Open for Consideration (O) and Not Normally Permitted (N), for the land use zones designated in Section 3.1.2 above. Whilst the matrix does not provide an exhaustive list of potential uses, the uses listed in the matrix should be considered by applicants to provide a clear indication of the overall acceptability of a particular land use within a specific zoning category. Where a use is proposed that is not listed in the matrix, development proposals will be assessed on their individual merits in accordance with the general guidance provided by the matrix and having regard to the nature of existing and proposed uses, to the general policies and zoning objective/s for the area in the Local Area Plan and to the principles of proper planning and sustainable development. Where there is no perceived conflict between existing and proposed uses, favourable consideration will be given to the proposed development, subject to all</p>	See LU 13 above		No

other normal requirements and to the principles of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area			
Residential Development – Policies & Objectives			
<p>Policy RD 1 – Residential Development</p> <p>It is the policy of the Galway County Council to support the creation of sustainable communities and high quality residential areas at appropriate locations, with a range of housing options and adequate support services, facilities and amenities, having regard to the guidance contained in the following policy/guidance documents or any updated/amended versions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Galway County Council and Ballinasloe Town Council Housing Strategy 2009-2015. • <i>Sustainable Residential Developments in Urban Areas: Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2009</i> and the accompanying guidance document <i>Urban Design Manual: A Best Practice Guide – A Companion Document to the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, 2009</i>. • Galway Clustered Housing Guidelines, where appropriate, in the assessment of any proposals of new multiple unit housing developments within the Plan area. • <i>Galway County Council Traveller Accommodation Programme</i>. • <i>Smarter Travel A Sustainable Transport Future - A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020</i> including the <i>National Cycle Policy Framework 2009-2022</i> and any other related national documents. • EU Water Framework Directive, EU Floods Directive and <i>The Planning System and Flood Risk Management, Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009</i>. 	Neutral - This Policy will not in itself result in likely significant effects to European Sites.		No
<p>Policy RD 2 – Phased Development on Residential Zoned Lands (refer to Map 1)</p> <p>It is the policy of Galway County Council to encourage orderly, sequential and phased residential development in accordance with the Preferred Development Strategy and the land use management and zoning provisions set out in this Local Area Plan. This shall include a positive presumption in favour of the sequential development of suitably serviced Residential (Phase 1) lands in order to align the Local Area Plan with the Core Strategy/Settlement Strategy in the current Galway County Development Plan, subject to compliance with the policies and objectives in this Local Area Plan and the principles</p>	Neutral/Positive - The phasing of residential development which will ensure development is prioritised in suitably serviced lands will reduce the likelihood for potential indirect impacts (as outlined for Objective LU3 above) associated with residential development in un-		No

<p>of proper planning and sustainable development. There will be a general presumption against residential development on lands zoned Residential (Phase 2) within the lifetime of the Local Area Plan, subject to the exceptions provided for under the Residential Development Objective RD1.</p>	<p>serviced lands from occurring.</p>		
<p>Objective RD1 – Phased Residential Development (Refer to Map 1 A/1B Land Use Zoning)</p> <p>Support the development of lands designated as Residential (Phase 1) within the lifetime of the Local Area Plan, subject to normal planning, access and servicing requirements, and reserve the lands designated as Residential (Phase 2) for the longer term growth needs of the town. Residential (Phase 2) lands are generally not developable within the lifetime of this Plan, with the exception of the following developments, which may be considered by the Planning Authority within the lifetime of this Local Area Plan subject to a suitable case being made for the proposal:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Single house developments for family members on family owned lands. 2. Non-residential developments that are appropriate to the site context, any existing residential amenity and the existing pattern of development in the area. 3. Where it is apparent that Residential (Phase 1) lands cannot or will not be developed within the plan period, residential development may be considered in a phased manner on some Residential (Phase 2) lands. <p>The above exceptions will be subject to compliance with the Core Strategy in the Galway County Development Plan, the policies and objectives in this Local Area Plan, the principles of proper planning and sustainable development and to meeting normal planning, access and servicing requirements. Developments will only be permitted where a substantiated case has been made to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority and the development will not prejudice the future use of the lands for the longer term growth needs of the town.</p>	<p>Neutral - See LU 3 above.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective RD2 – Quality Housing Environments</p> <p>Encourage the development of sustainable residential communities through the promotion of innovative, high quality building design and appropriate layouts, that prioritise walking, cycling and public transport options and provide for a high level of</p>	<p>Neutral - This Objective will not in itself result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>

<p>permeability, accessibility and connectivity to the existing built environment, services and facilities. In this regard, future residential development proposals will be in accordance with the principles set out in the DEHLG document '<i>Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas 2009</i>' and its companion document '<i>Urban Design Manual: A Best Practice Guide for Planning Authorities 2009</i>' (or any updated/superseding documents).</p>			
<p>Objective RD3 – Housing Options</p> <p>Require that a suitable variety and mix of dwelling types and sizes are provided in developments to meet different needs, having regard to demographics and social changes, social inclusion, life time changes, smaller household sizes, lower formation age, immigration, etc.</p>	<p>Neutral - This Objective will not in itself result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective RD4 – Open Space in Residential Areas</p> <p>Ensure the provision of adequate areas of high quality, safe and overlooked and suitably landscaped open space within residential developments and support the provision of play and multi- purpose recreational areas in all new large residential developments. The minimum public open space required in new multiple unit residential developments will be 15% of the total site area and this open space shall be located in central, useable and suitably overlooked locations.</p>	<p>Neutral – Only existing residential areas occur within the vicinity of Lough Rea. No new Phase 1 or Phase 2 residential developments are zoned in areas immediately adjacent to the lake. Thus no new open space and potential disturbing impacts associated with the use of open space by people will be provided in areas adjacent to the lake.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective RD5 – Social and Affordable Housing</p> <p>Require that 20% of all new eligible residential sites are set aside for the development of new social and affordable units, unless addressed through suitable alternative arrangements by agreement with the Planning Authority, in accordance with Galway County Council's <i>Housing Strategy 2009-2015</i> (and any updated/superseding document) and Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).</p>	<p>Neutral - This Objective will not in itself result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>

<p>Objective RD6 – Traveller Accommodation</p> <p>Provide adequate accommodation facilities for the traveller community in accordance with the <i>Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009-2013</i> (or any updated/superseded document).</p>	<p>Neutral - This Objective will not in itself result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective RD7 – Compatible Development</p> <p>Facilitate the development of appropriate, compatible uses within residential areas, subject to ensuring that adequate Residential zoned lands are retained and can be developed for residential uses to meet the growth needs of the town within the plan period. Non-compatible uses include those uses that may generate large amounts of traffic, emissions, pollution, noise, odour, etc., or uses that can impact negatively on residential amenity.</p>	<p>Neutral - This Objective will not in itself result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective RD8 – Other Residential Development</p> <p>There shall be a general presumption in favour of the development of nursing homes and retirement facilities and community/day care centres on residential zoned lands or adjacent to the established town centre or as suitable re-use for protected structures or other buildings (e.g. institutional or educational buildings) that would have limited re-development potential given their size and architectural character, subject to normal planning, access and servicing requirements.</p>	<p>Neutral - This Objective will not in itself result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective RD9 – Agricultural Zoned Lands</p> <p>There will be a general presumption against residential development on Agricultural (A) zoned lands, with the exception of single house developments for family members on family owned lands, which may be considered subject to compliance with the Policy RD1, as appropriate, normal planning, access and servicing requirements and the principles of proper planning and sustainable development. Developments will only be permitted where a substantiated case has been made to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority and the development will not prejudice the future use of the lands for the longer term growth needs of the town. An enurement clause will be applied in the case of any permissions for single house developments for family members on family owned</p>	<p>Neutral – See LU 8 above.</p>		<p>No</p>

lands.			
<p>DM Guideline RD1 – Open Access Fibre Ducting</p> <p>Request that all new build residential developments have open access fibre connections installed for high speed technologies, where practicable, in accordance with the Department of Communications Energy and Natural Resources document <i>Recommendations for Open Access Fibre Ducting and Interior Cabling for New Residential Buildings ‘Making Homes Fibre Ready’, 2011.</i></p>	Neutral		No
Social and Community Development– Policy & Objectives			
<p>Policy CF1 – Social Inclusion and Universal Access</p> <p>It is the policy of Galway County Council to support the principles of social inclusion and universal access and to ensure that all individuals have access to goods, services, facilities and buildings in order to assist them to participate in and contribute to social and cultural life within Loughrea.</p>	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.		No
<p>Policy CF2 – Community Facilities and Amenities</p> <p>It is the policy of the Council to support the provision of an adequate level and equitable distribution of community facilities and amenities in the plan area that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets the needs of the local community as they arise and as resources permit. • Are located in appropriate, accessible locations to serve the residential population in the plan area. • Are clustered or linked together wherever facilities and amenities are complementary and it is practicable to do so, to allow for shared and multi-purpose use of facilities. <p>Community facilities and amenities projects will be facilitated in appropriate locations following an assessment of each proposal and, where appropriate, subject to cooperation and consultation with the local community and other relevant stakeholders, including the Department of Education and Skills, and available resources.</p>	Neutral – See LU 6 above.		No

Social Inclusion and universal Access Objectives			
<p>Objective CF1 – Social Inclusion</p> <p>Support the implementation of the provisions of the <i>Galway County Council Social Inclusion Action Plan 2010</i> and <i>Social Inclusion Work Programme 2011</i> (and any subsequent updates to these documents).</p>	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.		No
<p>Objective CF2 – Universal Access</p> <p>Ensure that housing developments, community facilities, public spaces, public roads, public footpaths and transport services give due consideration to the needs of disabled or mobility impaired people and the requirements of the <i>Disability Act 2005</i>, the Council's <i>Disability Action Plan 2007-2015</i>, and <i>Traffic Management Guidelines 2003</i> (and any updated/superseding to these documents).</p>	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.		No
Community Facilities & Amenities Objectives			
<p>Objective CF3 – Lands for Community Facilities and Amenities (refer to Map 1 and Map 2) Ensure that there are adequate zoned and serviced lands to cater for the establishment, improvement or expansion of educational, community, recreation and amenity facilities within the Plan Area. This will include the following:</p> <p>a) Reserve lands for existing community facilities and for the expansion and provision of additional community facilities adjacent to existing community facility lands.</p> <p>b) Reserve lands for the provision of community facilities adjacent to large blocks of residentially</p>	Neutral – See LU 6 above.		No
<p>Objective CF4 – Educational Facilities (refer to Map 2)</p> <p>Support the provision of adequate educational facilities for the local community including primary, post primary, third level outreach programmes, Research and Development facilities, and other training facilities, to meet the widest range of residents within Loughrea and its environs.</p> <p>Galway county Council is positively disposed towards the provision of new school</p>	Neutral – See LU 6 above.		No

<p>facilities in appropriate locations/s and has identified a number of areas considered to be generally suitable for new school provision. The indicative locations of areas considered suitable for new school provision are shown in Map 2 – Specific Objectives. Other sites may also be considered where these are considered suitable in terms of location, access, servicing etc.</p>			
<p>Objective CF5 – Childcare Facilities</p> <p>Facilitate and promote the development of childcare facilities in suitable locations and in accordance with national policy including the DEHLG <i>Childcare Facilities-Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ 2001</i>, (or any updated/superseded document).</p>	Neutral – See LU 6 above.		No
<p>Objective CF6 – Open Spaces(refer to Map 2)</p> <p>Protect existing open spaces from inappropriate development, so as to maintain their role in providing places for active and passive recreation, social interaction and civic activities, visual relief from the built environment and enhancing the residential and overall character of the town. Facilitate the development of open spaces, including local parks, civic spaces and amenity areas, at suitable locations within the Plan Area.</p>	Neutral – See LU 7 above.		No
<p>Objective CF7 – Sports, Play and Recreation Facilities</p> <p>Support the provision of new sports, play and recreational facilities to service the needs of the local community, require the provision of play/recreation facilities in new large residential developments, and facilitate the development of same in other appropriate locations in the town, including supporting public/community initiatives to provide same.</p>	Neutral – See LU 7 above.		No
<p>Objective CF8 – Community, Recreation and Amenity Facilities (refer to Map 1)</p> <p>Retain existing community, recreation and amenity facilities and lands zoned for such uses, and prevent their change of use or redevelopment, unless it can be clearly demonstrated to the satisfaction of the planning authority that the facility/land is no longer required and that the new use or development contributes to the overall</p>	Neutral – See LU 6 above.		No

community, recreation and amenity needs of the Loughrea area.			
<p>Objective CF9 – Amenity Network (refer to Map 2)</p> <p>Support the establishment of an accessible network of greenway linkages and amenities that provide safe and attractive circulation routes for pedestrians and cyclists for the enjoyment and recreational use of the entire community. This network will link together community facilities, amenities and built heritage features in the Plan area and surrounding areas and will help to reinforce the ecological network and support the ecological biodiversity and functioning of the natural environment. Galway County Council will seek to promote the functioning of greenway networks as wildlife corridors and habitats to enhance biodiversity and the natural environment.</p>	<p>Positive – reinforcing and supporting an ecological network and biodiversity will have a positive impact on the natural environment of the Plan area.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective CF10 – Linear Park along St Cleran’s River (refer to Map 2)</p> <p>Ensure that the development of lands along St Cleran’s River incorporates a linear park and amenity walkway in the identified flood risk area associated with the river. The existing river, riparian vegetation and nearby tree lines should be retained as part of the park and any new development along the river will be required to be compatible with the aim of achieving good ecological status for St. Cleran’s River as well as having a positive relationship with the park, including high quality streetscapes, overlooking development and active/responsive ground floor uses, where appropriate. This will include the lands zoned Open Space (OS) and Town Centre (C1) east of St Cleran’s River in the vicinity of the Station Road Car Park and as shown on Map 2 – Specific Objectives</p>	<p>Neutral – The establishment of a linear park along the St Cleran’s River, its passive use as a recreation area and the retention of the riparian corridor along this watercourse will not result in negative impacts to the aquatic and riparian habitats occurring along this stretch of the river.</p> <p>Furthermore the quality species of the Loughrea SPA are not likely to be associated with the lotic habitat of the St Cleran’s River occurring within the town centre.</p> <p>As no qualifying species are associated with the Lough Rea SAC no such impact will affect this European Site.</p>		<p>No</p>

Economic Development Policy, Objectives & Guidelines			
<p>Policy ED – Economic Development</p> <p>It is the policy of Galway County Council to support economic development and employment creation in Loughrea through the identification of appropriately located and adequately serviced lands for business and enterprise, retail, industrial, commercial and tourism developments, the promotion of investment in transportation and other support infrastructure and the creation of a high quality environment to encourage economic investment. The promotion of economic development and employment creation will be appropriately guided to ensure the protection of residential amenities, built and natural heritage, landscape/townscape/streetscape character and the vitality and viability of the town centre. Support the aims, objectives and recommendations, where appropriate in the context of Loughrea, of the following (and any updated/superseding documents).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Galway County Development Board Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development entitled Working Together, shaping our Future 2002-2012 Galway City and County Development Board Tourism Strategy entitled Development Sustainable Tourism in Galway: A framework for Action 2003-2012 West Regional Authority Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 - 2022 	<p>Negative - While this Objective states that the economic development of Loughrea will be promoted in an appropriate manner that ensures the protection of the natural heritage, including European Sites, its aim to identify lands for a range of land uses will have the potential to result in negative impacts to European Sites. The types of impacts associated with this Objective are outlined above by the assessment of potential impacts relating to LU 4.</p>	<p>Policy: DS1; UI3; NH1</p> <p>Objective: DS3; DS5; LU1; LU9; LU13; LU14; UI2; UI4; UI5; UI9; UI10; UI11; UI4; UI12; UI15; UI19; UI10; UD4; NH1; NH2; NH3; NH4; NH5; NH6; NH7; NH8; NH9; NH10; NH11</p> <p>DM Guidelines: UI2</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Objective ED 1 – Employment & Economic Development</p> <p>Support the Economic Development Strategy of the West Regional Authority Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 and the economic development and tourism policies and objectives as set out in the current County Development Plan (and updated/superseding documents).</p>	<p>Neutral</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective ED2 – Business/Enterprise and Industrial Development</p> <p>Facilitate and encourage the establishment of business, enterprise and industrial developments that are considered compatible with surrounding uses on suitably zoned</p>	<p>Neutral – see LU 5 above.</p>		<p>No</p>

<p>and serviced sites. Where such uses are developed adjacent to residential areas or community facilities, buffer zones shall be provided as well as adequate screening, in the form of planting and landscaping, as appropriate. The Business and Enterprise (BE) and Industrial (I) zonings will be the primary focus for such uses, subject to the guidance provided in DM Guideline LU2 – Land Use Zoning Matrix.</p>			
<p>Objective ED3 – Retail Development</p> <p>Support the development of appropriate types, scales and patterns of retail development in suitable locations within the town and with high quality designs that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the vitality and viability of the existing town centre and associated main streets and/or do not undermine their vitality and viability • Protect investment in strategic roads and infrastructure and are easily accessible, particularly in terms of public transport. • Comply with the <i>Retail Planning Guidelines 2005</i> and <i>Draft Retail Planning Guidelines 2011</i> (and any updated/superseding document, including the forthcoming Best Practice Design Manual), including the application of a sequential approach to retail development. • Contribute to the creation of a high quality retail environment. <p>The Town Centre (C1) zoning will remain the primary focus for the location of new retail development and on Commercial/Mixed Use (C2) zoning where appropriate. 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 under Section 5.4 of the <i>Draft Retail Planning Guidelines 2011</i> (and any updated/superseding document) and will require Retail Impact Assessments, including details of the sequential approach and Design Statements, where appropriate, for retail developments in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines and DM Guideline ED1 and ED2.</p>	<p>Neutral – see LU 2 above.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective ED4 – Tourism Development</p> <p>Encourage and facilitate the development of the tourism potential of Loughrea in a manner that respects, builds on, protects and enhances the cultural, built and natural</p>	<p>Negative – Potential pressures associated with boating activities on the lake have previously been noted by the</p>	<p>The recommendation for this Objective will</p>	<p>No</p>

<p>heritage for the town and the local amenities within the Plan Area. Key Projects and initiatives that will be supported will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Protect and enhance the quality and amenity of the blue flag beach and public amenity area at Long Point, Loughrea b) Support the development of water based recreational facilities and activities that will benefit the local community and visitors to the area and enhance the tourism infrastructure in an environmentally sustainable manner that recognises the Water Framework Directive water quality and Natura 2000 conservation management objectives for Lough Rea c) Seek to develop a strategy for information signage to structures or buildings of historical importance and tourism value and investigate the provision of a tourist/information centre within the town centre. 	<p>NPWS. The increased use of the lake as a recreational amenity, specifically for boating will have the potential to adversely affect the qualifying interests of the Lough Rea SPA through disturbance and Lough Rea SAC through decreases in water quality and clarity associated with diesel engines.</p>	<p>ensure that no water-based recreational facilities will be undertaken that are in conflict with the objectives of the WFD and the conservation management objectives for the Lough Rea European Sites.</p> <p>Policy: UI3; NH1</p> <p>Objective: DS3; LU9; UI9; UI10; UI11; NH1; NH2; NH4; NH6; NH7; NH11.</p> <p>DM Guidelines</p>	
<p>Objective ED5 – Quality Working Environments</p> <p>Encourage the provision of high quality designs (including variations in design and scale), layout, boundary treatment and arrival views of development within Industrial (I), Business and Enterprise (BE) and Commercial/Mixed Use (C2) zonings, in order to positively contribute to the character and visual amenity of the area.</p>	<p>Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>
	<p>Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to</p>		<p>No</p>

	European Sites.		
<p>Objective ED6 – Non Conforming Uses</p> <p>Facilitate the relocation of existing uses that do not conform with the land use zoning objectives or matrix in the plan to more suitable and appropriately zoned lands.</p>	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.		No
<p>Objective ED7 – Proliferation of Individual Uses</p> <p>Protect and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre by ensuring that it remains the primary retail, commercial and mixed use centre in the town and prohibit a proliferation of any individual use that, in the opinion of the Planning Authority, does not contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centre.</p>	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.		No
<p>DM Guideline ED1 – Retail Impact Assessments</p> <p>Retail Impact Assessments will be required with planning applications for large retail developments (such as shopping centres or large food/grocery chain stores), mixed use developments with a large retail component, developments that may have a significant effect on the vitality and viability of the town centre or as otherwise considered appropriate by the Planning Authority. Retail Impact Assessments will be in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines, including details of the sequential test.</p>	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.		No
Transport – Policy & Objectives			
<p>Policy TI1 – Sustainable Transport, Walking and Cycling</p> <p>It is the policy of Galway County Council to promote the use of public transport, walking and cycling as safe, convenient and environmentally sustainable alternatives to private transport and to implement the key goals, policy guidance and relevant actions set out in the Department of Transport’s policy document <i>Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future – A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020 and the National Cycle Policy Framework 2009-2020</i> (and any updated/superseding documents), any forthcoming guidance in relation to street design and cycling facilities and any Smart Travel Plan(s) that may be adopted by Galway County Council.</p>	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.		No

<p>Objective TI1 – Integrated Land Use and Transport</p> <p>Ensure that land use planning is integrated with transportation planning and reduce the need to travel, particularly by private transport, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting the consolidation of development; • Encouraging intensification and mixed use development along public transport corridors and at public transport hubs and nodes; • Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport within, and providing access to, new development proposals, as appropriate; • Ensuring that land use and zoning are fully integrated with the provision and development of a comprehensive, sustainable, efficient, high quality transportation network that accommodates the movement needs of residents, businesses and visitors. 	<p>Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective TI2 – Sustainable Transportation</p> <p>Facilitate any Smarter Travel initiatives that will improve sustainable transportation within the plan area and facilitate sustainable transportation options including public transport, electric vehicles, car clubs, public bike schemes, park and ride/park and stride facilities, improved pedestrian and cycling facilities as appropriate.</p>	<p>Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective TI3 – Public Transport</p> <p>Support the provision of improved and enhanced public transport facilities and services, including bus stops, shelters and services, the Rural Transport Initiative, park and ride/park and stride facilities and all associated ancillary requirements, in consultation with the relevant public transport providers.</p>	<p>Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective TI4 – Walking</p> <p>Facilitate the improvement of the pedestrian environment and network so that it is safe and accessible to all through the provision of the necessary infrastructure such as footpaths, lighting, pedestrian crossings etc. New development shall promote and prioritise walking, 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</p>	<p>Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>

national policy document <i>Smarter Travel A Sustainable Transport Future 2009-2020</i> , (and any updated /superseding document).			
<p>Objective T15 – Cycling</p> <p>Facilitate the improvement of the cycling environment/network so that it is safe and accessible, through adequate traffic management and the provision of the necessary infrastructure, such as surface treatment, junction treatment, cycle track/s, cycle lane/s, lighting, road crossings etc. New developments shall promote and prioritise cycling, shall be permeable, adequately linked and connected to neighbouring areas, the town centre, recreational, educational, residential and employment destinations and shall adhere to the principles contained within the national policy document <i>Smarter Travel A Sustainable Transport Future 2009-2020</i>, and the <i>National Cycle Policy Framework</i> document (and any updated/superseding documents).</p>	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.		No
<p>Objective T16 – Bicycle Parking</p> <p>Ensure that adequate levels of bicycle parking as required within the Plan area, in accordance with the standards as set out in the current County Development Plan, and ensure that new developments provide adequate safe, secure and sheltered bicycle parking facilities.</p>	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.		No
<p>Objective T17 – Walking & Cycling Strategy</p> <p>Support the preparation of a County Walking & Cycling Strategy and the implementation of any specified objectives for the town of Loughrea and its environs, as resources permit.</p>	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.		No
<p>Objective T18 – Pedestrian Crossings</p> <p>Facilitate the provision of pedestrian crossings adjacent to schools and at other appropriate locations within the Plan area, as required.</p>	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.		No
<p>Objective T19 – Mobility Management Plans</p>	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to		No

Require Mobility Management Plans for all medium to large scale residential, commercial, mixed use or business/enterprise or industrial developments, as appropriate.	European Sites.		
Objective TI10 – Charging Points for Electric Vehicles Facilitate the provision and delivery of recharging points for electric powered vehicles within public car parks and at other appropriate locations in Loughrea for domestic, transition and end of journey type travel.	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.		No
Objective TI11 – Bus Facilities and Services (refer to Map 2) Support the improvement of bus facilities and services within Loughrea, including the following: a) Facilitate the provision of bus shelters at existing bus stops in the town centre and at any other bus stops that may be provided in the future b) Consult with bus operators regarding the provision of additional bus stops serving Loughrea, including stops on Dublin Road, Portumna Road and Athenry Road c) Investigate the potential of developing a Public Transport Node at the Station Road Car Park, or other suitable locations/s to provide a facility for transferring between one transport service or mode and another d) Carry out a feasibility study and investigate the provision of a bus depot in the vicinity of the Mart.	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.		No
Objective TI12 Amenity/Walking/Cycling Network (refer to Map 2) Support the progressive improvement of the amenity/walking/cycling network, to include existing and enhanced public footpaths along the main streets and providing linkages to existing and future schools, cycling routes where possible and amenity corridors linking town centre, residential, community facility, public amenity, commercial and transport nodes, as shown on Map 2 Specific Objectives	Neutral – No new routes proposed for amenity/walking /cycling are will result in likely significant effects as all such routes are set back from Lough Rea and St Cleran’s River.		No
Roads, Streets and Parking – Policies & Objectives			
Policy TI2 – Roads, Streets and Parking	Neutral - This Policy will not result in negative impacts to		No

<p>It is the policy of Galway County Council to ensure that the road and street network is safe and convenient, that it has adequate capacity to accommodate motorised traffic and non-motorised movements, that it has a high environmental quality with appropriate adjacent development and built form, particularly in the case of urban streets and streetscapes, and that adequate parking facilities are provided to serve the needs of the town. This policy and its associated objectives will be guided by relevant national policy, including the <i>Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines 2012</i>, the <i>Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines</i> and accompanying <i>Urban Design Manual</i>, the <i>Traffic Management Guidelines 2003</i>, the <i>Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines 2007</i> (and any updated/superseding documents) and any forthcoming guidelines in relation to street design and cycling facilities.</p>	<p>European Sites.</p>		
<p>Objective TI13 – National Road Network Protect the national road network and safeguard the efficiency, safety, capacity and strategic investment in the N65 and N66 national routes. Direct access from future development to these national roads should be avoided outside of the speed limit zones for the town and there will be a presumption against large retail centres located adjacent or close to existing, new or planned national roads. Proposals for large scale developments will be required, where appropriate, to submit Traffic and Transport Assessments to assess the impact of the proposed development and associated traffic movements on the efficiency, safety and capacity of the national road network.</p>	<p>Neutral - This Policy will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective TI4 – Urban Street Network Support the treatment of the route network within the built areas of the town as urban streets that prioritise the needs of pedestrians, that facilitate cyclists wherever possible and that support public and private transport movements, stopping and parking, as appropriate. Where appropriate, new developments will be required to facilitate the extension of the urban street network and/or the provision of improved connectivity and permeability, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.</p>	<p>Neutral - This Policy will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective TI15 – Transport Network Improvements (refer to Map 2) Support the improvement of the road and street network in and around the Plan Area, subject to normal planning and environmental considerations including in combination effects under the EU Habitats Directive Assessment as appropriate. This will include the following new routes and projects and any other appropriately approved transport</p>	<p>Negative – see LU 11 above.</p>	<p>Policy: DS1; UI3; NH1 Objective: DS3; UI4; UI5;</p>	<p>No</p>

<p>schemes/improvements to roads and streets in and around the Plan Area:</p> <p>a) A new relief road/street connecting the north-eastern approach road (R446) to the south-eastern approach road (L4213) in the eastern portion of the Plan Area. This new route should be designed to provide adequate access points to adjacent lands with adjacent street-oriented development and will provide opportunities for smarter travel improvements within the town.</p> <p>b) The proposed western bypass of the town connecting the N66/R446/R349 junction in the northwest of the plan area to the N66 route to the southwest of the Plan Area.</p> <p>c) Carry out road improvement, widening and realignment of the Coarsing field road which links the Portumna road and the existing N6 Dublin road.</p> <p>d) Acquire the lands of the old railway line, used as a link road between Bride Street and the Loughrea/New Inn road.</p> <p>e) Improve culverts and all roadside drainage, maintain and renew pavements, widen and improve existing roads, improve road signage and facilitate the provision of new roads/streets within Loughrea, as the need arises and as resources permit.</p> <p>Require proposed developments to incorporate provisions for busways, footpaths and cycleways where properties bound main arterial routes, new link routes or other routes determined by the NRA. Prohibit development on lands that are reserved for proposed road/street corridors and associated buffers and where development would affect a route, line, level or layout of any proposed new roadway or any junction required between a proposed and existing road.</p>		<p>UI9; UI10; UI11; NH1; NH5; NH6; NH9; NH11</p> <p>DM Guideline: UI2</p>	
<p>Objective TI16 – Galway County Development Plan Policies, Objectives & Development Management Standards</p> <p>Ensure that new developments including developments proposed onto and in proximity to National and Class II Controlled roads shall be assessed, as appropriate, in relation to details including the provision of a safe means of access/egress, provision of sightlines, car and bicycle parking, loading bay provision, building setbacks from routes/roads etc., in accordance with the policies, objectives and Development Management Standards set out in the current County Development Plan.</p>	<p>Neutral - This Policy will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective TI17 – Road Safety Audits, Traffic Impact Assessment</p> <p>Require all proposed new commercial, industrial and retail developments (or where significant changes are proposed to existing commercial, industrial or larger retail</p>	<p>Neutral - This Policy will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>

<p>developments) and residential developments greater than 4 units, to submit Road Safety Audits and Traffic Impact Assessments as part of their planning application documentation.</p>			
<p>Objective TI18 – Noise</p> <p>All new proposed development, within 300m of roadways with traffic volumes greater than 8,220AADT, to include a noise assessment and mitigation measures if necessary with the planning application documentation.</p>	<p>Neutral - This Policy will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective TI19 – Schools</p> <p>Promote and facilitate greater ease of traffic movement and safe routes to schools in partnership with local schools and ensure that schools have a safe drop off/collection facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles and adequate and appropriately located staff parking.</p>	<p>Neutral - This Policy will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective T20 Parking Facilities (refer to Galway County Development Plan)</p> <p>Ensure that existing parking facilities in the town centre are managed appropriately and additional parking facilities are provided in suitable locations within the Plan Area to serve the needs of the town in accordance with applicable standards and guidelines. Provide disabled car parking facilities at appropriate locations throughout the town and ensure that all new developments have adequate car parking, disabled parking and cycling facilities. Requirements for car parking are contained in the Galway County Development Plan.</p>	<p>Neutral - This Policy will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective TI21 – Traffic Safety and Access (refer to Galway County Development Plan)</p> <p>Ensure that all new developments are properly located in terms of traffic safety and adequately address issues of traffic safety and access.</p> <p>a) Provide adequate facilities for people with special mobility needs to create a safe and accessible environment by providing parking facilities on ground floor level, tactile crossing points, audio facilities on traffic lights and ramped kerbs.</p> <p>b) Encourage new developments to use existing access junctions that enter onto major traffic routes rather than allowing a proliferation of new individual vehicular access points.</p>	<p>Neutral - This Policy will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>

<p>c) Require developers to bear the cost of improvements to junctions, road widening and the provision of footpaths in association with public lighting requirements where these will facilitate or benefit the proposed development.</p> <p>d) Require, where possible, the provision of adequate off-street parking and adequate loading/ unloading facilities as part of each development to ensure that parked vehicles do not cause a traffic hazard, obstruct vehicle or pedestrian movement or create a negative visual impact. Underground car parking will be considered in the Town Centre (C1) zone, where it would not conflict with residential amenity, geological, natural heritage or archaeological sensitivities or traffic safety.</p>			
<p>Objective TI22 – Loughrea Bypass (refer to Map 2) Protect and enhance the capacity and visual amenity of the Loughrea Bypass:</p> <p>a) Prevent new accesses onto the N6 Loughrea Bypass route that have not been accommodated in the bypass design in the interest of traffic safety.</p> <p>b) Ensure that new developments along the bypass respond positively to the route in terms of high quality building designs and elevation/boundary/landscaping treatments, as appropriate, facing onto the bypass route.</p> <p>c) Facilitate the development of a walking/cycling/amenity corridor along the southern edge of the bypass route and ensure that new developments incorporate and connect to this corridor, as appropriate.</p>	<p>Neutral - This Policy will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective TI23 – Access Points (refer to Map 2) Reserve access points for future development of backlands. This will include those shown on Map 2 – Specific Objectives and any other access points that may be identified for reservation by the planning authority during the plan period.</p>	<p>Neutral - This Policy will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Water Supply, Wastewater, Surface Water - Policies & Objectives</p>			
<p>Policy UI1 – Water Supply, Wastewater Disposal And Surface Water Drainage Infrastructure</p> <p>It is the policy of Galway County Council to support the provision and maintenance of adequate wastewater disposal, water supply and surface water drainage infrastructure, to service the development of Loughrea in accordance with EU Directive, national legislation and applicable standards. This will include the provision of adequate capacity in the public wastewater sewer network, wastewater treatment plant and storm water sewer network, an adequate quantity and quality of water supply and the promotion of Sustainable Drainage System approaches and techniques within the Plan</p>	<p>Negative - While the provision of adequate wastewater infrastructure will ensure adverse impacts to surface water resulting from inadequate wastewater treatment or surface water drainage are avoided the continued abstraction of water from Lough Rea to provide an adequate water supply for the future</p>	<p>Policy: NH1</p> <p>Objective:</p> <p>DS3; UI2; UI9; UI10; NH1; NH2; NH4; NH6; NH11</p>	<p>No</p>

<p>Area.</p>	<p>needs of the Plan area could have the potential to exert pressure on the ecological status of Lough Rea and restrict the range of suitable habitat to support stoneworts (<i>Chara</i> spp.), the presence of which are a key reason for the designation of Lough Rea as an SAC.</p> <p>Stoneworts are macrophyte species that colonise lake substrates. They are dependent on a range of abiotic factors for the maintenance of favourable habitat conditions. Light penetration is a key requirement for this species with greater water clarity potentially increasing the range of habitat available for this species. While they have been recorded to depths of 60m they are generally found in shallow water to depths of 1 to 10m.</p> <p>Considering the general restriction of this species to shallower waters any reductions in lake levels as a result of water abstraction could potential restrict the range of habitat available for stoneworts.</p>		
<p>Objective UI1 – Water Services Infrastructure (refer to Map 2) Support the maintenance, improvement and monitoring of the public water supply, wastewater disposal and surface water drainage infrastructure, as necessary to address any deficiencies in infrastructure capacity and/or service the development needs of the</p>	<p>Negative - See Policy UI 1 above.</p>	<p>Policy: NH1 Objective: DS3; UI2; UI9;</p>	<p>No</p>

<p>town. This will include the following and any other projects approved during the period of the Plan:</p> <p>a) Progress the upgrading of the existing wastewater sewer network for the town.</p> <p>b) Progress the Loughrea Regional Water Supply Scheme in order to improve the quality of supply to consumers within the town and extend supply to surrounding areas.</p> <p>c) Continue to carry out improvements to the existing infrastructure and quality of the town's water supply system, including the provision of an upgraded water treatment plant, additional storage and the connection of the Loughrea pump station with the Long point pump station.</p> <p>d) Monitor the capacity of the updated wastewater treatment plant as development takes place.</p> <p>e) Improve and maintain an adequate surface water drainage system throughout the Plan Area.</p>		<p>UI10; NH1; NH2; NH4; NH6; NH11</p>	
<p>Objective UI2 – Water Services for New Developments</p> <p>Require all new developments to be adequately serviced with water supply, wastewater disposal and surface water drainage in accordance with applicable legislation, standards and guidelines and to submit the necessary documentation with their planning applications to confirm same. Encourage only as much development, both in terms of quantity and type of development, that can be provided for based on the utility services available and prohibit any proposed development that cannot be adequately serviced, that would lead to significant environmental effects or that would pose an unacceptable threat to the capacity of water, wastewater or surface water infrastructure in the Plan Area.</p>	<p>Positive – This objective is underpinned by a sustainable approach to development that aims to avoid exerting undue environmental pressures to Lough Rea in terms of water abstraction (which has specific mitigatory consequences for Policy UI 1 above) and the towns wastewater and water supply infrastructure.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective UI3 – Water Supply & Water Conservation</p> <p>Ensure that new developments are adequately serviced with a suitable quantity and quality of sustainably sourced drinking water supply, promote water conservation to reduce the overall level of water loss in the public supply and require that new domestic developments provide for water supply metering.</p>	<p>Negative – See Objective UI 1.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective UI4 – Wastewater Disposal.</p> <p>New developments shall only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that they can be serviced and that there is adequate capacity in the wastewater disposal infrastructure in accordance with applicable requirements and standards, including urban wastewater treatment disposal standards, in order to protect the Galway Bay</p>	<p>Positive - This approach which is consistent with the approach to new development outlined in the Galway County Development Plan will ensure wastewater generated during</p>		<p>No</p>

Complex and its qualifying interests.	the construction and operation of new developments will not result in a deterioration of water quality within Lough Rea or the St Cleran's River, thus ensuring impacts to associated European Sites are avoided.		
<p>Objective UI5– Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems</p> <p>Maintain, and enhance as appropriate, the existing surface water drainage system in the Plan Area, ensure that new developments are adequately serviced with surface water drainage infrastructure and promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems in 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 proposal.</p>	Positive – This Objective will ensure that surface water drainage from existing and new developments will not result in adverse impacts to the water quality of waterbodies occurring within the Plan area.		No
<p>Objective UI6 – St. Cleran's River Tributary and Drainage Catchment (refer to Map 2)</p> <p>Require new development proposals within the catchment of the St. Cleran's River tributary or that potentially drain towards this tributary to include full details of proposals to address the high probability of flooding associated with the tributary and the need to provide adequate surface water drainage, including the incorporation of Sustainable Drainage Systems proposals.</p>	Positive – this Objective will ensure that development will not results in alterations to the baseline flow conditions of St Cleran's River during the lifetime of the Plan.		No
Flood Risk Management- Policies & Objectives			
<p>Policy UI2 – Flood Risk Management It is the policy of Galway County Council to support, in co-operation with the OPW, the implementation of the EU <i>Flood Risk Directive (2007/60/EC)</i>, the <i>Flood Risk Regulations (SI No. 122 of 2010)</i> and the DEHLG/OPW publication <i>Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009</i> (and any updated/superseding legislation or policy guidance). Galway County Council will also take account of the <i>Catchment Flood Risk Management Plans (CFRAMs)</i>, <i>Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA)</i> and <i>County Galway Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2012</i> and any recommendations and outputs arising from same that relate to or impact on the Plan Area.</p>	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.		No

<p>Objective UI7 – Flood Risk Management and Assessment (refer to Map 3) Ensure the implementation of the DEHLG/OPW publication <i>Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009</i> (or any updated/superseding document) in relation to flood risk management within the Plan Area. This will include the following:</p> <p>a) Avoid, reduce and/or mitigate, as appropriate in accordance with the <i>Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009</i>, the risk of flooding within the flood risk areas indicated on Map 3 – Flood Risk Management, including fluvial, coastal/tidal, pluvial and groundwater flooding, and any other flood risk areas that may be identified during the period of the Plan or in relation to a planning application.</p> <p>b) Development proposals in areas where there is an identified or potential risk of flooding or that could give rise to a risk of flooding elsewhere will be required to carry out a Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment, and justification test where appropriate, in accordance with the provisions of the <i>Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009</i> (or any superseding document). Any flood risk assessment should include an assessment of the potential impacts of climate change, such as an increase in the extent or probability of flooding, and any associated measures necessary to address these impacts.</p> <p>c) Development that would be subject to an inappropriate risk of flooding or that would cause or exacerbate such a risk at other locations shall not normally be permitted.</p> <p>d) Where certain measures proposed to mitigate or manage the risk of flooding associated with new developments are likely to result in significant effects to the environment or Natura 2000 sites downstream, such measures will undergo environmental assessment and Habitats Directive Assessment, as appropriate.</p>	<p>Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective UI8 – Flood Zones and Appropriate Land Uses (refer to Map 3) 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 <i>Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009</i> (or any superseding document) and the guidance contained in DM Standard UI1 – Flood Zones and Appropriate Land Uses. Where a development/land use is proposed that is inappropriate within the Flood Zone, then the development proposal will need to be accompanied by a Development Management Justification Test and Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment in accordance with the criteria set out under the <i>Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009</i></p>	<p>Positive - the restriction of development in flood risk areas will ensure no artificial impermeable surfaces installed in such areas. This will ensure natural surface runoff characteristics are maintained adjacent to Lough Rea and the St Cleran’s River.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective UI9 – Waterbodies and Watercourses (refer to Map 2 and Map 3)</p> <p>Protect waterbodies and watercourses within the Plan Area from inappropriate</p>	<p>Positive - The implementation of this buffer area will protect the water quality of rivers and</p>		<p>No</p>

development, including the lake, rivers, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains. This will include a 10m environmental management buffer on either side of St. Cleran's River and its tributary in the east of the Plan Area, measured from the near river bank. Promote the	streams and minimise disturbance to fauna supported by watercourses within the Plan area.		
Water Quality – Policy & Objectives			
Policy UI3 – Water Quality It is the policy of Galway County Council to protect and improve water quality in conjunction with other agencies and stakeholders and in accordance with the EU <i>Water Framework Directive (2006/60/EC)</i> , EU <i>Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC)</i> and associated national legislation and to support the implementation of the Western River Basin District Management Plan, including the actions and measures that form part of the Clarin/Kilcolgan Water Management Unit Action Plan. Galway County Council will take account of the above requirements to protect and improve water quality when considering new development proposals.	Positive - This implementation of this Policy will facilitate the improving/maintaining good water quality and good ecological status within Lough Rea and the St Cleran's River.		No
Objective UI10 – Western River Basin District Management Plan and Protection of Waters Support the protection of water quality in accordance with the EU <i>Water Framework Directive (2006/60/EC)</i> and the <i>European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (SI No. 722 of 2003)</i> (as amended) (or any updated legislation), including the implementation of the relevant recommendations and measures as outlined in the <i>Western River Basin District Management Plan 2009-2015</i> , including the <i>Clarin/Kilcolgan Water Management Unit Action Plan</i> (and any updated/ superseding documents). Development will only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on the water environment, including surface water, groundwater quality and quantity, river corridors and associated wetlands. Galway County Council is statutorily obliged to protect the existing good quality status of the waters in Loughrea (including Lough Rea, St. Cleran's River and tributary and the Clarin/Kilcolgan drainage area).	Positive - Supporting the recommendations and measures of the Western River Basin District Management Plan and associated management plans such as the Clarin/Kilcolgan Water Management Unit Action Plan will ensure that the good water quality and ecological status of Lough Rea and St Cleran's River is improved maintained over the lifetime of the Plan.		No
Objective UI11– Groundwater & Aquifers Support the protection of groundwater resources and dependent wildlife/habitats in accordance with the EU <i>Groundwater Directive 2006/118/EC</i> and the <i>European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations, 2010 (S.I. No. 9 of 2010)</i> (or any updated legislation). Protect the locally important aquifer that under lays the Plan Area from risk of environmental pollution and have regard to any groundwater	Positive - Implementing this Objective will support the protection of groundwater and associated groundwater influenced habitats such as turloughs.		No

protection schemes and groundwater source protection zones where data has been made available by the Geological Survey of Ireland.			
Waste Management – Policy & Objectives			
<p>Policy UI4 – Waste Management</p> <p>It is the policy of the Galway County Council to support sustainable waste management through the prevention, reduction and recycling of waste and by facilitating the provision of adequate waste infrastructure, such as bring banks, at locations that will not adversely affect residential amenities</p>	Positive - This Policy will have a positive impact for the environment.		No
<p>Objective UI12 – Waste Prevention, Reduction & Recycling</p> <p>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 with their planning applications.</p>	Positive - See Policy UI 4 above.		No
<p>Objective UI 13 – Bring Bank Facility</p> <p>Facilitate the installation of bring bank(s) at suitable locations within the Plan area and where they will not adversely affect residential amenities.</p>	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.		No
Energy and Communications Infrastructure – Policy & Objectives			
<p>Policy UI 5 – Energy and Communications</p> <p>It is the policy of Galway County Council to support the provision of adequate energy and communications infrastructure to service developments including gas, electricity, broadband, and telephone services. In particular, the Council supports the increased development and use of renewable energy and the aims of sustainable energy use and conservation in building design and construction.</p>	Negative - the development of energy and/or communications infrastructure in areas adjacent to European Sites will have the potential to result in negative impacts.	<p>Policy: DS1; NH1</p> <p>Objective: DS3; NH1; NH2; NH4; NH11</p>	No

<p>Objective UI14— Electricity & Gas Supply</p> <p>Facilitate the provision of an adequate supply of electricity and gas to developments in the Plan Area, to the requirements of the relevant service provider, and in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.</p> <p><i>(SEA Note: Uncertain interactions with EPOs due to infrastructural requirements not yet designed or planned)</i></p>	<p>Negative - See Policy UI 5 above.</p>	<p>Policy: DS1; NH1</p> <p>Objective: DS3; NH1; NH2; NH4; NH11</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Objective UI15 – Energy Conservation & Efficiency</p> <p>Continue to implement Galway County Council’s Energy Action Plan regarding energy efficiency and conservation in existing and future residential, commercial and industrial buildings within Loughrea. Ensure that new buildings are sustainable in their siting, orientation, design and construction. Passive solar design techniques, high energy efficiency, low impact construction methods and the use of local/sustainable building materials, recycling aggregates and local craftsmanship will be encouraged to ensure that new developments minimise their environmental impacts and long term costs.</p>	<p>Positive - This Objective will have a positive impact for the environment.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective UI16 – Broadband & Telecommunications</p> <p>Facilitate the provision of adequate telecommunication infrastructure within the Plan Area, including telephone 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>Negative - See Policy UI 5 above.</p>	<p>Policy: DS1; NH1</p> <p>Objective: DS3; NH1; NH2; NH4; NH11</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Objective UI17-- Renewable Energy</p> <p>Promote and facilitate the development of renewable sources of energy within the Plan area and encourage the integration of micro-renewable energy sources into the design and construction of new developments, as appropriate.</p>	<p>Negative - See Policy UI 5 above.</p>	<p>Policy: DS1; NH1</p> <p>Objective: DS3; NH1; NH2; NH4; NH11</p>	<p>No</p>

Climate Change & Air Quality – Policy & Objectives			
<p>Policy UI 6 – Climate Change & Air Quality</p> <p>It is the policy of Galway County Council to support and promote, in conjunction with other agencies, local, national and international initiatives for limiting/reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and encouraging the development of renewable energy sources in accordance with The 'National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012', the EU Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFÉ) Directive (2008/50/EEC) and the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (SI No180 of 2011) (or any updated/superseding documents).</p>	<p>Positive - Implementing this Objective will support a reduction in greenhouse gas emission and encourage the development of renewable energy.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective UI18 Climate Change</p> <p>Support the implementation of the National Climate Change Strategy 2007 -2012 (or any updated/superseding document) and continue to implement Galway County Council's Energy Action Plan regarding energy efficiency and conservation in existing and future buildings, in energy use and procurement activities and in raising awareness and stimulating action within local communities</p>	<p>Positive – See Policy UI 16 above.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective UI 19 –Air Quality</p> <p>Promote the preservation of best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development throughout the Plan Area in accordance with the EU <i>Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFE) Directive (2008/50/EC)</i> by seeking to protect and maintain the regulatory standards contained with the EPA's <i>Air Quality in Ireland 2009: Key Indicators of Ambient Air Quality 2010</i> (or any updated/superseding document) and by ensuring that all air emissions associated with new developments are within Environmental Quality Standards as out in the <i>Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (SI No. 180 of 2011)</i> (or any updated/ superseding documents).</p>	<p>Positive – See Policy UI 16 above.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective UI 10 – Air Purification</p> <p>Encourage landscaping and deciduous tree planting in an environmentally sensitive manner within the Plan Area as a means of air purification, the filtering of suspended particles and the improvement of Loughrea's micro- climate.</p>	<p>Positive – The planting of deciduous trees and associated landscaping will have the potential to provide habitat for a range of fauna as well as functioning as an air purifiers in</p>		<p>No</p>

	the Plan area.		
<p>Objective UI 11 – Radon</p> <p>Have regard, in accordance with Galway County Council’s statutory role under the Building Control Act 2007, to the specific guidance on radon prevention measures for new homes as contained within the Building Regulations.</p>	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.		No
Development Management Guidelines			
<p>DM Guideline UI1 – Flood Zones and Appropriate Land Uses</p> <p>The table below indicates the types of land uses that are appropriate in each of the Flood Zones identified within the Plan Area, in accordance with the <i>Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009</i>. Where developments/land uses are proposed that are considered inappropriate to the Flood Zone, then a Development Management Justification Test and Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment will be required in accordance with the <i>Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009</i>.</p>	Neutral		No
<p>DM Guideline UI2 – Waterbodies and Watercourses</p> <p>Require all relevant applications, which are located in close proximity to waterbodies or watercourses (including Lough Rea, St.Cleran’s River and tributaries), to submit measures to reduce and prevent pollution to the waterbody/watercourse, both during construction and after completion of the scheme.</p>	Positive – This Objective will ensure that projects and developments occurring within the Plan area avoid negative impact to the water quality of Lough Rea and St Cleran’s River.		No
<p>DM Guideline UI3 – Energy Statements</p> <p>All proposals for new non-residential developments with a floor area of 1,000m² or more and residential developments comprised of 10 or more units may be required to submit an energy Statement outlining the methods proposed to minimise energy use in the development, such as building orientation and passive solar design, materials and insulation, renewable/alternative energy sources etc.</p>	Neutral		No
Urban Design & Landscape – Policy & Objectives			

<p>Policy UD1 – Urban Design and Landscape</p> <p>It is the policy of Galway County Council to promote the use of sustainable urban design principles and approaches that will help to create high quality built and natural environments appropriate to the context and landscape setting of the town, having regard to the guidance contained in the <i>Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines 2009</i> and the accompanying <i>Urban Design Manual 2009</i> (or any updated/superseding guidance documents). This will focus on the development of a high quality, well landscaped and appropriately scaled built environment with a strong civic and commercial core, responsive building frontages, appropriate building forms, heights, designs and materials and high quality civic, community, recreational and amenity facilities. The creation of a high quality natural environment will also be supported through the protection of the landscape sensitivities, views and prospects in the town and the promotion of the development of a green network and high quality landscaping.</p>	<p>Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective UD1 – High Quality, Context Sensitive Design</p> <p>Ensure that new developments are responsive to their site context and in keeping with the character, amenity, heritage, environment and landscape of the area. New development proposals will be required to complement the existing character of the town centre/area in terms of scale, height, massing, building line, urban grain and definition and through high quality design proposals for buildings/structures/shop fronts, the use of high quality, appropriate materials and the provision of appropriate signage, lighting, landscaping proposals and other such details. External lighting and light spill will be minimised in general and the use of lighting in areas of ecological sensitivity avoided and/or minimised where possible. Lighting should not be directed at St. Cleran’s River or Lough Rea.</p>	<p>Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective UD 2 – Public Spaces and Streets</p> <p>Promote the development of high quality public spaces consisting of streets, squares, parks and amenities connected by a network of pedestrian and cycling routes. Public spaces should have a high standard of design and street furniture that will create a coherent character for the area. This would include appropriately designed and located</p>	<p>Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>

park benches, bus shelters, cycle storage facilities, refuse bins, signage, street sculpture, etc. but should avoid the over-proliferation of different elements and/or cluttering of public spaces.			
<p>Objective UD 3 – Spatial Definition and Animation</p> <p>Ensure that new developments are designed to provide spatial definition and animation to public spaces and streets through the use of appropriate building lines and built forms, responsive building frontages and passive surveillance and high quality streetscapes and/or landscaping edges to enclose and address public spaces. Perimeter block typologies provide a useful approach in generating good spatial definition, adequate enclosure and a high quality public realm and the creation of focal points, such as landmark buildings and gateways, help to improve spatial definition and legibility and will be encouraged in appropriate locations.</p>	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.		No
<p>Objective UD4 – Green Network and Landscaping</p> <p>Support the development of a network of amenities, open spaces and natural areas that support biodiversity, that incorporate existing landscape features such as local rivers, streams, trees, stone walls and hedgerows, that provide pedestrian and cycling linkages and active and passive recreation opportunities, that help to structure and provide relief from the built environment and that can provide areas for surface water attenuation and flood risk management.</p>	Positive - The Objective will enhance connectivity between habitats facilitates the dispersal of flora and fauna.		No
<p>Objective UD5 – Street-Oriented Development and Responsive Frontages</p> <p>Promote street-oriented development along the urban street network within the built areas of the town and along the approach routes to the town. This will include improved facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport as appropriate. Buildings and spaces should be designed to provide a human scale along street frontages with the use of appropriate building heights and responsive ground floor treatments. Intensive, fine-grained developments will generally be encouraged to provide a diversity of building forms and public spaces.</p>	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.		No
<p>Objective UD6 – Design Statements</p>	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to		No

<p>Require design statements with all large scale or sensitively located development proposals, such as in close proximity to an Architectural Conservation Area, protected structure, natural heritage designation, significant public amenity, elevated position or visually vulnerable area, and in the case of any other development proposals where this is considered necessary by the planning authority. Design statements should include a site appraisal examining the location, context, landscape/townscape setting, accessibility, features and characteristics of the development site, which should be used to inform the selection of appropriate development forms and design responses and the incorporation and provision of any important landscape features in the layout and design of the development. Design statements should be succinct documents that include both text and supporting graphics demonstrating how the site context and characteristics and design principles, policies and objectives have been addressed in the design and layout of the development proposal.</p>	<p>European Sites.</p>		
<p>Objective UD7 -Landscape, Townscape, Views and Prospects (refer to Map 2 and Galway County Development Plan)</p> <p>Protect the landscape character, values, sensitivities, focal points and views in the Plan Area, including those identified in the Galway County Development Plan and included in the Landscape and Landscape Character Assessment for County Galway 2002 and as shown on Map2– Specific Objectives. This will include, inter alia, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Ensure that new developments are responsive to the high and special sensitivity of the Lough Rea lake and surrounds, to the moderate sensitivity of the elevated lands to the east of the town and to any other elevated sites, visually vulnerable areas or locally important townscape contexts. b) Require Visual Impact Assessment for developments with the potential to impact on areas of significant landscape character, value or sensitivity, including both urban and natural features, such as Lough Rea, significant townscapes and historic buildings, as appropriate c) Prohibit development that will block or interfere with a significant view or prospect. Where it is considered that a development may impact on views or prospects, have regard to the significance of any such impact and any appropriate mitigation measures that should be incorporated. 	<p>Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Built Heritage & Cultural Heritage – Policies & Objectives</p>			

<p>Policy BH1 – Built Heritage</p> <p>It is the policy of Galway County Council to support the protection and conservation of the architectural and archaeological heritage, including the Protected Structures, Architectural Conservation Area, Recorded Monuments and Places and other important features of architectural or archaeological heritage within the Plan Area. Galway County Council will ensure the implementation of the legislative, statutory and policy provisions relevant to the conservation of built heritage including the following (and any updated/superseding documents):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative provisions in the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and National Monuments Act 1930 (as amended). • Statutory provisions in the Galway County Development Plan, including the Record of Protected Structures. • Policy guidance in <i>Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015, the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines 2004, the Archaeology and Development: Guidelines for Good Practice for Developers.</i> 	<p>Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Policy BH2 – Cultural Heritage</p> <p>It is the policy of Galway County Council to acknowledge and promote awareness of the origins, historical development and cultural heritage of the town, to support high quality developments that relate to local heritage and to ensure that new development respects and is responsive to the cultural heritage of Loughrea.</p>	<p>Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective BH1 – Architectural Heritage</p> <p>Ensure the protection of the architectural heritage in the Plan Area, in particular by implementing the relevant legislative provisions of the <i>Planning and Development Act 2000</i> (as amended) in relation to architectural heritage and policy guidance contained within the <i>Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines 2004</i>, (or any updated/superseding document).</p>	<p>Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective BH2 – Protected Structures (refer to Galway County Development Plan)</p> <p>Ensure the protection and sympathetic enhancement of structures included and</p>	<p>Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>

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.			
<p>Objective BH3 – Architectural Conservation Area (refer to Map 1 and 2)</p> <p>Protect, conserve and enhance the essential character of the Architectural Conservation Area (ACA), through the appropriate management and control of the design, location and layout of new development, alterations or extensions to existing structures, and/or modifications to the character or setting of the Architectural Conservation Area.</p>	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.		No
<p>Objective BH4 – ‘The Walk’ (refer to Map 2)</p> <p>Protect and enhance ‘The Walk’ to the rear of the main street, including the restriction of access to ‘The Walk’ to pedestrians and ensure that new development in close vicinity to the moat respects its character and setting.</p>	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.		No
<p>Objective BH5 Development/Works relating to Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas</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>a) 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>b) Any works/development carried out to a protected structure or the exterior of a building/structure within an ACA shall be in accordance with best conservation practice and use sustainable and appropriate materials.</p> <p>c) Works/development within the Architectural Conservation Area shall ensure the conservation of traditional features and building elements which contribute to the</p>	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.		No

<p>character of the area.</p> <p>d) New proposals shall have appropriate regard to scale, plot, form, mass, design, materials, and colours and function.</p>			
<p>Objective BH6 – Architectural Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan</p> <p>Prepare and publish an ACA Appraisal and Management Plan for Loughrea over the lifetime of the Plan, to preserve, protect and enhance the character of this area, including the public realm and implement any recommendations arising from same.</p>	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.		No
<p>Objective BH7 – Vernacular Architecture & Structures of Local Interest</p> <p>Recognise the importance of the contribution of vernacular architecture to the character of Loughrea and ensure the protection, retention, and appropriate revitalisation and use of vernacular heritage, including structures of local interest that contribute to the local distinctiveness, built heritage and/or streetscape character of Loughrea and resist the demolition of these vernacular structures.</p>	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.		No
<p>Objective BH8 – Archaeological Heritage</p> <p>Ensure the protection and sympathetic enhancement of archaeological heritage in the Plan Area, in particular by implementing the relevant provisions of the <i>Planning and Development Act 2000</i> (as amended), the <i>National Monuments Act 1930</i> (as amended), the <i>National Policy on Town Defences 2008</i> and the <i>Archaeology and Development: Guidelines for Good Practice for Developers</i>.</p>	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.		No
<p>Objective BH9 – Monuments and Places</p> <p>Ensure the protection and sympathetic enhancement of the monuments and places included and proposed for inclusion in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), together with the integrity of their character and setting, in particular by implementing the relevant provisions of the <i>Planning and Development Act 2000</i> (as amended) and the <i>National Monuments Act 1930</i> (as amended), the <i>National Policy on Town Defences 2008</i>, and the <i>Archaeology and Development: Guidelines for Good Practice for</i></p>	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.		No

<p><i>Developers.</i> This will include the protection of all Monuments on the list provided by the National Monument Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, which has statutory responsibility in this area.</p>			
<p>Objective BH10 –Zones of Archaeological Potential (refer to Map 1 and 2)</p> <p>Ensure that all planning applications for new developments and all proposed infrastructure projects/schemes in close proximity (30m) to Recorded Monuments and Places (RMPs), and within the Zones of Archaeological Potential (ZAPs) are referred to the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG) and take account of the archaeological heritage of the area, any advice received from the DAHG and the need for archaeological assessments and, where appropriate</p>	<p>Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective BH11- Town Defences (refer to Map 2)</p> <p>Protect and enhance the medieval town defences of Loughrea, including the remaining town walls, moat and gate, having due regard to the National Policy on Town Defences 2008. This will include the enhancement of the appearance of the original town moat, the restriction of development of new bridges over the Moat and the repair of existing bridges in a sensitive manner.</p>	<p>Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective BH12- Crannogs (refer to Map 2)</p> <p>Protect crannogs in the Lough from insensitive and inappropriate water based leisure activities.</p>	<p>Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>ObjectiveBH13– Local Place Names</p> <p>Protect local place names as an important part of the cultural heritage and unique character of the Plan Area. Support the use of appropriate names for new developments that reflect the character and heritage of the area and that contribute to the local distinctiveness of the village. New developments will be required to consult with <i>Coiste Logainmneacha Chontae na Gaillimhe</i>, the Galway County Council ‘Placename Committee’, and to identify an appropriate name for new developments</p>	<p>Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to European Sites.</p>		<p>No</p>

that reflect the local character and heritage of the area.			
Natural Heritage & Biodiversity – Policies & Objectives			
<p>Policy NH1 – Natural Heritage and Biodiversity It is the policy of Galway County Council to support the conservation and enhancement of natural heritage and biodiversity, including the protection of the integrity of Natura 2000 sites, the protection of Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas and the promotion of the development of a green/ecological network within the Plan Area, in order to support ecological functioning and connectivity, create opportunities in suitable locations for active and passive recreation and to structure and provide visual relief from the built environment. The protection of natural heritage and biodiversity, including Natura 2000 sites, will be implemented in accordance with relevant EU environmental directives and applicable national legislation, policies, plans and guidelines, including the following (and any updated/superseding documents):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU Directives, including the <i>Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)</i>, the <i>Birds Directive (2009/147/EC)</i>, the <i>Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (85/337/EEC)</i>, the <i>Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)</i> and the <i>Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC)</i>. • National legislation, including the <i>Wildlife Act 1976</i>, the <i>European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1989 (SI No. 349 of 1989)</i> (as amended), the <i>Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000</i>, the <i>European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2003</i> (as amended), the <i>Planning and Development Act 2000</i> (as amended) and the <i>European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011)</i>. • National policy guidelines, including the <i>Landscape and Landscape Assessment Draft Guidelines 2000</i>, the <i>Environmental Impact Assessment Sub-Threshold Development Guidelines 2003</i>, <i>Strategic Environmental Assessment Guidelines 2004</i> and the <i>Appropriate Assessment Guidelines 2010</i>. • Catchment and water resource management plans, including the <i>Western River Basin District Management Plan 2009-2015</i>. • Biodiversity plans and guidelines, including <i>Actions for Biodiversity 2011-2016: Ireland’s National Biodiversity Plan</i>, the <i>Biodiversity Action Plan for County Galway 2008-2013</i> and the <i>Biodiversity Guidelines</i> produced by Galway County Council. 	Positive - This Policy aims to support the protection of the conservation status and integrity of European Sites.		No

<p>Objective NH1 – Natura 2000 Sites (refer to Map 2) Protect European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network (including Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation) in accordance with the requirements in the EU <i>Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)</i>, EU <i>Birds Directive (2009/147/EC)</i>, the <i>Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010</i>, the <i>European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011)</i> (and any subsequent amendments or updated legislation) and having due regard to the guidance in the <i>Appropriate Assessment Guidelines 2010</i> (and any subsequent or updated guidance). A plan or project (e.g. proposed development) within the Plan Area will only be authorised after the competent authority (Galway County Council) has ascertained, based on scientific evidence and a Habitats Directive Assessment where necessary, that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The plan or project will not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects); or 2. The plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000 site (that does not host a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000; or 3. The plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000 site (that hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, restricted to reasons of human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000. 	Positive – See Objective DS 3		No

<p>Objective NH2 – Protected Habitats and Species</p> <p>Support the protection of protected habitats and species listed in the annexes to the EU <i>Habitats Directive 1992 (92/43/EEC)</i> and the <i>Birds Directive (2009/147/EC</i>-codified version of Directive)- This includes the protection of bats and their roosts, and the maintenance of woodland, hedgerows, treelines, ecological networks and corridors which serve as feeding areas, flight paths and community routes for bats.</p>	<p>Positive – See Policy NH 1 and Objective DS 3 and NH 1 above.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective NH3 –Natural Heritage Areas (refer to Map 2)</p> <p>Protect Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas in accordance with the requirements of the <i>Wildlife Act 1976</i>, the <i>Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000</i> and the <i>Planning and Development Act 2000</i> (as amended). Where a proposed development within the Plan Area may give rise to likely significant effects on any Natural Heritage Area or proposed Natural Heritage Area an Ecological Impact Assessment or an Environmental Impact Assessment may be required.</p>	<p>Positive - This objective provides protection for NHAs & pNHAs.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective NH4 – Impact Assessments</p> <p>Ensure full compliance with the requirements of the EU <i>Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)</i>, <i>SEA Directive (2001/42/EC)</i> and <i>EIA Directive (85/337/EEC)</i>, and the associated <i>European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011)</i>, <i>European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004-2011</i>, <i>Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004-2011</i> and the <i>European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1989-2011</i> (or any updated/superseding legislation). Planning applications for proposed developments within the Plan Area that may give rise to likely significant effects on the environment and/or any designated site may need to be accompanied by one or more of the following: an Environmental Impact Statement, an Ecological Impact Assessment Report, a Habitats Directive Assessment Screening Report or a Natura Impact Statement, as appropriate. Ensure that Natura Impact Statements and any other environmental or ecological impact assessments submitted in support of proposals for development are carried according to best</p>	<p>Positive - These measures will ensure all proposed developments with the potential to result in likely significant effects to the environment and/or natural heritage will be identified, assessed and mitigated where necessary.</p>		<p>No</p>

practice methodologies and contain all necessary baseline assessments.			
<p>Objective NH5 – Biodiversity & Ecological Networks (refer to Map 2)</p> <p>Support the protection of biodiversity and ecological connectivity within the Plan area including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, rivers, streams, natural springs, wetlands, stone walls, geological and geo-morphological systems, other landscape features and associated wildlife, where these form part of the ecological network.</p> <p>a) Seek to retain and incorporate these natural features into developments, in order to avoid ecological fragmentation and maintain ecological corridors and stepping stones.</p> <p>b) Protect and enhance the water quality and ecology of St Cleran’s River and its tributary to the east, and their function as ecological corridors, by maintaining the existing banks and channel and ensuring that new developments are set back at least 10m from the top of the bank of the stream.</p> <p>c) Ensure greater biodiversity through the appropriate planting of native trees, shrubs and hedgerow indigenous to the Loughrea area and of Irish provenance in public and private areas and new developments.</p>	Positive - The implementation of this Policy will support the enhancement of natural habitats providing shelter and resources for a range of flora and fauna including Qualifying Species of the Loughrea SPA.		No
<p>Objective NH6 – Water Resources</p> <p>Protect all water resources in the Plan Area, including Lough Rea, St Cleran’s River, its tributaries and downstream waterbodies, other streams, springs, surface water and groundwater quality, in accordance with the requirements and guidance in the EU <i>Water Framework Directive 2000 (2000/60/EC)</i>, the <i>European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (as amended)</i> and the <i>Western River Basin Management Plan 2009-2015 (including any superseding versions of same)</i>. Support the application and implementation of a catchment planning and management approach to development and conservation, including the implementation of Sustainable Drainage System techniques for new development in the Plan Area.</p>	Positive - See Policy UI 2 and UI 3 and Objective UI 6; U I 9; UI 10 and UI 11 above.		No
<p>Objective NH7 – Environmental Management Area (refer to Map 2)</p>	Positive – the implementation of this Objective will ensure		No

<p>Ensure that new development proposals on the lakeshore and around the lake that may impact on the Lough Rea SAC/SPA/pNHA are adequately assessed, undergo environmental and/or Habitats Directive assessments, including the evaluation of cumulative/in combination effects and any impacts identified can be avoided, reduced and/or mitigated, as appropriate, in accordance with applicable environmental legislation and policy prior to any consent being given. This will include any amenity proposals on open space lands around the lake and development proposals on zoned lands around the lake or that drain towards the lake.</p>	<p>developments occurring in the vicinity of Lough Rea do not result in adverse impacts to the Lough Rea European Sites.</p>		
<p>Objective NH8 – Trees, Parkland/Woodland and Hedgerows</p> <p>Protect important tree clusters and hedgerows in the Plan Area and ensure that development proposals take cognisance of significant trees/tree stands. Seek to retain natural boundaries including stone walls, hedgerows and tree boundaries, wherever possible and replace with a boundary type similar to the existing boundary where removal is unavoidable.</p>	<p>Positive – the protection of these features will provide shelter and refuge for a range of fauna and facilitate the dispersal of flora and fauna.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective NH9 – Geological and Geomorphological Systems</p> <p>Protect and conserve geological and geomorphological systems, sites and features from inappropriate development that would detract from their heritage value and interpretation and ensure that any plan or project affecting karst formations are adequately assessed with regard to their potential geophysical, hydrological, hydrogeological or ecological impacts on the environment.</p>	<p>Positive</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective NH10 – Control of Invasive and Alien Invasive Species</p> <p>Seek to prevent the spread of invasive and alien species and promote measures to achieve this objective. Require a landscaping plan to be produced for developments near waterbodies and ensure that such plans do not include alien invasive species.</p>	<p>Positive – This Objective has particular implications for waterbodies whose ecology and conservation status are at risk from the spread of invasive and alien species.</p>		<p>No</p>
<p>Objective NH 11 – Consultation with Environmental Authorities</p> <p>Ensure that all development proposals are screened to determine whether they are</p>	<p>Positive – this Objective will ensure that the relevant environmental authorities responsible for protecting and</p>		<p>No</p>

<p>likely to have a significant direct, indirect or cumulative effect on the integrity or conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 site and, where significant effects are likely or uncertain, there will be a requirement for consultation with the relevant environmental authorities as part of any Habitats Directive Assessment that may be required.</p>	<p>enhancing the natural environment are afforded an opportunity to advise Galway County Council on the implications of developments that may have the potential to result in likely significant effects to European Sites.</p>		
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Appendix 3:

Brief Description of

European Sites

N2K Site	Site Code	Qualifying Interests	Current threats to Qualifying Interests	Sensitivity of Qualifying Interests
Lough Rea SAC	304	Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp.	Nutrient enrichment arising from intensification of agriculture and urban developments.	Surface and groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Highly sensitive to pollution
Lough Rea SPA	4134	<p>Anas clypeata [wintering]</p> <p>Fulica atra [wintering]</p> <p>Waterbirds and Wetlands</p>	<p>While no information in the form of an Article 17 Conservation Status Report exists for waterbirds or their respective SPAs a number of pressures have been identified by Crowe et al (2008). These pressures include: the modification of wetland sites, particularly for industry or housing and increased levels of disturbance, largely related to recreational activity. Eutrophication at a number of wetland sites as a result of nutrient inputs from a range of polluting activities were also identified as a potential pressure. However this latter pressure is now being alleviated through stricter control of activities associated with water discharge/runoff etc. Climate change was also noted as a significant factor underlying changes in trends of wintering waterbirds in Ireland. For instance recent research (Lehikoinen & Jaatinen, 2011) has suggested that later autumn arrival times in Ireland from Iceland are linked to mild late autumn temperatures at the Icelandic stage grounds.</p>	<p>Highly sensitive to hydrological changes and loss of wetland habitat. Sensitive to disturbance.</p>

Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA	4168	Circus cyaneus [breeding] Falco columbarius [breeding]	Hen harrier is listed as a priority bird species by Birdwatch Ireland and RSPB.	Sensitive to disturbance.
Sonnagh Bog SAC	1913	Blanket bog (*active only)	Land reclamation, peat extraction; afforestation; erosion and landslides triggered by human activity; drainage; burning and infrastructural development.	Surface and groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Inappropriate management
Rahasane Turlough SAC	322	Turloughs*	Nutrient enrichment and inappropriate grazing; drainage, peat cutting; marl extraction and quarrying.	Surface and Groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Changes in nutrient or base status.
Rahasane Turlough SPA	4089	Cygnus cygnus [wintering] Anas penelope [wintering] Pluvialis apricaria [wintering] Limosa limosa [wintering] Anser albifrons flavirostris [wintering] Waterbirds and	See Inner Galway Bay SPA for information regarding wintering bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this Site	Highly sensitive to hydrological changes and loss of wetland habitat. Sensitive to disturbance.

		Wetlands		
Peterswell Turlough SAC	318	Turloughs*	Nutrient enrichment and inappropriate grazing; drainage, peat cutting; marl extraction and quarrying.	Surface and Groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Changes in nutrient or base status.
Castletaylor Complex SAC	242	Turloughs*	Nutrient enrichment and inappropriate grazing; drainage, peat cutting; marl extraction and quarrying.	Surface and Groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Changes in nutrient or base status.
		Limestone pavements*	Quarrying, reclamation for agriculture and reduced farming activity which has facilitated the spread of scrub over some areas. Intensive agriculture and domestic/municipal waste sources in the vicinity of pavement may also threaten groundwater.	Physical removal. Scrub encroachment
		Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrub facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (*important orchid sites)	The main threats to this habitat include the abandonment of traditional agricultural practices and reclamation.	Changes in management. Changes in nutrient or base status. Moderately sensitive to hydrological change
		Alpine and boreal heaths	Abandonment; overgrazing; burning; outdoor recreation; quarries; communication networks; and wind	Changes in management. Changes in nutrient or base status. Moderately

			farm developments.	sensitive to hydrological change
		Juniperus communis formations on heaths or calcareous grassland	Overgrazing; fire; agricultural expansion; invasion by alien species particularly Rhododendron ponticum; and poor regeneration.	Onset of inundation or water-logging Inappropriate management
Lough Coy SAC	2117	Turloughs*	Nutrient enrichment and inappropriate grazing; drainage, peat cutting; marl extraction and quarrying.	Surface and Groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Changes in nutrient or base status.
Carrowbaun, Newhall And Ballylee Turloughs SAC	2293	Turloughs*	Nutrient enrichment and inappropriate grazing; drainage, peat cutting; marl extraction and quarrying.	Surface and Groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Changes in nutrient or base status.

- indicates priority habitat or species as listed under Annex 1 and Annex 2 respectively of the EU Habitats Directive.

Appendix 4:

Screening Assessment of Material Alterations to the draft LAP

1 Addendum Screening Report on proposed Material Alterations to the draft Loughrea Local Area Plan 2012 -2018.

1.1 Introduction

In accordance with Section 20(d) of the Planning and Development Acts, 2000-2010, notice is hereby given that Galway County Council are proposing Material Alterations to the Draft Loughrea Local Area Plan 2012-2018. These alterations have arisen following the review of the Manager's Report on submissions received during the public display period of the Draft Loughrea Local Area Plan 2012- 2018 by the Elected Members of the Council.

The purpose of this report is to consider whether the Material Alterations to the Local Area Plan will have any likely significant effects on European Sites, and as such, would therefore require an Appropriate Assessment (AA).

In accordance with the Planning & Development (Amendment) Act, 2010 and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011, the Draft Loughrea Local Area Plan was 'screened' for likely significant effects to European Sites in March 2012. The results of the Screening of the Draft Plan concluded that, without the implementation of mitigation, the Draft Plan had the potential to result in likely significant effects to European Sites. Following this conclusion a Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment of the Draft Plan was undertaken.

The Appropriate Assessment outlined a range of mitigatory policies and objectives, whose implementation would ensure the avoidance of likely significant effects to European Sites.

This screening report of the Material Alterations to the Draft Plan is undertaken with regard to the mitigatory policies and objectives outlined in the Appropriate Assessment of the Draft Plan.

The proposed Material Alterations to the Draft Local Area Plan are outlined in Table 1, presented in the order they appear in the Local Area Plan and should be read in conjunction with the Draft Loughrea Local Area Plan 2012-2018. The likely significant effects or potential impacts of all Alterations are screened and assessed in Table 1. Please also refer to the Material Amendments Map to locate the proposed rezonings.

This screening report concludes that these Material Alterations will not result in likely significant effects to European Sites. Therefore the Alterations to the Draft Loughrea Local Area Plan 2012-2018 do not warrant a Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment.



Table 2a: Material Alteration: Screening of Potential Effects to European Sites.

Alteration	Consideration
<p>Section 1.3.2 Statutory Process. Paragraph 2 and 3 as follows:</p> <p>Environmental assessments have also been undertaken to assess the potential impacts of the Local Area Plan on the environment and on European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network, including a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and a Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA).</p> <p>A HDA (also referred to as an ‘Appropriate Assessment’ or ‘AA’) is required to determine whether a plan or project will have a significant adverse effect, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, on the integrity of any European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 sites network, in view of its conservation objectives. In the case of Loughrea, this includes the Lough Rea candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA) and other European sites within 15km of the Local Area Plan area. The relevant recommendations and mitigation measures from the HDA process and Natura Impact Report have been incorporated into the Plan.</p>	<p>This text provides clarification and appropriate terminology in line with the EU Habitats Directive.</p> <p>It also outlines the requirements of the HDA process and the influence this has on the development of the LAP.</p> <p>The insertion of this text will not result in likely significant effects to European Sites.</p>
<p>Section 1.4.1 Plan Informants</p> <p>Strategic Planning Context</p> <p>the <i>Retail Planning Guidelines 2005/Draft Retail Planning Guidelines 2011 2012</i>.</p>	<p>This text updates the relevant retail planning guidelines.</p> <p>This change in the text to the LAP will not have the potential to result in likely significant effects to European Sites.</p>
<p>Heritage and Environment – Promoting and facilitating appropriate growth of the town,</p>	<p>Highlighting the European site Lough Rea cSAC/SPA provides additional clarity to potential applicants and the need to consider likely significant effects</p>

<p>while protecting the built, cultural and natural heritage of Loughrea in accordance with applicable legislation and policy. This also includes consideration of the environmental designations adjacent to and within the plan boundary (Lough Rea cSAC/SPA), some of which were partly zoned for residential and amenity uses in the previous Local Area Plan</p>	<p>to these sites.</p> <p>The insertion of this text is considered to be positive from the perspective of highlighting the need to protect European Sites. This text insertion will not have the potential to result in likely significant effects to European Sites.</p>
<p>Amend Objective DS3 and NH1 as follows:</p> <p>Protect European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network (including Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation) in accordance with the requirements in the EU <i>Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)</i>, EU <i>Birds Directive (2009/147/EC)</i>, the <i>Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010</i>, the <i>European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011)</i> (and any subsequent amendments or updated legislation) and having due regard to the guidance in the <i>Appropriate Assessment Guidelines 2010</i> (and any subsequent or updated guidance). A plan or project (e.g. proposed development) within the Plan Area will only be authorised after the competent authority (Galway County Council) has ascertained, based on scientific evidence, screening for appropriate assessment, and a Habitats Directive Assessment where necessary, that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The plan or project will not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 European site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects); or 2. The plan or project will have significant adversely ly-affect effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 European site (that does not host a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the 	<p>This textual changes are on foot on a submission by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, and again provide clarity and better reflect legislative terminology in the EU Habitats Directive.</p>

<p>protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000; or</p> <p>3. The plan or project will have significant adverse ly affect effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 European site (that hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, restricted to reasons of human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000.</p>	
<p>Objective LU15 – Residential Densities (refer to DM Guideline LU1) Promote a range of residential densities within the Plan Area appropriate to the prevailing development pattern, supporting infrastructure, urban character and heritage resources in accordance with the guidance in the <i>Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines 2009</i> (or any updated/superseding document). Higher residential densities should be encouraged at locations where it is appropriate to the existing context and density of the Plan Area, for example around the town centre and within convenient walking distance of public transport facilities, and where it will not unduly impact on built or natural heritage or impact adversely on the integrity of European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 sites network. The density of residential developments will generally be in accordance with the guidance set out under <i>DM Guideline LU1</i>, although the planning authority may consider higher residential densities where this is considered appropriate to the context and necessary to secure the urban design or other objectives of the Plan. Development will only be permitted where adequate infrastructural capacity and services can be provided.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
<p>Objective LU16 – Action Area Plans (refer to Map 2) Require the preparation of Action Area Plans for the development of strategic or significant lands. This will include development proposals in the following areas and other locations</p>	<p>1. This additional text is identified as generating positive impacts for the following EPOs:</p>

<p>where the Planning Authority considers it necessary or appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action Area Plan for the sensitive development of land in the vicinity and to the west of the north mound, the rear of main street, the mart and to the eastern end of the Carmelite fathers in consultation with landowners and relevant stakeholders. Action Area Plans for the integrated development of backlands to the rear of the primary streets of Loughrea. An Action Area Plan for the sensitive and appropriate development of industrial zoned lands at the western approach to the town with high quality building frontages and/or landscaping treatments along all public roads. <p>These Action Area Plans may be subject to Habitats Directive Assessment where appropriate, depending on the scale and intensity of development proposed and the likelihood of significant effects on the Lough Rea SPA/SAC or any other European site that forms part of the Natura 2000 site network.</p>	<p>Land 1, Land 3Pop 1</p> <p>For other EPOs, impacts are identified as being mitigated through existing Development Management Guidelines, and Policies and Objectives in the draft LAP.</p> <p>2. This textual changes are on foot on a submission by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, and again provide clarity and better reflect legislative terminology in the EU Habitats Directive.</p> <p>The insertion of this text will not have the potential to result in likely significant effects to European Sites.</p>
<p>Objective ED3 – Retail Development</p> <p>Support the development of appropriate types, scales and patterns of retail development in suitable locations within the town and high quality designs that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the vitality and viability of the existing town centre and associated main streets and/or do not undermine their vitality and viability. Protect investment in strategic roads and infrastructure and that are easily accessible, particularly in terms of public transport. Comply with the provisions of the <i>Retail Planning Guidelines 2005 2012</i> and <i>Draft Retail Planning Guidelines 2012</i> (and any updated/superseding documents, including the forthcoming Best Practice Design Manual), including the application of a sequential approach to retail development, the policies and objectives of any future Retail Strategy for Galway that may be adopted in the lifetime of the Local Area Plan and the guidance in the <i>Retail Design Manual 2012</i> (and any updated/superseding documents). Contribute to the creation of a high quality retail environment <p>The Town Centre (C1) zoning will remain the primary focus for the location of new retail development and on Commercial/Mixed Use (C2) zoning where appropriate. The Planning Authority will ensure that the location of future retail development is consistent with the</p>	<p>Additional text reflects the Retail Design Manual 2012.</p> <p>The insertion of this text will not have the potential to result in likely significant effects to European Sites.</p>

<p>key policy principles and order of priority as set out under Section 5.4 of in the <i>Draft Retail Planning Guidelines 2011-2012</i> (and any updated/superseding document) and will require Retail Impact Assessments, including details of the sequential approach, and, where considered necessary, Transport Impact Assessments and/or Design Statements, where appropriate, for retail developments in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines, the <i>Retail Design Manual</i> and DM Guideline ED1 and ED2.</p>	
<p>DM Guideline ED2 – Design Statements Design Statements may be required with planning applications for major retail proposals, retail proposals that are located within a sensitive area or as otherwise considered appropriate by the Planning Authority. Design Statements should address the issues raised in Section 6.4 5.3 of the <i>Draft-Retail Planning Guidelines 2011-2012</i> (and any updated/superseding document), including an appraisal of the character of the area adjoining the site and proposals for high quality design that integrates successfully with the context. Design Statements should also take account of the design and layout guidance set out in the forthcoming <i>Best Practice Retail Design Manual</i>.</p>	<p>Updates to text reflect the 2012 Retail Planning Guidelines.</p> <p>The insertion of this text will not have the potential to result in likely significant effects to European Sites.</p>
<p>Objective UI4 – Wastewater Disposal Restrict development that does not connect to the public sewer and discourage the proliferation of individual septic tanks and treatment plants in order to protect groundwaters, consolidate the town structure and control ribbon development along the approach roads into Loughrea. Ensure that any trade effluent from new development is managed properly and discharged to sewer in accordance with relevant discharge licenses, where appropriate.</p>	<p>This additional text is on foot on a submission from the EPA and aims to address trade effluent in addition to residential effluent.</p> <p>The insertion of this text will have an overall positive effect with regard to protecting the quality of waterbodies within the and surrounding the Plan area.</p> <p>The insertion of this text will have the potential to result in overall positive effects for European Sites.</p>
<p>Objective UI7 – Flood Risk Management and Assessment (refer to Map 3) Ensure the implementation of the DEHLG/OPW publication <i>Flood Risk Management</i></p>	<p>This textual changes are on foot on a submission by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, and again provide clarity and better reflect</p>

<p><i>Guidelines 2009</i> (or any updated/superseding document) in relation to flood risk management within the Plan Area. This will include the following ..</p> <p>(d)Where certain measures proposed to mitigate or manage the risk of flooding associated with new developments are likely to result in significant effects to the environment or Natura 2000 European sites downstream, such measures will undergo environmental assessment and Habitats Directive Assessment, as appropriate</p>	<p>legislative terminology in the EU Habitats Directive</p>
<p>Section 3.8.1 Context. Last Paragraph The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht’s full database of archaeological monuments can be accessed at www.archaeology.ie.</p>	<p>This additional text is on foot of a submission by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and provides additional information on relevant archaeological data sources.</p> <p>The insertion of this text is for informative purposes and will not result in likely significant effects to European Sites.</p>
<p>Objective BH13 – Local Place Names Protect local place names as an important part of the cultural heritage and unique character of the Plan Area. Support the use of appropriate names for new developments that reflect the character and heritage of the area and that contribute to the local distinctiveness of the village town. New developments will be required to consult with <i>Coiste Logainmneacha Chontae na Gaillimhe</i>, the Galway County Council ‘Placename Committee’, and to identify an appropriate name for new developments that reflect the local heritage and character of the area.</p>	<p>This change in the text of the draft Plan will not have the potential to result in likely significant effects to European Sites.</p>
<p>Section 3.9.1 Context</p>	<p>These textual changes are on foot on a submission by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, and aim to better reflect national legislative terminology.</p>

<p>Natural Heritage Areas and Associated Legislation</p> <p>The national designation for wildlife and nature conservation is the Natural Heritage Area (NHA), and designated established Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) are protected under the Wildlife (Amendment) Acts, 1976-2000. These areas are considered important for the habitats present or hold species of plants and animals whose habitat need protection under national legislation. NHAs and proposed NHAs may also be regarded as stepping stones or ecological corridors in the context of Article 10 of the EU Habitats Directive. Lough Rea is designated as a proposed NHA and the Local Area Plan includes policies and objectives to protect the site in accordance with applicable legislation and policy.</p>	<p>This text also aims to highlight the importance of NHAs and pNHAs in meeting the requirements of Article 10 of the EU Habitats Directive.</p> <p>The insertion of this text is positive overall for the future conservation of biodiversity.</p>
<p>Policy NH1 – Natural Heritage and Biodiversity</p> <p>It is the policy of Galway County Council to support the conservation and enhancement of natural heritage and biodiversity, including the protection of the integrity of European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 sites network, the protection of Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas and the promotion of the development of a green/ecological network within the Plan Area, in order to support ecological functioning and connectivity, create opportunities in suitable locations for active and passive recreation and to structure and provide visual relief from the built environment. The protection of natural heritage and biodiversity, including Natura 2000 European sites, will be implemented in accordance with relevant EU environmental directives and applicable national legislation, policies, plans and guidelines, including the following (and any updated/superseding documents):</p>	<p>These textual changes are on foot on a submission by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, and aim to better reflect the legislative terminology of the EU Habitats Directive and European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011.</p>
<p>Objective NH1 – proposed changes identical to text shown for Objective DS 3 above</p>	<p>Please see response to DS 3.</p>
<p>Objective NH2 – Protected Habitats and Species</p> <p>Support the protection of protected habitats and species listed in the annexes to and/or covered by the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC, as amended) and Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), and species that are protected under the Wildlife Acts, 1976-2000. This includes the protection of bats and their roosts, and the maintenance of woodland, hedgerows, treelines, ecological networks and corridors that serve as feeding areas, flight paths and commuting routes for bats</p>	<p>These textual changes are on foot on a submission by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, and aim to ensure that all species protected under both European and National legislation are included in Objective NH2.</p>
<p>Objective NH4 – Impact Assessment</p> <p>Ensure full compliance with the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) and EIA Directive (85/337/EEC) (2011/92/EU), and the</p>	<p>These textual changes are on foot on a submission by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, and reflects current legislative terminology with</p>

<p>associated legislation/ regulations, including the <i>European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011)</i>, <i>European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004-2011</i>, the <i>Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004-2011</i> and the <i>European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1989-2011</i> (or any updated/superseding legislation). Planning applications for proposed developments within the Plan Area that may give rise to likely significant effects on the environment and/or any designated site may need to be accompanied by one of more of the following: an Environmental Impact Statement, an Ecological Impact Assessment Report, a Habitats Directive Assessment Screening Report or a Natura Impact Statement, as appropriate. Ensure that Natura Impact Statements and any other environmental or ecological impact assessments submitted in support of proposals for development are carried out in accordance with best practice methodologies and contain all necessary baseline assessments.</p>	<p>respect to European Directives.</p>
<p>Objective NH5 – Biodiversity and Ecological Networks (refer to Map 2) Support the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and ecological connectivity within the Plan Area, including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, rivers, streams, natural springs, wetlands, stonewalls, geological and geo-morphological systems, other landscape features and associated wildlife where these form part of the ecological network and/or may be considered as ecological corridors or stepping stones in the context of Article 10 of the Habitats Directive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek to retain and/or incorporate these natural features into developments, in order to avoid ecological fragmentation and maintain ecological corridors and stepping stones. • Protect and enhance the water quality and ecology of St. Cleran’s River and its tributary to the east, and their function as ecological corridors, by maintaining the existing banks and channel and ensuring that new developments are set back at least 10m from the top of the bank of the stream. • Ensure greater biodiversity through the appropriate planting of native trees, shrubs and hedgerows indigenous to the Loughrea area and of Irish provenance in public and private areas and in new developments. 	<p>Reference to stepping stones and ecological corridors under Article 10 of the Habitats Directive is provided on foot of the submission by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.</p> <p>The addition of this text highlights the importance of ecological corridors in the context of Article 10 of the EU Habitats Directive. This text addition will have an overall positive effect for biodiversity.</p>
<p>Objective NH6 – Water Resources (refer to Map 2) Protect the water resources in the Plan Area, including Lough Rea, St. Cleran’s River, its tributaries and downstream waterbodies, other streams, springs, surface water and groundwater quality, in accordance with the requirements and guidance in the EU <i>Water</i></p>	<p>Additional clarity provided by reference to all relevant EU Directives.</p> <p>The inclusion of this text will ensure that all relevant legislation and policy guidance that aim to protect water resources will apply for the ongoing</p>

<p><i>Framework Directive 2000 (2000/60/EC), the European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (as amended) and the Western River Basin District Management Plan 2009-2015 and other relevant EU Directives, including associated national legislation and policy guidance (and any updated/superseding documents).</i> Support the application and implementation of a catchment planning and management approach to development and conservation, including the implementation of Sustainable Drainage System techniques for new development in the Plan Area.</p>	<p>protection of water resources in the Plan area.</p> <p>The inclusion of this text will have an overall positive impact for European Sites, water quality and the aquatic environment.</p>
<p>Objective NH11 – Consultation with Environmental Authorities Ensure that all development proposals are screened to determine whether they are likely to have a significant direct, indirect or cumulative effect on the integrity or conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 European site in view of its conservation objectives and, where significant effects are likely or uncertain, there will be a requirement for to prepare and submit a Natura Impact Statement, including prior consultation with the relevant environmental authorities as part of any Habitats Directive Assessment that may be required</p>	<p>These textual changes are on foot on a submission by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, and again provide clarity and better reflect legislative terminology in the EU Habitats Directive.</p>
<p>Land Use Zoning Changes</p>	<p>Consideration.</p>
<p>MA4. Change zoning from Agriculture to Industrial.</p>	<p>The proposed change in zoning from agriculture to industrial is located towards the northwest of the Plan area. It is not linked, via surface hydrological pathways to European Sites and is buffered from the Loughrea European Sites by the town of Loughrea.</p> <p>Considering the distance of this proposed zoning from the Loughrea European Sites other emissions such as air or noise are not likely to have a significant effect on the qualifying interest of these sites.</p> <p>However the draft NIR contains a number of mitigatory mechanisms to ensure that such impacts are avoided during the development of industrial facilities. These include Policy DS1; UI3; and NH1 along with Objectives DS3, UI4, UI5; UI6; UI9; UI10; UI11; NH1; NH5; NH6; and NH11.</p> <p>The application of these mitigatory measures will ensure that no future industrial developments within this change of zoning will result in likely significant effects to the conservation status of European Sites.</p>

<p>MA 9: Change zoning from Community Facilities to Residential Phase 2.</p>	<p>The area associated with the change of zoning from Community Facilities to Residential Phase 2 is located towards the northeast of the Plan area. No surface water hydrological pathways link this area to the Loughrea European Sites. This area is also buffered from these European Sites by the urban land cover of Loughrea town. This location and lack of surface hydrological pathways to these European Sites are likely to ensure that any future residential developments in this area will not result in likely significant effects to the conservation status of this Sites.</p> <p>However the draft NIR contains a number of mitigatory mechanisms to ensure that such impacts are avoided during the development of residential facilities. These include Policy DS1; UI3; and NH1 along with Objectives DS3, UI4, UI5; UI6; UI9; UI10; UI11; NH1; NH5; NH6; and NH11.</p> <p>The application of these mitigatory measures will ensure that no future residential developments within this change of zoning will result in likely significant effects to the conservation status of European Sites.</p>
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1.2 Screening Conclusion

The Material Alterations to the draft Loughrea Local Area Plan have been assessed for their potential to result in likely significant effects to European Sites in light of the mitigatory policies and objectives outlined in the draft Loughrea LAP. It is concluded that the Material Alterations to the draft Plan will not result in likely significant effects to European Sites. As such this Screening Assessment has resulted in a Finding of No Significant Effects and a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required.