

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING AND NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT

BSM

Est.
1968

**Brady Shipman
Martin**

**Built.
Environment.**

Environmental Assessment

Client:

Fáilte Ireland

Date:

16 October 2025

DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

7052_RPAA-01_Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

Project No. 7052
Client: Fáilte Ireland
Project Name: Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030
Report Name: Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement
Document No. RPAA-01
Issue No. 02
Date: 16/10/2025

This document has been issued and amended as follows:

| Issue | Status | Date | Prepared | Checked |
|-------|------------|-------------|----------|---------|
| 01 | Draft | 25 Jul 2025 | NK | MH |
| 02 | Final Plan | 16 Oct 2025 | NK | MH |

CONTENTS

| | | |
|-----|--|-----|
| 1 | Introduction..... | 1 |
| 1.1 | Background..... | 1 |
| 1.2 | Expertise and Qualifications | 1 |
| 1.3 | Legal requirement for Appropriate Assessment..... | 1 |
| 1.4 | Baseline data collection..... | 3 |
| 2 | Outline Description of the Plan..... | 5 |
| 2.1 | Introduction..... | 5 |
| 2.2 | Vision..... | 6 |
| 2.3 | Strategic Objectives..... | 7 |
| 2.4 | Destination Catalyst Projects & Enabling Projects Overview | 9 |
| 3 | Stage 1: Screening for Appropriate Assessment..... | 12 |
| 3.1 | Introduction..... | 12 |
| 3.2 | Potential Zone of Influence | 12 |
| 3.3 | Description of the Receiving Environment and the Potential Zone of Influence | 13 |
| 3.4 | Screening for Appropriate Assessment – Summary..... | 50 |
| 4 | Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment | 51 |
| 4.1 | Introduction..... | 51 |
| 4.2 | Potential impacts from the GCDEDP, including in-combination effects | 52 |
| 4.3 | Conservation objectives, threats and vulnerabilities of the European Sites..... | 87 |
| 4.4 | Mitigation measures..... | 87 |
| 4.5 | Summary and Conclusion | 101 |
| | Appendix 1 – Appropriate Assessment Determination | 102 |



1 Introduction

1.1 Background

This document comprises an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (AASR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS), prepared in order to support the Appropriate Assessment for the Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030 (hereafter referred to the 'Plan' or the 'GCDEDP') in line with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive and Article 42 of the European Communities (Birds and Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended (the Habitats regulations).

The potential impacts on European sites (also known as Natura 2000 sites), both as a result of the GCDEDP and in-combination with other plans and projects, are appraised in this report.

This report should be read in conjunction with the GCDEDP and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) – Environmental Report prepared by Brady Shipman Martin (2025).

1.2 Expertise and Qualifications

This Report has been prepared by Namrata Kaile, Ecologist and Environmental Consultant with Brady Shipman Martin. She holds a Bachelor's Degree (BSc) in Life Sciences from University of Delhi and a Master's Degree (MSc) with distinction in Environmental Sciences from Trinity College Dublin. She is a full member of Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM) and has been working professionally in the field of environmental consultancy for the last six years. Namrata is experienced in drafting and reviewing AA Screening Reports, EIA Screening Reports as well as in coordination of EIARs. She is also experienced in undertaking baseline ecological surveys and preparing Ecological Impact Assessments Reports (EclA).

A technical review of this document has been completed by Senior Ecologist and Associate, Matthew Hague BSc MSc Adv. Dip. Plan. & Env. Law CEnv MCIEEM. Matthew is a highly experienced and qualified ecologist, with a master's degree in Ecosystem Conservation and Landscape Management. He has over 20 years of experience in ecological and environmental consultancy, across a wide range of sectors. Matthew is a Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv) and a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM). Matthew has also completed an Advanced Diploma in Planning and Environmental Law, at King's Inns and is a member of the Irish Environmental Law Association (IELA).

1.3 Legal requirement for Appropriate Assessment

European sites make up a network of sites designated for nature conservation under Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the "Habitats Directive") and Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (the "Birds Directive"). The requirements for Appropriate Assessment are set out under *Article 6 of the Habitats Directive*, transposed into Irish law by the *European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended)* (the "Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations") and the *Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended)* (the "Planning Acts").

European sites are also known as Natura 2000 Sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)). As defined in section 177R of the Planning Acts “European site” means:

- (a) a candidate site of Community importance,
- (b) a site of Community importance,
- (ba) a candidate special area of conservation,
- (c) a special area of conservation,
- (d) a candidate special protection area and
- (e) a special protection area.

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive states that:

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

The first test is to establish whether, in relation to a particular plan or project, appropriate assessment is required. Article 42(1) of the Habitats Regulations requires that the AA screening test must be applied to the Plan, as follows:

42. (1) Subject to Regulation 42A, a screening for Appropriate Assessment of a plan or project for which an application for consent is received, or which a public authority wishes to undertake or adopt, and which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site as a European Site, shall be carried out by the public authority to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge and in view of the conservation objectives of the site, if that plan or project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects is likely to have a significant effect on the European site.

An appropriate assessment is required if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the development (plan or project), individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site.

1.3.1 Stages in the Appropriate Assessment Process

European Commission guidance (2021)¹ sets out the principles on how to undertake decision making in applying the Habitats Directive. The requirements of the Habitats Directive comprise three distinct stages”:

Stage One: Screening - The first part of the procedure consists of a pre-assessment stage (‘screening’) to ascertain whether the plan or project is directly connected with, or necessary to,

¹ [Assessment of Plans and Projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6\(3\) and \(4\) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC \(European Commission Environment Directorate-General, September 2021\)](#)

the management of a Natura 2000 site, and, if this is not the case, then whether it is likely to have a significant effect on the site (7) (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) in view of the site's conservation objectives. Stage one is governed by the first part of the first sentence of Article 6(3).

Stage Two: The Appropriate Assessment - If likely significant effects cannot be excluded, the next stage of the procedure involves assessing the impact of the plan or project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) against the site's conservation objectives, and ascertaining whether it will affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 site, taking into account any mitigation measures. It will be for the competent authorities to decide whether or not to approve the plan or project in light of the findings of the appropriate assessment. Stage two is governed by the second part of the first sentence and the second sentence of Article 6(3)..

Stage Three: Derogation from Article 6(3) under certain conditions - The third stage of the procedure governed by Article 6(4). It only comes into play if, despite a negative assessment, the developer considers that the plan or project should still be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest. This is only possible if there are no alternative solutions, the imperative reasons of overriding public interest are duly justified, and if suitable compensatory measures are adopted to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected.

1.4 Baseline data collection

This report takes the following guidance documents into account:

- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine, September 2018, updated in September 2019 (V1.1), April 2022 (V1.2 and September 2024 (V1.3);*
- Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) (2010a). *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities;*
- DoEHLG (2010b). *Circular NPW 1/10 & PSSP 2/10: Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities;*
- European Commission (2021). *Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites- Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC;*
- European Commission (2018). *Managing Natura 2000 sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC;*
- Directorate – General for Environment (European Commission), (2021). *Guidance document on the strict protection of animal species of Community Interest under the Habitats Directive;*
- National Roads Authority (NRA)² (2009). *Guidelines for Assessment of Ecological Impacts of National Road Schemes;*
- Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) (2021). *Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management;*
- National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) (2021). *Guidance for Public authorities on the Application of Articles 12 and 16 of the EU Habitats Directive to development/works undertaken by or on behalf of a Public authority.*

² Now Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII).

Information was collated from the organisations and websites listed below:

- Data on European sites and rare and protected plant and animal species contained in the following databases:
 - The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (www.NPWS.ie);
 - The National Biodiversity Data Centre (NDBC) (www.biodiversityireland.ie);
 - BirdWatch Ireland (www.birdwatchireland.ie);
 - Bat Conservation Ireland (www.batconservationireland.org).
- Information on land-use zoning from the online mapping of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (<http://www.myplan.ie/en/index.html>);
- Recent and historical OSi mapping and aerial photography, including www.geohive.ie;
- Information on local watercourses from www.catchments.ie;
- Information on water quality in the area (www.epa.ie);
- Information on soils, geology and hydrogeology in the area (www.gsi.ie);
- Information on the Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland (Article 17 report) (NPWS, August 2019);
- Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030 (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2024);
- Galway City Development Plan 2023 – 2029 and the accompanying reports;
- Galway County Development Plan 2022 – 2028 and the accompanying reports.

The report takes full account of the details of the GCDEDP and a detailed examination of all relevant elements was undertaken. The Strategic Environmental Assessment – Environmental Report (Brady Shipman Martin, 2025) was also reviewed in the preparation of this report.

A desk-based assessment of the receiving environment was undertaken, and this focussed on habitats and species that are listed as Qualifying Interests (QI) (in the case of SACs) and Special Conservation Interests (SCI) (in the case of SPAs) for European sites. An assessment of habitat suitability for species with links to European sites was undertaken, in order to appraise the potential for *ex-situ* effects on European sites.

2 Outline Description of the Plan

2.1 Introduction

The Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan (GCDEDP) is a five-year sustainable tourism development plan for Galway City and Salthill. The GCDEDP represents a multi-stakeholder approach focused on growing the economic value of tourism and increasing the length of stay in the city. The approach within the plan recognises the important tourism linkages between the Galway City and County experience and will work with other regional DEDPs such as Connemara Coast & Aran Islands DEDP, Burren DEDP, etc.

The Galway City DEDP has been developed with the aim of dispersing Visitors across the city by increasing the range of things to do and see. It will provide visitors with more reasons to stay longer in the city and increase visitor spend in the day and evening time. Future product development in areas such as activities and day time experiences will strengthen the appeal of the city within the domestic visitor market. The international visitor focus will be on growing the value per visitor and growing their length of stay.

A programme of research and consultation was undertaken to inform the development of the Galway City DEDP. The research analysis is summarised through the V.I.C.E. model (Visitor, Industry, Community and Environment) for sustainable tourism.

The key objectives of the plan are:

- *Grow annual revenues from international and domestic visitors to Galway City and increase the value of tourism for the destination.*
- *Progress projects that will disperse tourists across the city beyond the current city centre 'hotspot'.*
- *Motivate visitors to explore Galway's coastal and urban communities through increased levels of collaboration among existing tourism networks and develop the year-round appeal of Galway neighbourhoods.*
- *Growing the number of saleable visitor experiences available during the day while protecting the city's status as a vibrant night-time destination.*
- *Grow the appeal of Galway City in the domestic leisure and the family markets by leveraging the investment in outdoor activities.*
- *Maximise the large scale capital investment in visitor attractions and activities to broaden the appeal of Galway City among range of visitor segments.*
- *Pursue product development opportunities that build on the city's reputation for culture, arts, festivals and events.*
- *Establish Galway as an international food destination and hub for major events and festivals.*
- *Enhance the role of Galway City as driver of tourism in county Galway and influencing visitor flows across the Wild Atlantic Way.*

Furthermore, four strategic destination development objectives have been identified for the next five years. These will address emerging destination opportunities and address tourism development challenges, including critical infrastructure, identified in the consultation and research process. The four destination strategic development pillars are as follows:

- ***Developing the Day Time Visitor Experiences*** - *Capitalise on the large scale investment in the Galway Museum and examine opportunities for new indoor and outdoor day time visitor experiences.*

- **Linking City, Village and Neighbourhoods** - Disperse visitors throughout the city by linking the City, Salthill Village and Galway Neighbourhoods building on the uniqueness of Galway communities and City Neighbourhoods as part of the city experience.
- **Galway City of Tribes: Culture, Festivals & Events** – Grow the number of visitor experiences and adopt the theme of the City of Tribes, Culture and Creativity to differentiate the Galway visitor experience and build on the Capital of Culture legacy.
- **Atlantic & Galway Waters** – Build on the heritage of Galway as a maritime city to create opportunities for the visitor to engage with our Atlantic and Galway waters.

The GCDEDP aims for the following ‘Target Outcomes’:

- Increased levels of visitor dispersion across the city.
- Growth in the number of day and evening time visitor experiences.
- Investment in visitor attractions and activities growing the appeal of the destination in international and domestic markets.
- Active tourism networks growing the profile and appeal of Galway City neighbourhoods.
- Growth in the city's activity base to strengthen the appeal in the family market.
- Elevated status as a Bilingual City and a point of differentiation in the Galway visitor experience.
- Development of the structures to support and sustain an authentic calendar of festivals and events.
- Galway City is a celebrated food destination for casual, locally sourced urban dining experiences.
- Agreed approach to sustainable tourism development embraced by our visitors, tourism industry and local community.

The Plan adopts a sustainable tourism approach and focuses on the following aspects:

- Position Galway City as a national and international leader in sustainable urban destination development; economically, socially, culturally and environmentally.
- Sustainably manage visitor pressure to balance tourism growth and the protection of natural and cultural resources.
- Provide great visitor experiences highlighting the destinations sustainability values.
- Ensure a coherent approach to sustainability and enhance local capabilities to develop new sustainable visitor experiences
- Support the development of more accessible and inclusive tourism experiences and employment opportunities.
- Connect visitors to destination sustainability at every stage of the visitor journey.
- Balance long term sustainability with economic value for Galway City.
- Highlight destination co-responsibility in addressing climate change and other sustainable challenges, and protection and enhancement of our biodiversity.
- Work with all stakeholders and industry partners to support the reduction of carbon emissions, increase the use of clean energy and reduce waste.
- Ensure sustainable tourism growth contributes to the economic well-being and social fabric of the communities in Galway City.
- Engage our Galway City communities with tourism and build awareness of the benefits tourism brings to the city, county and region.

2.2 Vision

The Destination Vision for GCDEDP 2034 is:

‘A city that dances to its own rhythm, Galway blends the raw beauty of the Atlantic with a carnival-like atmosphere that makes every visit an adventure. From its cobbled streets to its

vibrant neighbourhoods, visitors can partake in numerous indoor and outdoor experiences where they can engage with Galway's creativity, its colour and its love of the unexpected. Festivals celebrating music, art, culture and food bring locals and visitors together in a place where bohemian spirit meets coastal charm. Galway is also deeply committed to protecting and enhancing its natural environment, embracing eco-tourism, sustainable practices, and initiatives that create net positive benefits for both nature and local communities. Galway effortlessly blends age old traditions with modern science and technology creating a constantly evolving energy that visitors love. Water continues to define how this city lives from the River Corrib to Galway Bay and the canals in between telling the story of our merchant past and our maritime future. Gaillimh proudly shares its bilingual identity where visitors will come away with cúpla focail and an understanding that gaeilge is a living language here. Galway is not just a city, it's the beating heart of the West.'

2.3 Strategic Objectives

Regional Tourism Development Plans 2023-2027 (RTDS) have been developed for each of Fáilte Ireland's four Regional Experience Brands (Ireland's Ancient East, Wild Atlantic Way, Dublin and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands). These plans provide the strategic framework for other tourism development strategies, such as, Destination and Experience Development Plans (DEDPs) and County Tourism Strategies. The GCDEDP has been developed to contribute to the overarching regional objectives for the Wild Atlantic Way.

The strategic objectives for the GCDEDP are based on the Strategic Objectives of the Wild Atlantic Way Regional Tourism Development Strategy (RTDS). A number of strategic objectives have been identified to achieve the vision for Galway City & Salthill and contribute to the development of the Wild Atlantic Way.

The Plan is structured around the following strategic objectives:

1. Strategic Objective 1: Grow the year-round appeal of the Wild Atlantic Way domestically and internationally ensuring the area attracts and disperses high value visitors into and throughout the region.

- 1.1. Deliver on the ambition to become the tourism capital of the Wild Atlantic Way.
- 1.2. Grow the mix and range of saleable visitor experiences that appeal to domestic and international visitors on a year round basis.
- 1.3. Implement a creative approach to wayfinding and visitor orientation that motivates wider exploration of the city experience and Galway City neighbourhoods.
- 1.4. Attract Business Events to Galway supporting tourism business availability and complementing the typical leisure patterns due to their off-peak and midweek patterns.
- 1.5. Develop the indoor visitor attraction and permanent event infrastructure in Galway to sustain the year round appeal of the destination.
- 1.6. Maximise the investment in the Galway Museum to become a signature attraction for Galway City.
- 1.7. Examine the feasibility of developing an additional signature attraction for Galway City.

2. Strategic Objective 2: Increase tourism revenue, visitor dispersion and season extension across the Southern half of the Wild Atlantic Way.

- 2.1. Develop Galway as an international festivals and events city, recognised for the quality of programming and diversity of events.
- 2.2. Leverage the uniqueness of Galway's profile for creativity and culture into new placemaking projects and future urban regeneration investment.
- 2.3. Develop Galway's profile for food in tourism by developing new food experiences and establishing an iconic focal point in the city for food experiences.
- 2.4. Maximise the economic partnership opportunities to develop distinctive and creative visitor experiences that communicate Galway's status as an international economic destination e.g. Medtech, University City, Sciences.
- 2.5. Grow the value of business events to Galway by maximising existing city infrastructure and ensuring future event infrastructure investment contributes to the international appeal of the city for the MICE sector.

3. Strategic Objective 3: Protect the authenticity and "wildness" of the Wild Atlantic Way.

- 3.1. Grow the inclusion of the Irish language into the Galway City visitor experience and develop the tourism opportunity presented by the city's Gaeltacht status.
- 3.2. Continue to grow the appeal of the Galway Neighbourhoods to introduce visitors to the authenticity of the Galway people and community.
- 3.3. Develop the visitor experience at iconic Galway sites throughout the city that convey the authentic Galway City story.
- 3.4. Embrace the maritime heritage of the city and coastal community to deliver an innovative approach to water based experiences.
- 3.5. Maximise the uniqueness of the blended city, Galway Bay and Atlantic coast and how the Salthill coastal village experience is integrated into the city neighbourhoods approach.

4. Strategic Objective 4: Enable and assist the industry to grow its capacity and capability so that it can thrive over the period of this plan.

- 4.1. Develop sustainable tourism projects to showcase, protect and enhance the special character of Galway City's urban natural heritage, in partnership with local stakeholders and compliance with relevant European and National legislation, and local authority biodiversity action plans.
- 4.2. Build the digital capabilities of the tourism industry as part of the destinations approach to sustained demand generation.
- 4.3. Develop an industry wide approach to deliver a brand communications programme that resonates with the domestic and international market.
- 4.4. Enhance the capabilities of tourism networks and industry groups to work together in developing Galway City as an international tourism destination.
- 4.5. Develop new collaborative approaches around maximising the impact of festivals and events in the city.

| |
|---|
| <p>4.6. Collectively embrace sustainability as a destination priority and become recognised as a leader for sustainable urban tourism, creating better places to live and visit while ensuring our natural environment is protected and respected.</p> <p>4.7. Create new partnerships within the destination to package Galway cultural experiences with the city's accommodation network.</p> |
| <p>5. Strategic Objective 5: Foster strong coalitions of industry and stakeholders with a common purpose in developing Galway City as a flourishing destination supporting thriving communities.</p> |
| <p>5.1. Work with all stakeholders to ensure the tourism opportunity for Galway is reflected across future urban regeneration projects.</p> <p>5.2. Disperse the value of tourism across the city through a community and Galway City neighbourhood approach.</p> <p>5.3. Foster economic partnerships that highlight the depth of creativity across the city from its University status to being the home of a world class industry and innovation cluster.</p> <p>5.4. Embrace sustainability and creative approaches to climate action through a partnership approach ensuring a positive impact on our community and visitors.</p> <p>5.5. Maximise business events for the destination as a mechanism to deliver greater impact on local communities. Collectively position Galway as a thriving business hub that promotes knowledge sharing and innovation, driving enhanced networking, competitiveness and productivity.</p> |

2.4 Destination Catalyst Projects & Enabling Projects Overview

The strategic development pillars (Section 2.1) will be activated by eight destination catalyst projects that include developing the Galway Museum experience as signature attraction in the city, developing vibrant Galway Neighbourhoods and improving visitor orientation across the city. It will examine the opportunity for the development of an indoor Food Market and incorporating the city's status as a Bilingual City into the visitor experience. Additional catalyst projects include the development of vision and masterplan for Leisureland, establishing Galway City as a national festivals and events hub and undertaking feasibility analysis to develop a Galway Municipal Arts and Culture venue.

The Galway City DEDP is delivered over a five-year period through an action plan which also includes an additional number of projects that will build on the potential of the eight destination catalyst projects. These projects will work towards creating more saleable visitor experiences and building the skills and capabilities of the tourism industry and local networks.

The catalyst projects and their objectives are as follows:

Project 1 Galway Museum and City Attractions – *Maximise the investment in the Galway Museum to become a key attraction for Galway.*

Project 2 Vibrant Galway Neighbourhoods – *Develop the capabilities of the Galway City tourism networks to build on the uniqueness and character of their neighbourhoods to deliver unique day and evening time city experiences.*

Project 3 Destination Visitor Orientation – *Develop a destination wide approach to visitor orientation that motivates visitors to explore the city neighbourhoods, city attractions and disperse the economic benefits of tourism across the city.*

Project 4 Food Market / Food Hall - *Develop an indoor food market in Galway City to contribute to its reputation as an international food destination*

Project 5 Bilingual City - *Grow the visibility of the Irish language as part of the Galway city visitor experience and leverage the uniqueness of the Bilingual City status.*

Project 6 Festivals and Events – *Establish Galway City as Ireland's Festivals and Events hub supported by the resources and infrastructure required to sustain year round programming.*

Project 7 Culture Venue / Arts Focal Point - *Undertake a site options assessment and feasibility analysis to develop a Galway Municipal Arts and Culture venue.*

Project 8 Galway Waters Experience - *Deliver a co-ordinated approach to enhance and develop Galway's water themed experiences and attractions.*

Underpinning these destination projects are a number of destination supporting projects (enablers) that will support the development of the tourism industry, local communities and other stakeholders. These are projects and supports that will enhance the destination's capacity to recover and achieve future growth. They also address the gaps that can strengthen the destination's ability to work towards achieving year-round visitor footfall. The destination supporting projects include improving industry capabilities, a focus on the family market, developing clusters and building on the rich culture of the region and its unique programme of festivals and events.

Destination enablers are a series of projects that are required to support destination development and prepare the destination for emerging opportunities that will occur following product investment in the city. The destination enabling projects include a focus on developing the capabilities of the tourism industry in areas such as digital, experience development and ensuring an international sales focus. It includes specific activity around the food in tourism opportunity for the city and enhancing the profile of the city's food network. Existing visitor attractions will be encouraged to consider new experience development opportunities and grow their appeal to new audiences.

A programme of training activity will prepare the tourism industry for opportunities presented by large scale investment in the city that has the potential to be transformational. These include Woodquay Urban Regeneration, Galway Docks, the Greenway and Galway City Blueway.

Expanding the range and volume of accommodation options will be a key consideration over the coming years. Integrating creativity into the Galway visitor experience will be central to how Galway City experiences are delivered. This will include all facets of the visitor experience from how visitor orientation is developed to ensuring a differentiated approach to placemaking across the city.

The eight enabler projects include:

Enabler 1 City of Tribes Stories & Saleable Experiences - *Increasing the number of saleable experiences available for visitors across the city to grow the value of the day and evening time tourism economy for Galway City.*

Enabler 2 Tourism Industry & Network Development - *Develop the capabilities and skills of the tourism industry in the areas of embracing digital platforms, saleable experience development, cluster development and network development.*

Enabler 3 Galway Food Destination - *Leverage Galway's reputation and profile for food and become recognised as a national food in tourism destination animated by great food experiences.*

Enabler 4 Urban Green and Blue Activities - *Develop Galway's urban outdoor activity experience profile by maximising the investment in the PFG 2 - Facilities Centres for Water Sports Activities and Terryland River Corrib - River Facilities, the Greenway and the Galway City Blueway.*

Enabler 5 Accommodation - *Working with the public and private sector to grow the accommodation stock across Galway City to enhance its role as a hub for the wider county and regional destination.*

Enabler 6 Regional DEDP Collaboration – *Ensure a consistent approach between all DEDP's and how they impact on the visitor experience. Regional DEDP collaboration will focus on increasing the value of tourism and the role of Galway City as an access point for neighbouring destinations.*

Enabler 7 Business Tourism - *Continue to develop the appeal of Galway City as a business tourism destination working in partnership with local industry and the Galway Convention Bureau.*

Enabler 8 Sustainable Tourism - *Develop a collective destination wide approach to sustainable tourism and ensure we protect the special character of Galway City's urban natural heritage.*

The complete list of catalyst project, enabling projects and actions are provided and assessed in **Section 4.2.4**.

3 Stage 1: Screening for Appropriate Assessment

3.1 Introduction

The first part of the Appropriate Assessment process is the Screening phase. Screening identifies the likely effects of the GCDEDP on European sites that could arise, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, and considers whether these impacts are likely to have a significant effect on the European site in view of the site's conservation objectives.

As per Section 1.3 and in accordance with Article 42 of the Habitats regulations, screening for appropriate assessment must be carried out. Screening must be undertaken without the inclusion of mitigation and it is in this context that this AA Screening Report is prepared.

Following screening therefore, if there is a possibility of there being a significant effect on a European site, this will generate the need for an appropriate assessment for the purposes of compliance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. This means that if the conclusions at the end of the screening exercise are that significant effects on any European sites, as a result of the GCDEDP, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, are likely, uncertain or unknown, then an Appropriate Assessment must be carried out. This is in accordance with established precedent and case law.

3.2 Potential Zone of Influence

This assessment is based on the source-pathway-receptor model, which dictates that, for an effect to occur, there must be a 'source' (such as a construction site); a 'receptor' (such as a designated site for nature conservation); and a 'pathway' between the two (such as a watercourse). A construction site or completed development may also create a barrier to movement, for example, by preventing the migration of fauna along a river corridor, or by obstructing the migration of birds.

Identification of a potential effect means that there is a possibility of ecological or environmental damage occurring, with the level and significance of the impact depending upon the nature and exposure to the potential effect and the characteristics of the receptor. Although there may be a risk of an impact, it may not necessarily occur, and if it does occur, it may not be significant. In other words, the existence of a source, a pathway and a receptor does not necessarily mean that a significant effect is likely.

There are no set recommended distances for projects to consider European sites as being relevant for assessment. DoEHLG (2010a, pp. 31 – 32) states that:

“The approach to screening is likely to differ somewhat for plans and projects, depending on scale and on the likely effects, but the following should be included:

1. Any Natura 2000 sites within or adjacent to the plan or project area
2. Any Natura 2000 sites within the likely zone of impact of the plan or project. A distance of 15km is currently recommended in the case of plans, and derives from UK guidance (Scott Wilson et al., 2006). For projects, the distance could be much less than 15km, and in some cases less than 100m, but this must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with reference to the nature, size and location of the project, and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, and the potential for in combination effects

3. *Natura 2000 sites that are more than 15km from the plan or project area depending on the likely impacts of the plan or project, and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, bearing in mind the precautionary principle. In the cases of sites with water dependent habitats or species, and a plan or project that could affect water quality or quantity, for example, it may be necessary to consider the full extent of the upstream and/or downstream catchment."*

The 2021 OPR guidelines, *Practice Note PN01: Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management*, state that the Zone of Influence "should be established on a case-by-case basis using the Source-Pathway-Receptor framework and not by arbitrary distances (such as 15 km)" (p. 8).

Therefore, considering the nature, scale and location of the GCDEDP, and in accordance with the source-pathway-receptor model, the potential Zone of Influence for the GCDEDP includes any site to which there is a potential for impacts, as set out in the following sections.

3.3 Description of the Receiving Environment and the Potential Zone of Influence

The description of the receiving environment presented in this section has been based on a desktop study of relevant available information, as cited in the text.

The *Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028* states the following:

VEDP 1 Visitor Experience Development Plans - To support the preparation and implementation of Visitor Experience Development Plans (VEDPs) in the county and to underpin the overarching tourism benefits and to promote the natural and cultural assets of the county.

The *Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029* states the following:

Policy 6.8 Tourism Sector (7.) Support the preparation and implementation of the forthcoming Regional Tourism Strategies and the continued collaboration with Fáilte Ireland and tourism stakeholders to ensure successful implementation and delivery of these tourism plans.

The Regional Tourism Development Strategies 2023-2027 published by Fáilte Ireland provide a framework for sustainable tourism development across Ireland and include Regional Tourism Strategies for Ireland's Ancient East, Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Hidden Heartlands and Dublin. The Regional Tourism Development Strategies will be activated across every region through a series of local area action plans, referred to as Destination and Experience Development Plans (DEDPs). Under the Wild Atlantic Way Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027, there is a requirement to prepare DEDP for Galway City.

Therefore, as detailed previously the study area for this report includes Galway City and Salthill and the environmental aspects are described in the sections below.

Biodiversity plays a significant role in the provision of clean air, water, healthy soils and food as well as visually contributing to a plan area with its natural beauty and heritage. The diverse green and blue infrastructure network offer many opportunities for Tourism, Culture, Recreation and Leisure. The Landscape and Seascape also contributes to its wider setting, creating a unique sense of place.

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

management of these areas through land use planning and development policies. Ecological networks are important in connecting areas of local biodiversity with each other and with nearby designated sites so as to prevent islands of habitat from being isolated entities. They are composed of linear features, such as treelines, hedgerows and rivers / streams which provide corridors or stepping stones for wildlife species moving within their normal range.

Ecological corridors are important for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species, particularly for mammals, bats and small birds and facilitate linkages both between and within designated ecological sites, non-designated surrounding countryside and the more urban areas within the study area.

3.3.1 Designated European Sites

Within the study area, there are a number of areas designated for protection under the Natura 2000 network. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are legally protected under the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and are selected for the conservation of Annex I habitats and Annex II species. Special Protection Areas are protected under the European Union Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds 2009/147/EC.

All designated European Sites located within the study area are listed in **Table 3.1** below. There are further SPAs and SACs within the Zone of Influence (Zoi) of the study area listed in **Table 3.2** below.

Conservation objectives for SACs and SPAs have been set for the habitats and species for which the sites have been selected. Site specific detailed conservation objectives are available on the NPWS website³.

Table 3.1 European sites located within the study area

| Site Code | Special Protection Area (SPA) | Site Code | Special Area of Conservation (SAC) |
|-----------|-------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------------|
| 004042 | Lough Corrib SPA | 000297 | Lough Corrib SAC |
| 004031 | Inner Galway Bay SPA | 000268 | Galway Bay Complex SAC |

Table 3.2 European sites located within the potential zone of influence of the study area

| Site Code | Special Protection Area (SPA) | Site Code | Special Area of Conservation (SAC) |
|-----------|-------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------|
| 004181 | Connemara Bog Complex SPA | 001312 | Ross Lake and Woods SAC |
| 004142 | Cregganna Marsh SPA | 001271 | Gortnandarragh Limestone Pavement SAC |
| 004089 | Rahasane Turlough SPA | 002034 | Connemara Bog Complex SAC |
| 004107 | Coole-Garryland SPA | 000479 | Cloughmoyne SAC |
| 004168 | Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA | 000996 | Ballyvaughan Turlough SAC |
| | | 000020 | Black-Head Poulsallagh Complex SAC |
| | | 000054 | Moneen Mountain SAC |

³ NPWS website 2019: <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/conservation-management-planning/conservation-objectives>

| Site Code | Special Protection Area (SPA) | Site Code | Special Area of Conservation (SAC) |
|-----------|-------------------------------|------------------|--|
| | | 001926 | East Burren Complex SAC |
| | | 002294 | Cahermore Turlough SAC |
| | | 000238 | Caherglassaun Turlough SAC |
| | | 000252 | Coole-Garryland Complex SAC |
| | | 002295 | Ballinduff Turlough SAC |
| | | 000286 | Kiltartan Cave (Coole) SAC |
| | | 002293 | Carrowbaun, Newhall and Ballylee Turloughs SAC |
| | | 002117 | Lough Coy SAC |
| | | 000318 | Peterswell Turlough SAC |
| | | 000606 | Lough Fingall Complex SAC |
| | | 001285 | Kiltieman Turlough SAC |
| | | 002244 | Ardrahan Grassland SAC |
| | | 000242 | Castletaylor Complex SAC |
| | | 000322 | Rahasane Turlough SAC |
| | | 002352 | Monivea Bog SAC |
| | 001321 | Termon Lough SAC | |

3.3.2 Nationally Designated Sites

Nationally Designated Sites include *Natural Heritage Areas* (NHAs) which are legally protected areas that are considered important for their habitats or which holds species of plants and animals whose habitat needs protection. *Proposed Natural Heritage Areas* (pNHAs) are also of significance for wildlife and habitats but have not yet been statutorily designated. However, under the Wildlife Amendment Act (2000) NHAs are legally protected from damage from the date they are formally proposed for designation⁴.

Refer to **Tables 3.3** and **3.4** and **Figure 3.2** below for the NHAs and pNHAs within the study area and within the zone of influence of the study area.

Table 3.3 Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) within the study area and potential zone of influence

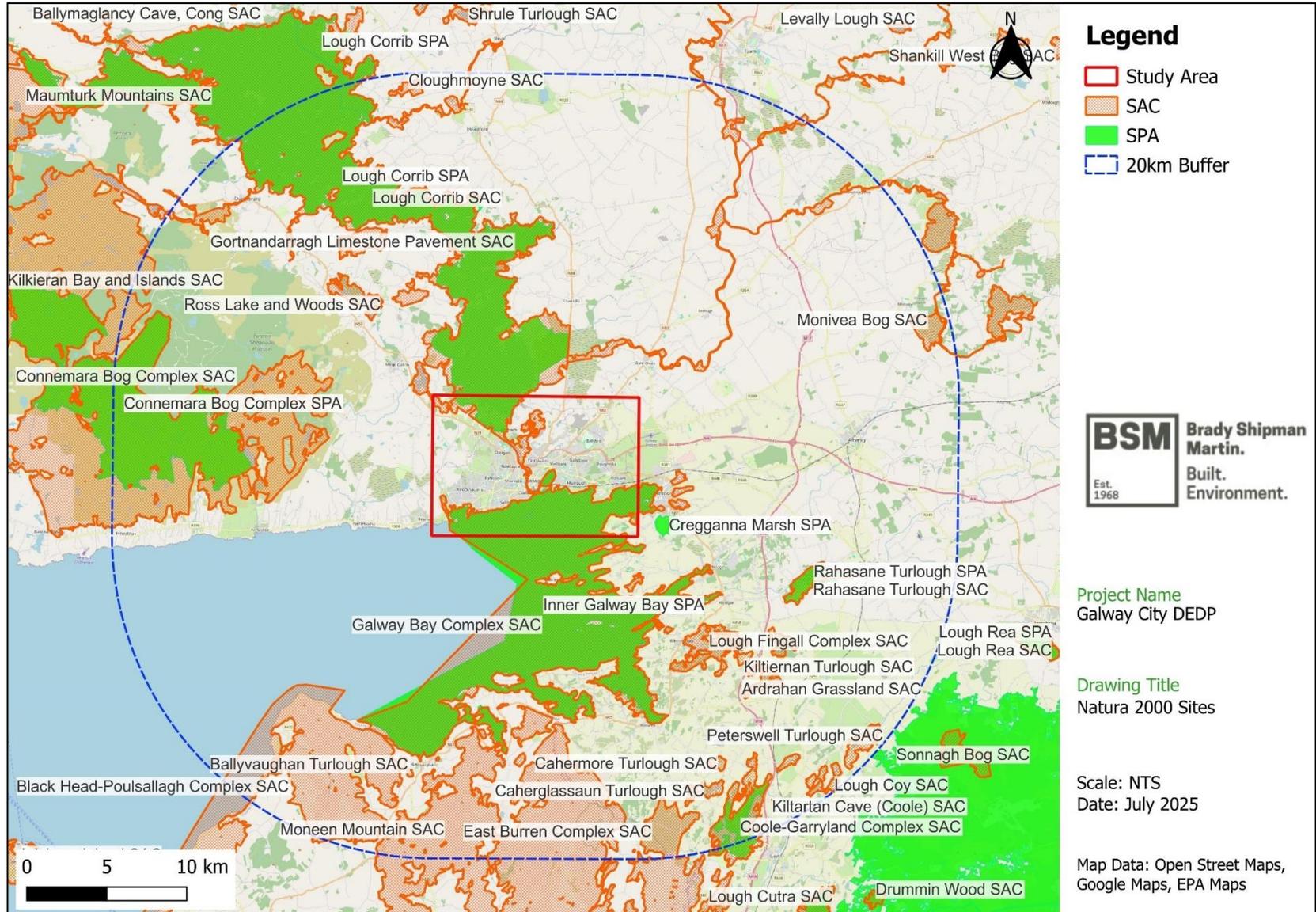
| Site Code | Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) within study area | Site Code | Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) within potential zone of influence |
|-----------|---|-----------|--|
| 002364 | Moycullen Bogs NHA | 000253 | Cregganna Marsh NHA |
| | | 002431 | Oughterard District Bog NHA |
| | | 001280 | Killaclogher Bog NHA |

⁴ NPWS website 2019: <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/nha>

Table 3.4 Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) within the study area and potential zone of influence

| Site Code | Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) within study area | Site Code | Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) within zone of influence |
|-----------|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| 000297 | Lough Corrib pNHA | 001267 | Furbough Wood pNHA |
| 000268 | Galway Bay Complex pNHA | 002034 | Connemara Bog Complex pNHA |
| 000287 | Kiltullagh Turlough pNHA | 000228 | Ballycuirke Lough pNHA |
| | | 002083 | Killarainy Lodge, Moycullen pNHA |
| | | 001260 | Drimcong Wood |
| | | 001312 | Ross Lake and Woods pNHA |
| | | 001271 | Gortnandarragh Limestone Pavement pNHA |
| | | 002082 | Oughterard National School pNHA |
| | | 000479 | Cloughmoyne pNHA |
| | | 000385 | Rostaff Turlough pNHA |
| | | 001788 | Turloughcor pNHA |
| | | 001322 | Turlough Monaghan pNHA |
| | | 001294 | Lough Hacket pNHA |
| | | 002038 | Castle Hackett Souterrain pNHA |
| | | 001288 | Knockmaa Hill pNHA |
| | | 000331 | Turlough O’Gall pNHA |
| | | 000234 | Belclare Turlough pNHA |
| | | 001709 | Tiaquin Bog pNHA |
| | | 000311 | Monivea Bog pNHA |
| | | 000322 | Rahasane Turlough pNHA |
| | | 000242 | Castletaylor Complex pNHA |
| | | 000606 | Lough Fingall Complex pNHA |
| | | 001285 | Kiltieman Turlough pNHA |
| | | 000318 | Peterswell Turlough pNHA |
| | | 000286 | Kiltartan Cave (Coole) pNHA |
| | | 000252 | Coole-Garryland Complex pNHA |
| | | 000238 | Caherglassaun Turlough pNHA |
| | | 001926 | East Burren Complex pNHA |
| | | 000071 | Turloughnagullaun pNHA |
| | | 000054 | Moneen Mountain pNHA |
| | | 000996 | Ballyvaughan Turlough pNHA |
| | 000020 | Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex pNHA | |

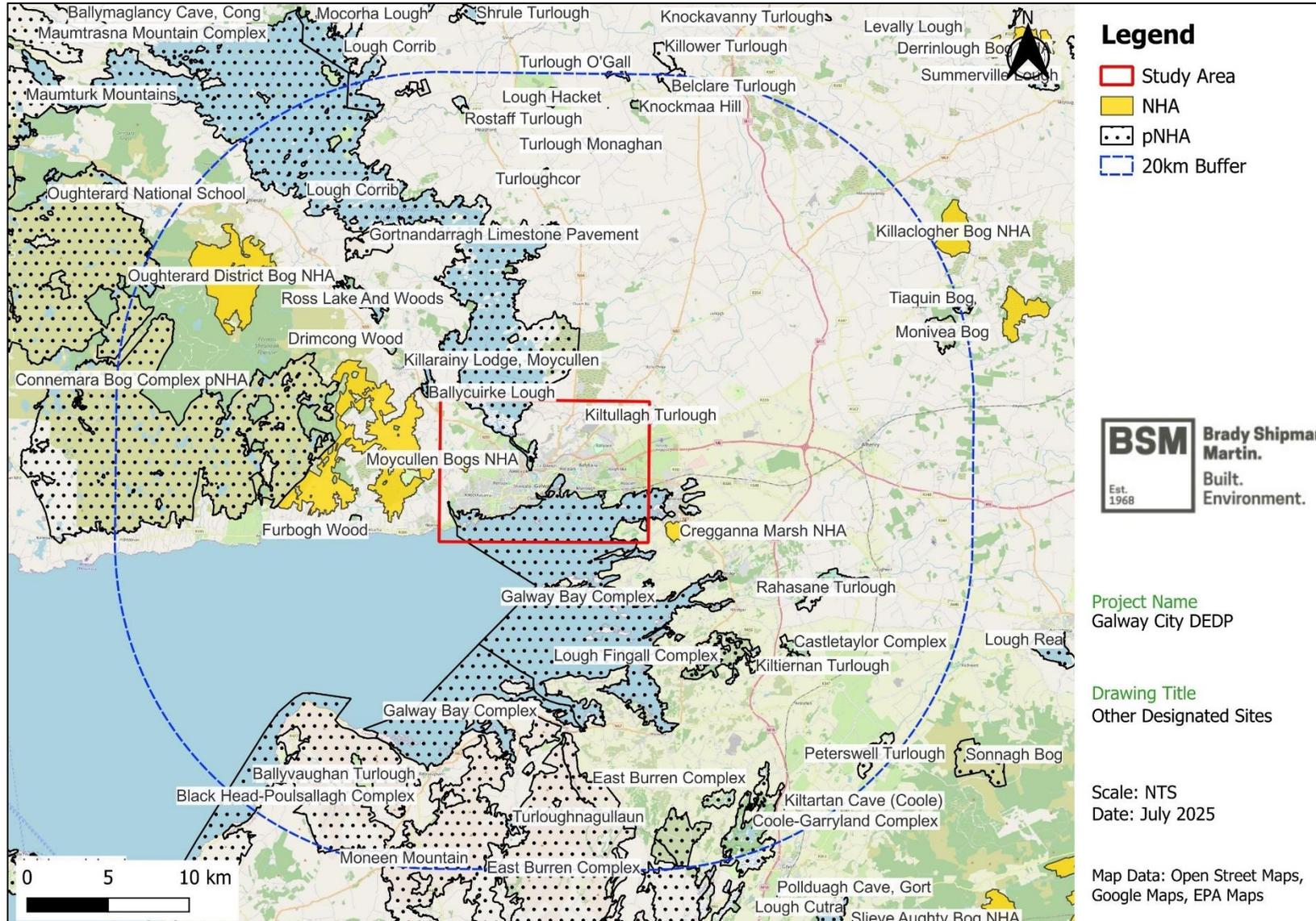
Figure 3.1 European Sites within the study area and in the surrounding potential zone of influence



Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

Figure 3.2 Other Designated Sites within the study area and in the surrounding potential zone of influence



3.3.3 Hydrology

The latest *Water Quality in Ireland* report 2016-2021 was published by the EPA in 2022. This report contains the most up-to-date and comprehensive assessment of the ecological health of Ireland's groundwater, rivers, lakes, canals, transitional waters and coastal waters following the completion of the first six-year cycle of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD⁵). The results shows that a considerable amount of work is still required to meet the environmental objectives of the WFD.

Water Quality in 2023, An Indicators Report was published by the EPA in 2024 and it states that –

- *The proportion of rivers in satisfactory biological condition is relatively unchanged since 2018 and there is no indication yet of an improvement.*
- *Of the 1,459 river water bodies monitored in 2022 and 2023 there has been a further small net decline in biological quality of 45, with the number of declines (232) exceeding the number of improvements (187).*
- *There has been a slight decline in the proportion of lakes with satisfactory (high and good) biological quality, driven by a reduction in the number of lakes with high biological quality.*

The status of the **river waterbodies** in the study area range from 'poor' to 'good'. The status of the **lake waterbodies** within the study area have 'Good' status and includes Menlough (IE_WE_30_290 – Good) and Corrib Lower (IE_WE_30_666a – Good).

The **coastal WFD waterbody** within the study area includes Inner Galway Bay North (IE_WE_170_0000) which has a 'Good' status. Outer Galway Bay (IE_WE_100_0000) is located adjacent to the study area and has a 'High' status (2016-2021). Inner Galway Bay South (IE_WE_160_0000) is located outside the study area to the south of the Inner Galway Bay North and has a 'High' status (2016-2021). The **transitional WFD waterbodies** within the study area includes Corrib Estuary (IE_WE_170_0700) which has a 'Moderate' Status (2016-2021) and Oranmore Bay (IE_WE_170_0500) the status for which is 'Unassigned'. Refer to **Figures 3.3** and **3.4**.

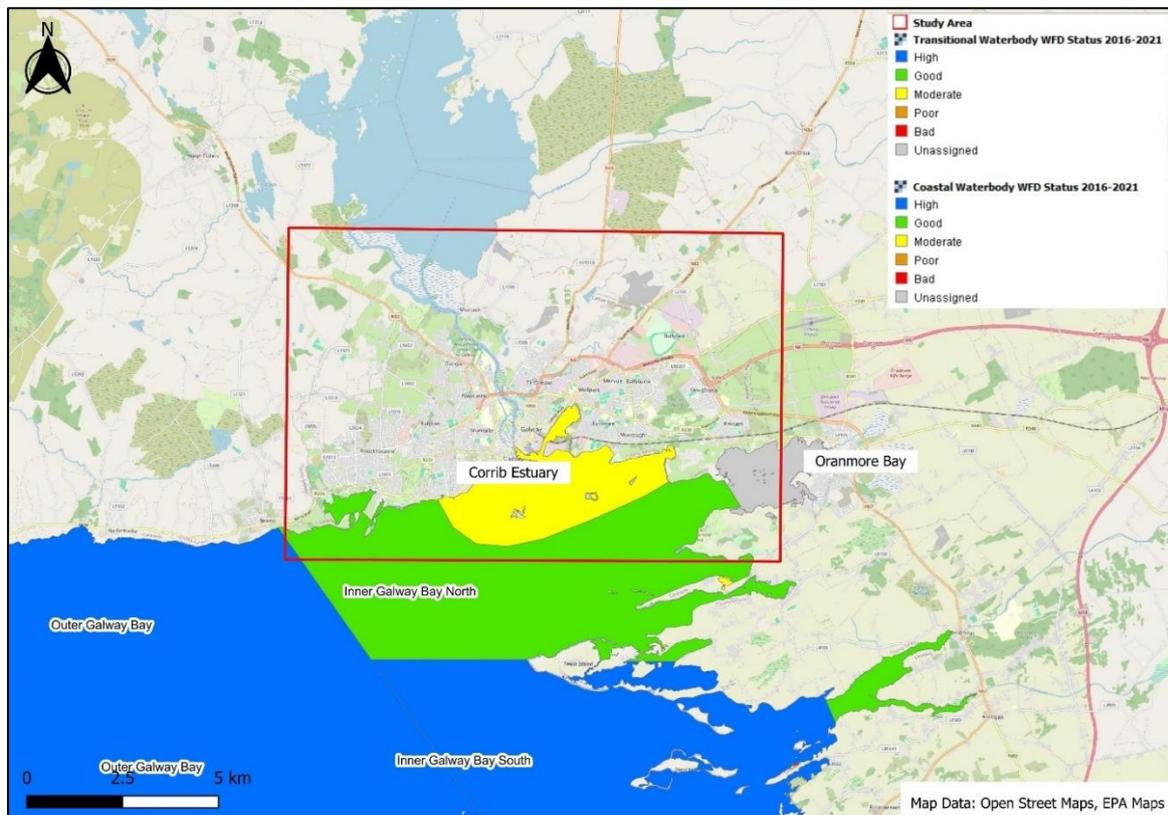
The study area covers the following WFD catchments – Corrib (30), Galway Bay South East (29) and Galway Bay North (31) and also the following sub-catchments – Corrib_SC_010 (30_18), Ballycuirke Lough Stream_SC_010 (30_14), Knock [Furbo]_SC_010 (31_7), Carrowmoneash [Oranmore]_SC_010 (29_6) and Clare [Galway]_SC_070 (30_4). The greatest pressures on these catchments are due to agriculture, domestic and urban wastewater, hydromorphological pressures, industry, peat and invasive species.

⁵ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/water/water-framework-directive_en

Figure 3.3 WFD River Waterbody Status 2016-2021⁶



Figure 3.4 WFD Transitional and Coastal Waterbody Status 2016-2021



⁶ EPA Water Quality Data - <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

Groundwater Quality Status between 2016 and 2021 was generally ‘good’ across the groundwater bodies within the study area with the exception of Waste Facility (W0013-01) (IE_WE_G_0084 - Poor) to the north and Industrial Facility (P0056-01) (IE_WE_G_0117 – Poor), c. 1km to the east of the study area. The groundwater vulnerability within the study area ranges from ‘moderate’ to ‘extreme’.

A number of these protected areas are present within study area and these are as follows:

- WFD RPA Nutrient Sensitive Areas (Lake, Coastal & Transitional waterbodies) – none within study area or immediate vicinity.
- WFD RPA Nutrient Sensitive Areas (Rivers) – none within study area or immediate vicinity.
- WFD RPA Shellfish Areas – none within study area. Shellfish areas in close vicinity include: Clarinbridge/Kinvara Bay (IE_WE_160_0000), The Bay at Aughinish (IE_WE_130_0000) and Ballyvaughan/Poulnaclough Bay (IE_WE_110_0000).
- Salmonid Rivers – Corrib (IE_WE_30C020600).

3.3.3.1 Designated Shellfish Waters

The *EU Shellfish Waters Directive* (2006/113/EC) aims to protect and improve shellfish waters in order to support shellfish life and growth.

Pollution reduction programmes are in operation for these areas. The identified pressures on these designated waters include urban wastewater systems, on-site wastewater treatment systems and port activities. The coastal waters provide an important resource, supporting and generating employment and recreational activities and must be protected.

There are no areas of Shellfish waters within the study area. However, areas in the vicinity of the study area include - Clarinbridge/Kinvara Bay (IE_WE_160_0000), The Bay at Aughinish (IE_WE_130_0000) and Ballyvaughan/Poulnaclough Bay (IE_WE_110_0000).

3.3.3.2 Salmonid Waters

The *Salmonid Regulations* (S.I. No. 293 of 1988) designate the waters capable of supporting salmon (*Salmo salar*), trout (*Salmo trutta*), char (*Salvelinus*) and whitefish (*Coregonus*) as protected. Thirty-four rivers, tributaries and lakes are listed and protected under these Regulations that prescribe quality standards for salmonid waters, sampling programmes and methods of analysis and inspection to be used by local authorities to determine compliance with the standards.

Only one of the rivers within the study area is designated Salmonid Water under the EU Freshwater Fish Directive - Corrib (IE_WE_30C020600).

3.3.4 Other Designations

RAMSAR Sites

Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention⁸. Wetlands are important ecosystems, which improve water quality, provide storm protection, flood mitigation, stabilise shorelines, maintain biodiversity, and provide natural products such as fish and shellfish. Ireland presently has 45no. RAMSAR sites. There is only one Ramsar site located within the study area – Inner Galway Bay (838). This site provides a shallow sheltered part of a large sea bay with numerous intertidal inlets and small low islands composed of glacial deposits and provides important

⁷ EPA Groundwater Quality Data - <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>

⁸ <https://www.ramsar.org/>

habitat for marine life along the coast. The site supports the richest seaweed flora on the Irish Coast and 65% of the Irish marine algal flora occur in the area. The site supports internationally and nationally important numbers of numerous species of waterbirds.

Relevant authorities are expected to manage their Ramsar Sites so as to maintain their ecological character and retain their essential functions and values for future generations.

Wildfowl Sanctuaries

Wildfowl sanctuaries are areas that have been excluded from the 'Open Season Order' so that game birds can rest and feed undisturbed. There are 68 no. sanctuaries in the State⁹. Shooting of game birds is not allowed in these sanctuaries. The Lough Rusheen (WFS-62) wildfowl sanctuary is within the study area. There is another sanctuary within County Galway – Moyne (WFS-63).

Nature Reserves

Other nature conservation designations are *Statutory Nature Reserves*, which are protected under Ministerial order. There are no nature reserves within the study area. However, the nearest Nature Reserves include –

- Coole-Garryland Park - The Coole-Garryland reserve contains a variety of floral habitats including well-formed high forest on deep pockets of soil, dwarf woodland on limestone pavement and a turlough complex in the Callows and Coole Lake. These two reserves, through their combination of deciduous woods, limestone reefs, lakes and turloughs, constitute one of the most interesting Irish vegetation and faunal complexes still in existence.
- Keelhilla (Slieve Carron) – This site is a good example of karst topography containing three distinct vegetation communities i.e. woodland, scrub grassland and pavement.
- Leam West Bog - The bog is of international importance. It is an area of very diverse blanket bog developed over both acid and base rich rocks at the north east limit of the Connemara blanket bogs. It forms part of one of the largest areas of intact bog in Connemara and it is one of the few sites containing both lowland and highland bog. A large number of habitats occur including rock outcrops, bog pools, extremely wet quaking areas, streams and relatively nutrient rich flushes.

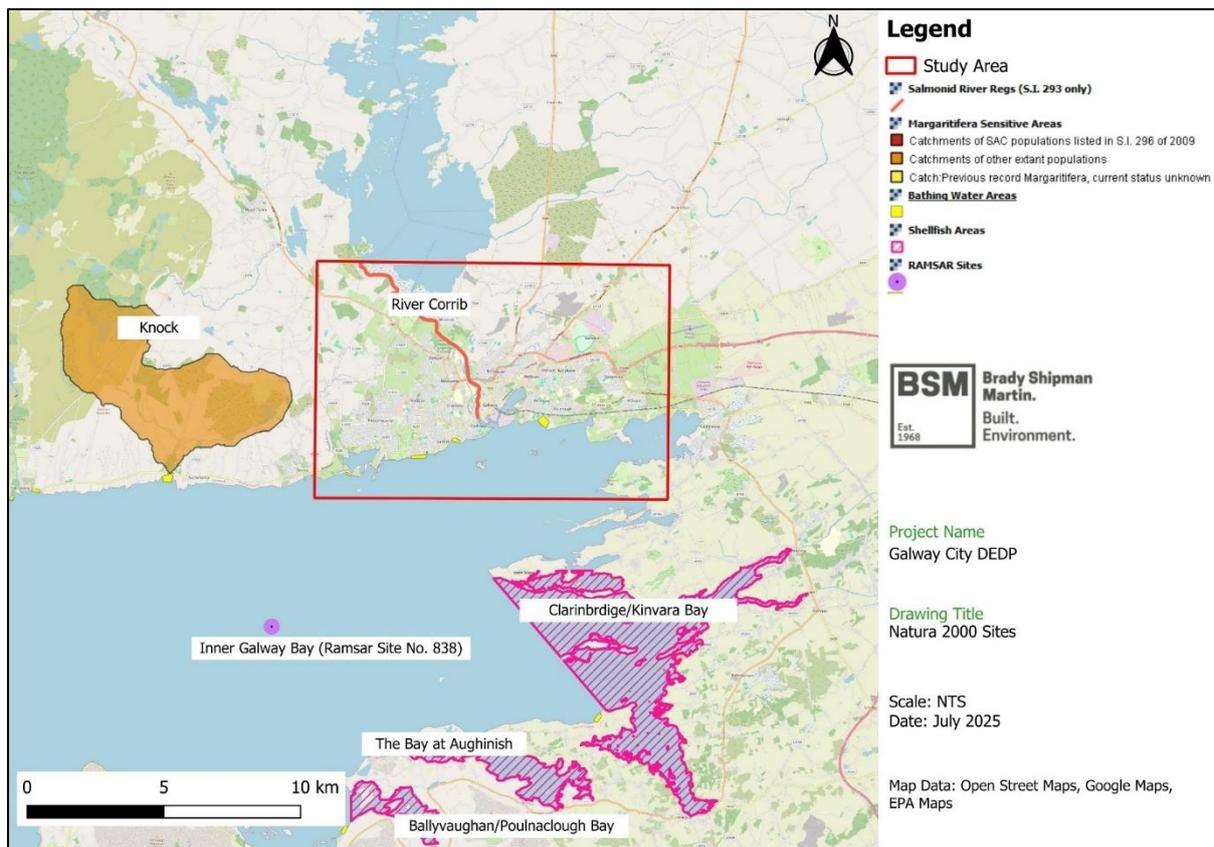
Margaritifera Sensitive Area

Freshwater pearl mussel is a globally threatened, long-lived and extremely sensitive species that can be impacted by many forms of pollution, particularly sediment and nutrient pollution and by hydrological and morphological changes, which may arise from developments, activities or changes in any part of the catchment. There are two species of freshwater pearl mussel in Ireland (*Margaritifera margaritifera* and *Margaritifera durrovensis*) and both are protected under Annex II and Annex V of the EU Habitats Directive. The Margaritifera Sensitive Areas found closest to the study area include – Knock and Corrib-Owenriff.

Refer to **Figure 3.5**.

⁹ NPWS (2021).

Figure 3.5 Other Designated Sites within study area and in the surrounding area



3.3.5 Potential for significant effects on Natura 2000 sites

The effects that could arise from the GCDEDP have been examined in the context of several factors that could potentially affect the integrity of any European site, see **Table 3.6** below.

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

Table 3.6 Potential for significant effects on designated sites in the potential Zone of Influence

| European Site (Site Code) | Reasons for designation (information correct as of September 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat) | Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects | Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In) |
|--|---|--|--|
| European sites within the study area | | | |
| Lough Corrib SPA (site code 004042), within the study area | <p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A051 Gadwall (<i>Anas strepera</i>) ■ A056 Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) ■ A059 Pochard (<i>Aythya farina</i>) ■ A061 Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) ■ A065 Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) ■ A082 Hen Harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>) ■ A125 Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>) ■ A140 Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) ■ A179 Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) ■ A182 Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) ■ A193 Common Tern (<i>Sterna Hirundo</i>) ■ A194 Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) ■ A395 Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) ■ A999 Wetlands | <p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is within the GCDEDP area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP.</p> | Yes |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| European Site (Site Code) | Reasons for designation (information correct as of September 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat) | Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects | Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In) |
|---|---|--|--|
| | <p>According to the SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 27 January 2023), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species and wetland habitat listed as SCI's for this SPA.</p> | | |
| <p>Lough Corrib SAC (site code 000297), within the study area</p> | <p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1029 Freshwater Pearl Mussel (<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>) ■ 1092 White-clawed Crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>) ■ 1095 Sea Lamprey (<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>) ■ 1096 Brook Lamprey (<i>Lampetra planeri</i>) ■ 1106 Salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>) ■ 1303 Lesser Horseshoe Bat (<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>) ■ 1355 Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) ■ 1393 Slender Green Feather-moss (<i>Drepanocladus vernicosus</i>) ■ 1833 Slender Naiad (<i>Najas flexilis</i>) | <p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is within the GCDEDP area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP.</p> | <p>Yes</p> |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| European Site (Site Code) | Reasons for designation (information correct as of September 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat) | Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects | Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In) |
|---------------------------|--|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 3110 Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) ■ 3130 Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the Littorelletea uniflorae and/or Isoeto-Nanojuncetea ■ 3140 Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp. ■ 3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation ■ 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) ■ 6410 <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) ■ 7110 Active raised bogs ■ 7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration | | |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| European Site (Site Code) | Reasons for designation (information correct as of September 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat) | Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects | Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In) |
|--|--|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion ■ 7210 Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the Caricion davallianae* ■ 7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)* ■ 7230 Alkaline fens ■ 8240 Limestone pavements * ■ 91A0 Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles ■ 91D0 Bog woodland* <p>According to the SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 28 April 2017), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p> | | |
| Inner Galway Bay SPA (site code 004031), within the study area | <p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A003 Great Northern Diver (<i>Gavia immer</i>) | Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased | Yes |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| European Site (Site Code) | Reasons for designation (information correct as of September 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat) | Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects | Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In) |
|---------------------------|---|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A002 Black-throated Diver (<i>Gavia arctica</i>) ■ A017 Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) ■ A028 Grey Heron (<i>Ardea cinerea</i>) ■ A046 Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) ■ A050 Wigeon (<i>Anas Penelope</i>) ■ A052 Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) ■ A056 Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) ■ A069 Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) ■ A137 Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) ■ A140 Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) ■ A142 Lapwing (<i>Vanellus Vanellus</i>) ■ A149 Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>) ■ A157 Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) ■ A160 Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) ■ A162 Redshank (<i>Tringa tetanus</i>) ■ A169 Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) ■ A179 Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) | <p>risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is within the GCDEDP area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP.</p> | |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| European Site (Site Code) | Reasons for designation (information correct as of September 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat) | Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects | Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In) |
|--|--|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A182 Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) ■ A191 Sandwich Tern (<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>) ■ A193 Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) ■ A999 Wetlands <p>According to the SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 01 May 2013), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species and wetland habitat listed as SCI's for this SPA.</p> | | |
| Galway Bay Complex SAC (site code 000268), within the study area | <p>The Qualifying Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide ■ 1150 Coastal lagoons* ■ 1160 Large shallow inlets and bays ■ 1170 Reefs ■ 1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks ■ 1310 <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand ■ 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) | <p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is within the GCDEDP area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP.</p> | Yes |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| European Site (Site Code) | Reasons for designation (information correct as of September 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat) | Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects | Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In) |
|---------------------------|--|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1355 Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) ■ 1365 Harbour seal (<i>Phoca vitulina</i>) ■ 1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) ■ 3180 Turloughs* ■ 5130 <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands ■ 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco Brometalia)(*important orchid sites) ■ 7210 Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the Caricion davallianae* ■ 7230 Alkaline fens ■ 8240 Limestone pavements* <p>According to the SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 16 April 2013), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p> | | |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| European Site (Site Code) | Reasons for designation (information correct as of September 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat) | Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects | Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In) |
|--|--|--|--|
| European sites within the potential zone of influence of the study area | | | |
| Cregganna Marsh SPA (site code 004142), c. 1.1 km to the east of the study area | <p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A395 Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) <p>According to the SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 27 January 2023), for the listed SCI, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird specie listed as SCI for this SPA.</p> | <p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 1.1km to the east of the study area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP.</p> | Yes |
| Connemara Bog Complex SPA (site code 004181), c. 11.3 km to the west of the study area | <p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A017 Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) ■ A098 Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>) ■ A140 Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) ■ A182 Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) <p>According to the SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 27 January 2023), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or</p> | <p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c.11.3km to the west of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP.</p> | No |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| European Site (Site Code) | Reasons for designation (information correct as of September 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat) | Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects | Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In) |
|---|---|---|--|
| | restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as SCIs for this SPA. | | |
| Rahasane Turlough SPA (site code 004089), c. 9.9 km to the south-east of the study area | <p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A038 Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) ■ A050 Wigeon (<i>Anas Penelope</i>) ■ A140 Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) ■ A156 Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) ■ A395 Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) ■ A999 Wetlands <p>According to the SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 27 January 2023), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species and wetland habitat listed as SCIs for this SPA.</p> | <p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c.9.9km to the south-east of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP.</p> | No |
| Coole-Garryland SPA (site code 004107), c. 17.2km | The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are: | Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction | No |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| European Site (Site Code) | Reasons for designation (information correct as of September 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat) | Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects | Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In) |
|--|---|--|--|
| to the south-east of the study area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A038 Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) <p>According to the SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 07 February 2025), for the listed SCI, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as SCI for this SPA.</p> | <p>works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c.17.2km to the south-east of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP.</p> | |
| Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA (site code 004168), c. 20.2 km to the south-east of the study area | <p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A082 Hen Harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>) ■ A098 Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>) <p>According to the SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 20 December 2022), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as SCIs for this SPA.</p> | <p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c.20.2km to the south-east of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP.</p> | No |
| Ross Lake and Woods SAC (site code 001312), c. 6.0 km to the north-west of the study area | <p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1303 Lesser Horseshoe Bat (<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>) | <p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased</p> | No |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| European Site (Site Code) | Reasons for designation (information correct as of September 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat) | Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects | Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In) |
|---|---|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 3140 Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp <p>According to the SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 18 October 2018), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p> | <p>risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c.6.0km to the north-west of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP.</p> | |
| <p>Gortnandarragh Limestone Pavement SAC (site code 001271), c. 9.5 km north-west to the study area</p> | <p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 8240 Limestone pavements* <p>According to the SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 17 April 2019), for the listed QI, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p> | <p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c.9.5km to the north-west of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP</p> | <p>No</p> |
| <p>Connemara Bog Complex SAC (site code 002034), c. 6.6 km to the west of the study area</p> | <p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1065 Marsh Frillary (<i>Euphydryas aurinia</i>) ■ 1106 Salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>) ■ 1150 Coastal lagoons* | <p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> | <p>No</p> |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| European Site (Site Code) | Reasons for designation (information correct as of September 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat) | Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects | Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In) |
|---------------------------|---|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1170 Reefs ■ 1355 Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) ■ 1833 Slender Naiad (<i>Najas flexilis</i>) ■ 3110 Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae) ■ 3130 Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the Littorelletea uniflorae and/or Isoeto-Nanojuncetea ■ 3160 Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds ■ 3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation ■ 4010 Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> ■ 4030 European dry heaths ■ 6410 <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) ■ 7130 Blanket bogs (* if active bog) ■ 7140 Transition mires and quaking bogs | <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c.6.6km to the west of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP.</p> | |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| European Site (Site Code) | Reasons for designation (information correct as of September 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat) | Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects | Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In) |
|---|--|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion ■ 7230 Alkaline fens ■ 91A0 Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles <p>According to the SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 28 October 2015), for the listed QI, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p> | | |
| Cloughmoyne SAC (site code 000479), c. 18.8 km to the north of the study area | <p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 8240 Limestone pavements* <p>According to the SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 17 April 2019), for the listed QI, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p> | <p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 18.8km to the north of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP.</p> | No |
| Ballyvaughan Turlough SAC (site code 000996), c. | <p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> | <p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction</p> | No |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| European Site (Site Code) | Reasons for designation (information correct as of September 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat) | Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects | Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In) |
|--|--|---|--|
| 14.8 km to the south of the study area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 3180 Turloughs* <p>According to the SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 15 January 2021), for the listed QI, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p> | <p>works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 14.8km to the south of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP.</p> | |
| Black-Head Poulisallagh Complex SAC (site code 000020), c. 11.2 km to the south-west of the study area | <p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1170 Reefs ■ 1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks ■ 1395 Petalwort (<i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i>) ■ 2130 Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)* ■ 3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation ■ 4060 Alpine and Boreal heaths ■ 5130 <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands ■ 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco Brometalia)(*important orchid sites) | <p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 11.2km to the south-west of the study area and there is a hydrological connectivity to the study area via Galway Bay. Therefore, there is potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP.</p> | Yes |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| European Site (Site Code) | Reasons for designation (information correct as of September 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat) | Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects | Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In) |
|---|--|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 6510 Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) ■ 7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) ■ 8240 Limestone pavements ■ 8330 Submerged or partially submerged sea caves <p>According to the SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 21 May 2014), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p> | | |
| Moneen Mountain SAC (site code 000054), c. 11.8 km to the south of the study area | <p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1065 Marsh Fritillary (<i>Euphydryas aurinia</i>) ■ 1303 Lesser Horseshoe Bat (<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>) ■ 3180 Turloughs* ■ 4060 Alpine and Boreal heaths ■ 5130 <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands ■ 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous | <p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 11.2km to the south-west of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP.</p> | No |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| European Site (Site Code) | Reasons for designation (information correct as of September 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat) | Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects | Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In) |
|---|---|--|--|
| | <p>substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)* ■ 8240 Limestone pavements* <p>According to the SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 20 December 2021), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p> | | |
| East Burren Complex SAC (site code 001926), c. 11.8 km to the south of the study area | <p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1065 Marsh Fritillary (<i>Euphydryas aurinia</i>) ■ 1303 Lesser Horseshoe Bat (<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>) ■ 1355 Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) ■ 3140 Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp. ■ 3180 Turloughs* ■ 3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculus fluitans</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation | <p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 11.8km to the south of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP.</p> | No |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| European Site (Site Code) | Reasons for designation (information correct as of September 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat) | Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects | Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In) |
|---------------------------|---|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 4060 Alpine and Boreal heaths ■ 5130 <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands ■ 6130 Calaminarian grasslands of the <i>Violetalia calaminariae</i> ■ 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) ■ 6510 Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) ■ 7210 Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the Caricion <i>davallianae</i>* ■ 7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>)* ■ 7230 Alkaline fens ■ 8240 Limestone pavements* ■ 8310 Caves not open to the public ■ 91E0 Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>)* <p>According to the SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 18 January 2022), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or</p> | | |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| European Site (Site Code) | Reasons for designation (information correct as of September 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat) | Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects | Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In) |
|---|---|---|--|
| | restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected. | | |
| Cahermore Turlough SAC (site code 002294), c. 14.8 km to the south-east of the study area | <p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 3180 Turloughs* <p>According to the SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 22 January 2021), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p> | <p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 14.8km to the south-east of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP.</p> | No |
| Caherglassaun Turlough SAC (site code 000238), c. 16.2 km to the south-east of the study area | <p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1303 Lesser Horseshoe Bat (<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>) ■ 3180 Turloughs* ■ 3270 Rivers with muddy banks with <i>Chenopodium rubri</i> p.p. and <i>Bidenton</i> p.p. vegetation <p>According to the SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 31 October 2018), for each of the listed QIs, the</p> | <p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 16.2km to the south-east of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP.</p> | No |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| European Site (Site Code) | Reasons for designation (information correct as of September 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat) | Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects | Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In) |
|---|--|---|--|
| | <p>Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p> | | |
| <p>Coole-Garryland Complex SAC (site code 000252), c. 15.8 km to the south-east of the study area</p> | <p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1303 Lesser Horseshoe Bat (<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>) ■ 3150 Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation ■ 3180 Turloughs* ■ 3270 Rivers with muddy banks with <i>Chenopodium rubri</i> p.p. and <i>Bidention</i> p.p. vegetation ■ 5130 <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands ■ 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) ■ 8240 Limestone pavements* ■ 91J0 <i>Taxus baccata</i> woods of the British Isles* | <p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 15.8km to the south-east of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP.</p> | <p>No</p> |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| European Site (Site Code) | Reasons for designation (information correct as of September 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat) | Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects | Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In) |
|---|--|---|--|
| | According to the SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 02 July 2024), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected. | | |
| Ballinduff Turlough SAC (site code 002295), c. 17.0 km to the south-east of the study area | <p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 3180 Turloughs* <p>According to the SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 22 January 2021), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p> | <p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 17.0km to the south-east of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP.</p> | No |
| Kiltartan Cave (Coole) SAC (site code 000286), c. 18.5 km to the south-east of the study area | <p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1303 Lesser Horseshoe Bat (<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>) ■ 8310 Caves not open to the public <p>According to the SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 24</p> | <p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> | No |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| European Site (Site Code) | Reasons for designation (information correct as of September 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat) | Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects | Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In) |
|---|---|---|--|
| | October 2018), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected. | This Natura 2000 Site is c. 18.5km to the south-east of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP. | |
| Carrowbaun, Newhall and Ballylee Turloughs SAC (site code 002293), c. 18.8 km to the south-east of the study area | <p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 3180 Turloughs* <p>According to the SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 22 January 2021), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p> | <p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 18.8km to the south-east of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP.</p> | No |
| Lough Coy SAC (site code 002117) c. 18.9 km to the south-east of the study area | <p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 3180 Turloughs* <p>According to the SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 22 January 2021), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p> | <p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 18.8km to the south-east of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the</p> | No |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| European Site (Site Code) | Reasons for designation (information correct as of September 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat) | Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects | Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In) |
|--|---|---|--|
| | | strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP. | |
| Peterswell Turlough SAC (site code 000318) c. 18.7 km to the south-east of the study area | <p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 3270 Rivers with muddy banks with <i>Chenopodium rubri</i> p.p. and <i>Bidention</i> p.p. ■ 3180 Turloughs* <p>According to the SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 11 November 2021), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p> | <p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 18.7km to the south-east of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP.</p> | No |
| Lough Fingall Complex SAC (site code 000606) c. 7.0 km to the south-east of the study area | <p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1303 Lesser Horseshoe Bat (<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>) ■ 3180 Turloughs* ■ 4060 Alpine and Boreal heaths ■ 5130 <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands ■ 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous | <p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 7.0km to the south-east of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the</p> | No |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| European Site (Site Code) | Reasons for designation (information correct as of September 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat) | Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects | Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In) |
|---|---|--|--|
| | <p>substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 7210 Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the Caricion davallianae* ■ 8240 Limestone pavements* <p>According to the SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 14 January 2019), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p> | <p>strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP.</p> | |
| <p>Kiltiernan Turlough SAC (site code 001285) c. 9.8 km to the south-east of the study area</p> | <p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 3180 Turloughs* <p>According to the SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 15 January 2021), for the listed QI, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p> | <p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 7.0km to the south-east of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP.</p> | <p>No</p> |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| European Site (Site Code) | Reasons for designation (information correct as of September 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat) | Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects | Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In) |
|--|---|---|--|
| Ardrahan Grassland SAC (site code 002244) c. 11.2 km to the south-east of the study area | <p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 4060 Alpine and Boreal heaths ■ 5130 <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands ■ 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) ■ 8240 Limestone pavements* <p>According to the SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 11 June 2024), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p> | <p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 11.2km to the south-east of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP.</p> | No |
| Castletaylor Complex SAC (site code 000242), c. 10.4 km to the south of the study area | <p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 3180 Turloughs* ■ 4060 Alpine and Boreal heaths ■ 5130 <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands ■ 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous | <p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 10.4km to the south of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways</p> | No |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| European Site (Site Code) | Reasons for designation (information correct as of September 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat) | Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects | Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In) |
|--|--|--|--|
| | <p>substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 8240 Limestone pavements* <p>According to the SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 20 December 2021), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p> | <p>there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP.</p> | |
| <p>Rahasane Turlough SAC (site code 000322) c.10.2 km south-east of the study area</p> | <p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 3180 Turloughs* <p>According to the SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 16 December 2020), for the listed QI, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p> | <p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 10.4km to the south of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP.</p> | <p>No</p> |
| <p>Monivea Bog SAC (site code 002352) c. 18.0 km</p> | <p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 7110 Active raised bogs* | <p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased</p> | <p>No</p> |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| European Site (Site Code) | Reasons for designation (information correct as of September 2025) (*denotes a priority habitat) | Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects | Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In) |
|--|---|--|--|
| to the north-east of the study area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration ■ 7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion <p>According to the SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 01 December 2015), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p> | <p>risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 18.0km to the north-east of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP.</p> | |
| Termon Lough SAC (site code 001321) c. 22.0 km south of the study area | <p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 3180 Turloughs* <p>According to the SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 15 January 2021), for the listed QI, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p> | <p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the GCDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 23.5km to the south of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & strategic development pillars, catalyst projects, enabling projects and development outcomes proposed under the GCDEDP.</p> | No |

3.4 Screening for Appropriate Assessment – Summary

According to the Guidance published by the European Commission (*Managing Natura 2000 sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*, 2019¹⁰) the “integrity of a site” relates to the site’s conservation objectives. For example, it is possible that a plan or project will adversely affect the site only in a visual sense or only affect habitat types or species other than those listed in Annex I or Annex II. In such cases, the effects do not amount to an adverse effect for the purposes of Article 6(3). If none of the habitat types or species for which the site has been designated is significantly affected, then the site’s integrity cannot be considered to be adversely affected.

In addition, plans or projects or applications for developments which have “no appreciable effect” on the protected site are excluded from the requirement to proceed to appropriate assessment¹¹ (Opinion of Advocate General Sharpston in *Sweetman*, para. 48).

In other words, if, following Screening, there is a possibility of there being a significant effect on a European site, this will generate the need for an appropriate assessment for the purposes of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

European sites with no connection/pathway to the GCDEDP area can be screened out (Appropriate Assessment Screening) and they are not considered any further in this report. By virtue of their locations, and the presence of potential pathways, of the 32no. European sites listed in **Table 3.1** there is the possibility of there being a significant effect on a total of 6no. sites (these are listed in **Table 3.6**), and this results in a requirement for an appropriate assessment for the purposes of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

There is potential for significant effects (at least, the potential for significant effects cannot be excluded) as a result of:

- Habitat loss and/or fragmentation;
- Impacts to habitat structure;
- Disturbance to species of conservation concern;
- Mortality to species (such as roadkill);
- Noise pollution;
- Emissions to air;
- Emissions to water.

Despite its positive intent there is the possibility that the implementation of certain of the actions listed in the GCDEDP could result in significant effects on 6no. European sites (Lough Corrib SPA, Lough Corrib SAC, Inner Galway Bay SPA, Galway Bay Complex SAC, Cregganna Marsh SPA, and Black-Head Poolsallagh Complex SAC). Applying the precautionary principle therefore, and in accordance with Article 6 (3) of the Habitats Directive, Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is required.

¹⁰ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/11e4ee91-2a8a-11e9-8d04-01aa75ed71a1>

¹¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A62011CC0258>

4 Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment

4.1 Introduction

As set out in Section 3.4 the implementation of the GCDEDP has the potential to impact on up to 6no. European sites. Given this conclusion, which is based on the Precautionary Principle, it is necessary to undertake Appropriate Assessment.

At this stage it is necessary to determine whether the GCDEDP would result in *significant adverse impacts on the integrity of any European site* with respect to the site's structure, function, and/or conservation objectives.

These potential adverse effects may arise either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

The GCDEDP, once implemented, will ensure that all existing and future tourism projects and initiatives for the Galway City DEDP are planned, developed and managed in a sustainable and integrated manner. It is driven by local, regional, national, European and International plans and policy.

Nevertheless, as set out in the preceding sections, there is the potential that the implementation of certain elements of the GCDEDP could lead to impacts on these European sites. This is particularly the case for actions that will result in construction or other development, and/or their ancillary infrastructure.

There is the possibility of reduction of habitat area, or loss of habitat within European sites in the Zone of Influence as a result of the implementation of certain actions within the GCDEDP. Any development works, no matter how minor, adjacent to watercourses (such as those associated with the River Corrib, Lough Corrib, Galway Bay or elsewhere along the coast) have the potential to cause habitat loss or a reduction in habitat / water quality, with indirect effects on the European sites themselves. Similarly works within any European sites could lead to fragmentation (breakup) of habitats, resulting in impacts on site integrity or cause degradation to, any habitats associated with any European site.

There is the possibility of disturbance to key species arising as a result of the implementation of certain actions within the GCDEDP. The Qualifying Interests (QIs) and Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of the European sites are sensitive to disturbance from noise, light, vibration and other construction activities including inappropriately timed works, as well as from recreational and amenity activity (human disturbance). Rivers and estuarine sites such as the Lough Corrib SAC, Galway Bay Complex SAC, Lough Corrib SPA, Inner Galway Bay SPA, etc. are prone to contamination risk due to surface water runoff during construction. Any works near or within these sensitive sites could lead to disturbance of these species.

There is the possibility of changes to key indicators of conservation value arising as a result of the implementation of the GCDEDP. This could arise via pollution, air pathways, siltation or other run-off to watercourses that could ultimately discharge to the European sites. Any pollution-related impacts on the QIs/SCIs of any European site could adversely affect the integrity of the sites.

4.2 Potential impacts from the GCDEDP, including in-combination effects

4.2.1 Is the GCDEDP necessary for the management of European sites?

As set out in the Habitats Directive (Article 6(3)), plans that are directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site do not require Appropriate Assessment. Management in this context means management for nature conservation and the qualifying interests of the European site, specifically the conservation objectives – to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the habitats and species for which the site has been selected.

While the GCDEDP has been developed with sustainability as core elements its purpose is to deliver and promote enhanced tourism experience within Galway City & Salthill. Therefore, the GCDEDP is not considered to be directly connected with or necessary to the management of European designated sites.

4.2.2 Are there elements of the GCDEDP with potential to give rise to significant effects on European sites

The elements/actions of the GCDEDP have potential to give rise to significant effects on European sites during construction and operational phase. Any development of existing and new infrastructure located within the potential zone of influence of any European site has the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, for example via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water and, potentially, disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. During the operational phase, there is potential for uncertain effects due to the new developments and their ancillary infrastructure and increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.

The GCDEDP, once implemented, is expected to enhance the visitor experience, promote tourism and support economic growth. Despite its positive intent, the GCDEDP has the potential to give rise to effects on European sites within its zone of influence under the following scenarios:

- Any Action that could directly or indirectly affect water quality, flow and/or morphology and potentially affect the European sites, protected habitats and species;
- Any Action that could directly or indirectly increase risk of flooding and potentially affect the European sites, protected habitats and species;
- Any Action that could directly or indirectly affect groundwater quality or supply and potentially affect the European sites, protected habitats and species;
- Any Action that could directly or indirectly affect air quality due to emissions and affect the European sites, protected habitats and species;
- Any risk of habitat loss, fragmentation or degradation to European sites or network supporting European sites, protected habitats and species, including via increased visitor numbers and human activity;
- Any potential for a risk of direct or indirect disturbance to European site habitats and/or species, e.g. development at coastal sites /along rivers, noise disturbance due to construction, light pollution etc.;
- Any Action that could risk a reduction in ecological connectivity between European sites and/or the ecological networks supporting them.

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

4.2.3 Appraisal of the of the Strategic Objectives of the Galway City Destination & Experience Development Plan

The finding of the environmental assessment of the overall Vision, Strategic Objectives and Strategic Development Pillars of the GCDEDP is presented in **Table 4.1**.

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

Table 4.1 Appraisal of the Strategic Objectives and Strategic Development Pillars of the GCDEDP

| Strategic Objectives/Pillars | Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence? | Mitigation Required ? Yes / No |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| <p>Vision</p> <p>The Destination Vision (2034 vision) for GCDEDP is:</p> <p><i>'A city that dances to its own rhythm, Galway blends the raw beauty of the Atlantic with a carnival-like atmosphere that makes every visit an adventure. From its cobbled streets to its vibrant neighbourhoods, visitors can partake in numerous indoor and outdoor experiences where they can engage with Galway's creativity, its colour and its love of the unexpected. Festivals celebrating music, art, culture and food bring locals and visitors together in a place where bohemian spirit meets coastal charm. Galway is also deeply committed to protecting and enhancing its natural environment, embracing eco-tourism, sustainable practices, and initiatives that create net positive benefits for both nature and local communities. Galway</i></p> | <p>This vision statement sets an overall context for destination experience and tourism in Galway City & Salthill. This will support and underpin the local tourism economy, sustainable tourism and the quality of tourism. No specific projects are associated with the statement, and therefore no negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.</p> | <p>No</p> |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| Strategic Objectives/Pillars | Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence? | Mitigation Required ? Yes / No |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| <p><i>effortlessly blends age old traditions with modern science and technology creating a constantly evolving energy that visitors love. Water continues to define how this city lives from the River Corrib to Galway Bay and the canals in between telling the story of our merchant past and our maritime future. Gaillimh proudly shares its bilingual identity where visitors will come away with cupla focail and an understanding that gaeilge is a living language here. Galway is not just a city, it's the beating heart of the West.'</i></p> | | |
| <p>Strategic Objective 1: Grow the year-round appeal of the Wild Atlantic Way domestically and internationally ensuring the area attracts and disperses high value visitors into and throughout the region.</p> | | |
| <p>1.1 Deliver on the ambition to become the tourism capital of the Wild Atlantic Way.</p> | <p>In the absence of mitigation, development of any new and existing developments/ projects to deliver on the ambition, might result in uncertain environmental effect for biodiversity and Natura 2000 Sites, that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coastal/transitional waters. Increased tourism in this location would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. The development could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.</p> | <p>Yes</p> |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| Strategic Objectives/Pillars | Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence? | Mitigation Required ? Yes / No |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1.2 Grow the mix and range of saleable visitor experiences that appeal to domestic and international visitors on a year round basis. | In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potentially uncertain effects on all European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. | Yes |
| 1.3 Implement a creative approach to wayfinding and visitor orientation that motivates wider exploration of the city experience and Galway City neighbourhoods. | No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required. | No |
| 1.4 Attract Business Events to Galway supporting tourism business availability and complementing the typical leisure patterns due to their off-peak and midweek patterns. | The development of existing and new infrastructure presents potential uncertain environmental effects on all European sites within the Zone of Influence that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. | Yes |
| 1.5 Develop the indoor visitor attraction and permanent event infrastructure in Galway to sustain the year round appeal of the destination. | In the absence of mitigation, development of any new and existing developments, might result in negative or uncertain environmental effect for biodiversity and Natura 2000 Sites, that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. Increased tourism in this location would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. The development could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites. | Yes |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| Strategic Objectives/Pillars | Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence? | Mitigation Required ? Yes / No |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1.6 Maximise the investment in the Galway Museum to become a signature attraction for Galway City. | No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required. | No |
| 1.7 Examine the feasibility of developing an additional signature attraction for Galway City. | No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required. | No |
| Strategic Objective 2: Increase tourism revenue, visitor dispersion and season extension across the Southern half of the Wild Atlantic Way | | |
| 2.1. Develop Galway as an international festivals and events city, recognised for the quality of programming and diversity of events. | In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potentially uncertain effects on all European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. Increased tourism in this location would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. The development could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites. | Yes |
| 2.2. Leverage the uniqueness of Galway's profile for creativity and culture into new placemaking projects and future urban regeneration investment. | In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potentially uncertain effects on all European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. | Yes |
| 2.3. Develop Galway's profile for food in tourism by developing new food experiences and establishing an | In the absence of mitigation, the new experience development presents a variety of potentially uncertain effects on all European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. | Yes |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| Strategic Objectives/Pillars | Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence? | Mitigation Required ? Yes / No |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| iconic focal point in the city for food experiences. | | |
| 2.4. Maximise the economic partnership opportunities to develop distinctive and creative visitor experiences that communicate Galway's status as an international economic destination e.g. Medtech, University City, Sciences. | In the absence of mitigation, the new experience development presents a variety of potentially uncertain effects on all European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. | Yes |
| 2.5. Grow the value of business events to Galway by maximising existing city infrastructure and ensuring future event infrastructure investment contributes to the international appeal of the city for the MICE sector. | In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potentially uncertain effects on all European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. | Yes |
| Strategic Objective 3: Protect the authenticity and “wildness” of the Wild Atlantic Way | | |
| 3.1. Grow the inclusion of the Irish language into the Galway City visitor experience and develop the tourism opportunity presented by the city's Gaeltacht status. | No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required. | No |
| 3.2. Continue to grow the appeal of the Galway | No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required. | No |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| Strategic Objectives/Pillars | Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence? | Mitigation Required ? Yes / No |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| Neighbourhoods to introduce visitors to the authenticity of the Galway people and community. | | |
| 3.3. Develop the visitor experience at iconic Galway sites throughout the city that convey the authentic Galway City story. | In the absence of mitigation, the new experience development presents a variety of potentially uncertain effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. This could also result in increased visitor numbers and pressure in the vicinity of European sites. | Yes |
| 3.4. Embrace the maritime heritage of the city and coastal community to deliver an innovative approach to water based experiences. | In the absence of mitigation, this objective could have the potential to result in negative or uncertain effects on biodiversity and European sites within the Zone of Influence. The development of new and existing water based experience might result in negative environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure potentially will be located in ecologically and visually sensitive coastal areas. These works can also potentially result in the spread of invasive species. This could also result in increased visitor numbers and pressure in the vicinity of European sites. | Yes |
| 3.5. Maximise the uniqueness of the blended city, Galway Bay and Atlantic coast and how the Salthill coastal village experience is integrated into the city neighbourhoods approach. | No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required. | No |
| Strategic Objective 4: Enable and assist the industry to grow its capacity and capability so that it can thrive over the period of this plan | | |
| 4.1. Develop sustainable tourism projects to showcase, protect and enhance the special | In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing projects presents a variety of potentially uncertain on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. | Yes |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| Strategic Objectives/Pillars | Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence? | Mitigation Required ? Yes / No |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| character of Galway City's urban natural heritage, in partnership with local stakeholders and compliance with relevant European and National legislation, and local authority biodiversity action plans. | | |
| 4.2. Build the digital capabilities of the tourism industry as part of the destinations approach to sustained demand generation. | No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required. | No |
| 4.3. Develop an industry wide approach to deliver a brand communications programme that resonates with the domestic and international market. | No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required. | No |
| 4.4. Enhance the capabilities of tourism networks and industry groups to work together in developing Galway City as an international tourism destination. | In the absence of mitigation, the development of existing or new infrastructure presents a variety of potentially uncertain effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. This could also result in increased visitor numbers and pressure in the vicinity of European sites. | Yes |
| 4.5. Develop new collaborative approaches | The new future development presents potential uncertain environmental effects on all European sites within the Zone of Influence that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. This would also require provision of welfare facilities, | Yes |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| Strategic Objectives/Pillars | Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence? | Mitigation Required ? Yes / No |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| around maximising the impact of festivals and events in the city. | wastewater and waste management which has potential to effect the receiving environment. This could also result in increased visitor numbers and pressure in the vicinity of European sites. | |
| 4.6. Collectively embrace sustainability as a destination priority and become recognised as a leader for sustainable urban tourism, creating better places to live and visit while ensuring our natural environment is protected and respected. | No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required. | No |
| 4.7. Create new partnerships within the destination to package Galway cultural experiences with the city's accommodation network. | No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required. | No |
| Strategic Objective 5: Foster strong coalitions of industry and stakeholders with a common purpose in developing Galway City as a flourishing destination supporting thriving communities. | | |
| 5.1. Work with all stakeholders to ensure the tourism opportunity for Galway is reflected across future urban regeneration projects. | No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required. | No |
| 5.2. Disperse the value of tourism across the city through a community and Galway City neighbourhood approach. | No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required. | No |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| Strategic Objectives/Pillars | Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence? | Mitigation Required ? Yes / No |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| 5.3. Foster economic partnerships that highlight the depth of creativity across the city from its University status to being the home of a world class industry and innovation cluster. | No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required. | No |
| 5.4. Embrace sustainability and creative approaches to climate action through a partnership approach ensuring a positive impact on our community and visitors. | No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required. | No |
| 5.5. Maximise business events for the destination as a mechanism to deliver greater impact on local communities. Collectively position Galway as a thriving business hub that promotes knowledge sharing and innovation, driving enhanced networking, competitiveness and productivity. | In the absence of mitigation, the new development presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. This would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management which has potential to effect the receiving environment. | Yes |
| Strategic Development Pillars | | |
| 1. Developing Day Time Visitor Experiences | In the absence of mitigation, this pillar could have the potential to result in negative or uncertain effects on biodiversity and European sites within the Zone of Influence. The development of new and existing visitor experiences might result in negative environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise | Yes |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| Strategic Objectives/Pillars | Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence? | Mitigation Required ? Yes / No |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| <p>Capitalise on the large scale investment in the Galway Museum and examine opportunities for new indoor and outdoor day time visitor experiences to enhance the tourism offering in the city. This will include exploring opportunities for additional indoor attractions and growing the range of outdoor experiences available to visitors and the local community. This focus on Urban Blue and Green Activities will include maximising the opportunities such as the Galway City Blueway, Connemara Greenway and the PFG-2 Terryland River Corrib - River Facilities.</p> | <p>from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure potentially will be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast/transitional waters. These works can also potentially result in the spread of invasive species. This could also result in increased visitor numbers and pressure in the vicinity of European sites. This would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management which has potential to effect the receiving environment.</p> | |
| <p>2. Linking City, Village and Neighbourhoods</p> <p>Increase the levels of collaboration and connectivity among the existing city neighbourhoods to influence greater levels of visitor flow across the city and links to the</p> | <p>In the absence of mitigation, this pillar could have the potential to result in negative or uncertain effects on biodiversity and European sites within the Zone of Influence. The development of new and existing visitor experiences might result in negative environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure potentially will be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast/transitional waters. These works can also potentially result in the spread of invasive species. This could also result in increased visitor numbers and pressure in the vicinity of European sites. This would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management which has potential to effect the receiving environment.</p> | <p>Yes</p> |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| Strategic Objectives/Pillars | Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence? | Mitigation Required ? Yes / No |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| <p>Salthill and the coastal village. It will include creative approaches to visitor orientation and wayfinding and develop Galway's neighbourhoods to become attractions in their own right. The approach will focus on ensuring great levels of industry collaboration to grow the appeal of the city as a destination and building distinctive neighbourhood and community experiences.</p> | | |
| <p>3. Galway City of Tribes: Culture, Festivals & Events</p> <p>Differentiate the Galway visitor experience through how creativity is applied to every destination experience and build on the city's international profile as a Capital of Culture. The approach will build on the uniqueness of the Galway Tribes story as the basis for experience development. This will include the Irish language, maritime, food, arts/culture, working with the creative sector and</p> | <p>In the absence of mitigation, the new development presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.</p> | <p>Yes</p> |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| Strategic Objectives/Pillars | Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence? | Mitigation Required ? Yes / No |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| <p>delivering unique Galway neighbourhood experiences. We will work to establish Galway as Ireland's Festivals and Events City with the structures and resources required to achieve and sustain year-round programming. The target outcome is a calendar of authentic festivals and events celebrating the City of the Tribes and the delivery of a programme of unique events only Galway can deliver.</p> | | |
| <p>4. Atlantic & Galway Waters</p> <p>Develop the opportunities for the visitor to experience Galway's rich maritime heritage and sample Galway Bay and the Wild Atlantic Way on the city's doorstep. The strategic focus is to ensure a co-ordinated approach to developing the water themed experience in Galway. It will include a focus on many of Galway's 'iconic' landmarks that include Salthill Promenade, Blackrock Tower</p> | <p>In the absence of mitigation, this pillar could have the potential to result in negative or uncertain effects on biodiversity and European sites within the Zone of Influence. The development of new and existing visitor experiences might result in negative environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure potentially will be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast/transitional waters. These works can also potentially result in the spread of invasive species. This could also result in increased visitor numbers and pressure in the vicinity of European sites. This would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management which has potential to effect the receiving environment.</p> | <p>Yes</p> |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| Strategic Objectives/Pillars | Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence? | Mitigation Required ? Yes / No |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| <p>and Leisureland. The approach is designed to maximise the potential of Galway Port and its development plans, developing experiences on the city blueway to realising the opportunity for Leisureland & Salthill Park as driver of year round visitor footfall. It will ensure Salthill continues to evolve a key Galway neighbourhood experience while growing the number of visitor experiences that have the potential to disperse visitors across the destination.</p> | | |

4.2.4 Appraisal of the Destination Catalyst Projects and Destination Enabling Projects listed within the Galway City Destination & Experience Development Plan

The GCDEDP includes a list of catalyst projects and enabling projects which will be delivered to support the above strategic objectives and strategic development pillars of the DEDP. The environmental assessment of the effects of the action plan, catalyst projects and enabling projects is detailed in **Table 4.2** below.

The projects/actions where there is a requirement for development of existing and new infrastructure might also give rise to uncertain environmental effects on other environmental themes and SEOs that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.

Where potential negative or uncertain effects on European sites have been identified appropriate mitigation has been provided. See **Section 4.4** of this Report.

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

Table 4.2 Appraisal of the Action Plan of the GCDEDP

| No. | Project | Action | Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence? | Mitigation Required Yes / No. |
|---|---|---|--|-------------------------------|
| CATALYST PROJECTS | | | | |
| 1. CATALYST PROJECT 1 : Galway Museum & City Attractions | | | | |
| 1.1 | Galway Museum | Deliver sustainably a best-in-class visitor experience at Galway Museum to maximise the significant investment in the existing museum and the adjacent Comerford House, Spanish Arch experience and wall walk, and construction of a new three-storey building contiguous to Comerford House, incorporating the Sea Gate archaeological site. | <p>The listed project and associated actions will enhance tourism opportunities for the county and have positive effect on population and human health.</p> <p>In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potential uncertain effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. Increased tourism in these locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management.</p> | Yes |
| 1.2 | Galway Museum and public realm – iconic Galway sites | Deliver an iconic visitor experience at the Galway Museum by introducing the visitor to the many stories, heritage and 'tribes' of Galway. | | |
| 1.3 | Signature Visitor Experiences | Undertake an analysis of the opportunity for Galway to develop signature visitor attractions for the city centre linked to the themes of culture, creativity and science. This will include concept and feasibility analysis of possible locations and future options to consider e.g. a Macnas visitor experience in Galway City. | | |
| 1.4 | University of Galway Visitor Experiences | Undertake a feasibility analysis on developing the visitor experience at the main University of Galway campus to ensure the campus is an integral part of the Galway city visitor experience. Undertake an assessment of the potential of existing displays and university department museums to create new on campus visitor experiences. | | |
| 2. CATALYST PROJECT 2: Vibrant Galway Neighbourhoods | | | | |
| 2.1 | Vibrant Galway Neighbourhoods | Support the neighbourhood business communities to achieve their full tourism potential. This will include Eyre Square, West End, Latin Quarter, Docklands, Woodquay and Salthill. | <p>The development of these projects could result in negative environmental effects on all European sites within the Zone of Influence that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both</p> | Yes |
| 2.1a | Galway Tribes – Streets and Lanes | Undertake a review of the requirements to develop a Galway Tribes / Living City project on the streets and lanes to highlight the | | |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| No. | Project | Action | Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence? | Mitigation Required Yes / No. |
|------|-------------------------------------|---|--|-------------------------------|
| | | personalities of the local neighbourhoods and highlighting the character of the people living in Galway City. The story of City of the Tribes should be widely embraced across the neighbourhoods and by the tourism industry to bring the stories back to life. | the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast. These works can also potentially result in the spread of invasive species. Increased tourism in these locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. The development of these projects could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites. | |
| 2.1b | Evening Time Innovation | Develop the evening time opportunity by developing distinctive neighbourhoods evening experiences to grow the city wide programme of evening time activity by supporting the Night Time Economy Officer. | | |
| 2.1c | Evening Time and Venues | Assess the opportunity to develop a programme of evening time performances in iconic Galway venues and sites as part of the development of evening time economy linked to Galway's profile for culture and creativity. | | |
| 2.1d | Enhancement of place | Undertake an assessment of the requirements to enhance the presentation of city centre buildings and the rejuvenation of sites that contributes to the sense of vibrancy across the various neighbourhoods in Galway. | | |
| 2.1e | Outdoor dining | Review the current outdoor dining opportunities in the city and review the current policies to identify new opportunities through the Galway Neighbourhoods initiative to strengthen the appeal of Galway as a dining and food destination. | | |
| 2.2 | City to Salthill Orientation | Enhance the orientation and visitor experience from the City to Salthill to encourage increased visitor footfall from the city to Salthill. | | |
| 2.3 | Woodquay Urban Regeneration | Deliver the projects that will impact positively on the visitor experience to Galway through the Woodquay Urban Regeneration investment and PFG 2 - Facility Centres for Water Sports Activities Scheme. This will include access to the bus connects, Woodquay plaza, blueway, greenway, PFG 2 Facility Centres for Water Sports Activities, University campus, Nuns Island. | | |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| No. | Project | Action | Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence? | Mitigation Required Yes / No. |
|---|--|--|---|-------------------------------|
| 2.4 | Augustine Hill Urban Regeneration | Examine the visitor experience and destination enhancement opportunities for tourism, culture and food as part of any future urban regeneration of the Augustine Hill area and identify how it can contribute to the development of Galway City as a tourism destination. This will include the examination of a visitor attraction, food experiences and cultural facilities. | | |
| 2.5 | Claddagh Ring Experience | Develop a Claddagh Ring experience telling visitors the story of the origin of the ring linked to the story of Galway City. | | |
| 2.6 | Outdoor Performance Spaces | Undertake a review of existing and new outdoor performance & event spaces across the city and develop a plan for year round usage and understand associated opportunities and challenges to address. The assessment will also include the identification of potential new spaces and maximising the investment in urban regeneration funding delivering new outdoor performance space across the city. | | |
| 2.7 | Festival / Event Programme & Neighbourhoods | Host elements of Galway festivals and events programming across a mix of Galway neighbourhoods that will encourage attendees to explore more of the city e.g. mix of festival/event programmes linked to the neighbourhoods theme e.g. Ukulele, Oyster Festival, Blas festival. | | |
| 2.8 | Music in the City | Review the requirements to create a year round Galway Trad Trail and Music City Trail. | | |
| 2.9 | Medieval Galway Experience | Examine the visitor experience potential of a trail linking the Medieval points of interest across the city e.g. Medieval Stones of Galway incorporating Browne's Door and the Medieval Stones of Galway story into future public realm projects. | | |
| 3. CATALYST PROJECT 3: Destination Visitor Orientation | | | | |
| 3.1 | Destination Town Project | Complete the visitor orientation project under the Destination Town to create a Galway outdoor museum connecting with the Galway neighbourhoods. | The development of these projects might result in uncertain environmental effects on all European | Yes |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| No. | Project | Action | Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence? | Mitigation Required Yes / No. |
|-----|---|--|---|-------------------------------|
| 3.2 | City Centre Orientation | Deliver a programme of public realm enhancements incorporating visitor orientation to ensure that the city centre visitor experience plays a role in visitor dispersion across the city. | sites within the Zone of Influence that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. Increased tourism in these locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. | |
| 3.3 | City Pedestrianisation | Examine the short term to long term opportunities for the pedestrianisation of areas within the city that open up new visitor experiences and encourage greater dispersion of visitors across the city during the day time and night time. This will include the pedestrianisation of Middle Street and Cross Street on a full time basis and identify how they can contribute to the visitor experience in the city. | | |
| 3.4 | Night Time Economy Accessibility and Inclusivity | Explore collaboration opportunities with businesses within the Night Time Economy, and tourism and hospitality sectors generally, to raise awareness and encourage practical steps to be taken at business level to improve accessibility and inclusivity for all visitors. | | |
| 3.5 | Galway Welcome Sites | Develop a Galway Welcome programme to ensure a stronger sense of arrival and welcome to Galway at key arrival points and on the approach to the city. The project will identify key sites to create a sense of welcome to Galway City as an international visitor destination. The project will also link with future transport infrastructure e.g. Ceannt Station. The Galway Welcome initiative will also align with future city destination branding. | | |
| 3.6 | Galway Creative & Culture Route – Arts and Science Trail | Undertake an assessment of the requirements to create a creative culture city trail linked to the medtech profile and creative expertise in Galway to deliver a creative arts and science trail/visitor experience in Galway. | | |
| 3.7 | Destination Visitor Orientation | Develop a city mapping approach linked to the Galway/Gaillimh brand and apply the branding to all future mapping and visitor orientation activity. | | |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| No. | Project | Action | Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence? | Mitigation Required Yes / No. |
|--|--|--|---|----------------------------------|
| 3.8 | Tech & Smart City | Undertake a review of compatibility of current visitor wayfinding and orientation with Google Maps and identify how visitors are influenced pre-visit and while in the destination to explore the wider area. | | |
| 3.9 | Galway City Tourist Information Office | Undertake an assessment of a suitable location in Eyre Square for a Discover Ireland tourist information office. | | |
| 4. CATALYST PROJECT 4: Food Market / Hall | | | | |
| 4.1 | Galway Food Market | Support the development of a year round indoor food market for Galway that will accommodate a daytime and night market | The development of this project might result in negative environmental effects on all European sites within the Zone of Influence that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. Increased tourism would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. | Yes |
| 5. CATALYST PROJECT 5: Bilingual City | | | | |
| 5.1 | Gaeltacht City Experience Development | Develop a Bilingual City Gaeilge tourism experience toolkit that integrates the Irish language further into the Galway City visitor experience with a primary focus on assessing the viability of an Irish language festival to be hosted as part of the profiling of Galway as Ireland's Bilingual City with potential to incorporate living Irish culture aspects including traditional music, song and dance and language-based events. | No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required. | No |
| 5.2 | Urban Gaeltacht Experience | Develop an Irish language tourism itinerary for Galway City, and a programme of Irish language weekends to create the Urban Gaeltacht experience for visitors combining the Irish language, music and other cultural activity e.g. Trad on the Prom. | | |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| No. | Project | Action | Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence? | Mitigation Required Yes / No. |
|--|---|--|--|-------------------------------|
| 5.3 | Ionad Gaeilge Visitor Experience | Undertake a feasibility analysis of the development of an Ionad Gaeilge and visitor experience focused on the Irish language in Galway City. | | |
| 5.4 | Irish language Saleable Experiences | Develop a suite of saleable Irish language experiences, building on the Failte Ireland Gaeilge agus Failte project working on experience development to bringing the experiences to market. | | |
| 6. CATALYST PROJECT 6: Festivals & Events | | | | |
| 6.1 | Galway's Festival and Event Strategy | Assess the Events and Festival offering of Galway City and identify potential areas for further growth by creating a Festival and Events team within City Hall. Adopt a strategic approach for existing festivals in Galway City that will deliver a strong portfolio of Festivals and Participative Events that are rooted in the destination and unique to Galway City. Thus creating an authentic year-round (excluding July and August) Festivals and Events calendar, with a few selected as Hero's to headline the City of Tribes. | <p>This project will enhance tourism opportunities and have positive effect on population and human health.</p> <p>In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potential uncertain effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast. These works can also potentially result in the spread of invasive species. Increased tourism in these locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. The development of these projects could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.</p> | Yes |
| 6.2 | Festival Audit | Undertake an audit of all festivals in Galway to assess the capability, type, scale and ambition of Festivals. Identify Festivals within this cohort that have the resources, capability and ambition to grow. Identify the potential around ensuring festivals take place throughout the year to tackle seasonality challenges. A focus of this could be to also build on existing one day events to expand into two day festivals or more. | | |
| 6.3 | Year Round Festival Venue | Maximise the opportunity of the Galway International Arts Festival for Galway City through the identification/development of a showcase venue suitable for the event as part of the scoping study on the current Cultural infrastructure in Galway City. Leverage the international and domestic tourism profile opportunity provided by the Galway International Arts festival for Galway and establish the suitable venue as a proposition capable off hosting events year round. | | |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| No. | Project | Action | Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence? | Mitigation Required Yes / No. |
|---|---|---|--|-------------------------------|
| 6.4 | Christmas in Galway | Develop the destination's capacity to grow the Christmas in Galway programme and maximise the value of the event by increasing the range of things to do and see in establishing Galway as Ireland's Christmas destination. | | |
| 6.5 | Galway Races and City Engagement | Deliver an annual city/neighbourhoods engagement programme around the Galway Racing Festival to ensure a connection between the event and the city. | | |
| 6.6 | Off-peak Events | Maximise the off-peak event opportunity for Galway through a packaging focus around Events in the shoulder season e.g. Connacht Rugby, Race Meetings, GAA, Galway United, Christmas Market, Comedy Festival, Blas, Tonnta. | | |
| 6.7 | Galway Bank Holidays | Devise a strategic approach to grow the destination's ownership of the bank holiday calendar where international and domestic visitors will consider Galway as Ireland's destination for bank holiday weekends. The bank holiday development approach will focus on protecting the reputation of Galway as a leading bank holiday destination by providing more things for visitors to do and see during these periods. | | |
| 6.8 | Outdoor / Active Festivals | Develop Festivals within the Outdoor Active cohort – looking primarily at sea swimming, rowing, sailing and kayaking. This will assist the natural landscape (e.g. coastline and waterways) in offering sustainable tourism products on a year round basis. | | |
| 7. CATALYST PROJECT 7: Cultural Venue / Arts Focal Point | | | | |
| 7.1 | Municipal Cultural Venue | Undertake a scoping study on existing cultural infrastructure in Galway City followed by feasibility analysis of a Municipal and Cultural venue for Galway City. | The listed projects and actions might result in negative environmental effects on all European sites within the Zone of Influence that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such | Yes |
| 7.2 | Merchant's Road | Deliver a new cultural experience in the venue proposed as part of the Merchants Road Lower development. | | |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| No. | Project | Action | Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence? | Mitigation Required Yes / No. |
|--|---|---|---|----------------------------------|
| 7.3 | Dominic Street | Integrate new cultural infrastructure into the proposed Galway Creative and Culture Route across the city to demonstrate the depth of cultural assets accessible by visitors during the day and evening. | developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. Increased tourism would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. | |
| 7.4 | The 'Manse' Nuns Island Theatre | Deliver the cultural infrastructure at The Nuns Island Theatre on Nuns Island. | | |
| 7.5 | Galway Cultural Venues | Co-ordinate the year round programming across Galway's cultural venues and opportunities to package culture events and performances around the off-peak periods. | | |
| 8. CATALYST PROJECT 8: Galway Waters Experience | | | | |
| 8.1 | Leisureland | Deliver a framework for leisureland & Salthill Park that will maximise its potential for the local community and attract visitors on a year round basis to Galway and develop a Vision that provides the basis for future masterplanning. | The development of new and existing blueways, seafronts, river facilities etc. has the potential to contribute to sustainable mobility and a better management of movements in sensitive areas, thereby benefiting various environmental components including habitats at certain locations. The development of these projects, however, could result in negative environmental effects on all European sites within the Zone of Influence that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast. These works can also potentially result in the spread of invasive species. Increased tourism in these locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater | Yes |
| 8.2 | Leisureland Visioning | Develop a sustainable tourism vision for Leisureland & Salthill Park to maximise its potential for the local community and attract visitors on a year round basis to Galway. This vision will contribute to the wider masterplanning and framework for Salthill and the Seafront Framework examining it in the context of its role in the Galway DEDP. | | |
| 8.3 | Salthill Village Visitor Experience | Undertake a Salthill Village and Seafront Masterplan that will set out a vision framework to guide planned and future projects and initiatives in Salthill including the promenade flood defence & improvements, traffic and parking management, tidal pools, Leisureland & Salthill Park redevelopment, Blackrock Tower maintenance and other potential projects to ensure an integrated and strategic approach that builds on the uniqueness of Salthill and contributes to an enhanced visitor experience. | | |
| 8.4 | Galway Water Experience PFG 2 - Facility Centres for | Maximise the opportunity through the PFG 2 - Facility Centres for Water Sport Activities scheme and the potential for year round activation of the Terryland River Corrib - River Facilities with the addition of the floating pontoon and access via tributary to the River | | |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| No. | Project | Action | Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence? | Mitigation Required Yes / No. |
|--|---|---|---|-------------------------------|
| | Water Sports Facilities | Corrib as a catalyst for developing the Galway City Blueway water experiences. | and waste management. The development of these projects could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites. | |
| 8.5 | Galway City Blueway | Commence the Blueway accreditation process for the Galway City Blueway based on the feasibility analysis and develop- a number of Blueway pods/hubs along the waterways system in Galway City including the River Corrib, identified locations in Lough Corrib, Canal network, and Claddagh basin. | | |
| 8.6 | Galway Waterscapes & Blue Spaces | Examine the feasibility of a Galway Water Trail linking Salthill, Galway Bay, River Corrib and the Galway City Blueway. This will include examination of an ecotourism interpretation trail that combines the Galway maritime story and building on the legends of the Corrib Trail experience. | | |
| 8.7 | Blue Flag Beaches | Protect the Blue Flag awards of the Salthill & Silverstrand beaches and deliver a programme of works to achieve Blue Flag status at Ballyloughane to help develop the international profile of Galway as a city with easy access to coastal activities. | | |
| 8.8 | Salthill LIDO – Tidal Pool | Examine the requirements to develop a LIDO in Salthill based on project feasibility analysis. | | |
| ENABLING PROJECTS | | | | |
| 9. ENABLING PROJECT 1 – Saleable Galway Experiences | | | | |
| 9.1 | Saleable Experience Development | Deliver a saleable experience development programme for Galway City to grow the range of things to do and see across each of the strategic development pillars within the Galway City DEDP. The areas for immediate focus will include building on the uniqueness of the Galway Tribes story as the basis for experience development, Irish language, maritime, food, arts/culture, working with the creative sector and unique Galway neighbourhood experiences. | The development of these projects might result in negative environmental effects on all European sites within the Zone of Influence that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. Increased tourism would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. | Yes |
| 9.2 | Accessible tourism | Undertake an assessment of current visitor experiences to improve the accessibility of Galway visitor experiences across attractions and activities. This will include recommendations for future experience | | |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| No. | Project | Action | Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence? | Mitigation Required Yes / No. |
|--|---|---|---|-------------------------------|
| | experiences development | development and ensuring accessibility is a core feature of all future destination and experience development. | | |
| 9.3 | Accessible tourism in the West End | Support the delivery of the West End Inclusive Tourism project in conjunction with the Galway Autism Partnership. Based on the learnings of the project examine ways to expand the reach of the project and other accessible tourism initiatives. | | |
| 10. ENABLING PROJECT 2 – Tourism Industry & Network Development | | | | |
| 10.1 | Industry Development | Undertake a programme of capability building focused on growing the online presence of Galway tourism industry and digital capabilities. | No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required. | No |
| 10.2 | Tourism Creatives | Deliver a Tourism Entrepreneurship Programme for the arts and culture community to grow awareness of the tourism opportunity among the Galway cultural community. | | |
| 10.3 | Brand Gaillimh | Develop a brand activation programme to develop and implement a destination brand programme supported by content development, brand activation and investment in training. | | |
| 10.4 | Galway Family Experiences | Develop the capabilities of the tourism industry to develop family focused experiences and identify how the city and county can connect with each other in areas such as outdoor activities and opportunities presented by the blueway and greenway investment. | | |
| 10.5 | Increasing Value From Cruise Tourism | Prepare the tourism industry to maximise the opportunity from potential growth in cruise ship business and grow the economic value of cruise visits for the destination. | | |
| 11. ENABLING PROJECT 3 – Galway Food Destination | | | | |
| 11.1 | Galway Food in Tourism Plan | Develop a food in tourism plan for Galway City with five year action plan to grow the city's profile as a national food destination. | No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required. | No |
| 11.2 | Food in Tourism – Seafood City | Examine the opportunity to develop Galway City as the Seafood Experience City animated by a programme of supporting initiatives from dining weeks, leveraging the Oyster Festival, dedicated food weekends and highlighting the food personalities of Galway. | | |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| No. | Project | Action | Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence? | Mitigation Required Yes / No. |
|---|---|---|---|-------------------------------|
| 11.3 | Region of Gastronomy | Examine the opportunity to leverage the European Region of Gastronomy designation for Galway and how to maximise this designation with future food in tourism activity. | | |
| 12. ENABLING PROJECT 4 – Urban Green and Blue Activities | | | | |
| 12.1 | Connemara Greenway (Galway to Clifden) | Support the sustainable development of the Galway to Clifden Greenway and maximise the associated tourism opportunity for the city and communities on the route through capability building. The preferred/selected route to the city should take in the University of Galway Campus and the old railway bridges at Woodquay. | <p>The development of new and existing greenways / blueways has the potential to contribute to sustainable mobility and a better management of movements in sensitive areas, thereby benefiting various environmental components including habitats at certain locations.</p> <p>In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potential uncertain effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast and could also result in increased visitor numbers and pressure in the vicinity of European sites. These works can also potentially result in the spread of invasive species. Increased tourism in these locations would also</p> | Yes |
| 12.2 | Greenway Trails Heads | Support the sustainable development of the Galway Greenway Trail Head Experience Plan for Woodquay and future links to the Westend to ensure wider dispersion of Greenway users across the city. | | |
| 12.3 | Galway Urban Green Spaces | Support the sustainable development of the Galway City Green Spaces Strategy developing the tourism potential of public parks and their future capacity to provide additional event or performance spaces and become part of the Galway City family experience. | | |
| 12.4 | Public Realm Strategy | Support the sustainable development of the Galway City Public Realm Strategy to include visitor orientation and wayfinding in the city. Incorporate the Galway/ Gailimh Brand into any developments. | | |
| 12.5 | Galway Cycleways & Active Travel | Support the sustainable development of the Urban Cycleway network leveraging the links to the Connemara Greenway (Galway to Clifden) and the proposed Athlone to Galway Greenway through Active Travel investment to grow the number of cycling routes in the city and improved access to the Eurovelo 1 route. | | |
| 12.6 | Walking & Cycling Orientation | Undertake a study of existing walking and cycling orientation infrastructure in Galway City and Salthill. The outputs will include a recommended approach to improve visitor orientation around the city through walking and cycling options. | | |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| No. | Project | Action | Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence? | Mitigation Required Yes / No. |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|---|----------------------------------|
| 12.7 | Tourism Enterprise Development | Work with education and training agencies to stimulate tourism entrepreneurship in the activities sector that can animate future investment across the city e.g. blueways, greenways and new activity experiences for Galway City. | require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. | |
| 12.8 | Galway Hooker Experience | Examine the requirements to develop a market ready visitor experience to tell the story of the Galway Hooker and their restoration as a community / sustainability project. | | |
| 12.9 | Wild Atlantic Way Coastal Path | Assess how existing and planned Greenway, Blueway and walking/cycling infrastructure projects in Galway and Salthill will be integrated with the proposed Wild Atlantic Way Coastal Path. | | |
| 12.10 | Trail Infrastructure | Assess the opportunity to develop land activity and trail infrastructure around the Waterworks building site linking it with the Castles (Menlo Castle and Terryland Castle). This assessment will also explore the linking of the proposed Terryland Forest Park with the City. | | |
| 13. ENABLING PROJECT 5 – Accomodation | | | | |
| 13.1 | Accomodation Development | Support the development of sustainable accommodation and associated critical infrastructure across the city and attracting private sector investment into Galway City to increase current accommodation levels. | The development of these projects might result in negative environmental effects on all European sites within the Zone of Influence that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. Increased tourism would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. | Yes |
| 13.2 | Campervan Facilities | Undertake a feasibility assessment of delivering an Aire de Service 2025-2028 in Galway City to accommodate campervan/RV parking. This assessment should examine short term to long term opportunities and the engagement with site owners across the city to identify short term opportunities. | | |
| 14. ENABLING PROJECT 6 – Business Events | | | | |
| 14.1 | Business Events Sectors | Develop the networks of industry partners sectoral clusters and platforms to attract conferences and facilitate knowledge sharing and innovation, and provide access to opinion leaders, speakers, and other engagement opportunities. | The development of these projects might result in negative environmental effects on all European sites within the Zone of Influence that would, if | Yes |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| No. | Project | Action | Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence? | Mitigation Required Yes / No. |
|---|--|--|---|-------------------------------|
| 14.2 | Dexcom Stadium at Connacht Rugby | Support the development and ongoing investment into Dexcom Stadium as a business events venue, to maximise its potential to attract and host impactful business events to the City. | unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. Increased tourism would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. | |
| 14.3 | Business Events – Beyond Tourism | Position Galway as a leader in hosting impactful business events, and deliver on the value of business events, for tourism and beyond, achieving benefits for Galway as a community, ensuring positive impacts on our focal communities and long-term legacy benefits for the participating sectoral collectives. Connect local communities with business event delegates and organisers who seek opportunities for positive social contributions. | | |
| 14.4 | Gala Dining Venue/Business Events | Maximise the business tourism opportunity for Galway presented by future investment in gala dining venues such as Claregalway Castle & St Nicholas Church, and the enhancement of Galway as a business events destination. | | |
| 14.5 | Business Events Value | Leverage business events to achieve regionality and seasonality objectives. Grow the number of business events hosted in Galway, whilst prioritising a value over volume model and promoting extended delegate stays. | | |
| 14.6 | Business Events Showcase | Leverage the AIPCO Conference as showcase for business events development in Galway. | | |
| 15. ENABLING PROJECT 7 – Sustainable Tourism | | | | |
| 15.1 | Sustainable Galway Destination | Deliver on the Galway City Climate Action Plan and collaborate with industry to collective commitment to developing Galway as a sustainable city destination and work with partners to roll out the All Ireland Certification Assurance Scheme. | The development of these projects might result in negative environmental effects on all European sites within the Zone of Influence that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. Increased tourism would also | Yes |
| 15.2 | Salthill Environmental and Biodiversity Projects | Undertake a scoping exercise to explore potential projects to be included in a Salthill Environmental and Biodiversity project. This will include assessing the potential for projects such as Clean Coasts, Sand Dunes Projects, Land based biodiversity projects and partnering on | | |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| No. | Project | Action | Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence? | Mitigation Required Yes / No. |
|------|--|--|--|-------------------------------|
| | | projects such as the Aquarium, Galway Convention Bureau and Marine Institute. | require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. This could also result in increased footfall in sensitive areas. | |
| 15.3 | Sustainable tourism observatory partnership | Explore the opportunity to create a sustainable tourism observatory partnership working with third level colleges to develop a repository of visitor information that can inform sustainable tourism development. | | |
| 15.4 | Biodiversity Hub | Assess the feasibility study of delivering a Biodiversity Hub in the City or Salthill to educate and raise awareness of Nature Way Solutions in place in the destination. | | |
| 15.5 | Biodiversity Walks | Expand and protect the suite of Biodiversity Walks available in the City, particularly along Eglinton Canals and Coastal locations, giving careful consideration for the non disturbance of wildlife and fauna. | | |
| 15.6 | Sustainability Initiatives | Encourage buy in from tourism and hospitality business to the Coffee Cup deposit scheme in place in the City to enhance the City's reputation as a sustainable destination. | | |
| 15.7 | Sustainable Initiatives for Business Events | Explore opportunities to mobilise programmes for business events delegates to the city to contribute to the environment/biodiversity of the destination through activities such as coastal clean ups, litter picks, tree planting. mapping of seagrass beds, swallow/swift box workshops etc. | | |
| 15.8 | City Transportation Strategy | Complete the City Transportation Review to maximise the future potential of increased public transport access e.g. Bus Connects, Ceannt Station, Coach Drop and sustainable transport options around the city e.g. cycle. The City Transportation Strategy will also examine the long term requirements to alleviate traffic pressures around the city and the potential negative impact it has on the visitor experience. | | |
| 15.9 | City Park and Ride | Undertake a review of the development of Park and Ride as a viable option for visitors and an alternative transport option for the local community. | | |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| No. | Project | Action | Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence? | Mitigation Required Yes / No. |
|---------------------------------|---|---|--|-------------------------------|
| 15.10 | Sustainable Saleable Experiences | Deliver sustainable tourism and biodiversity related saleable experiences for Galway City. | | |
| 16. Destination Projects | | | | |
| 16.1 | Visitor Mobility Assessment | Review current transport information systems to assess current gaps in how transportation information is presented to visitors. Deliver a legible transport information system where the visitor understands how local transport works together and promote the connectivity across the city linking rail access with new bus hubs throughout the destination. | The development of these projects might result in negative environmental effects on all European sites within the Zone of Influence that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. Increased tourism would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. This could also result in increased footfall in sensitive areas. | Yes |
| 16.2 | Galway Port Tourism Opportunity | Support the long-term tourism opportunity presented by Phases One to Four of the Galway Port Regeneration Project from the Inner Harbour to the Outer Harbour. Prepare for the short term opportunity presented by the re-imagining of the Inner Docks to become a water activity basin and future plans to incorporate cultural and food market spaces. The planning application for the proposed New Port of Galway consists of 23.89 hectares of land reclamation. The development will extend 935m out to sea, providing 660m of quay berth to -12m Chart Datum (C.D.) depth, serviced by a -8m C.D. channel depth. The development is broken down into 4 stages. Stage 1 Reclamation of 19.86ha of Quay areas and back-up land that will facilitate marine leisure activities. Stage 2 Formation of reclamation bund allowing for the reclamation of 3.21ha of additional back-up land. Stage 3 Reclamation of 3.21 ha of back-up land, and 0.7ha as fishing pier and slipway areas. Stage 4 Delivery of the Western Marina with 216 berths and 12 Volvo scale berths. | | |
| 16.3 | Tourism Opportunity Sites | Undertake a review of the potential opportunity sites in Galway City that have the capacity to become sites for potential tourism projects ranging from accommodation to visitor attractions. | | |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| No. | Project | Action | Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence? | Mitigation Required Yes / No. |
|------|-------------------------------|---|---|-------------------------------|
| 16.4 | Community Enabler for Tourism | Establish active citizenship/ volunteerism programmes and initiatives to support tourism developments in Galway City. | | |

4.2.5 Direct, indirect or secondary effects?

None of the Actions of the GCDEDP are expected to have any direct resource requirements from any European site as a result of any of the actions contained therein.

Any pollution could adversely affect the habitats and species listed as qualifying interests in any of the European sites, many of which rely on good water quality. Also, during construction works there is potential for an increase in run-off due to compaction of the soil which will in turn reduce the infiltration capacity and increase the rate and volume of surface water run-off. This can increase surface water run-off and sediment loading which has potential to impact the local drainage and in turn on the European sites.

In addition to the habitats and species associated with the European sites, bird species, may be sensitive to disturbances arising as a result of any proposed development. Construction works have the potential for indirect impacts on the Natura 2000 sites and their qualifying features of interest. Potential impacts include habitat degradation as well as disturbance to habitats, species and ecosystem dynamics due to noise, vibration, air quality, and disturbance due to human activities. In addition there is a potential risk to flora and fauna arising from dust deposition, which in extreme cases can inhibit photosynthesis in plants and can increase turbidity in watercourses.

During the operational phase, there is potential for uncertain effects due to the new developments and their ancillary infrastructure and increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.

4.2.6 In-combination / Cumulative effects with other plans and programmes

It is a requirement of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive that when considering whether a plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of a European site the assessment must take into account in-combination effects with other current or reasonably foreseeable plans and projects.

If it can be clearly demonstrated that the plan or project will not result in any impact on the integrity of a European site then the plan or project should proceed without considering the in-combination test; further, if there are identified effects arising from the plan or project even if they are perceived as minor and not likely to have an impact on the integrity of a European site alone, then any such impacts must be considered 'in-combination' with the effects arising from other plans and projects.

The catalyst projects, enabling projects and associated actions listed within the GCDEDP will be required to comply with the relevant international, national and regional policies, plans and programmes and also undertaken individual environmental assessments for Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and any other relevant processes as appropriate.

The GCDEDP could have a relationship with other plans and programmes. However, these plans and programmes will also be subject to environmental assessment, including SEA and AA, for the purpose of preventing and mitigating potential negative environmental effects. **Table 4.3** lists the relevant plans and programmes that have potential for cumulative effects with the GCDEDP.

The assessment of cumulative effects above focused on national, regional and local plans, programmes, strategy and policy documents that have the potential to affect the same receiving environment that could be affected by the GCDEDP.

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

The Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 sets out policies and objectives for land use, settlement strategy, sustainable development, transport, infrastructure, environmental protection, and management, cultural heritage, climate change, etc. for the study area. Other higher-level international, national and regional plans are integrated within the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 and have been assessed as such. The GCDEDP will comply with the provisions set within the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 which itself has been subject to standalone environmental assessment (SEA, NIR, etc.).

The assessment of cumulative effects concludes that the implementation of the GCDEDP will not result in direct, indirect or cumulative impacts which would have the potential to adversely affect the environment. Indeed, the implementation of the GCDEDP has the potential for positive cumulative interactions in delivering on policies and objectives of higher-level plans in relation to increased economic activity and employment and greater appreciation and understanding of natural heritage, cultural heritage and landscape.

Table 4.3 Potential Cumulative Effects with other Plans and Programmes

| Plan, Programme etc. | Potential Cumulative effect | Likely Cumulative Effect |
|---|---|--------------------------|
| National Planning Framework (NPF) Project 2040 (First Revision April 2025) National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030 (<i>As part of Project Ireland 2040 the National Development Plan sets out the Government's over-arching investment strategy and budget for the period 2021-2030</i>) | The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the National Planning Framework have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the plan have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration. | No |
| Northern and Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy | The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the RSES have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the RSES have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration. | No |
| National CFRAMS Programme Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Study | Catchment-based Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Studies and their product – Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) – are at the core of national policy for flood risk management and the strategy for its implementation. These studies are required by The Floods Directive [2007/60/EC], which is being implemented in Ireland through the European Communities (Assessment and Management of Flood Risks) Regulations 2010 [S.I.122/2010]. Each FRMP is accompanied by an associated SEA Environmental Report and Natura Impact Statement. The SEA and AA processes | No |

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

| Plan, Programme etc. | Potential Cumulative effect | Likely Cumulative Effect |
|--|--|--------------------------|
| | carried out during the preparation of the FRMP have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the FRMP have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration. | |
| National 4 th Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030 | The Biodiversity Action notes the requirements and purposes of AA and SEA and the vision of the plan to conserve and restored for the benefit of all sectors of society. | No |
| National Sustainable Mobility Policy (2022) | The policy sets a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel and public transport to support Ireland's overall requirement to achieve a 51% reduction in carbon emissions by the end of this decade. The projects which will be implemented as a result of this national policy will be subject to their individual environmental impact assessment and appropriate assessment processes (as appropriate) and hence there would be no potential adverse effects on the overall receiving environment. | No |
| River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for Ireland 2022-2027 (Water Action Plan 2024) | The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the RBMP have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Plan have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration. | No |
| County Development Plans (Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028, Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028, Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027, Tipperary County Development Plan 2022-2028, Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029) | The County Development Plan (CDP) provides the principal planning strategy document for the development of a local authority area over the statutory time period of the plan. Each of the CDP within the Zone of Influence of the study area has been subject to SEA and AA processes to ensure that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Plan have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration. | No |
| Regional Tourism Development Strategies 2023-2027 – Wild Atlantic Way Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027 | The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the Strategy have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Strategy have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration. | No |

4.3 Conservation objectives, threats and vulnerabilities of the European Sites

A key aim of the Habitats Directive is to ‘*maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of habitats and species of community interest*’. Site-specific conservation objectives aim to define favourable conservation condition for particular habitats or species within a European site. In the case of European sites for which site-specific conservation objectives have not yet been prepared, generic conservation objectives have been provided by NPWS.

The integrity of a site is the coherence of its ecological structure and function, across its whole area, which enables it to sustain the habitat, complex of habitats and/or the levels of populations of the species for which it was classified.

Site specific conservation objectives for each of the 6no. European sites (Lough Corrib SPA, Lough Corrib SAC, Inner Galway Bay SPA, Galway Bay Complex SAC, Cregganna Marsh SPA, and Black-Head Poolsallagh Complex SAC as described in detail in Table 3.6) under appraisal in the NIS have been published by NPWS. For every SAC the conservation objectives are to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of each of the Qualifying Interests (habitats), as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out. For every SPA the conservation objectives are to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of each of the Special Conservation Interests (the bird species and the wetland habitat), as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.

4.4 Mitigation measures

The findings set out in **Section 4.2** of this Natura Impact Report confirm that, if unmitigated, a number of the actions of the Galway City Destination & Experience Development Plan have potential for adverse effects on the integrity of a total of 6no. European sites.

This Plan sits at the lower level of the hierarchy and must comply with relevant higher-level strategic actions / plans. These documents include plans and programmes, which have also been subject to their own environmental assessment processes, as relevant.

The projects included in this Plan will have to comply, as relevant, with the various provisions of legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework, of which this Plan is not part and does not contribute towards. The Plan includes requirements for environmental protection and management including the ones set out in the ***Regional Tourism Development Strategies 2023-2027*** especially the ***Wild Atlantic Way Regional Tourism Development Strategy***.

As stated in the GCDEDP these include:

- **Infrastructure Capacity** - *With respect to infrastructural capacity (including drinking water, wastewater, waste, and transport) the potential environmental impacts associated with increase visitor numbers and increase pressure on capacities of existing infrastructure (including accommodation) will require careful planning and assessment. The potential environmental effects of the likely increase in tourism volumes resulting from the relevant projects in this plan will need to be considered at project level and mitigated as appropriate. Critical transport infrastructure to support all forms of transport around Galway City is important. This Plan supports the completion of the Galway City Transport Action Strategy in this regard. In*

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

addition, communication where relevant, between Fáilte Ireland and Uisce Eireann over the implementation period of this plan will be important to ensure projects resulting from this plan will have sufficient water and wastewater resources to sustainably function.

This aspect should be linked to the development of visitor management plans as appropriate. The promotion of developing visitor friendly supporting infrastructure where it is required will also be encouraged.

- **Visitor Management** - *Partners tasked with progressing actions and projects shall seek to sustainably manage existing and any increase in visitor numbers and/or any change in visitor behaviour to avoid significant effects on the environment including loss of habitat and/or disturbance to sensitive species (including human beings and biodiversity) where relevant. This shall include for example, ensuring that new projects are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities. Visitor management plans will be required for proposed plans, programmes and projects that are to receive funding as relevant and appropriate.*
- **Green Infrastructure and Ecosystem Services** - *Blue and Green Infrastructure and Ecosystem Services - Those receiving funding shall contribute towards the maintenance and enhancement of existing blue and green infrastructure and its ecosystem services. Proposals for the development of any blue and green infrastructure or activities in these areas should demonstrate the synergies that can be achieved with regard to the: provision of open space amenities; sustainable management of water; protection and management of biodiversity; protection of cultural heritage; and protected landscape sensitivities.*
- **Control and Management of Invasive Species** - *Proposals and the development of Visitor Management plans shall consider the control and management of invasive species having regard to existing objectives contained within the County Development Plan to include: Developers and managers of existing tourism or recreational sites and/or future development should adhere to best practice and facilitate the development of appropriate facilities to minimise the spread of invasive species including along Blueways and Greenways. Further information and resources on “Check, Clean, Dry, Disinfect” should be sought on invasives.ie.
Failte Ireland shall work with partners to encourage greater awareness of potential threats caused by invasive species and how they can spread.*

The majority of the mitigation measures are achieved through the detailed environmental protective policies and objectives as set out in the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029. The Development Plans provide for sustainable planning and management control of all development in County Galway – including the delivery of Destination Experience Development Plans through continued collaboration with Fáilte Ireland.

Proposals for development within the GCDEDP area must comply as appropriate with the relevant provisions included within the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029. Given that the GCDEDP sits within and at a lower level in the planning hierarchy, the measures contained to the Development Plans, and in their Natura Impact Report (NIR), SEA Environmental Report / SEA Statement and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) are applicable to the GCDEDP.

Therefore, the key environmental protection measures included in the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029, provide for appropriate and detailed mitigation of potential uncertain environmental effects of the GCDEDP. These measures include the following selected aims / policies / objectives as detailed below.

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 Protective Policy Objectives are as follows:

- *F5 Deforestation - To promote the avoidance of deforestation or commercial afforestation within European sites unless directly relating to the management of the site for its qualifying interests.*
- *MCH 2 Marine Based Environment - It is a policy objective of the Local Authority to protect and enhance where appropriate marine biodiversity in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.*
- *MCC 1 Environmental Value of the Coast - Protect the amenity, character, visual, recreational, economic potential and environmental values of the coast. Ensure that natural coastal defences including sand dunes, beaches and coastal wetlands are not compromised by inappropriate development.*
- *MCC 2 Protection of Coastal Habitats - To strictly control the nature and pattern of development within coastal areas and ensure that it is designed and landscaped to the highest standards and sited appropriately so as not to detract from the visual amenity of the area.*

(a) Development shall be prohibited where the development poses a significant or potential threat to coastal habitats or features, and/or where the development is likely to result in altered patterns of erosion or deposition elsewhere along the coast;

(b) To prohibit development along the coast outside existing towns and villages where such development is not adequately safeguarded over the lifetime of the development without the need to construct additional coastal defences.

- *MCC 3 Protection of Coastal Area - It is a policy objective to protect the Coastal Area through the following measures:*

(a) Ensure that conservation works undertaken in coastal areas are in accordance with best practice and measures to protect the coast, the coastal edge and coastal habitats are supported;

(b) Seek to prevent the unauthorised removal of sand and related beach material;

(c) Protect, enhance and conserve beaches in the County from inappropriate development and seek to maintain the current status of the designated Blue Flag beaches and Green Coasts and to increase the number of beaches and coasts holding this status in the future;

(d) Facilitate an Integrated Coastal Zone Management approach to ensure the conservation, management and protection of man-made and natural resources of the coastal zone.

- *MCC 4 Integrated Framework Management Plan - Support the preparation of an Integrated Galway Bay Framework Management Plan by all relevant stakeholders to provide for the sustainable and integrated development of the Galway Bay Area in a co-ordinated manner.*

- *NHB 1 Natural Heritage and Biodiversity of Designated Sites, Habitats and Species - Protect and where possible enhance the natural heritage sites designated under EU Legislation and National Legislation (Habitats Directive, Birds Directive, European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 and Wildlife Acts) and extend to any additions or alterations to sites that may occur during the lifetime of this plan.*

Protect and, where possible, enhance the plant and animal species and their habitats that have been identified under European legislation (Habitats and Birds Directive) and protected under national Legislation (European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI 477 of 2011), Wildlife Acts 1976-2010 and the Flora Protection Order (SI 94 of 1999).

Support the protection, conservation and enhancement of natural heritage and biodiversity, including the protection of the integrity of European sites, that form part of the Natura 2000 network, the protection of Natural Heritage Areas, proposed Natural Heritage Areas, Ramsar Sites, Nature Reserves, Wild Fowl Sanctuaries (and other designated sites including any future designations) and the promotion of the development of a green/ ecological network.

- *NHB 2 European Sites and Appropriate Assessment - To implement Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and to ensure that Appropriate Assessment is carried out in relation to works, plans and projects likely to impact on European sites (SACs and SPAs), whether directly or indirectly or in combination with any other plan(s) or project(s). All assessments must be in compliance with the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011. All such projects and plans will also be required to comply with statutory Environmental Impact Assessment requirements where relevant.*
- *NHB 3 Protection of European Sites - No plans, programmes, or projects etc. giving rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on European sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans, programmes, etc. or projects).*
- *NHB 4 Ecological Appraisal of Biodiversity - Ensure, where appropriate, the protection and conservation of areas, sites, species and ecological/networks of biodiversity value outside designated sites. Where appropriate require an ecological appraisal, for development not directly connected with or necessary to the management of European Sites, or a proposed European Site and which are likely to have significant effects on that site either individually or cumulatively.*
- *NHB 5 – Ecological Connectivity and Corridors - Support the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and ecological connectivity in non-designated sites, including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, semi-natural grasslands, rivers, streams, natural springs, wetlands, stonewalls, geological and geo-morphological systems, other landscape features and associated wildlife areas where these form part of the ecological network and/or may be considered as ecological corridors in the context of Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.*
- *NHB 7 Mitigation Measures - Require mitigating measures in certain cases where it is evident that biodiversity is likely to be affected. These measures may, in association with other specified requirements, include establishment of wildlife areas/corridors/parks, hedgerow, tree planting, wildflower meadows/marshes and other areas. With regard to residential development, in certain cases, these measures may be carried out in conjunction with the provision of open space and/or play areas.*
- *NHB 9 Protection of Bats and Bats Habitats - Seek to protect bats and their roosts, their feeding areas, flight paths and commuting routes. Ensure that development proposals in areas which are potentially important for bats, including areas of woodland, linear features such as hedgerows, stonewalls, watercourses and associated riparian vegetation which may provide migratory/foraging uses shall be subject to suitable assessment for potential impacts on bats. This will include an assessment of the cumulative loss of habitat or the impact on bat populations and activity in the area and may include a specific bat survey. Assessments shall be carried out by a suitably qualified professional and where development is likely to result in significant adverse effects on bat populations or activity in the area, development will be prohibited or require mitigation and/or compensatory measures, as appropriate. The impact of lighting on bats and their roosts and the*

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

lighting up of objects of cultural heritage must be adequately assessed in relation to new developments and the upgrading of existing lighting systems.

- *NHB 10 NPWS & Integrated Management Plans - Article 6(1) of the Habitats Directive requires that Member States establish the necessary conservation measures for European sites involving, if need be, appropriate management plans specifically designed for the sites or integrated into other development plans. The NPWS's current priority is to identify site specific conservation objectives; management plans may be considered after this is done. Where Integrated Management Plans are being prepared by the NPWS for European sites (or parts thereof), the NPWS shall be engaged with in order to ensure that plans are fully integrated with the Plan and other plans and programmes, with the intention that such plans are practical, achievable and sustainable and have regard to all relevant ecological, cultural, social and economic considerations, including those of local communities.*
- *NHB 11 Increases in Visitor Numbers to Semi-Natural Areas, Visitor and Habitat Management - Seek to manage any increase in visitor numbers in order to avoid significant effects including loss of habitat and disturbance, including ensuring that any new projects, such as greenways, are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities, such as riparian zones. Where relevant, the Planning Authority and those receiving permission for development under the Plan shall seek to manage any increase in visitor numbers and/or any change in visitor behaviour in order to avoid significant effects, including loss of habitat and disturbance. Management measures may include ensuring that new projects and activities are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities. Visitor/Habitat Management Plans will be required for proposed projects as relevant and appropriate.*
- *WTWF 1 Wetland Sites - Protect and conserve the ecological and biodiversity heritage of the wetland sites in the County. Ensure that an appropriate level of assessment is completed in relation to wetland habitats that are subject to proposals which would involve drainage or reclamation that might destroy, fragment or degrade any wetland in the county. This includes lakes and ponds, turloughs, watercourses, springs and swamps, marshes, fens, heath, peatlands, some woodlands as well as some coastal and marine habitats. Protect Ramsar sites under The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (especially as Waterfowl Habitat).*
- *P 1 Protection of Peatlands - Ensure that peatland areas which are designated (or proposed for designation) as NHAs, SACs or SPAs are conserved for their ecological, climate regulation, education and culture, archaeological potential including any ancient walkways (toghers) through bogs.*
- *IS 1 Control of Invasive and Alien Invasive Species - It is a policy objective of the Planning Authority to support measures for the prevention and eradication of invasive species.*
- *IS 2 Invasive Species Management Plan - Ensure that proposals for development do not lead to the spread or introduction of invasive species. If developments are proposed on sites where invasive species are currently or were previously present, an invasive species management plan will be required. A landscaping plan will be required for developments near water bodies and such plans must not include alien invasive species.*
- *PO 1 Delivery of All Ireland Pollinator Plan - To facilitate the delivery of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan where possible. In the interest of preserving and enhancing biodiversity and working in conjunction with the All Ireland Pollinator Plan - It shall be the policy objective of the Planning Authority to ensure that at least 20% of the green space on all housing estates being built will have to be dedicated, developed and maintained as a pollinator zone. The area dedicated can be confined to one single lot or various lots around the site providing that the total area of the lots meets the minimum requirement of 20%. The pollinator zones should be planted with a mix of pollinator friendly-bulbs,*

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

self seeding annuals and biennials, perennials, shrubs, trees, fruit trees and fruit bushes and the majority of this planting should consist of native plants.

- *TWHS 1 Trees, Hedgerows, Natural Boundaries and Stone Walls - Protect and seek to retain important trees, tree clusters and tree boundaries, ancient woodland, natural boundaries including stonewalls, existing hedgerows particularly species rich roadside and townland boundary hedgerows, where possible and replace with a boundary type similar to the existing boundary. Ensure that new development proposals take cognisance of significant trees/tree stands and that all planting schemes developed are suitable for the specific site and use suitable native variety of trees of Irish provenance and hedgerows of native species. Seek Tree Management Plans to ensure that trees are adequately protected during development and incorporated into the design of new developments.*
- *TWHS 3 Protection of Forestry - Protect all substantial areas of deciduous forest, other than areas of commercial forestry. Proposals for development in these areas should seek to interact with the landscape character of the forested areas and its limits while also enhancing the forested areas so as to increase biodiversity value.*
- *GBI 1 New Developments - Require all proposals for large scale development to contribute to the protection, management and enhancement of the existing green/blue infrastructure of the County and the delivery of new green/blue infrastructure, where appropriate by including a green/ blue infrastructure plan as an integral part of any planning application. This plan should identify environmental and ecological assets, constraints and opportunities and shall include proposals which protect, manage, and enhance the development of green infrastructure resources in a sustainable manner.*
- *SRA 2 Promote Public Access to Natural Amenities - Recognize the role played by natural amenities as a major resource for visitors and local people and support, protect and promote public access to natural amenities that have been traditionally used for outdoor recreation (water-based facilities, recreational activities, and marinas).*
- *SQ 1 Soil Impact Assessments - Ensure good soil quality throughout the county by requiring developments of a certain nature (as specified in the relevant environmental legislation) to carry out assessments of the impact of the development on soil quality.*
- *SQ 2 Soil Protection Measures - To ensure that adequate soil protection measures are undertaken where appropriate.*
- *SQ 3 Soil Protection, Contamination and Remediation - Adequate and appropriate investigations shall be carried out into the nature and extent of any soil and groundwater contamination and the risks associated with site development work, where brownfield development is proposed.*

All undeveloped, contaminated sites shall be remediated to internationally accepted standards prior to redevelopment. All applications shall be accompanied by a report from a qualified, expert consultant remediation incorporating international best practice and expertise on innovative ecological restoration techniques including specialist planting and green initiatives that create aesthetically improved sites, healthy environments and contribute to the provision of new green open spaces as integral parts of newly created areas.

Treatment/management of any contaminated material shall comply as appropriate with the Waste Management Act 1996 (waste licence, waste facility permit), as amended, and under the EPA Act 1992 (Industrial Emissions licensing, in particular the First Schedule, Class 11 Waste), as amended.

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

These measures will ensure that contaminated material will be managed in a manner that removes any risk to human health and ensures that the end use will be compatible with any risk.

- *PG 1 Geological and Geo-Morphological Systems - Protect and conserve geological and geomorphological systems, county geological heritage sites and features from inappropriate development that would detract from their heritage value and interpretation and ensure that any plan or project affecting karst formations, eskers or other important geological and geomorphological systems are adequately assessed with regard to their potential geophysical, hydrological or ecological impacts on the environment.*
- *PG 2 Geological Heritage of County Galway - Support the implementation of recommendations made in the Geological Heritage of County Galway – An Audit of County Geological Sites in County Galway (2019). Consult with the Geological Survey of Ireland when undertaking, approving or authorising developments which are likely to impact on County Geological Sites or involve significant ground excavations including sites identified as part of the Geological Heritage of County Galway – An Audit of County Geological Sites in County Galway (2019).*
- *PG 3 Promotion of and Access to Geological Sites - Encourage greater awareness of the geological heritage sites of the county and promote, where appropriate, public access to geological and geomorphological sites and avoid inappropriate development.*
- *ESK 1 Protection of Eskers Systems - Protect and conserve the landscape, natural heritage and biodiversity value of esker systems in the county. Assess applications for quarrying and other proposed developments with reference to their status or relative importance, for example, amenity, landscape and scientific value in the context of the overall esker system.*
- *CT 1 Tourism Resource - To protect beaches, and bathing areas as valuable local amenities and as a tourism resource and support the maintenance, protection and improvement of access to these amenities.*
- *CT 5 Tourism Products - To support the protection and enhancement of our islands, coastline and waterways as tourism products and attractions, subject to community and environmental carrying capacity.*
- *LWT 1 Lakeland and Waterways Tourism - To support the development of tourism activities in lakeland areas and waterways subject to Normal Planning and environmental criteria. All proposed developments shall be in accordance with the Water Framework Directive and all relevant EU Directives.*
- *NMPF 1 Marine Planning Framework - To seek to implement the policy objectives as set out within the National Marine Planning Framework to support the effective management of marine activities and more sustainable use of the county's marine resources.*
- *MCD 1 Protection of the Coastline - To protect the special character of the coast by preventing inappropriate development, particularly on the seaward side of coastal roads. New development, wherever possible, shall be accommodated within existing developed areas and shall be climate resilient in its location and design.*
- *MCD 2 Pattern of Development along the Coast - To strictly control the nature and pattern of development within coastal areas and ensure that it is designed and landscaped to the highest standards and sited appropriately so as not to detract from the visual amenity of the area.*
- *SF1 Shellfish Waters Directive - To continue to work with local communities, relevant stakeholders and with the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine to ensure the proper and successful implementation of the Shellfish Waters Directive along County Galway's coastline.*

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

- *SF2 Protection of Shellfish Waters - To seek to protect the quality of designated shellfish waters off the County Galway coast.*
- *MCT 1 Water Based Sports and Marine Recreation - To encourage proposals that promote sustainable development of water-based sports and marine recreation in coastal areas and on river systems across the County in accordance with environmental considerations.*
- *MCT 2 Coastal Tourism and Recreation - To facilitate sustainable tourism and recreation activities where appropriate, whilst encouraging the diversification and utilisation of existing facilities in accordance with environmental considerations.*
- *WR 1 Water Resources - Protect the water resources in the plan area, including rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, springs, turloughs, surface water and groundwater quality, as well as surface waters, aquatic and wetland habitats and freshwater and water dependant species in accordance with the requirements and guidance in the EU Water Framework Directive 2000 (2000/60/EC), the European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (as amended), the River Basin District Management Plan 2018 – 2021 and other relevant EU Directives, including associated national legislation and policy guidance (including any superseding versions of same) and also have regard to the Freshwater Pearl Mussel Sub-Basin Management Plans.*
- *WR 2 River Basin Management Plans - It is a policy objective of the Planning Authority to implement the programme of measures developed by the River Basin District Projects under the Water Framework Directive in relation to: Surface and groundwater interaction, Dangerous substances, Hydromorphology, Forestry, On site wastewater treatment systems, Municipal and industrial discharges, Urban pressures, Abstractions.*
- *IW 1 Inland Waterways –*
 - (a) Protect and conserve the quality, character and features of inland waterways by controlling developments close to navigable and non-navigable waterways in accordance with best practice guidelines.*
 - (b) Preserve, protect and enhance Galway’s inland lakes and waterways for their amenity and recreational resource amenity.*
 - (c) Protect the riparian zones of watercourse systems throughout the County, recognising the benefits they provide in relation to flood risk management and their protection of the ecological integrity of watercourse systems and ensure they are considered in the land use zoning in Local Area Plans.*
 - (d) The Planning Authority will support in principle the development and upgrading of the Inland Waterways and their associated facilities in accordance with legislation, best practice and relevant management strategies, key stakeholders and bodies including Waterways Ireland.*
 - (e) Ensure all abstractions of water will be subject to assessment for compliance with the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.*
 - (f) Seek to provide additional accesses to lake shores and rivers for public rights of way, parking and layby facilities, where appropriate.*
 - (g) Developments shall ensure that adequate soil protection measures are undertaken, where appropriate, including investigations into the nature and extent of any soil/groundwater contamination.*

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

- *FL 6 Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) - Maintain and enhance, as appropriate, the existing surface water drainage system in the County. Ensure that new developments are adequately serviced with surface water drainage infrastructure and promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems in all new developments. Surface water run-off from development sites will be limited to predevelopment levels and planning applications for new developments will be required to provide details of surface water drainage and sustainable drainage systems proposals.*
- *FL 7 Protection of Waterbodies and Watercourses - Protect waterbodies and watercourses within the County from inappropriate development, including rivers, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains. This will include protection buffers in riverine, wetland and coastal areas as appropriate.*
- *FL 8 Flood Risk Assessment for Planning Applications and CFRAMS - Protect Flood Zone A and Flood Zone B from inappropriate development and direct developments/land uses into the appropriate Flood Zone in accordance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009 (or any superseding document) and the guidance contained in Development Management Standard 68.*

Site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is required for all planning applications in areas at elevated risk of flooding, even for developments appropriate to the particular flood zone. The detail of these site-specific FRAs will depend on the level of risk and scale of development. A detailed site-specific FRA should quantify the risks, the effects of selected mitigation and the management of any residual risks. The Planning Authority shall have regard to the results of any CFRAM Studies in the assessment of planning applications.

Development proposals will need to be accompanied by a Development Management Justification Test in addition to the site-specific Flood Risk Assessment. Where only a small proportion of a site is at risk of flooding, the sequential approach shall be applied in site planning, in order to seek to ensure that no encroachment onto or loss of the flood plain occurs and/or that only water compatible development such as Open Space would be permitted for the lands which are identified as being at risk of flooding within that site.

In Flood Zone C, where the probability of flooding is low (less than 0.1%, Flood Zone C), site-specific Flood Risk Assessment may be required and the developer should satisfy themselves that the probability of flooding is appropriate to the development being proposed.

In addition to the County Plan SFRA datasets (including the Flood Zones, CFRAMS mapping, historical and predictive groundwater mapping, predictive pluvial mapping and historical flood risk indicator mapping, such as the Benefitting Lands mapping), new and emerging datasets (such as the OPW's National Fluvial Mapping that will supersede existing PFRA fluvial mapping for catchments greater than 5km²) must be consulted by prospective applicants for developments and will be made available to lower-tier Development Management processed in the Council.

Applications for developments in coastal areas and associated assessments shall also consider wave overtopping and coastal erosion.

- *AQ 1 Ambient Air Quality - To promote the preservation of best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development in accordance with the EU Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFÉ) Directive (2008/50/EC) and ensure that all air emissions associated with new developments*

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

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).

- AQ 2 Assessment of Air Quality - To require developments which would have the potential to have adverse impacts on air quality to carry out assessments of the impact of the development on air quality.
- AQ 3 – Air Quality Mitigation Measures - To require the use of appropriate mitigation measures such as dust dampeners to minimise the potential impacts of developments on air quality.
- NP 1 Galway County Council Noise Action Plan 2019-2023 - To implement the Galway County Council Noise Action Plan 2019-2023 (and any subsequent Plan) in order to avoid, prevent and reduce the harmful effects, including annoyance, due to environmental noise exposure.
- NP 3 Noise Impact Assessments - To require an assessment of impact of the development on noise levels, having regard to the provisions of the Environmental Protection Agency Acts 1992 and 2003 and the EPA Noise Regulations 1994 when assessing planning application.
- NP 4 Noise Pollution and Regulation - Restrict development proposals causing noise pollution in excess of best practice standards and regulate and control activities likely to give rise to excessive noise, other than those activities which are regulated by the EPA.
- NP 5 Noise Mitigation Measures - Require activities likely to give rise to excessive noise to install noise mitigation measures and monitors. The provision of a noise audit may be required where appropriate.
- WS 3 River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021 - Support the implementation of the relevant recommendations and measures as outlined in the relevant River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021, and associated Programme of Measures, or any such plan that may supersede same during the lifetime of this plan.
- WW 4 Requirement to Liaise with Irish Water – Wastewater - Ensure that new developments will only be permitted which are adequately serviced with sufficient capacity for appropriate collection, treatment and disposal (in compliance with the Water Framework Directive and River Basin Management Plan) to the public sewer unless provided for otherwise by the plan. Developers shall liaise with Irish Water with regard to the wastewater (and water) infrastructure to ensure sufficient capacity is available prior to the submission of a planning application.
- WW 7 Sustainable Drainage Systems - To require the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems to minimise and limit the extent of hard surfacing and paving and require the use of SuDS measures be incorporated in all new development (including extensions to existing developments). All development proposals shall be accompanied by a comprehensive SuDS assessment including run-off quantity, run off quality and impacts on habitat and water quality.
- WM 5 Construction and Environmental Management Plans - Construction Environment Management Plans shall be prepared in advance of the construction of relevant projects and implemented throughout. Such plans shall incorporate relevant mitigation measures which have been integrated into the Plan and any lower tier Environmental Impact Statement or Appropriate Assessment. CEMPs typically provide details of intended construction practice for the proposed development, including:
 - (a) location of the sites and materials compound(s) including area(s) identified for the storage of construction refuse;
 - (b) location of areas for construction site offices and staff facilities;
 - (c) details of site security fencing and hoardings;

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

- (d) details of on-site car parking facilities for site workers during the course of construction;*
- (e) details of the timing and routing of construction traffic to and from the construction site and associated directional signage;*
- (f) measures to obviate queuing of construction traffic on the adjoining road network;*
- (g) measures to prevent the spillage or deposit of clay, rubble or other debris;*
- (h) alternative arrangements to be put in place for pedestrians and vehicles in the case of the closure of any public right of way during the course of site development works;*
- (i) details of appropriate mitigation measures for noise, dust and vibration, and monitoring of such levels;*
- (j) containment of all construction-related fuel and oil within specially constructed bunds to ensure that fuel spillages are fully contained (such bunds shall be roofed to exclude rainwater);*
- (k) disposal of construction/demolition waste and details of how it is proposed to manage excavated soil, including compliance with 2006 Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government;*
- (l) a water and sediment management plan, providing for means to ensure that surface water runoff is controlled such that no silt or other pollutants enter local water courses or drains;*
- *LP 3 Dark Skies - To encourage the maintenance of dark skies in rural areas and to limit light pollution in urban and rural areas.*
- *TI 4 Tourism and Infrastructure Capacity - The potential environmental effects of a likely increase in tourists/tourism-related traffic volumes in particular locations/along particular routes shall be considered and mitigated as appropriate. Such a consideration should include potential impacts on existing infrastructure (including drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) resulting from tourism proposals. Galway County Council will support Irish Water and Fáilte Ireland to ensure that tourism is serviced by adequate and appropriate water services infrastructure.*

Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 Protective Policies/Objectives are as follows:

- *Policy 5.1 Green Network and Biodiversity*
 - 1. Support sustainable use and management of areas of ecological importance, parks and recreation amenity areas and facilities through an integrated green network policy approach in line with the Galway Recreation and Amenity Needs Study and where superseded by the Green Space Strategy, where it can be demonstrated that there will be no adverse impacts on the integrity of European sites.*
- *Policy 5.1 Green Network and Biodiversity*
 - 4. Support the implementation of the National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) 2017- 2021 (and any subsequent NBAP) and the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (2021-2025) and support the actions of the City Council's Heritage Plan 2016-2021 and Biodiversity Action Plan 2014-2024 relating to the promotion of ecological awareness, biodiversity and best practices.*
- *Policy 5.1 Green Network and Biodiversity*
 - 6. Promote the integration of nature based solutions and green/blue infrastructure in all new developments as appropriate to contribute to the city's climate resilience and require large scale development proposals to include a green infrastructure and biodiversity plan.*

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

- *Policy 5.2 Protected Spaces: Sites of European, National and Local Ecological Importance*
 1. *Protect European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network (including Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation) in accordance with the requirements in the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) and associated national legislation.*
- *Policy 5.2 Protected Spaces: Sites of European, National and Local Ecological Importance*
 2. *Ensure that all plans or projects within the Plan area will only be authorised and / or supported after the competent authority has ascertained based on scientific evidence, screening for appropriate assessment and /or a Habitats Directive Assessment that:*
 - i. *The plan or project will not give rise to an adverse direct, indirect or secondary effect on the integrity of any European site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects); or*
 - ii. *The plan or project will have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site (that does not host a priority natural habitat type/and or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000; or*
 - iii. *The plan or project will have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site (that hosts a 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 for 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.*
- *Policy 5.2 Protected Spaces: Sites of European, National and Local Ecological Importance*
 3. *Protect, conserve and promote the nationally designated sites of ecological importance, including existing and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (NHA and pNHAs) in the city.*
- *Policy 5.2 Protected Spaces: Sites of European, National and Local Ecological Importance*
 4. *Protect, conserve and support the development of an ecological network throughout the city which will improve the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network in accordance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.*
- *Policy 5.2 Protected Spaces: Sites of European, National and Local Ecological Importance*
 6. *Protect Local Biodiversity Areas, wildlife corridors and stepping stones based on the Galway Biodiversity Action Plan 2014-2024 and support the biodiversity of the city in the Council's role/responsibilities, works and operations, where appropriate.*
- *Policy 5.2 Protected Spaces: Sites of European, National and Local Ecological Importance*
 7. *Encourage, in liaison with the NPWS, the sustainable management of features which are important for the ecological coherence of the network of European sites and essential, by their linear or continuous nature or as stepping stones for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.*
- *Policy 5.2 Protected Spaces: Sites of European, National and Local Ecological Importance*

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

8. Support the actions of the Galway City Council Heritage Plan 2016-2021 and any update and Biodiversity Action Plan 2014-2024 relating to the promotion of ecological awareness and biodiversity, the protection of wildlife corridors and the prevention of wildlife habitat fragmentation.
- Policy 5.2 Protected Spaces: Sites of European, National and Local Ecological Importance
 - 10. Protect and conserve rare and threatened habitats and their key habitats, (wherever they occur) listed on Annex I and Annex IV of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43EEC) and listed for protection under the Wildlife Acts 1976-2000 and plant species listed in the Flora Protection Order 2015.
 - Policy 5.2 Protected Spaces: Sites of European, National and Local Ecological Importance
 - 11. Ensure that plans and projects with the potential to have a significant impact on European sites (SAC or SPA) whether directly, indirectly or in combination with other plans or projects are subject to Appropriate Assessment, under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (92/43EEC) and associated legislation and guidelines, to inform decision making.
 - Policy 5.2 Protected Spaces: Sites of European, National and Local Ecological Importance
 - 14. Support and implement measures to control and manage alien/invasive species, where appropriate in accordance with the EU (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011.
 - Policy 5.2 Protected Spaces: Sites of European, National and Local Ecological Importance
 - 15. Protect the ecological integrity of statutory Nature Reserves, Wildfowl Sanctuaries, refuges for fauna and Annex 1 Habitats.
 - Policy 8.8 Public Realm
 - 5. Promote nature based SUDS solutions in the public realm where possible to enhance biodiversity and resilience to climate change.
 - Policy 9.7 Light Pollution
 - 3. Lighting on linear infrastructures, including greenways and blueways, should be carefully managed to ensure coherence of the supporting habitats of European sites, as outlined in Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.
 - Policy 9.7 Light Pollution
 - 4. Ensure the design of external lighting does not have an adverse impact on wildlife and ecosystems and encourage the use of dark zones and sensor lighting where feasible.
 - Policy 5.3 Blue Spaces: Coast, Canals and Waterways
 - 1. Protect and maintain the integrity of the coastal environment and waterways by avoiding significant impacts and meeting the requirements of statutory bodies, national and European legislation and standards.
 - Policy 5.3 Blue Spaces: Coast, Canals and Waterways
 - 2. Conserve and protect natural conservation areas within the coastal area and along waterways and ensure that the range and quality of associated habitats and the range and populations of species are maintained.
 - Policy 5.3 Blue Spaces: Coast, Canals and Waterways
 - 5. Support the implementation of the recommendations of the River Basin Management Plan in relation to the protection of water quality of surface waters, groundwater and coastal waters.
 - Policy 5.3 Blue Spaces: Coast, Canals and Waterways
 - 6. Ensure development and uses adhere to the principles of sustainable development and restrict any development or use which negatively impact on water quality.
 - Policy 5.3 Blue Spaces: Coast, Canals and Waterways

7. *Have regard to European and national best practice when assessing development in or near coastal areas which is likely to have significant effects on the integrity, defined by the structure and function, of any designated European sites, protected coastal and marine fauna and flora.*
- *Policy 5.3 Blue Spaces: Coast, Canals and Waterways*
 8. *Ensure the conservation of the canal corridor and require that developments abutting the canal relate to the context of the adjacent environment and contribute to the overall amenity, and explore the possibility of opportunities for public access.*
- *Policy 5.3 Blue Spaces: Coast, Canals and Waterways*
 12. *Ensure the protection of the River Corrib as a Salmonid River, where appropriate.*
- *Policy 5.3 Blue Spaces: Coast, Canals and Waterways*
 16. *Ensure any development within the aquatic environment shall be carried out in consultation with prescribed bodies and with adherence to their guidelines.*
- *Policy 5.3 Blue Spaces: Coast, Canals and Waterways*
 17. *Protect and maintain, where feasible, undeveloped riparian zones and natural floodplains along the River Corrib and its tributaries.*
- *Policy 5.3 Blue Spaces: Coast, Canals and Waterways*
 18. *Ensure that development does not have a significant adverse impact, incapable of satisfactory mitigation, on protected species.*
- *Policy 9.1 Flood Risk*
 4. *Protect and promote sustainable management and uses of water bodies and watercourses from inappropriate development, including rivers, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains.*
- *Policy 9.1 Flood Risk*
 8. *Protect and maintain, where feasible, undeveloped riparian zones and natural floodplains along the River Corrib and its tributaries.*
- *Policy 9.2 Water Quality*
 1. *Support the actions of the River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 and future River Basin Management Plan in order to promote and achieve a restoration of good status, reduce chemical pollution and prevent deterioration of surface, coastal and groundwater quality, where appropriate.*
- *Policy 9.2 Water Quality*
 3. *Ensure development adheres to prevailing environmental standards and guidelines and accords with emerging legislation and strategy on the marine environment.*
- *Policy 9.4 Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS)*
 1. *Ensure the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and sustainable surface water drainage management, wherever practical in the design of development to enable surface water run-off to be managed as near to its source as possible and achieve wider benefits such as sustainable development, water quality, biodiversity local amenity and climate adaptation*
- *Policy 9.6 Air Quality and Noise*
 1. *Maintain air quality to a satisfactory standard by regulating and monitoring atmospheric emissions in accordance with EU policy directives on air quality and Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFÉ) Directive (2008/50/EC) by promoting and supporting initiatives to reduce air pollution and by increasing the use of sustainable transport modes and developing urban woodlands, encouraging tree planting, conserving and creating green open space.*

4.5 Summary and Conclusion

This Natura Impact Statement has considered the potential adverse impacts of the implementation of the Galway City Destination & Experience Development Plan on the integrity of the relevant European sites.

This report concludes on the best scientific evidence that it can be clearly demonstrated that no elements of the GCDEDP will result in any adverse impact on the integrity or Qualifying Interests/Special Conservation Interests of any relevant European site, either on their own or in-combination with other plans or projects, in light of their conservation objectives, provided mitigation measures are implemented.

Refer to Appendix 1 for the Appropriate Assessment Determination.

Appendix 1 – Appropriate Assessment Determination

AA Screening Determination

further to the main AA Natura Impact Statement

under the
European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 (as amended) for the
Draft Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan

Appropriate Assessment (AA) screening

This ancillary determination is ancillary to both:

- Fáilte Ireland's AA Natura Impact Statement; and
- Fáilte Ireland's AA determination that is made in advance of finalisation of the Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan.

In making the determination that AA is required, the information on the potential effects on European Sites arising from the Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan is taken into account (this information is reproduced in the AA Natura Impact Statement).

That information has been carefully considered and its reasoning and conclusion agreed with and adopted – allowing the AA Natura Impact Statement to conclude at the end of Section 3 "Screening for Appropriate Assessment" of the Natura Impact Statement that Stage 2 AA is required. It has been determined that the Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan may have effects on a number of European Sites - therefore, Stage 2 AA (including the preparation of the Natura Impact Statement) is required for the Plan (see Natura Impact Statement subsection 3.4 "AA Screening Conclusion").

Signed on behalf of Fáilte Ireland:



Dated: May 2025

**Appropriate Assessment Determination under the
European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 (as amended)
for the
Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan**

An Appropriate Assessment (AA) Determination, pursuant to Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive and Regulation 42 (11) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended), as to whether a plan or project would adversely affect the integrity of a European Site has being made by Fáilte Ireland.

In carrying out this AA, Fáilte Ireland is taking into account the relevant matters specified under Regulation 42 (12) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended). The AA Natura Impact Statement (which considers other relevant plans and projects) has been carefully considered and its reasoning and conclusion agreed with and adopted. All other relevant documents prepared and submitted during the preparation process for the Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan were also considered in making this determination, including the Plan to be finalised and written submissions made on the Draft Plan and associated documents while they were on public display.

It is determined that the risks to the integrity of the Natura 2000 sites have been addressed by the inclusion of achievable mitigation measures that will prioritise the avoidance of impacts in the first place and reliably mitigate these impacts where they cannot be avoided. Furthermore, in order to be realised, projects included in the Plan will have to comply, as relevant, with the various provisions of legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier AA) that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework, of which the Plan is not part and does not contribute towards.

Having incorporated these mitigation commitments; it is determined that implementation of the Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan will not have a significant adverse impact on the ecological integrity of any European Site, either individually or in combination with any other plan or project¹. Therefore, no further assessment is required.

Date: __October 2025_____

Signed: 
Signatory
Approved Officer

¹ Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be:
a) No alternative solution available,
b) Imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the plan to proceed; and
c) Adequate compensatory measures in place.

Brady Shipman Martin

DUBLIN

Mountpleasant Business Centre
Mountpleasant Avenue Upper
Ranelagh
Dublin 6

CORK

Penrose Wharf Business Centre
Penrose Wharf
Cork

+353 1 208 1900

mail@bradyshipmanmartin.com

www.bradyshipmanmartin.com

