

**Galway City Destination and Experience  
Development Plan 2025-2030**  
**SEA Environmental Report Non-  
Technical Summary**



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## Glossary

### Appropriate Assessment

The obligation to undertake Appropriate Assessment derives from Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. AA is a focused and detailed impact assessment of the implications of a strategic action or project, alone and in combination with other strategic actions and projects, on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site in view of its conservation objectives.

### Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna

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

Flora is all of the plants found in a given area.

Fauna is all of the animals found in a given area.

### Environmental Problems

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

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

### Environmental Vectors

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

### Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures are measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and, as fully as possible, offset any significant adverse impacts on the environment of implementing a human action, be it a plan, programme or project. Mitigation involves ameliorating significant negative effects. Where there are significant negative effects, consideration should be given in the first instance to preventing such effects or, where this is not possible, to lessening or offsetting those effects.

### Protected Structure

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

#### **Recorded Monument**

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

#### **SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment)**

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

#### **SEA Scoping**

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

#### **Strategic Actions**

Strategic actions include: Policies / Strategies, which may be considered as inspiration and guidance for action and which set the framework for Plans and programmes; Plans, sets of coordinated and timed objectives for the implementation of the policy; and Programmes, sets of projects in a particular area.

#### **Strategic Environmental Objective (SEO)**

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

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Overview

An Environmental Report of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Galway City Destination & Experience Development Plan 2025-2030 (hereafter referred to the 'Plan' or the 'GCDEDP') has been prepared to comply with the provisions of Article 12 of S.I. 435 of 2004 – European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations – as amended by S.I. 200 of 2011 – European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011.

This document is a non-technical summary (NTS) of the SEA Environmental Report (ER). It shall endeavour, insofar as possible, to present a condensed summary of the ER, using non-technical terms, but without omitting or understating any environmental effects of note.

The Environmental Report and NTS, which should be read in conjunction with the GCDEDP, has been prepared by Brady Shipman Martin, environmental, planning and landscape consultants, on behalf of Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority.

### 1.2 Destination & Experience Development Plans

A Destination Experience Development Plan (DEDP) is a five year commercial destination and experience development plan prepared for an area.

The GCDEDP is focused on an area comprising of 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.

### 1.3 Strategic Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) stems from *Directive 2001/42/EC*<sup>1</sup> (the 'SEA Directive') of the European Parliament and of the Council of Ministers on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. Article 1 of the Directive states that:

*“The objective of this directive is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.”*

In effect, SEA comprises a systematic assessment process of predicting and evaluating the 'likely significant environmental effects' of implementing a proposed plan or programme, before a decision is made to adopt the plan or programme. The overall aim of SEA is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development.

The SEA Directive was transposed into Irish law through two Statutory Instruments (S.I.):

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<sup>1</sup>SEA Directive: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN>

- S.I. No. 435 of 2004 *The European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004*, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011 *The European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011*; and
- S.I. No. 436 of 2004 *Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2004*, as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011 *The Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011*.

The former regulations, (S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011), relate to SEA as it applies to plans or programmes prepared for “agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism and town and country planning or land use”, and these provisions are applicable to the GCDEDP as a tourism sector plan.

The latter regulations (S.I. No. 436 of 2004 as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011) relate to SEA as it applies to plans or programmes where the context requires, “a development plan, a variation of a development plan, a local area plan (or an amendment thereto), regional planning guidelines or a planning scheme”, and are not applicable to the GCDEDP.

#### 1.4 The Requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Plan

Article 3(2) of the SEA Directive, introduced the requirement that SEA be carried out on plans and programmes:

- a) *which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive<sup>2</sup>, or*
- b) *which, in view of the likely effect on sites, have been determined to require an assessment pursuant to Article 6 or 7 of the 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive)<sup>3</sup> i.e. requires that SEA is undertaken where Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is being undertaken on the plan or programme.*

The Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan is a non-statutory tourism sector plan that does not set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive and does not contain provisions or define rules that must be complied with when consent of other projects is being granted. Therefore, SEA of the GCDEDP is not required under Article 3(2)(a) above of the SEA Directive.

The Plan does, however, fall under the definition of a “plan” contained within the *Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011 (as amended)* and therefore, must be screened for the requirement to undertake Appropriate Assessment (AA) in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EC). The Screening for AA (BSM, 2025) has found that the Plan has the potential, if unmitigated, to affect the ecological integrity of European sites and that measures to ensure that potential effects

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<sup>2</sup> Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, *on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment*

<sup>3</sup> Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

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are avoided are required. Therefore, in accordance with Article 3(2)(b) above and guidance provided in SEA Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08<sup>4</sup>, a SEA of the GCDEDP has been undertaken.

The Environmental Report provides the findings of the SEA and takes account of recommendations contained in submissions from the Environmental Authorities. On finalisation of the Plan, an SEA Statement will be prepared, summarising, *inter alia*, how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/circular-sea-01-08.pdf>

## 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 tile day while protecting the city's status as a vibrant night-lime destination.*
- *Grow the appeal of Galway City in tile domestic leisure and tile family markets by leveraging the investment in outdoor activities.*
- *Maximise the large scale capital investment in visitor attractions and activities to broaden tile appeal of Galway City among range of visitor segments.*
- *Pursue product development opportunities that build on tile 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 tile 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 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.*

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- **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 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.'*

### 2.3 Strategic Objectives

The Plan is structured around the following strategic objectives:

- 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.
- Strategic Objective 2: Increase tourism revenue, visitor dispersion and season extension across the Southern half of the Wild Atlantic Way.
- Strategic Objective 3: Protect the authenticity and “wildness” of the Wild Atlantic Way.
- 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.
- 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.

The accompanying strategic objectives of the GCDEDP are set out in **Table 8.1** of this report.

### 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.*

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**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 projects, enabling projects and actions are provided and assessed in **Appendix 1** of the SEA Environmental Report .

### 3 Strategic Environmental Assessment

#### 3.1 Introduction

SEA is a process for evaluating, at the earliest appropriate stage, the environmental quality and consequences of Plans or Programmes (P/Ps). The purpose is to ensure that the environmental consequences of P/Ps are assessed both during their preparation and prior to their adoption. The SEA process also gives specified environmental authorities, interested parties and the general public, an opportunity to comment on the environmental impacts of the proposed P/P and to be kept informed during the decision-making process.

*Directive 2001/42/EC<sup>5</sup> on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment* (the ‘SEA Directive’) requires EU Member States to assess the ‘likely significant environmental effects’ of plans and programmes prior to their adoption. This provides for the assessment of strategic environmental considerations at an early stage in the decision-making process.

The SEA process is designed to ensure that significant environmental effects arising from plans are:

- Properly identified and assessed;
- Subject to public participation;
- Taken into account by decision makers; and
- Regularly monitored.

The SEA Directive and SEA Regulations require that competent authorities determine whether the implementation of plans or programmes, or modifications thereof, will be likely to have significant effects on the environment. This determination process is referred to as an Environmental Assessment and defined as:

*“...the preparation of an environmental report, the carrying out of consultations, the taking into account of the environmental report and the results of the consultations in decision-making and the provision of information on the decision...”<sup>6</sup>*

#### 3.2 SEA Stages and Process

The key focus of SEA is to take environmental issues, and in particular ‘likely significant environmental effects’ of a P / P, into consideration during the plan or programme making process. The key stages in the SEA process as they relate to the GCDEDP are outlined in **Table 2.1** below.

**Table 2.1 Outline of the SEA Process**

Stage	Description	Status
1. Screening	<p>The requirement to undertake a SEA is mandatory for certain Plan / Programme (P / P). Where SEA is not a mandatory requirement, the P / Ps is subject to a ‘Screening process’, to consider if it is <i>likely to have significant effects</i> on the environment, and therefore, if SEA is required.</p> <p>The preparation of the <i>Draft GCDEDP</i> has been screened for Appropriate Assessment (AA) and it has been concluded that potential for effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be</p>	<p>Completed</p> 

<sup>5</sup> SEA Directive: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN>

<sup>6</sup> Article 2(b) of Directive 2001/42/EC, European Union, Article 2 (3) of EC (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 S.I No. 435 of 2004

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Stage	Description	Status
	<p>excluded beyond all reasonable scientific doubt and is required to undergo Appropriate Assessment.</p> <p>Therefore, in accordance with <i>Circular Letter SEA 1/08 &amp; NPWS 1/08</i> the <i>Draft GCDEDP</i> is also required to undergo a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with <i>Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment</i> (known as the SEA Directive).</p>	
2. Scoping	<p>Preparation of a SEA Scoping Report highlighting that the Environmental Report is required to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ methods of assessment;</li> <li>■ contents and level of detail in the Plan / Programme;</li> <li>■ the stage in the Plan or Programme-making process; and</li> <li>■ the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in the decision-making process in order to avoid duplication of environmental assessment.</li> </ul> <p>Scoping provides for consultation with the Environmental Authorities specified in Article 13 of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011, and the process allows for incorporation of the views of the environmental authorities within the P / P and the SEA Environmental Report.</p>	Completed 
3. Environmental Report	<p>Preparation of a systemic identification and evaluation of alternatives and assessment of the <i>likely significant environmental effects</i> of implementing the P / P.</p> <p>The findings of the assessment, which is carried out at various stages in the P / P making (<i>e.g.</i> Draft, Amended Draft <i>etc.</i>), are provided in the SEA Environmental Report in accordance with Article 12 (including Schedule 2) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011.</p> <p>The output from this stage is an Environmental Report which accompanied the draft P / P on public display.</p>	Completed 
4. SEA Statement	<p>Completion / adoption of the Final GCDEDP, taking account of <i>likely significant environmental effects</i>, any submissions or observations received from consultations and integration of mitigation and monitoring measures within the Plan.</p> <p>The Environmental Report is concluded and an SEA Statement is prepared in accordance with Article 16(2)(b) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011, summarising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan / Programme;</li> <li>■ how the environmental report, and any submissions /observations or consultations have been taken into account in the preparation of the Plan / Programme;</li> <li>■ the reasons for choosing the Plan / Programme in light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and</li> <li>■ the measures decided for monitoring the significant environmental effects of implementation of the Plan / Programme.</li> </ul>	Current Stage

### 3.3 SEA Screening and Requirement for SEA

The requirement to undertake a SEA is mandatory for certain P / Ps that are above specified thresholds. Where SEA is not a mandatory requirement, the P / P is subject to a 'Screening process', (Stage 1) to consider if it is likely to have significant effects on the environment, and therefore, if SEA is required.

Screening for the purposes of SEA is defined as “*the determination of whether implementation of a P / P [Plan or Programme] would be likely to have significant environmental effects on the environment. The process of deciding whether a P / P [Plan or Programme] requires SEA.*”<sup>7</sup> The criteria for screening, i.e. determining whether a particular plan is likely to have significant environmental effects are set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive. These criteria are reproduced in Schedule 1 of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011. The criteria are set out under two principal headings, each of which have a number of sub-criteria:

- Characteristics of a Plan / Programme; and
- Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected.

It is also noted that in accordance with Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08<sup>8</sup>, SEA for a P / P is also a mandatory requirement where the P / P requires Appropriate Assessment (AA) under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).

The GCDEDP has been screened for Appropriate Assessment (AA) in accordance with Article 6(3) of the *Habitats Directive* (92/43/EEC) and Regulation 42 of the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011*, as amended. The AA Screening has concluded that potential for effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded beyond all reasonable scientific doubt and therefore appropriate assessment and the preparation of a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) is required.

Therefore, in accordance with *Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08*<sup>9</sup> the GCDEDP was also required to undergo Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with *Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment*<sup>10</sup> (the *SEA Directive*).

### 3.4 SEA Scoping

Scoping allowed for consultation with the Environmental Authorities specified in Article 9(5) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011 and for incorporation of the views of the Environmental Authorities within the Plan or Programme and the SEA Environmental Report.

The consultation was undertaken with the following Environmental Authorities specified in Article 9(5) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended, on 20 March 2025:

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);
- Department of Climate, Environment & Energy;
- Department of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and the Marine;
- Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht;
- Department of Enterprise, Tourism & Employment;
- Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage.

<sup>7</sup> EPA: <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/ea/SEA%20Pack%202018.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/circular-sea-01-08.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/circular-sea-01-08.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> DIRECTIVE 2001/42/EC: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN>

## Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

### SEA Environmental Report Non-Technical Summary

Submissions / observations on the scoping of the Environmental Report were received from the environmental authorities and comments have been incorporated into the Plan and Environmental Report as set out in **Table 3.1**.

Table 3.1 SEA Scoping Submissions / Observation from Environmental Authorities

Environmental Authority	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
<p>Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage – Development Applications Unit (DAU)</p>	<p>The submission from DAU outlined heritage related observations and recommendations.</p> <p><u>Policy Context</u></p> <p>The submission notes that a number of key national policy documents pertaining to archaeology and built heritage include Heritage Ireland 2030, the Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan for the Built and Archaeological Heritage (2019), the Built Vernacular Strategy (2021) and the National Policy on Architecture (2022). Where appropriate, the policies and objectives of these core documents should be considered and referenced in the SEA Scoping for the DEDP.</p> <p>The submission further notes that the development of these new policy documents position archaeology and built heritage as a central and integrated theme within all government policy, planning and funding frameworks. These new policies are of strategic importance in terms of our alignment with EU policies and funding programmes, ensuring resilience in the face of significant challenges.</p> <p>The Department recognises that this is an important time to be working collaboratively and strategically with Local Authorities and other statutory bodies, particularly with regard to vulnerable built and archaeological heritage sites, the safeguarding of vacant buildings and the promoting/enabling reuse and repurposing of existing cultural assets. In this regard, the Department notes the importance of new areas of interest, including our built vernacular architecture and its setting – both rural and urban – and the protection and potential of planned and designed landscapes for recreational and amenity purposes.</p> <p>The Programme for Government supports the 17 no. Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the United Nations and built on the principle of ‘leaving no one behind’. Cultural and natural heritage, as part of the wider built environment, is represented by Goal No. 11 – make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Targets to be achieved are wide-ranging including the adoption and implementation of integrated policies and plans towards ‘inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters and implement holistic disaster risk management at all levels’, whilst</p>	<p>The information and datasets provided have informed the preparation of the Plan and the Environmental Report.</p>

## Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

### SEA Environmental Report Non-Technical Summary

Environmental Authority	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
	<p>targets for cultural and natural heritage are focused on strengthening its protection. Ireland is increasingly considered as being at the vanguard of research on the impacts of Climate Change on the archaeological heritage and is a forerunner in implementing actions to ensure continued conservation and enhancement of our heritage assets in the face of these impacts.</p> <p><u>Galway Historic Town Core</u></p> <p>The submission highlights that Galway City contains a Historic Town Core of medieval origin which is reflected in the surviving streetscape and in the fabric of many buildings in the city centre. Cultural Heritage, incorporating Archaeological Heritage, is interlinked and interacts with the vision, themes, and objectives of the statutory Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 – including but not limited to – the Vision and Core Strategy, Climate Action, Economic Development, Housing &amp; Sustainable Neighbourhoods (including well-being and quality of life), Sustainable Mobility &amp; Transportation, Physical Infrastructure (including Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Enhancement), Tourism, Urban Design and Place-making.</p> <p>The submission recommends that the over-arching vision for Galway City, together with the relevant Goals, Policies, Objectives and Development Management Process of the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029, as they pertain to archaeological heritage, should be considered and referenced where appropriate in the SEA for the DEDP to assist in highlighting and assessing these interactions as they relate to the strategy for Galway City. In particular, the specific Strategic Aims for Public Realm and Built Environment, Travel and Mobility and Heritage-based Tourism, as set out in the County Development Plan, should be considered and referenced in the SEA Scoping process where these interact with Cultural Heritage.</p> <p>The Department further notes that notwithstanding the unique built and archaeological heritage of Galway City and the benefits and opportunities that this presents, the stated target outcomes and objectives of the DEDP do not explicitly reference this theme. In this regard, it is important to note that the Historic Town Core of Galway, together with numerous individual recorded sites and monuments located within the city, are each subject to statutory protection in the Record of Monument and Places (RMP), established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994 (and as will be superseded by implementation</p>	<p>While stated targets do not expressly reference the unique built and archaeological heritage of the city, these aspects are referenced across the wider DEDP including within KPIs for environmental aspects, environmental considerations and guiding principles. Built and</p>

## Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

### SEA Environmental Report Non-Technical Summary

Environmental Authority	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
	<p>of the relevant parts of the recently enacted Historic, Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023).</p> <p>Any design proposals deriving from the DEDP must be cognisant of the requirement to conserve and enhance the setting and amenity of the historic streetscape, street furniture and features, as well the archaeological heritage of Galway City Centre generally. Any future projects, as may be proposed stemming from the implementation of the DEDP, should be subject to Archaeological Impact Assessment and resultant designs should include specific archaeological mitigation where this requirement is identified by the impact assessment process.</p> <p>The Department welcomes the opportunities that the Destination &amp; Experience Development Plan will bring to Galway City Centre. This will be strategically important to enhancing accessibility to, and appreciation of, the city’s heritage assets. The Department supports the integration and communication of multiple strands of cultural and natural heritage, particularly through the implementation of blue and green infrastructural projects that holistically deal with all aspects of archaeological, built and natural heritage. By delivering high quality renewal and enhancement to existing places, the social, environmental and economic objectives for sustainable development of communities will be met, and cultural heritage significance, conservation best practice and preservation and protection of the biodiversity of these places will be raised in general to the benefit of all.</p>	<p>archaeological heritage factors are also included within the SEA Monitoring programme.</p>
<p><b>Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)</b></p>	<p>The submission from EPA includes the following comments and recommendations:</p> <p>EPA highlights several key environmental issues to consider in preparing the Plan and SEA. The submission includes specific comments on the SEA Scoping Report in Appendix I and has also attached the following resource document - ‘<i>SEA of Local Authority Land-Use Plans – EPA Recommendations and Resources</i>’ (Version 1.25, 2025).</p> <p>Governance and Implementation – The submissions recommends to set out the implementation arrangements and governance structures, including lines of responsibility for implementation and delivery as well as provisions for interim review and progress reporting. The relationship between the Plan and the National Planning Framework, Regional Spatial and</p>	<p>The information provided has informed the preparation of the Plan and the Environmental Report.</p>

## Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

### SEA Environmental Report Non-Technical Summary

Environmental Authority	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
	<p>Economic Strategies and the implications of the Plan in the context of existing Local Authority Plans should be set out.</p> <p>Synergies with key national plans - The relevant actions of the Climate Action Plan 2024 and the objectives and policy commitments of the National Planning Framework, Water Action Plan 2024, and the Northern &amp; Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy should be aligned with and considered, as appropriate.</p> <p>Integration of the SEA and the Plan - The integration of the SEA process into the Plan should reflect the overall objective of the SEA Directive <i>“to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes”</i>.</p> <p>The submission advises that the SEA should address the complex and cross cutting nature of climate and biodiversity issues and include targets and measures where relevant and appropriate.</p> <p>Recommendations from the SEA &amp; AA including mitigation measures and monitoring proposals should be integrated into the Plan. SEA Environmental Report and the Plan should include a chapter on how the recommendations and mitigation measures have been incorporated into the Plan.</p> <p>EPA recommend that the Plan includes summary tables outlining the key findings of the SEA and linking the significant environmental effects identified to the proposed mitigation measures, monitoring programme and Plan policies/measures. Fully integrating the findings and recommendations of the SEA into the Plan will be key to strengthening its overall positive commitments while ensuring that any potential significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan are mitigated.</p> <p>EPA recommend that the SEA Environmental Report should include summary tables outlining the key findings of the SEA and linking the significant environmental effects identified to the proposed mitigation measures, monitoring programme and, where relevant, Plan policies/measures.</p>	

## Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

### SEA Environmental Report Non-Technical Summary

Environmental Authority	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
	<p>The submission notes that EPA has published a guidance note – EPA Good Practice Guidance on SEA for the Tourism Sector to help provide guidance and ideas on how to carry out strategic environmental assessments (SEA) of tourism sectoral plans and programmes in Ireland.</p> <p>The submission notes that EPA has published the 'Ireland's State of the Environment Report 2024'. This report should be considered, and relevant aspects integrated as appropriate, in implementing the Plan outputs/ recommendations.</p> <p>EPA highlights the requirement under the SEA Regulations to consult with Environmental Authorities (EPA, Minister of Housing, Local Government &amp; Heritage, Minister for Environment, Climate &amp; Communications, Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine)</p> <p>Appendix I to the EPA submission includes comments on the SEA Scoping Report - scope of the SEA, data and knowledge gaps, range of effects, monitoring, implementation &amp; reporting, SEA statement, available guidance &amp; resources, webtools.</p>	

### 3.5 SEA Environmental Report

The current stage of the SEA process (Stage 3) involves the preparation of the Environmental Report for the identification, description, evaluation and mitigation of the potential environmental impacts associated with the GCDEDP and the alternatives taking account of the geographical scope of the Plan.

Article 5(1) and Annex I of the *SEA Directive* provides detail on the information to be included in an Environmental Report.

### 3.6 Consultation

The Draft GCDEDP, together with the SEA Environmental Report and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) were placed on public display and submissions received.

Consultation was also undertaken with the Environmental Authorities as specified in Article 13 of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011 and for incorporation of the views of the Environmental Authorities within the Plan or Programme and the SEA Environmental Report.

Submissions received in relation to the environmental assessments are detailed in **Table 3.2** below.

Table 3.2 SEA Consultation Response

Submission	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
<p><b>Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)</b></p>	<p>The submission from EPA includes the following comments and recommendations: Ensure the Plan aligns with key relevant higher-level plans and programmes is consistent with the relevant objectives and policy commitments of the National Planning Framework and the Northern and Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.</p>	<p>The information provided has informed the preparation of the Plan and the Environmental Report.</p>
	<p><b>Biodiversity Considerations</b> EPA notes that the important ecosystem services within the Plan area should be promoted in an appropriate manner to enhance eco-tourism. This could also be supported by increasing awareness of the need for environmentally sustainable and responsible tourism. This would help protect the significant environmental resources of the area, including the many designated sites and protected species within and adjacent to the Plan area.</p>	<p>The Plan sets out guiding principles for sustainable and responsible tourism under Appendix 1 of the Plan. The importance of integrating requirements for environmental protection and management are also considered throughout the Plan.</p>
	<p><b>Invasive Species Management and Control</b> EPA advises the Plan to include a commitment to ensure the awareness of the need for management and control of invasive species within the Plan area. This is an important consideration, particularly in relation to promoting and developing or enhancing walking routes and marine activities. Awareness of biosecurity, management, monitoring and control and the promotion of these key considerations, in collaboration with other stakeholders, should be a priority.</p>	<p>The SEA ER identifies the potential issues relating to the management and control of invasive species. Appropriate mitigation measures as per the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 have been addressed in Section 9 of the SEA ER. Additionally, the following text has been added to Appendix 1 of the final Plan – <i>‘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</i></p>

## Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

### SEA Environmental Report Non-Technical Summary

Submission	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
		<p><i>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</i></p> <p><i>Failte Ireland shall work with partners to encourage greater awareness of potential threats caused by invasive species and how they can spread.’</i></p>
	<p>Link between the SEA and the Plan</p> <p>The note highlights that the SEA should identify the key environmental resources to be protected in implementing the Plan. Where tourism-related projects are proposed, in implementing Plan, it will be important that these are carefully assessed, developed, monitored and maintained.</p>	<p>The key environmental resources of the Plan have been identified in Section 5 of the SEA ER that provides a detailed description of the environmental baseline. The assessment of the Strategic Objectives and Strategic Development Pillars, Catalyst Projects and Enabling Projects is covered under Section 8 and Appendix 1 of the SEA ER. The mitigation measures and monitoring requirements are further addressed under Sections 9 &amp; 10, respectively.</p>
	<p>EPA recommends that a commitment is included to collaborate with key stakeholders such as Galway City Council and the National Parks and Wildlife Service in delivering many of the projects included in the Plan. Where relevant, and as appropriate, the requirements of the EIA and Habitats Directives should be taken into account. The potential for cumulative effects that may arise from multiple tourism initiatives needs to be a key consideration also. It will be important that environmental management plans are prepared, where appropriate, to ensure that important natural and cultural resources are afforded the required protection.</p>	<p>The Plan includes a commitment to implementation and consent under Appendix 1 of the Plan and emphasises the requirements for project level environmental assessments such as EIA, AA &amp; SSFRA and also development of visitor management plans. The cumulative assessment at a strategic level is included in Section 8 of the SEA ER, further consideration of cumulative effects specific to each site shall be undertaken at project level.</p> <p>Additionally, the following text in Appendix 1 of the final Plan has been updated as follows –</p> <p><b><i>‘Integrating Requirements for Environmental Protection, and Management and Collaboration into the Plan</i></b></p>

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report Non-Technical Summary

Submission	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
		<p><i>The SEA and AA team worked with the Plan preparation team at Fáilte Ireland to integrate requirements for environmental protection and management into the Plan. This process included changes to text in the plan and inclusion of new actions/projects in order to embed sustainability into the plan itself. Projects are varied and relating to land use, infrastructural development and land use activities and attractions. Reference made to such projects included in the Plan does not guarantee funding. While funding is provided to certain projects, Fáilte Ireland is not the developer.</i></p> <p><i>Fáilte Ireland is committed to collaborating with relevant stakeholders, including Galway City Council and the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) to ensure projects and initiatives coming from this Plan consider in full the requirements of project level environmental regulation and are afforded the correct level of environmental management to ensure natural and cultural resources are protected.'</i></p>
	<p>Visitor Numbers</p> <p>EPA notes that increases in visitor numbers can disturb or damage the natural environment. Expanding or creating new tourism developments may also impact land use, greenfield sites, and natural and cultural heritage. It's important to develop tourism in suitable, environmentally sustainable locations to minimise adverse impacts.</p>	<p>The Plan and the Environmental Report take into account integrating requirements for environmental protection and management under Appendix 1 of the Plan and is also considered throughout the Plan.</p>
	<p>Critical Service Infrastructure Provision</p> <p>EPA recommends that a commitment is included to engage with Uisce Éireann to ensure that adequate and appropriate wastewater and drinking water services are put in place to service any tourism-related projects arising from the Plan.</p>	<p>This infrastructure capacity assessment is included under Appendix 1 – 'Infrastructure Capacity'. This has been further updated to include a commitment to continue to</p>

## Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

### SEA Environmental Report Non-Technical Summary

Submission	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
	<p>Additionally, appropriate and sustainable waste management practices should be promoted.</p> <p><b>Traffic Management</b></p> <p>EPA recommends that the Plan recognises the need for effective traffic management within the Plan area. Supporting efforts to enhance opportunities for walking, cycling, public transport and water-related transport alternatives within the Plan area, would help improve traffic management. The Plan could also consider supporting and promoting opportunities for greater use of electric vehicles for tourism-related travel and the provision of associated charging infrastructure.</p>	<p>engage with Uisce Éireann and also identifies the need for traffic management.</p> <p><i>Infrastructure Capacity</i></p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p><i>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 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.</i></p> <p><i>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.</i></p>
	<p><b>Mitigation Measures</b></p> <p>EPA recommends that where there is potential for likely significant effects is identified, the SEA ER should provide appropriate mitigation measures to avoid or</p>	<p>This is already provided in Section 9 of the SEA ER. Furthermore, there are further reiterated in Appendix 1 of the Plan. As such this is already addressed and no further change is required.</p>

## Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

### SEA Environmental Report Non-Technical Summary

Submission	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
	<p>minimise these. Additionally, the Plan should include clear commitments to implement the mitigation measures identified in the SEA ER.</p>	
	<p>Monitoring</p> <p>EPA notes that the Monitoring Programme should be flexible to take account of environmental issues and unforeseen adverse impacts should they arise. It should consider and deal with the possibility of cumulative effects. Monitoring of both positive and negative effects should be considered. The monitoring programme should set out the various data sources, monitoring frequencies and responsibilities for each of the monitoring indicators identified. If the monitoring identifies adverse impacts in implementing the Plan, Fáilte Ireland should ensure that suitable and effective remedial action is taken.</p>	<p>The monitoring plan for the GCDEDP is provided under Section 10 of the SEA ER.</p>
	<p>Ireland's State of the Environment Report 2024</p> <p>The Submission refers to the State of the Environment Report – Ireland's Environment 2024.</p>	<p>The information provided has informed the preparation of the Plan and the Environmental Report.</p>
	<p>EPA advises that any future amendments to the Plan should be screened for likely significant effects.</p>	<p>The response has been noted.</p>
	<p>EPA advises on the preparation of the SEA statement and to send a copy of the SEA Statement to any environmental authority consulted during the SEA process.</p>	<p>The SEA statement has been prepared and will be forwarded to the EPA.</p>
<p><b>Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment</b></p>	<p>The response from the Department acknowledges the receipt of the correspondence.</p>	<p>The response has been noted.</p>
<p><b>Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI)</b></p>	<p>The submission from GSI encourages the use of their various datasets for EIAR, SEA, planning and scoping processes and to attribute them correctly. GSI appreciate the use of their Bedrock, Subsoil, Geoheritage, Landslide Susceptibility and Groundwater Vulnerability and Aquifer maps and datasets within the draft Galway City Experience DEDP and SEA.</p>	<p>The information provided has informed the preparation of the Plan and the Environmental Report.</p>

### 3.7 SEA Statement

Following approval of the Galway City Destination & Experience Development Plan, an SEA Statement (Stage 4) will be prepared which includes information on:

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

### 3.8 SEA Guidance

The SEA Environmental Report reflects the requirements of *Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (the SEA Directive)* and the national implementing Regulations S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, and by the PDR 2001, as amended.

The following principal sources of guidance were used in the SEA process including in the preparation of this Environmental Report:

- Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of certain plans and programmes on the environment.
- S.I. No. 435 of 2004 – European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004.
- S.I. No. 200 of 2011 -Environmental Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011.
- Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.
- Guidance on Implementation of Directive 2001/42/EC, European Commission, 2004, at: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/archives/eia/pdf/030923\\_sea\\_guidance.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/archives/eia/pdf/030923_sea_guidance.pdf)
- Strategic Environmental Assessment Guidelines for Regional Assemblies and Planning Authorities, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2022.
- SEA of Local Authority Land Use Plans - EPA Recommendations and Resources. EPA, Updated January 2025 (Version 1.25).
- SEA Pack. EPA, Updated January 2023.
- SEA Spatial Information Sources Inventory. EPA, Updated May 2025.
- SEA Resource Manual for Local and Regional Planning Authorities. EPA, 2015.
- Good Practice Guidance on SEA Screening. EPA, 2021.
- Good Practice Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Tourism Sector. EPA, June 2023.
- Good Practice Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Landscape. EPA, December 2023.
- Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Statements and Monitoring. EPA, March 2023.

- Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment - Environmental Impact Assessment Tiering, EPA, 2021.
- Local Authority Climate Action Plan Guidelines. Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, March 2023.
- EPA Mapping. Environmental Mapping / Geographical Information System (GIS) tools are available at: <http://gis.epa.ie/SeeMaps>
- EPA Water and Air Quality Reports at: <https://www.epa.ie/pubs/legislation/air/quality/>
- EPA Ireland's State of the Environment Report 2024, <https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring--assessment/assessment/state-of-the-environment/irelands-state-of-the-environment-report-2024.php>
- EPA Ireland's Environment – An Integrated Assessment 2020 at: <https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring--assessment/assessment/irelands-environment/state-of-environment-report-/#>
- SEA (EPA) Spatial Information Sources at: <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/ea/>
- Developing and Assessing Alternatives in Strategic Environmental Assessment, EPA 2015 at: [https://www.epa.ie/publications/research/biodiversity/EPA-157\\_web.pdf](https://www.epa.ie/publications/research/biodiversity/EPA-157_web.pdf)
- Good Practice Guidance on Cumulative Effects Assessment in SEA. EPA, 2020.
- Integrating Climate Change into Strategic Environmental Assessment in Ireland - A Guidance Note. EPA, 2019.
- Climate Action Plan 2025. Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment, 2025.
- Circular Letter PL 9/2013: Article 8 (Decision Making) of EU Directives 2001/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as amended. Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2013.
- Circular Letter PSSP 6/2011: Further Transposition of EU Directive 2001/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2011.
- Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08: Appropriate Assessment of Land Use Plans. Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2008.
- Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment - Streamlining AA, SEA and EIA Processes: Practitioner's Manual. Strive Report Series No. 106. Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2013.
- Guidance on Integrating Climate Change and Biodiversity into Strategic Environmental Assessment. European Commission 2013.
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites - The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission, 2000, at: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/provision\\_of\\_art6\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/provision_of_art6_en.pdf)
- Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission, 2002, at: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/natura\\_2000\\_asses\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/natura_2000_asses_en.pdf)
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2009, at: [http://www.npws.ie/publications/archive/NPWS\\_2009\\_AA\\_Guidance.pdf](http://www.npws.ie/publications/archive/NPWS_2009_AA_Guidance.pdf)

### 3.9 Appropriate Assessment

The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) requires an Appropriate Assessment (AA) to be carried out where a plan or project is *likely to have a significant impact* on a Natura 2000 site. Natura 2000 sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA).

Stage 1 is to establish whether AA is required for the particular plan or project. This stage is referred to as 'screening for the requirement for AA', and its purpose is to determine, on the basis of a preliminary assessment and objective criteria, whether a plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, could have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site, in view of the site's conservation objectives.

As set out in Department Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08<sup>11</sup> (15 February 2008), Screening for AA is of relevance to SEA screening in that *"where following screening, it is found that the draft plan or amendment may have an impact on the conservation status of a Natura 2000 site or that such an impact cannot be ruled out, adopting the precautionary approach:*

- An AA of the plan must be carried out, and
- In any case where SEA would not otherwise be required, it must also be carried out."

Hence, where a plan requires AA, it shall also require SEA.

A Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (AA) and the preparation of a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the GCDEDP and the SEA Environmental Report.

The AA has concluded that the GCDEDP will not affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.

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<sup>11</sup> NPWS SEA letter: <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/circular-sea-01-08.pdf>

## 4 Relationship with Plans and Programmes

Fáilte Ireland has prepared the Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan to enhance the visitor experience, promote tourism and support economic growth. The plan is designed to build on the ambition of the Wild Atlantic Way Regional Tourism Development Strategy. Regional Tourism Development Strategies 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, most notably, 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.

As part of the SEA process, it is necessary to consider the environmental protection objectives, established at the international; European and national level which are relevant to the GCDEDP and how they have been taken into account during the preparation of the Plan. In its making, the GCDEDP 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, are detailed below.

There is a legislative framework for the protection of the environment and our natural resources relevant to the GCDEDP. **Table 4.1** below provides a list of the principle legislative framework.

**Table 4.2** and **Table 4.3** below provide a working list of the principal plans and programmes influencing the formulation of the GCDEDP and the Environmental Report, either directly or through European, National and / or County level policy. The relationship with other plans and programmes is discussed, as appropriate, under the Current State of the Environment in **Section 5** of this Report.

**Table 4.1 Legislative Framework**

Legislative Framework	
Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended	Environmental Noise Directive (2002/49/EC)
Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended	Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC)
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EEC)	Fourth Daughter Directive (2004/107/EC)
Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (2011/92/EU) as amended by (2014/52/EU)	Renewable Energy Directive (2018/2001/EU) as amended by (EU/2023/2413)
Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)	European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations) 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011) (as amended)
Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) on the Conservation of Wild Birds, 1979	Renewable Energies in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century: Building a More Sustainable Future
Water Framework Directive (WFD) (2000/60/EC)	EU 2020 climate and energy package
Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC)	EU Renewable Energy Road Map
Flood Directive (2007/60/EC)	European Landscape Convention 2000
Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC)	Wildlife Acts 1976-2024
Shellfish Waters Directive (2006/113/EC)	The Water Services Act 2017-2023
Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC)	Foreshore Act 1933-2024

Legislative Framework	
Urban Wastewater Directive (91/271/EEC)	Aquaculture Act 1997-2006
Drinking Water Directive (98/83/EC)	Sea Fisheries & Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006
Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC)	The National Monuments Act 1930-2014
EU Landfill Directive (1999/31/EC)	Historic and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023
Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC)	Roads Act 1993, as amended
European Green Deal 2020	European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) (Sea Fisheries) Regulations 2013
Surface Water Directive (75/440/EEC)	Drinking Water Directive (98/83/EC), Drinking Water Directive Recast (2020/2184)
Sewage Sludge Directive (86/278/EEC)	Floods Directive (2007/60/EC)
Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021	

Table 4.2 Relevant National &amp; Regional Plans and Programmes

National & Regional Plans and Programmes	
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	National Policy Position on Climate Action and Low Carbon Development
Project Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework (NPF)	National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030
First Revision - National Planning Framework Updated Draft (April 2025)	National Sustainable Mobility Policy (2022)
Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010-2022	Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines (2012)
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the North-western Region	The Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (2014)
Ireland's Environment - An Integrated Assessment 2020	Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022-2042
National Mitigation Plan 2017	Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2019)
Our Sustainable Future - A Framework for Sustainable Development for Ireland (2012)	Ireland's First National Cycle Policy Framework 2009
Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland (2021)	National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy 2024 - 2030
Planning Design Standards for Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2025)	The National Renewable Energy Action Plan
4 <sup>th</sup> Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030	National Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2017-2020
Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth An Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland 2012	Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways 2018
National Strategic Plan for Aquaculture Development 2014- 2020	The National Broadband Plan 2020

## Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

### SEA Environmental Report Non-Technical Summary

National & Regional Plans and Programmes	
The National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development 2030	National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025
National CFRAMS Programme	Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011)
River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027	Heritage Ireland 2030
Water Action Plan 2024, A River Basin Management Plan for Ireland	Built Vernacular Strategy (2021)
Built and Archaeological Heritage, Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan (2019)	Places for People, National Policy on Architecture (2022)
The Planning System and Flood Risk Management (2009)	Food Harvest 2020
People, Place and Policy Growing Tourism to 2025	National Adaptation Framework Planning for a Climate Resilient Ireland 2018 and Review of the National Adaptation Framework 2022
Fáilte Ireland Corporate Plan	Climate Action Plan 2025
Tourism Action Plan 2019 – 2021	Water Services Strategic Plan / Capital Investment Programme (Uisce Éireann)
Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways 2018	Regional Tourism Development Strategies (2023-2027) & Ireland Ancient East Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023 - 2027
National Physical Activity Plan 2013 – 2025	Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021 – 2025
Ireland’s State of the Environment Report 2024	Actions to Promote Sustainable Tourism Practices 2021 - 2023
Fáilte Ireland Corporate Plan and Regional Tourism Development Strategies (2023-2027)	All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021 - 2025
Tourism Action Plan 2019-2021	Tourism Policy Framework 2025-2030
National Physical Activity Plan 2013-2025	

**Table 4.3 Relevant Local Plans and Programmes**

Local Plans and Programmes	
Galway City Development Plan 2023 – 2029	Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028
Salthill Village and Seafront Framework Plan	Galway County Tourism Strategy 2023-2031

## 5 Current State of the Receiving Environment (Environmental Baseline)

### 5.1 Introduction

The SEA Directive requires that the information on the baseline environment is focused upon the relevant aspects of the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected and the likely evolution of the current environment in the absence of the GCDEDP. Being consistent with the strategic provisions of the GCDEDP, this section provides a strategic description of aspects of environmental components which have the greatest potential to be affected by implementation of the GCDEDP, if unmitigated. The GCDEDP is focused on Galway City and Salthill.

### 5.2 Likely Evolution of the Environment in the Absence of the Galway City Destination & Experience Development Plan

The development plan for Galway City and County promote the development and strengthening of the overall value of tourism in this region as stated below.

The *Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029* states that:

*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 *Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028* state that:

*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.*

It is a requirement of the SEA Directive to consider – ‘*the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme.*’ In the absence of the GCDEDP it is envisaged that the baseline environment would primarily evolve in line with the policies and objectives of the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 and Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028. The County Development Plans detail policies and objectives specific to tourism, however, the standalone GCDEDP provides significant opportunities for specific set of tourism-related mitigation measures and the associated likely positive environmental effects.

The approach within the Galway City DEDP recognises the important links between the Galway city and county experience and will work in tandem with other regional DEDP’s. These include the Connemara Coast and Arran Islands DEDP, Burren DEDP and future DEDP’s developed over the lifetime of this plan. The overarching vision for Galway City is to ensure the city is recognised as one of Ireland’s signature visitor experiences and establish it as the tourism capital of the Wild Atlantic Way.

The Galway City DEDP incorporates existing tourism projects while identifying new opportunities to consider, ensuring all destination development activity is delivered in a coherent manner. This includes projects currently underway, projects featured in existing plans and initiatives designed to disperse visitors across the city. It represents a multi-stakeholder approach focused on growing the economic value of tourism and increasing the length of stay in the city.

Therefore while higher level environmental protection objectives – such as those of *County Development Plans* and various EU Directives and transposing Irish Regulations – would still apply, the

absence of the GCDEDP would mean that new development would be less coordinated and controlled. Less coordinated and controlled development would be less certain to result in the positive effects provided for by the GCDEDP.

### 5.3 Description of the Environmental Baseline

The baseline data helps to assess the current state of the environment, facilitate the identification, evaluation and subsequent monitoring of the effects of the Plan. Thus, this information creates a platform whereby existing issues relevant to the study area can be quantified, where possible, or qualified thereby ensuring that the implementation of GCDEDP does not exacerbate identifiable problems.

Baseline data collection is a first step in the process of evaluating the sensitivity of the environment. The *SEA Directive* requires that information is provided on ‘*any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the Plan or programme...*’. Information is therefore provided on existing environmental problems which are relevant to the Plan, thus helping to ensure that the Plan does not exacerbate any existing environmental problems in the study area.

The environmental aspects are described in line with the legislative requirements, under the following headings:

- Biodiversity (including Flora & Fauna);
- Population and Human Health;
- Land, Soils and Geology;
- Water Quality;
- Air Quality, Noise and Climate;
- Cultural Heritage;
- Landscape & Visual;
- Material Assets;
- Interaction of the foregoing; and
- Cumulative Impacts.

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.

#### 5.3.1 Biodiversity

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.

There are 2no. SACs and 2no. SPAs within the study area. There are a further 5no. SPAs and 23no. SACs within the Zol of the GCDEDP. 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 website<sup>12</sup>. Any potential for impact on European Sites have been fully addressed in the NIS that accompanies the GCDEDP and SEA Environment Report.

Nationally Designated Sites include *Natural Heritage Areas* (NHAs) and *Proposed Natural Heritage Areas* (pNHAs) located in the study area and within the zone of influence of the County boundary are detailed in the SEA ER.

Under the requirements of the *Water Framework Directive* (WFD) a number of waterbodies (or parts of) must have extra controls on their quality by virtue of how their waters are used by people and by wildlife have been listed on Registers of Protected Areas (RPAs). A number of these protected areas are present within the 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/Poul-na-clough Bay (IE\_WE\_110\_0000)
- Salmonid Rivers – Corrib (IE\_WE\_30C020600)

The *EU Shellfish Waters Directive* (2006/113/EC) aims to protect and improve shellfish waters in order to support shellfish life and growth. 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/Poul-na-clough Bay (IE\_WE\_110\_0000).

#### 5.3.1.1 Biodiversity Issues

Existing biodiversity issues / pressures and threats on Ireland's habitats and species, which are also relevant to the study area, include:

- Direct habitat loss within European Sites e.g. developments occurring on undeveloped sites, recreational activity works.
- Indirect effects on the ecological networks supporting European Sites e.g. linear developments forming barriers to movements of mobile species or loss of sites that support an overall population of species.
- Construction and use of commercial and recreational infrastructure and areas. For example development within watercourses.
- Indirect threat to water quality including changes to surface and groundwater quality and volumes.
- Direct / indirect disturbance of sensitive habitats / species e.g. recreation at harbour or coastal sites, riverside walkways, pressure from increased visitor numbers etc.
- Direct / indirect threats to European Sites by invasive species.
- Direct / indirect threats to native flora and fauna from pathogens / diseases.
- Invasive Species and problematic species - continued control and management of invasive species. For example the loss of biodiversity as native species are shaded out, but also diseases and pathogens.

#### 5.3.2 Population and Human Health

The study area includes Galway City and Salthill within County Galway. County Galway is surrounded by County Mayo to the north-west, County Roscommon to the north-east and east, County Offaly to east,

<sup>12</sup> NPWS website 2019: <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/conservation-management-planning/conservation-objectives>

County Tipperary to the south-east and County Clare to the south. The *National Planning Framework* (NPF) outlines that by 2040 there will be roughly an extra one million people living in Ireland.

The 2022 Census results showed that the percentage in population change for Galway City was 7.3%, and for County Galway was 7.8%. There has been an increase in the population of the city and county from 2016 to 2022.

The tourism industry has long been recognised as an important economic driver for the economy of the State. Tourism is particularly important in that it can assist in providing business and employment opportunities across regions and leads to jobs across the spectrum of skills requirements. The quality and diversity of tourism in the study area is particularly strong in relation to its rich heritage, quality rural landscape and many towns and villages, meaning the study area has a lot to offer as a tourist destination. The development plan for Galway City & County promotes the development and strengthening of the overall value of tourism in this region as previously stated. The counties have an objective to enhance the potential for economic development in the tourism sector.

#### 5.3.2.1 Existing Population and Human Health Issues

Existing population and human health issues / pressures on the population of the study area, include:

- Health and Well-being - continue the development of recreation and leisure facilities.
- Support cycle and walking tourism initiatives, in tandem with the development of greenways and blueways in the study area.
- Radon - Radon risk map levels in the study area have been collated from the EPA Radon Risk Map of Ireland.
- Pressure on critical infrastructure.
- Pressure on residential accommodation.
- Flooding - Over the past number of years there have been significant instances where flooding has occurred in areas of the study area causing damage to homes and businesses. Refer to Section 5.3.4.
- Effects on all other environmental factors such as the status of drinking water, wastewater and climate change are provided in other sections of this Report.

#### 5.3.3 Land, Soils & Geology

Woodlands provide recreational opportunities in addition to their heritage and economic benefits. They are also important as links in the county's green infrastructure network. Urban woodland parks and trees are important recreational amenities and natural features in the city. The following forests are present in the study area – Rusheen Bay – Barna Woods, Menlough – Coolough Hill, Merlin Park Woods, Terryland Forest Park.

The study area contains a range of soils that support various habitats and land uses and provide valuable mineral resource potential, which are described in detail in the SEA ER. These soils can be impacted upon by development, land use changes and water quality.

The *Seveso III Directive* (European Directive 2012/18/EU) and the *European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations, 2000* (S.I. No. 476 of 2000) apply to companies where dangerous substances are present in quantities equal to or above specified thresholds. At present there is one Upper Tier Seveso (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) (Revocation) Regulations 2015 (S.I. No. 208 of 2015) site in the study area – Topaz Energy Galway Terminal located in New Docks, Galway Harbour Board Enterprise Park. A consultation zone, of 400m, is applied by the HSA in relation to Seveso III establishments and any

relevant proposals for development within these zones or any future amended zones will be referred to the HSA for guidance.

According to Geological Survey, Ireland landslide susceptibility mapping, the vast majority of the county has been rated as having 'low' landslide susceptibility, with the risk rising to 'moderately low' to 'moderately high' in isolated patches throughout the study area, especially towards the south-west of the study area.

#### 5.3.3.1 Existing Land, Soils, Geology & Hydrogeology Issues

Existing land, soil and geology issues / pressures with environmental considerations include:

- Soil - the loss / damage of soil from the construction of greenfield sites for development.
- Land Management - conversion of land / sites can release CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere and further reduce areas of 'carbon sinks'.
- Land- management of woodlands for recreational purposes.
- Geological Heritage - the protection of sites of geological importance within the study area.

#### 5.3.4 Water Quality (including Flooding)

The *EU Water Framework Directive* (WFD) (2000/60/EC) establishes a framework for the protection of both surface water and groundwater waterbodies. The monitoring programme, as part of the WFD, assesses water quality but also water trends of rivers in relation to ecological and physio-chemical quality. The WFD status of rivers ranges from 'high' to 'bad'. The EPA also undertakes water quality surveys for transitional and coastal waterbodies.

The latest *Water Quality in Ireland* report 2016-2021 was published by the EPA in 2022. 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'. The groundwater vulnerability within the study area ranges from 'moderate' to 'extreme'. The study area is underlain with regionally important and poor bedrock aquifer. There are no gravel aquifers in the study area.

As part of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and Galway City Development Plan 2023-2027, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has been prepared.

#### 5.3.4.1 Existing Hydrogeology and Water Quality Issues

The Plan must comply with the requirements of the WFD and the Groundwater Directive and aim to drive improvement to water quality in both the short and long-term. Existing water quality issues / pressures with environmental considerations include:

- Water - the surface waterbodies within the study area need to be improved to achieve 'good' ecological status in waterbodies by 2027.
- Water - pressure on water sources include excessive nutrient enrichment which leads to eutrophication.

- Water - pressure on water sources also comes from land-use changes, water-based recreational sports, erosion, industry and urbanisation.
- Sustainable management of waterways and water-based recreation activities to ensure a balance between tourism development and conservation of natural resources and heritage areas.
- Water - water contamination arising through poor working practices, leakages or accidental spillage of materials if efficient pollution control measures are not fully implemented and maintained.
- Surface, ground, transitional & coastal waters - are at risk of pollution from septic tanks and wastewater treatment systems in the vicinity of waterbodies, potential pressures and impacts on water body status, water usage and flood risk from the construction projects i.e. increased sedimentation, groundwater recharge and accidental spillages. There is growing pressures from increasing population and increasing and sometimes conflicting social, economic and recreational uses.
- Flooding - flood risk to be considered as a key environmental criteria.

### 5.3.5 Air Quality, Noise & Climate

The current trends in air quality in Ireland are reported in the EPA publication ‘*2022 Annual Report on Air Quality in Ireland*’ which is currently the most up to date analysis of air quality data for Ireland. The study area is located largely within Zone C with few areas under Zone D. The designated zones have been defined to meet the criteria for air quality monitoring, assessment and management as defined in the aforementioned regulations. The air quality monitoring sites within the study area are located at Ragoon, Galway and Briarhill.

Air Quality Map show whether air quality is ‘good’, ‘fair’, ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ in each region. The current air quality across the study area is ‘good’. Monitoring is done using continuous monitors for ozone and nitrogen oxides in various locations around Ireland. The pollutants of most concern are those whose main source is traffic such as Particulate Matter (PM) and Nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>). There is need to protect and improve (as appropriate), air quality in the study area, particularly in areas zoned for increased urban and transport related development.

In accordance with *Environmental Noise Regulations (S.I. No. 140 of 2006)* (as revised by the *European Communities (Environmental Noise) Regulations 2018 (S.I. 549/2018)* and the *European Communities (Environmental Noise)(Amendment) Regulations 2021 (S.I. 663/2021)*), a *Galway City Noise Action Plan 2024-2028* was prepared by Galway City Council and also a *Noise Action Plan 2024-2028* was prepared by Galway County Council.

The recent *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021* was established to provide for the approval of plans by the Government in relation to climate change. This aims at pursuing the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich and climate neutral economy by no later than the end of the year 2050. Ireland’s *Climate Action Plan 2025* sets out Ireland’s national and sectoral targets in this regard. The Midlands Regional Enterprise Plan *provides a strong focus on amenity and recreation use, and the potential for sustainable slow tourism and strategic trails development, unlocking the regenerative and commercial potential within the region*<sup>13</sup>. The Action Plan supports the further development of sustainable tourism and sustainable destination management and provides for various measures that will contribute to climate mitigation, such as those relating to sustainable mobility, carbon pricing, electricity, agriculture and the built environment.

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<sup>13</sup> Climate Action Plan 2023 – <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/270956/94a5673c-163c-476a-921f-7399cdf3c8f5.pdf#page=null>

The IPCC Working Group II Report, published in February 2022, assesses the impacts of climate change, looking at ecosystems, biodiversity, and human communities at global and regional levels, and is more relevant to reviewing vulnerabilities, and the capacities and limits of the natural world and human societies to adapt to climate change. The report states that economic damage from climate change has been detected in climate-exposed sectors, with regional effects on agriculture, forestry, fishing, energy, and tourism<sup>38</sup>.

#### 5.3.5.1 Existing Issues

In urban areas, concern has clearly shifted to a range of pollutants associated with road traffic which may be considered relatively new in the context of air quality control. The most important of these pollutants are NO<sub>2</sub>, particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM<sub>10</sub>), carbon monoxide (CO) and a wide variety of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), including carcinogens such as benzene. Therefore, it is important that a good quality road infrastructure is provided and alternatives to the private car are encouraged as much as possible.

Tourists contribute to greenhouse gas emissions across the same sources/sectors as local and national populations, e.g. transport, heating and electricity, agriculture/food production and waste generation.

The potential effects of climate change resulting in an increase in the frequency and severity of weather events, including flooding, storms, heavy snowfall, and variation in temperature. Severe rainfall events, or very cold events with or without snowfall could adversely impact upon town's and people in the study area leading to water shortages, residential flooding and disruption to infrastructure and to movement. Therefore, it will be important to improve resilience of existing and planned critical infrastructure, systems and procedures to the effects and variability of climate change.

#### 5.3.6 Material Assets

Uisce Éireann is responsible for providing and developing public water services; and ensuring drinking water quality meets the standards in the Drinking Water Regulations. The EPA is the drinking water quality regulator, responsible for enforcing the Drinking Water Regulations. Private bored wells used as a source of water supply to single dwellings are the responsibility of the householder, and are therefore not regulated and Uisce Éireann has no regulatory function in this regard.

The latest *Drinking Water Quality in Public Supplies 2023*<sup>14</sup> was published by the EPA in 2024. The report provides a summary of assessment of drinking water quality in public supplies and public group water schemes in Ireland during 2023. Practical water conservation measures including active leakage detection, demand management and pressure management played and will continue to play a major role in reducing the demand for potable water, thus facilitating additional development and improving the level of service to existing consumers in the study area through the existing watermain networks.

The Galway City wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) (Mutton Island D0050-01) is located in the study area<sup>15</sup>. The Annual Environmental Report (AER) 2024 for the Galway City WWTP shows overall compliance of the final effluent with the emission limit values (ELVs). Uisce Éireann and County Councils are continually progressing sewer rehabilitation activities, capital maintenance activities, etc, and the Councils will continue to work with Uisce Éireann to monitor the performance of the networks and to advance and realise capital expansions and upgrades of wastewater infrastructure for the continued sustainable growth of the Counties.

<sup>14</sup> EPA Drinking Water Quality - <https://www.epa.ie/publications/compliance--enforcement/drinking-water/annual-drinking-water-reports/drinking-water-quality-in-public-supplies-2023.php>

<sup>15</sup> UWW Plant Locations - <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>

In un-serviced areas and outside the main settlements, the main method of sewage disposal is by means of individual septic tanks and proprietary wastewater treatment systems. The requirements for these systems are set out in the EPA *Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment Systems and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses*<sup>16</sup>.

EU and National waste management policy can be summarised by the waste hierarchy of prevention, recycling, energy recovery and disposal. For the purposes of waste management planning, Ireland is now divided into three regions: Southern, Eastern-Midlands and Connacht-Ulster. The study area is located within the North-Western Region. The Regional Waste Management Planning Offices have issued the National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy (NWMPCE) 2024 - 2030 in March 2024, which supersedes the regional waste management plan. The NWMPCE does not however dissolve the three regional waste areas. The NWMPCE sets the ambition of the plan to have a 0% total waste growth per person over the life of the Plan with an emphasis on non-household wastes including waste from commercial activities and the construction and demolition sector.

The European Commission's Circular Economy Action Plan: A New Circular Economy Action Plan for a Cleaner More Competitive Europe, March 2020, forms one of the main blocks of the European Green Deal. A Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy<sup>17</sup> was published in 2020 and outlines Ireland's National Waste Policy for 2020-2025.

The area to which the Plan relates is served by rail, bus, cycle network, regional and strategic roads. Public transport to Wild Atlantic Way from Dublin and Galway Cities is strong with regular train and bus services operating. Public transport to facilitate circulation within the region, however, is weaker with relatively poor linkages between towns and the principal visitor attractions. It is very difficult for a visitor to tour the region by public transport. Some Local Link services are currently expanding their routes during the summer months to provide access to key visitor attractions from some towns.

The improved provision of alternatives to the private car should bring about a reduction in demand for private car journeys and a commensurate increase in public transport, walking and cycling. Providing public transport and a network of safe, well-lit and convenient footpaths and cycleways within local neighbourhood centres, public transport stops and workplaces will encourage walking and cycling.

The development of public transport is critical in achieving more sustainable travel patterns and a reduced reliance on the car. Bus Éireann and a number of private operators operate services throughout the study area.

Air travel is essential for industrial, commercial and tourism development. The study area is served by the Galway Airport.

ESB Networks and EirGrid are the utility providers responsible for the electricity distribution and transmission systems. Gas Networks Ireland (GNI) are the utility provider responsible for the supply, transmission and distribution of natural gas.

#### **5.3.6.1 Existing Material Asset Issues**

The increased tourism will result in increasing demand for water, wastewater treatment, waste management, transport infrastructure / links and energy and telecommunications services at the Country level.

Existing material assets issues / pressures within the study area, include:

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<sup>16</sup> EPA, 2010: <https://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/water/wastewater/code%20of%20practice%20for%20single%20houses/>

<sup>17</sup> DCCA (2020).

- Water Supply and Wastewater Services - increased tourist numbers will generate pressure on existing water and wastewater sources to meet demands. Inadequate infrastructure, including inadequate capacity, contribute to the contamination of receiving surface water and groundwater waterbodies.
- Transport - the movement of people is key to the success of new development and areas, where adequate transport infrastructure (i.e. road, rail, cycle and pedestrian routes) to these developments and accessibility throughout the development / area (safe footpath and cycle paths) is fundamental to the development of tourism in the study area. Sustainable development of blueways and greenways is essential to promote recreation and tourism.
- Waste - increased tourist numbers will pose challenge in providing sustainable recycling infrastructure and will put pressure on the local authorities to provide better waste management and access to waste services.
- Light Pollution - can arise when external lighting is not properly designed or managed which can in turn lead to inappropriate or excessive light spillage.
- Utilities - provide, protect and maintain adequate utilities to support existing and envisaged development.

### 5.3.7 Cultural Heritage

The archaeological heritage of an area includes structures, constructions, groups of buildings, developed sites, moveable objects, monuments of other types as well as their context, whether situated on or under land or water.

The *National Monuments Acts 1930-2014* provide for the protection of archaeological heritage. The *Record of Monuments and Places (RMP)* was established under *Section 12* of the *National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994* and structures, features, objects or sites listed in this Record are known as Recorded Monuments.

The record of protected structures within the study area are presented in SEA ER.

#### 5.3.7.1 Cultural Heritage Issues

Increased tourist activities have the potential for direct negative impacts on heritage features and their setting. Development of infrastructure, in addition to development resulting from economic growth and increasing population, can potentially impact on the integrity of sites or features of architectural, archaeological or cultural heritage interest. This could directly impact upon the cultural amenity resource and tourism potential of the study area.

Existing cultural heritage issues / pressures include:

- Development of infrastructure -increased visitor numbers can potentially impact on the integrity of sites or features and their views to / from architectural, archaeological or cultural heritage interest.
- Development in close proximity to sites and areas of cultural heritage may adversely impact upon the cultural landscape setting.
- Development has the potential to impact archaeological heritage which is sub-surface. This includes the insertion of services (e.g. cycleways), landscaping works, ground levelling and tree planting.
- Architecture - impact on heritage streetscapes of regional and local importance.
- Archaeology - impact on archaeological monuments and their settings including undiscovered sites / features.
- Risk - protection of built and archaeological heritage to identify the heritage assets at risk.

#### 5.3.8 Landscape & Visual

A National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025<sup>18</sup> was published, in line with Ireland's obligations under the European Landscape Convention. The key objectives of this Strategy are the recognition of landscape in law and the provision of a policy framework to put measures in place for the management and protection of landscape, the production of a national Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) through data gathering and an evidence based description of character assessment, raising awareness and public consultation.

The landscape character areas and values are detailed in the SEA ER.

There is a need to protect and conserve views and prospects adjoining public roads and river valleys throughout the county where these views are of high amenity value. Landscape objectives of the current Development Plans aims to preserve the views and prospects and to protect views from development which would interfere unduly with the visual amenity and character of the landscape, so far as practically possible.

Many of these views are associated with heritage and tourism sites and provide vantage points over high quality landscapes. These scenic views are of an amenity and tourism value and contribute to our quality of life.

The protected views and prospects with the study area are detailed in the SEA ER.

##### 5.3.8.1 Existing Problems

Landscape can be considered a dynamic rather than static asset. It is constantly changing, and its changes are driven by nature itself, by direct human intervention, and indirectly through the consequences of human activity, notably Climate Change. All physical development undertaken by human impacts on the landscape.

Areas of a highly sensitive landscape have a low capacity to absorb new development and this can be a challenge to locate new development in these areas without it becoming unduly obtrusive.

Existing landscape and visual issues / pressures include:

- New development having adverse and visual impacts on the landscape and seascape.
- Green Infrastructure - protecting the existing green infrastructure network from fragmentation and loss due to pressures of urban development within and adjoining the network.
- Ecosystem Services - recognising and promoting the value of ecosystem services that the green infrastructure network provides to the study area.
- Protected views – development has potential to obstruct protected views and scenic routes.

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<sup>18</sup> National Landscape Strategy: <https://www.chg.gov.ie/app/uploads/2015/07/N-Landscape-Strategy-english-Web.pdf>

## 6 Strategic Environmental Objectives

The SEA Directive requires that ‘the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.’ Given the position of the GCDEDP beneath the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 in the land use planning hierarchy, the measures identified in the SEA for the Development Plans have also been considered in this assessment, with some modification where appropriate.

A series of Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) have been prepared in line with current guidance and also with specific reference to the SEA for the GCDEDP (refer to **Table 6.1**). The SEOs provide a basis for the assessment of the environmental effects of the GCDEDP and are framed in such a manner as to enable the GCDEDP to be fully assessed in environmental terms.

SEOs are distinct from the strategic objectives within the GCDEDP, although they often overlap and are developed from international, national and regional policies which generally govern environmental protection objectives. These high-level SEOs are paired with specific targets which can be monitored using indicators.

**Table 6.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) for GCDEDP**

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
Biodiversity (Flora & Fauna) (B)	B_1	Ensure compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to the protection of Natura 2000 Sites and Annex habitats and species <sup>19</sup> and no adverse effects on the integrity of any European site, with regard to its qualifying interests, associated conservation status, structure and function.
	B_2	Preserve, protect, maintain and where appropriate enhance the terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, including internationally, EU and nationally designated sites, habitats and protected species.
	B_3	Ensure GCDEDP does not contradict biodiversity protection, restoration and rehabilitation objectives in the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029.
Population & Human Health (PHH)	PHH_1	Promote sustainable high quality tourism within the Counties that supports economic development and maximises potential for employment and investment.
	PHH_2	Improve health and wellbeing by provision of recreational and tourism-related activities.
Land, Soils & Geology (LSG)	LSG_1	Minimise green field development and protect land and soil resources from pollution and degradation.
Water Quality (WQ)	WQ_1	Protect, maintain and where necessary improve water quality and the management of watercourses, groundwater and the marine environment, in compliance with the requirements of the WFD objectives and measures.

<sup>19</sup> ‘Annexed habitats and species’ refer to those listed under Annex I, II & IV of the EU Habitats Directive and Annex I of the EU Birds Directive.

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Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
	WQ_2	Implement and comply with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management and Sustainable Drainage Systems Guidelines to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding.
Air Quality, Noise & Climate (ANC)	ANC_1	Maintain and promote continuing improvement in air quality and noise emissions through the reduction of emissions.
	ANC_2	Contribute towards climate adaptation and mitigation and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with National targets, including Ireland's commitment to realising a climate neutral economy by 2050.
Material Assets (MA)	MA_1	To contribute towards the protection of public assets and infrastructure, ensure new developments are served with adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity (drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) that does not present a danger to human health.
	MA_2	Promote sustainable waste management, minimisation and recovery.
	MA_3	Promote sustainable transportation including increased use of public transport and active travel measures.
Cultural Heritage (CH)	CH_1	Protect and avoid impact on places, features and landscapes of cultural and archaeological importance, including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP).
	CH_2	Protect and avoid impact on places, features, buildings and landscapes of architectural heritage, (including entries to the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAHs)).
Landscape & Visual (LV)	LV_1	To protect landscape character, minimise the loss of historic landscape features such as mature trees and hedgerows and scenic views.
	LV_2	Avoid impacts on the statutory landscape & visual designations as identified in the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029.

## 7 Assessment of Alternatives

### 7.1 Introduction

Article 5(1) of the SEA Directive requires the Environmental Report to consider reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme and the significant environmental effects of the alternatives selected.

Alternatives put forward should be reasonable, realistic and capable of implementation. They should also be in line with the appropriate strategic level at which the plan will be implemented within the national planning hierarchy. As preparation of the Galway City Destination Experience Development Plan is a non-statutory plan, the 'do-nothing' or 'do-minimum' scenarios are viable alternatives, as is the 'do-something' scenario.

### 7.2 Alternative 1: Do-nothing / Do-Minimum

Tourism operations in the Galway City & Salthill area would continue to operate as at present outside of a plan, whose objective is to facilitate, promote, support and coordinate the various stakeholders involved in tourism activities and interest.

### 7.3 Do-something (Alternatives 2A and 2B: Prepare a Plan)

The do-something scenario sees the preparation of a Plan that seeks to better manage tourism in Galway City & Salthill. The Plan will facilitate, promote, support and coordinate the various stakeholders (including local authorities, other government agencies, tourism operators, communities and visitors) in their activities in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging plans that have been subject to environmental assessment.

While the Plan would co-ordinate activities and stakeholders in the tourism area, it would not provide consent, establish a framework for granting consent or contribute towards a framework for granting consent (such frameworks fall under the remit of other public authorities). Therefore, any projects arising from the Plan would be required to comply, as relevant, with the various provisions of documents that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework.

In essence the Plan would present a five-year sustainable tourism development plan for Galway City & Salthill. The key objectives of the Plan would be:

- *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 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.*

There are two separate alternatives under the 'do-something' (prepare a Plan) scenario.

#### **Alternative 2A: A Plan with Additional Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management**

Fáilte Ireland provides funding for sustainable tourism projects including land use and infrastructural development and land use activities. In order to achieve funding (including promotion) for land use or infrastructural development or land use activities, Alternative 2A would require stakeholders to demonstrate compliance with measures relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management contained within the relevant Fáilte Ireland published guidance and documents.

In order to be realised, projects included in the Plan (in a similar way to other projects from any other sector) would have to demonstrate compliance, as relevant, with various provisions of legislation, policies, plans and programmes that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework, of which the Plan is not part and does not contribute towards.

Further environmental requirements would be integrated into the Plan under Alternative 2A, relating to infrastructure capacity, visitor management and green infrastructure and ecosystem services.

#### **Alternative 2B: A Plan without Additional Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management**

Alternative 2B would not include the requirements for environmental protection and management described under Alternative 2A. Projects would continue to be required to comply, as relevant, with the various provisions of documents that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework.

## **7.4 Assessment of Alternatives**

Three reasonable alternatives for the GCDEDP have been identified and assessed as set out in **Table 7.1**. The potential effects of the reasonable alternatives on the SEOs categorised as follows:

- Potential Positive Environmental Impact (indicated by '+')
- Potential Negative Environmental Impact (indicated by '-')
- Potential Positive and Negative Environmental Impacts (indicated by '+/-').
- Uncertain Environmental Impact (indicated by '?').
- Neutral, No or Insignificant Environmental Impact (indicated by '0')

## **7.5 Reasoning for Selection of the Preferred Alternative**

Whilst unlikely to have negative environmental effects, Alternative 1 does not deliver positive benefits for tourism in Galway City & Salthill.

Alternative 2A will deliver effective benefit and response for tourism in Galway City & Salthill, whilst at the same providing for sustainable development and environmental protection.

Alternative 2B will deliver effective benefit and response for tourism in Galway City & Salthill, but without ensuring environmental protection.

Given the tourism and environmental benefits, Alternative 2A is selected as the preferred approach.

## 8 Assessment of Effects of the Galway City Destination Experience Development Plan

### 8.1 Introduction

The GCDEDP has been subject to an assessment for potential effects arising from the implementation of the Plan on the baseline environment as characterised and described in **Section 5** of this Report. The assessment is carried out having regard to the Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) established for the aspects of the baseline environment which have potential to be impacted by the GCDEDP. These Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) are detailed in **Section 6** of this Report.

The Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 states that-

*‘Policy 6.8 Tourism Sector (1.) - Recognise the significant contribution that national and international tourism makes to the local economy and the vitality of the city and facilitate, in partnership with Fáilte Ireland and key stakeholders, the sustainable development of associated infrastructure, attractions, including a destination attraction of scale and events particularly where they reflect the distinctive history, culture and environment of Galway and highlight the significance of Galway as the only city on the “Wild Atlantic Way” and as a gateway to the Northern and Western Region.’*

The Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028, states that-

*‘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.’*

It is noted that during its preparation the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029<sup>20</sup> and Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028<sup>21</sup>, was subject to full SEA, Appropriate Assessment (AA) and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).

The environmental assessment of the ‘Strategic Objectives’ and of the ‘Catalyst Projects/Enabling Projects/Destination Projects’ of the GCDEDP are set out separately in the following sections of this Report. The SEA Directive requires the Environmental Report to include information on the likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, fauna, flora, population, human health, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors.

### 8.2 Environmental Assessment of the Strategic Objectives and Strategic Development Pillars 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 8.1**.

<sup>20</sup> Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029- <https://www.galwaycity.ie/services/planning/development-plan-2023-2029>

<sup>21</sup> Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 - <https://consult.galway.ie/en/consultation/adopted-galway-county-development-plan-2022-2028>

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**Table 8.1 Environmental Assessment of Strategic Objectives of the GCDEDP**

(SEO Key: B – Biodiversity, PHH – Population & Human Health, LSG – Land, Soils & Geology, WQ – Water Quality, ANC – Air Quality, Noise & Climate Change, MA – Material Assets, CH – Cultural Heritage, LV – Landscape & Visual)

Strategic Objectives / Pillars	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
<p><b>Vision</b></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</i></p>	<p>This vision statement sets an overall context for destination experience and tourism in Galway City &amp; 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 the effect on the remaining environmental themes and SEOs will be neutral.</p>	<p><b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)</p>			<p><b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2)</p>	<p><b>No</b></p>

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Strategic Objectives / Pillars	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
<p><i>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 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><b>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.</b></p>						

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Strategic Objectives / Pillars	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
<p>1.1 Deliver on the ambition to become the tourism capital of the Wild Atlantic Way.</p>	<p>This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, development of any new and existing developments/ projects to deliver on the ambition, might result in uncertain 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 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><b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)</p>		<p><b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2),</p>		<p><b>Yes</b></p>
<p>1.2 Grow the mix and range of saleable visitor experiences that appeal to domestic and</p>	<p>This objective will enhance tourism opportunities for the county and have positive effect on population and human health.</p>	<p><b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)</p>		<p><b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1,</p>		<p><b>Yes</b></p>

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Strategic Objectives / Pillars	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
international visitors on a year round basis.	However, the development of existing and new infrastructure presents potential uncertain environmental effects that have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such experiences and/or their ancillary infrastructure.			ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)		
1.3 Implement a creative approach to wayfinding and visitor orientation that motivates wider exploration of the city experience and Galway City neighbourhoods.	This objective will support in raising awareness regarding tourism opportunities throughout the Destination and will have positive effect on population and human health.  No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)	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.	This objective will enhance tourism opportunities and will have positive effect on population and human health.  However, the development of any new or existing infrastructure presents potential uncertain 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.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2) ANC (ANC1, ANC2), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes

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Strategic Objectives / Pillars	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
1.5 Develop the indoor visitor attraction and permanent event infrastructure in Galway to sustain the year round appeal of the destination.	This objective will enhance tourism opportunities and will have positive effect on population and human health.  However, the development of any new or existing infrastructure presents potential negative or uncertain 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. Increased tourism in this location would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)	<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2)	<b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)		<b>Yes</b>
1.6 Maximise the investment in the Galway Museum to become a signature attraction for Galway City.	This objective will enhance visitor experience and promote tourism resulting in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.  No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	<b>No</b>
1.7 Examine the feasibility of developing an additional signature attraction for Galway City.	This objective will enhance visitor experience and promote tourism resulting in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1,	<b>No</b>

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Strategic Objectives / Pillars	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
	No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.				LV2) ANC (ANC1, ANC2), CH (CH1, CH2)	
<b>Strategic Objective 2: Increase tourism revenue, visitor dispersion and season extension across the Southern half of the Wild Atlantic Way</b>						
2.1. Develop Galway as an international festivals and events city, recognised for the quality of programming and diversity of events.	<p>This objective will provide enhanced visitor experience and have positive effect to population and human health.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the objective could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect on biodiversity, water quality, cultural heritage, land &amp; soils, landscape and visual, material assets and air &amp; noise. Increased visitation could also result in increased visitor numbers and pressure in sensitive areas. Increased tourism in these locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management.</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes
2.2. Leverage the uniqueness of Galway's profile for creativity and culture into new placemaking projects and future urban regeneration investment.	<p>This objective will enhance tourism opportunities and have positive effect on population and human health.</p> <p>However, the development of any new or existing infrastructure presents potential uncertain environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2)		Yes

## Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

### SEA Environmental Report Non-Technical Summary

Strategic Objectives / Pillars	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
	from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.					
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.	<p>This objective will enhance tourism opportunities for the county and have positive effect on population and human health.</p> <p>However, the new experience development presents potential uncertain environmental effects that have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such experiences and/or their ancillary infrastructure.</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes
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.	<p>This objective will enhance tourism opportunities for the county and have positive effect on population and human health.</p> <p>However, the new experience development presents potential uncertain environmental effects that have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such experiences and/or their ancillary infrastructure.</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes

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### SEA Environmental Report Non-Technical Summary

Strategic Objectives / Pillars	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
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.	<p>This objective will enhance tourism opportunities for the county and have positive effect on population and human health.</p> <p>However, the development of existing and new infrastructure presents potential uncertain environmental effects that have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such infrastructure and/or their ancillary infrastructure.</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes
<b>Strategic Objective 3: Protect the authenticity and “wildness” of the Wild Atlantic Way</b>						
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.	<p>This objective will support in raising awareness regarding the Irish language throughout the Destination.</p> <p>No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise.</p>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2)	No
3.2. Continue to grow the appeal of the Galway Neighbourhoods to introduce visitors to the authenticity of	This objective will enhance visitor experience and promote tourism resulting in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA	No

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the Galway people and community.	No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.				(MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2)	
3.3. Develop the visitor experience at iconic Galway sites throughout the city that convey the authentic Galway City story.	This objective will provide enhanced visitor experience and have positive effect to population and human health.  However, in the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. This would also result in increased footfall in sensitive areas.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)		<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)		<b>Yes</b>
3.4. Embrace the maritime heritage of the city and coastal community to deliver an innovative approach to water based experiences.	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience.  However, in the absence of mitigation, the initiative could have the potential to result in negative or uncertain environmental effect on biodiversity, water quality, cultural heritage, land & soils, landscape and visual, material assets and air & noise. The development of new and existing marine tourism activities might result in negative environmental effects that would, if	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)	<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2)	<b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)		<b>Yes</b>

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Strategic Objectives / Pillars	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
	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 marine areas. These works can also potentially result in the spread of invasive species. This would also result in increased footfall in sensitive areas.					
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.	This objective would result in positive effects for tourism industry and will not result in adverse environmental consequences.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	<b>No</b>
<b>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</b>						
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	This objective will provide enhanced visitor experience and have positive effect to population and human health.  However, in the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing projects presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects to arise from both the	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2),			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	<b>Yes</b>

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### SEA Environmental Report Non-Technical Summary

Strategic Objectives / Pillars	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
with relevant European and National legislation, and local authority biodiversity action plans.	construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.					
4.2. Build the digital capabilities of the tourism industry as part of the destinations approach to sustained demand generation.	This objective would result in positive effects for tourism industry and will not result in adverse environmental consequences.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	<b>No</b>
4.3. Develop an industry wide approach to deliver a brand communications programme that resonates with the domestic and international market.	This objective would result in positive effects for tourism industry and will not result in adverse environmental consequences.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	<b>No</b>
4.4. Enhance the capabilities of tourism networks and industry groups to work together in developing	This objective will provide enhanced visitor experience and have positive effect to population and human health.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)		<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1,		<b>Yes</b>

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Strategic Objectives / Pillars	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
Galway City as an international tourism destination.	However, in the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects 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.			MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)		
4.5. Develop new collaborative approaches around maximising the impact of festivals and events in the city.	This objective will result in positive effects on population.  However, in the absence of mitigation, the development of new festivals and events across the Destination presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects to arise from the provision of ancillary infrastructure for the events. There is also potential for uncertain environmental effect on air quality & noise, biodiversity and human health due to elevated levels of noise & congestion. This would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management which has potential to effect the receiving environment.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)		<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)		<b>Yes</b>
4.6. Collectively embrace sustainability as a destination priority and become recognised as a leader for	This objective will enhance visitor experience and promote tourism resulting in overall	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1,	<b>No</b>

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Strategic Objectives / Pillars	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
sustainable urban tourism, creating better places to live and visit while ensuring our natural environment is protected and respected.	positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.  No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.				ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2)	
4.7. Create new partnerships within the destination to package Galway cultural experiences with the city's accommodation network.	This objective will promote collaboration with stakeholders, support enhanced tourism experiences and have positive effect on population and human health.  The effect on the remaining environmental themes and SEOs will be neutral.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	<b>No</b>
<b>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.</b>						
5.1. Work with all stakeholders to ensure the tourism opportunity for Galway is reflected across future urban regeneration projects.	This objective will promote collaboration with stakeholders, support efficient delivery of tourism experiences across a range of future urban regeneration projects and have positive effect on population and human health.  The effect on the remaining environmental themes and SEOs will be neutral.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	<b>No</b>

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### SEA Environmental Report Non-Technical Summary

Strategic Objectives / Pillars	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
5.2. Disperse the value of tourism across the city through a community and Galway City neighbourhood approach.	This objective will enhance tourism opportunities and promote tourism and have positive effect on population and human health.  No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise, and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	<b>No</b>
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.	This objective will enhance visitor experience and promote tourism resulting in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.  No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	<b>No</b>
5.4. Embrace sustainability and creative approaches to climate action through a partnership approach ensuring a positive impact on our community and visitors.	This objective will support in raising awareness regarding climate action and will have positive effect on population and human health. No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	<b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)			<b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)	<b>No</b>

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Strategic Objectives / Pillars	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / 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.	This objective will enhance tourism opportunities and will have positive effect on population and human health.  However, the development of any new or existing infrastructure presents potential uncertain 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. This would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management which has potential to effect the receiving environment.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes
<b>Strategic Development Pillars</b>						
<b>1. Developing Day Time Visitor Experiences</b>  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	This pillar will enhance tourism opportunities for the destination and result in positive effects on population and human health.  However, in the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potentially negative or uncertain environmental effects 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	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)	B (B1, B2, B3), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2),	LSG (LSG1), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes

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<p>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>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. Increased tourism in these locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management.</p>					
<p><b>2. Linking City, Village and Neighbourhoods</b></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 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.</p>	<p>This pillar will provide enhance connectivity and visitor experience and have positive effect to population and human health.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. This would also result in increased footfall in sensitive areas.</p> <p>These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers</p>	<p><b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)</p>		<p><b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)</p>		<p><b>Yes</b></p>

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Strategic Objectives / Pillars	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
<p>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>and streams or along the coast/transitional waters.</p>					
<p><b>3. Galway City of Tribes: Culture, Festivals &amp; Events</b></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 delivering unique Galway neighbourhood experiences. We will work to establish Galway as Ireland's</p>	<p>This pillar will enhance tourism opportunities for the county and have positive effect on population and human health.</p> <p>However, the new experience development presents potential uncertain environmental effects that have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such experiences and/or their ancillary infrastructure.</p>	<p><b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)</p>		<p><b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2)</p>		<p><b>Yes</b></p>

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<p>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><b>4. Atlantic &amp; Galway Waters</b></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 and Leisureland. The approach</p>	<p>This pillar will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, this initiative could have the potential to result in negative or uncertain environmental effect on biodiversity, water quality, cultural heritage, land &amp; soils, landscape and visual, material assets and air &amp; noise. The development of new and existing land and water based activities 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</p>	<p><b>PHH</b> (PHH1, PHH2)</p>	<p><b>B</b> (B1, B2, B3), <b>LSG</b> (LSG1), <b>WQ</b> (WQ1, WQ2), <b>MA</b> (MA1, MA2, MA3), <b>LV</b> (LV_1, LV2)</p>	<p><b>CH</b> (CH1, CH2), <b>ANC</b> (ANC1, ANC2)</p>		<p><b>Yes</b></p>

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<p>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 &amp; 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>	<p>have potential to 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. Increased tourism in these locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management.</p>					

### 8.3 Environmental Assessment of the Catalyst Projects and Enabling Projects listed within the Galway City Destination Experience Development Plan

The GCDEDP includes an Action Plan that comprises 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 actions plan, catalyst projects and enabling projects is detailed in Appendix 1 of the SEA ER.

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. Refer to Table 8.1 in Appendix 1 of the SEA ER for the detailed assessment of effects of the catalyst projects, enabling projects and actions.

### 8.4 The Interrelationship between Environmental Factors

An overview of the key and minor / no interaction between environmental factors with potential for effects arising from the GCDEDP are set out in the matrix in **Table 8.2**.

Actions within the Plan that give rise to positive or negative environmental effects for one environmental component also have the potential to generate positive or negative environmental effects for inter-related environmental components – e.g. negative effect on soils can have a negative effect on biodiversity, water, and / or landscape. Likewise, actions supporting the delivery of SuDS will improve water quality, which in turn can have a positive effect on aquatic ecology.

An assessment of impact inter-relationships and interactions is already embedded in the evaluation of environmental effects that has been carried out in this environmental report. This ensures that there is adequate coverage of all potential environmental effects associated with the implementation of plan actions. In addition the mitigation measures set out in **Section 9.0** of this Report.

**Table 8.2 Significant Interrelationships between Environmental Factors**

Component \ Effect	Biodiversity	Population & Human Health	Land, Soils & Geology	Water Quality	Air Quality, Noise and Climate	Material Assets	Cultural Heritage	Landscape & Visual
Biodiversity		☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
Population & Human Health	☑		☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
Land, Soils & Geology	☑	☑		☑	☒	☑	☑	☑
Water Quality	☑	☑	☑		☒	☑	☒	☑
Air Quality, Noise and Climate	☑	☑	☒	☒		☑	☑	☒
Material Assets	☒	☑	☑	☑	☑		☒	☒
Cultural Heritage	☒	☑	☑	☒	☑	☑		☑

Component \ Effect	Biodiversity	Population & Human Health	Land, Soils & Geology	Water Quality	Air Quality, Noise and Climate	Material Assets	Cultural Heritage	Landscape & Visual
Landscape & Visual	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	
<b>Legend:</b> Key Interaction ☑      Minor/No Interaction ☒								

## 8.5 Potential Cumulative Effects

Cumulative effects can be described as the addition of many small impacts to create one larger, more significant, impact.

There are 2 types of potential cumulative effects that have been considered, namely:

- Potential intra-Plan cumulative effects - these arise from the interactions between different types of potential environmental effects resulting from a plan, programme, etc. The interrelationships between environmental factors that help determine these potential effects are identified on **Table 8.2**.
- Potential inter-Plan cumulative effects - these arise when the effects of the implementation of one plan occur in combination with those of other plans, programmes, projects, etc.

The GCDEDP could have a relationship with other plans and programmes. However, these plans and programmes have also been subject to environmental assessment, including SEA and AA, for the purpose of preventing and mitigating potential negative environmental effects. **Table 8.3** 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.

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 8.3 Potential Cumulative Effects with other Plans and Programmes

Plan, Programme etc.	Potential Cumulative effect	Likely Cumulative Effect
<p>National Planning Framework (NPF) Project 2040 (First Revision April 2025)</p> <p>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>)</p>	<p>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.</p>	No
<p>Northern and Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy</p>	<p>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.</p>	No
<p>National CFRAMS Programme</p> <p>Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Study</p>	<p>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 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.</p>	No
<p>National 4<sup>th</sup> Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030</p>	<p>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.</p>	No
<p>National Sustainable Mobility Policy (2022)</p>	<p>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</p>	No

Plan, Programme etc.	Potential Cumulative effect	Likely Cumulative Effect
	appropriate) and hence there would be no potential adverse effects on the overall receiving environment.	
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

## 9 Mitigation Measures

### 9.1 Overview

The finding of the environmental assessment in **Section 8.0** (and Appendix 1 the accompanying Environmental Report) is that, if unmitigated, a number of the actions of the Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan have potential for uncertain or negative effects on aspects of the environment. These potential negative and / or uncertain effects, which derive from potential works resulting from the relevant action, focus primarily on biodiversity, water, cultural heritage, material assets and landscape. This section of the Environmental Report identifies measures for the mitigation and avoidance of potential uncertain or negative environmental effects.

### 9.2 Mitigation Measures

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

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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*.

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 are detailed in the accompanying SEA ER.

## 10 Monitoring

### 10.1 Introduction

Monitoring of the GCDEDP and its implications on the environment is important to ensure that the environment is not adversely affected through the implementation of the Plan. In accordance with Article 10 of the SEA Directive, monitoring must be carried out of the significant environmental effects directly related to the implementation of the Plan *“in order to, inter alia, identify at an early stage unforeseen adverse effects and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action.”*

Monitoring is based around indicators which allow quantitative measures of trends and progress over time relating to the Strategic Environmental Objectives (**Section 6**) used in the assessment. Each indicator to be monitored is accompanied by the targets. The monitoring programme may be updated to deal with specific environmental issues - including unforeseen effects - as they arise. Such issues may be identified by the Council or identified to the Council by other agencies.

Fáilte Ireland is responsible for monitoring and the preparation of monitoring evaluation report(s), the publication of these reports and, if necessary, clear resolution plan will be produced with assigned responsibilities, timelines and monitoring to address environmental damage and cause of the same. It is recommended that the monitoring for the GCDEDP is undertaken utilising the outputs of monitoring and reviews of the Galway County & City Development Plans for efficiency and given that similar data sets will be used to measure the progress of each plan.

Environmental indicator assessment during monitoring can show positive / neutral impacts or negative impacts on the environment. Where an indicator value highlights a positive / neutral impact on the environment, it is likely that the objectives of the GCDEDP are well-defined with regard to the environment. Conversely where the objectives of the GCDEDP have a negative impact on the environment, it may be necessary to review the objectives of the GCDEDP or to take some other form of intervention. For example, if an objective is having a significant adverse impact, an amendment may be considered during the lifetime of the GCDEDP.

Refer to **Table 10.1** below for the monitoring programme set for the SEA which includes details on the indicators, targets and data sources to monitor the progress of the GCDEDP.

Table 10.1 Environmental Monitoring Programme

SEO Ref.	SEO Description	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources and Monitoring Frequency
<b>Biodiversity (Flora &amp; Fauna) (B)</b>				
<b>B1</b>	Ensure compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to the protection of Natura 2000 Sites and Annex habitats and species <sup>22</sup> and no adverse effects on the integrity of any European site, with regard to its qualifying interests, associated conservation status, structure and function.	Conservation status of habitats and species protected under European and International legislation.	Maintenance of favourable conservation status for habitats and species protected under European and International legislation to be unaffected by implementation of the Plan.	<p>Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's National Monitoring Report for the Birds Directive under Article 12 (every 3 years)</p> <p>Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht report of the implementation of the measures contained in the Habitats Directive - as required by Article 17 of the Directive (every 6 years)</p> <p>Irish Wetland Bird Survey (I-WeBS) data.</p> <p>EPA State of the Environment reporting.</p> <p>Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.</p> <p>Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities.</p>
<b>B2</b>	Preserve, protect, maintain and where appropriate enhance the terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, including internationally, EU and nationally designated sites, habitats and protected species.	Conservation status of habitats and species protected under International and National legislation.	Maintenance of favourable conservation status for all habitats and species protected under International and National legislation to be unaffected by implementation of the Plan.	<p>EPA State of the Environment reporting.</p> <p>Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.</p>

<sup>22</sup> 'Annexed habitats and species' refer to those listed under Annex I, II & IV of the EU Habitats Directive and Annex I of the EU Birds Directive.

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SEO Ref.	SEO Description	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources and Monitoring Frequency
<b>B3</b>	Ensure GCDEDP does not contradict biodiversity protection, restoration and rehabilitation objectives in the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029.	To comply with the biodiversity policies and objectives of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029.	No contravention of the biodiversity policies and objectives of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029	Galway County Council and Galway City Council monitoring for likely significant environmental effects of the developments and compliance with policies and objectives of the CDP.
<b>Population &amp; Human Health (PHH)</b>				
<b>PHH1</b>	Promote sustainable high quality tourism within the County that supports economic development and maximises potential for employment and investment.	To comply with the tourism and economic development policies and objectives of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029.	No contravention of the tourism and economic development policies and objectives of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029.	Central Statistics Office (CSO) census data.  Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities.  Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
<b>PHH2</b>	Improve health and wellbeing by provision of recreational and tourism-related activities.	Occurrence of a spatially concentrated deterioration in human health arising from environmental factors resulting from the GCDEDP, as identified by the Health Service Executive (HSE) and / or Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).	No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of the GCDEDP.	Publicly available data from HSE and EPA to be reviewed.  EPA State of the Environment reporting.  Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities.  Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.

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SEO Ref.	SEO Description	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources and Monitoring Frequency
<b>Land, Soils &amp; Geology (LSG)</b>				
LSG1	Minimise green field development and protect land and soil resources from pollution and degradation.	Extent of conversion of land cover / green field to developed / artificial surfaces.	Contribute towards the target of the SEA for the National Planning Framework's (2018, as revised 2025) to "Maintain built surface cover nationally to below the EU average of 4%."	CORINE mapping surveys (every 5 years). EPA State of the Environment reporting. Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
<b>Water Quality (WQ)</b>				
WQ1	Protect, maintain and where necessary improve water quality and the management of watercourses, groundwater and the marine environment, in compliance with the requirements of the WFD objectives and measures.	<p>Classification of Overall Status (comprised of ecological and chemical status) under the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (S.I. No. 272 of 2009).</p> <p>Groundwater compliance with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC, subject to exemptions provided for by Article 4 of the WFD.</p> <p>Reference to EPA WFD Monitoring programme and status of surface waterbodies, groundwater bodies reported.</p>	No deterioration in the status of any groundwater or surface water, or adverse effect upon the ability of any groundwater or surface water to achieve 'good status' as a result of the GCDEDP.	<p>Information issued under the Water Framework Directive Monitoring Programme for Ireland (multi-annual).</p> <p>Review of WFD status of Bathing Waters, green flag / blue flag for beaches.</p> <p>EPA State of the Environment reporting.</p> <p>Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.</p>

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SEO Ref.	SEO Description	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources and Monitoring Frequency
WQ2	Implement and comply with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management and Sustainable Drainage Systems Guidelines to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding.	Flood-related incidences related to the GCDEDP.	Compliance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines and to ensure that any new developments granted planning permissions are on appropriately zoned lands.	Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities.  Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.  Review of planning applications for any new infrastructure to be accompanied by standalone flood risk assessment report in sensitive areas.
<b>Air Quality, Noise &amp; Climate (ANC)</b>				
ANC1	Maintain and promote continuing improvement in air quality and noise emissions through the reduction of emissions.	Demonstration of compliance with air quality and noise provisions.  Number of exceedances of ambient air quality standards in the County, as monitored under the EPA's National Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Network.	To maximise the amount of measures relating to air quality and noise minimisation being implemented.	EPA State of the Environment reporting.  Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.  Review of EPA Air Quality Dashboard for air quality monitoring data results and EPA data for air quality monitoring.
ANC2	Contribute towards climate adaptation and mitigation and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with National targets, including Ireland's commitment to realising a climate neutral economy by 2050.	Demonstration of compliance with provisions relating to climate adaptation and mitigation.	To maximise the amount of measures relating to climate adaptation and mitigation being implemented.	EPA State of the Environment reporting.  Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
<b>Material Assets (MA)</b>				
MA1	To contribute towards the protection of public assets and infrastructure, ensure new developments are served with adequate and appropriate critical	Number of incompatible developments (supported by the plan) adversely affecting existing or planned	No incompatible development (supported by the plan) adversely affecting existing or planned material assets infrastructure.	Review of Annual Environmental Reports prepared by Uisce Éireann.

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SEO Ref.	SEO Description	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources and Monitoring Frequency
	infrastructure with sufficient capacity (drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) that does not present a danger to human health.	infrastructure, including water supply, wastewater management, energy and transport infrastructure.		Review of publicly available data from EPA monitoring. EPA State of the Environment reporting. Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
<b>MA2</b>	Promote sustainable waste management, minimisation and recovery.	Tonnes of hazardous waste received at Council Waste Management Facilities annually. Tonnes of W.E.E.E. waste received at Council Waste Management Facilities annually. Tonnes of Bulky waste received at Council Waste Management Facilities annually. Tonnes of garden waste received at Council Waste Management Facilities annually.	Increase waste recycling in the City & County. Reduce waste generation in the City & County.	EPA State of the Environment reporting. Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
<b>MA3</b>	Promote sustainable transportation including increased use of public transport and active travel measures.	% change in modal split. Kilometres of permanent segregated cycling network. Kilometres of permanent integrated cycling network. Number of Electric Vehicle charging points in the city & county.	Percentage increase in the number of public transport users in the City & County. Increase kilometres of permanent segregated cycling network. Increase kilometres of permanent segregated cycling network.	Review delivery of sustainable transport projects via Galway City & County Council / NTA. Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities. Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.

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SEO Ref.	SEO Description	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources and Monitoring Frequency
		Total Area of road reallocated for sustainable alternatives.	Increase number of Electric Vehicle charging points in the county. Increase Total Area of road reallocated for sustainable alternatives	
<b>Cultural Heritage (CH)</b>				
CH1	Protect and avoid impact on places, features and landscapes of cultural and archaeological importance, including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP).	Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan.	No adverse effects on archaeological or cultural heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan.	Review of data available from National Monuments Section of Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.  Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
CH2	Protect and avoid impact on places, features, buildings and landscapes of architectural heritage, (including entries to the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAHs)).	Percentage of entries to the Records of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan.	No adverse effects on architectural heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan.	Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities.
<b>Landscape &amp; Visual (LV)</b>				
LV1	To protect landscape character, minimise the loss of historic landscape features such as mature trees and hedgerows and scenic views.	Number of unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in Development Plans and other statutory land-use plans.	No unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in Development Plans and other statutory land-use plans.	Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.

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SEO Ref.	SEO Description	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources and Monitoring Frequency
LV2	Avoid impacts on the statutory landscape & visual designations as identified in the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029.	Status of High Amenity Zones and Views and Prospects. Number of developments permitted that result in avoidable adverse impacts on High Amenity Zones and Views and Prospects.	All action and development proposals supported by the plan must comply with policy objectives relating to the protection of High Amenity Zone and Views and Prospects defined in the Development Plans.  No development supported by the plan should have an adverse impact on High Amenity Zones and Views and Prospects.	Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.  Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities.

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