

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

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Environmental Assessment

Client:

Fáilte Ireland

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Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

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Contents

Glossary	i
1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Overview	1
1.2 Destination Experience Development Plans	1
1.3 Strategic Environmental Assessment	1
1.4 The Requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Plan	2
2 Outline Description of the Plan.....	3
2.1 Introduction.....	3
2.2 Vision.....	4
2.3 Strategic Objectives.....	5
2.4 Destination Catalyst Projects & Enabling Projects Overview	7
3 Strategic Environmental Assessment.....	10
3.1 Introduction.....	10
3.2 SEA Stages and Process	11
3.3 SEA Screening and Requirement for SEA.....	14
3.4 SEA Scoping	15
3.5 SEA Environmental Report	21
3.6 Consultation	22
3.7 SEA Statement.....	28
3.8 SEA Guidance.....	28
3.9 Appropriate Assessment	30
4 Relationship with Plans and Programmes	31
4.1 Overview	31
4.2 Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework	31
4.3 Tourism Policy Framework 2025-2030	33
4.4 Northern and Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.....	34
4.5 Galway City Development Plan 2023 – 2029	35
4.6 Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	37
4.7 Regional Tourism Development Strategies (2023-2027)	40
4.8 Galway County Tourism Strategy 2023-2031	41
4.9 Other Plans and Programmes.....	41
5 Current State of the Receiving Environment (Environmental Baseline)	45
5.1 Introduction.....	45
5.2 Likely Evolution of the Environment in the Absence of the Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan	45
5.3 Description of the Environmental Baseline	46
5.3.1 Biodiversity	46
5.3.2 Population and Human Health	57
5.3.3 Land, Soils & Geology.....	61
5.3.4 Water Quality	65
5.3.5 Air Quality, Noise & Climate	72



Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

5.3.6	Material Assets.....	76
5.3.7	Cultural Heritage.....	80
5.3.8	Landscape & Visual.....	84
6	Strategic Environmental Objectives.....	89
7	Assessment of Alternatives.....	91
7.1	Introduction.....	91
7.2	Alternative 1: Do-nothing / Do-Minimum.....	91
7.3	Do-something (Alternatives 2A and 2B: Prepare a Plan).....	91
7.4	Assessment of Alternatives.....	92
7.5	Reasoning for Selection of the Preferred Alternative.....	92
8	Assessment of Effects of the Galway City Destination Experience Development Plan....	94
8.1	Introduction.....	94
8.2	Environmental Assessment of the Strategic Objectives and Strategic Development Pillars of the Galway City Destination Experience Development Plan.....	94
8.3	Environmental Assessment of the Catalyst Projects and Enabling Projects listed within the Galway City Destination Experience Development Plan.....	114
8.4	The Interrelationship between Environmental Factors.....	114
8.5	Potential Cumulative Effects.....	115
8.6	Overview.....	117
9	Mitigation Measures.....	118
9.1	Overview.....	118
9.2	Mitigation Measures.....	118
10	Monitoring.....	154
10.1	Introduction.....	154
11	References.....	162
12	Appendices.....	163
Appendix 1: Detailed Assessment of Environmental Effects of the Destination Catalyst Projects and Destination Enabling Projects listed within the Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan.....		164
Appendix 2: Strategic Environmental Assessment Determination.....		186



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

This is the Environmental Report of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030 (hereafter referred to the 'Plan' or the 'GCDEDP').

This Environmental Report, 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*¹ (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.):

- 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*.

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

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 Directive², 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)³ 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 are avoided are required. Therefore, in accordance with Article 3(2)(b) above and guidance provided in SEA Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08⁴, a SEA of the GCDEDP has been undertaken.

This 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.

² 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*

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

⁴ <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 the day while protecting the city's status as a vibrant night-lime destination.*
- *Grow the appeal of Galway City in the domestic leisure and the family markets by leveraging the investment in outdoor activities.*
- *Maximise the large scale capital investment in visitor attractions and activities to broaden the appeal of Galway City among range of visitor segments.*
- *Pursue product development opportunities that build on the city's reputation for culture, arts, festivals and events.*
- *Establish Galway as an international food destination and hub for major events and festivals.*
- *Enhance the role of Galway City as driver of tourism in county Galway and influencing visitor flows across the Wild Atlantic Way.*

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

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

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

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

The GCDEDP aims for the following ‘Target Outcomes’:

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

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

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

2.2 Vision

The Destination Vision for GCDEDP 2034 is:

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

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

2.3 Strategic Objectives

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

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

The Plan is structured around the following strategic objectives:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 4.1. Develop sustainable tourism projects to showcase, protect and enhance the special character of Galway City's urban natural heritage, in partnership with local stakeholders and compliance with relevant European and National legislation, and local authority biodiversity action plans.
- 4.2. Build the digital capabilities of the tourism industry as part of the destinations approach to sustained demand generation.
- 4.3. Develop an industry wide approach to deliver a brand communications programme that resonates with the domestic and international market.
- 4.4. Enhance the capabilities of tourism networks and industry groups to work together in developing Galway City as an international tourism destination.
- 4.5. Develop new collaborative approaches around maximising the impact of festivals and events in the city.
- 4.6. Collectively embrace sustainability as a destination priority and become recognised as a leader for sustainable urban tourism, creating better places to live and visit while ensuring our natural environment is protected and respected.

4.7. Create new partnerships within the destination to package Galway cultural experiences with the city's accommodation network.

5. Strategic Objective 5: Foster strong coalitions of industry and stakeholders with a common purpose in developing Galway City as a flourishing destination supporting thriving communities.

5.1. Work with all stakeholders to ensure the tourism opportunity for Galway is reflected across future urban regeneration projects.

5.2. Disperse the value of tourism across the city through a community and Galway City neighbourhood approach.

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.

5.4. Embrace sustainability and creative approaches to climate action through a partnership approach ensuring a positive impact on our community and visitors.

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.

2.4 Destination Catalyst Projects & Enabling Projects Overview

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

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

The catalyst projects and their objectives are as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The eight enabler projects include:

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

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

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

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

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

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**.

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/EC⁵ 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.

Article 1 of the SEA 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.”

The SEA Directive was transposed into Irish law through:

- Statutory Instrument (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 (the 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).

S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, relates 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 which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive.”*⁶

S.I. No. 436 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011, relates 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”*⁷.

Given the nature of the Plan, the SEA for the GCDEDP is being prepared under the requirements of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011.

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

- Properly identified and assessed;
- Subject to public participation;

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

⁶ See Section 9(1)(a)

⁷ Section 5(c)

- 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...”⁸

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 3.1** and **Figure 3.1** below.

Table 3.1 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 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 & 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>	Completed 
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"> ■ methods of assessment; ■ contents and level of detail in the Plan / Programme; ■ the stage in the Plan or Programme-making process; and ■ 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. <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 

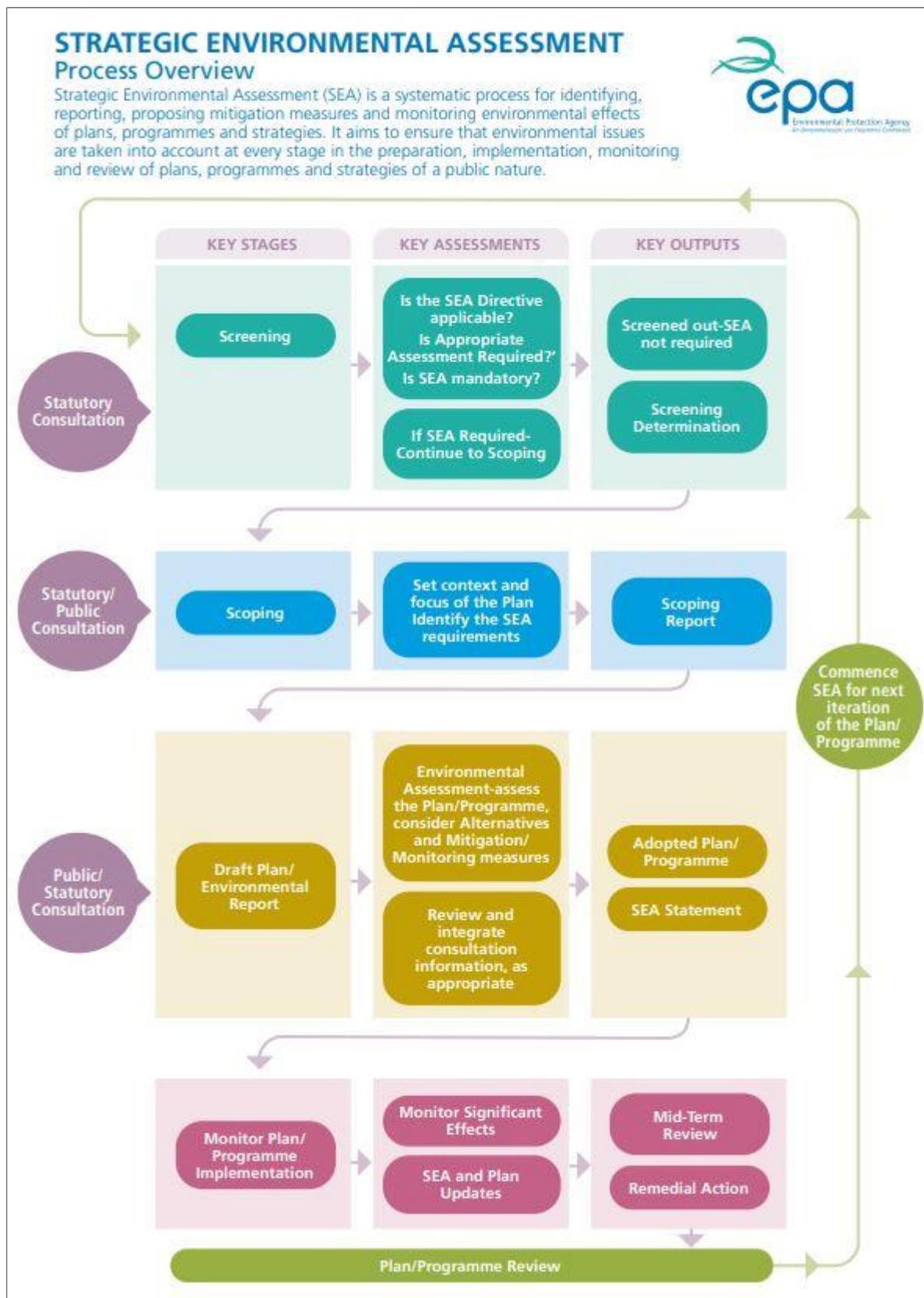
⁸ Article 2(b) of Directive 2001/42/EC, European Union, Article 2 (3) of EC (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 S.I No. 435 of 2004

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Stage	Description	Status
<p>3. Environmental Report</p>	<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>	<p>Completed</p> 
<p>4. SEA Statement</p>	<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"> ■ how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan / Programme; ■ how the environmental report, and any submissions /observations or consultations have been taken into account in the preparation of the Plan / Programme; ■ the reasons for choosing the Plan / Programme in light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and ■ the measures decided for monitoring the significant environmental effects of implementation of the Plan / Programme. 	<p>Current Stage</p>

Figure 3.1 Overview of SEA Process (EPA SEA Process Flow, 2021⁹)



⁹ EPA: <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/ea/SEA%20Process%20Checklist.pdf>

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."*¹⁰ 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 1/08¹¹, 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).

Article 3(2) of the SEA Directive requires that:

"Subject to paragraph 3, an environmental assessment shall be carried out for all 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 Directive 85/337/EEC, 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 Directive 92/43/EEC."

Article 9(1) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, states that:

"Subject to sub-article (2), an environmental assessment shall be carried out for all plans and programmes:

(a) which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism and 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 Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, or

(b) which are not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site but, either individually or in combination with other plans, are likely to have a significant effect on any such site."

Articles 9(2) and 9(3) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, further state that:

(2) "A plan or programme referred to in sub-article (1) which determines the use of a small area at local level or a minor modification to a plan or programme referred to in sub-article (1) shall

¹⁰ EPA: <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/ea/SEA%20Pack%202018.pdf>

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

require an environmental assessment only where the competent authority determines that it is likely to have significant effects on the environment and, for this purpose, the competent authority shall make any necessary determination.

(3) A competent authority shall determine whether plans and programmes other than those referred to in sub-article (1), which set the framework for future development consent of projects, are likely to have significant effects on the environment”

The *Draft 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*¹² the Draft GCDEDP is 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*¹³ (the SEA Directive).

This Environmental Report has been prepared as the GCDEDP is subject to requirements of SEA.

Refer to **Appendix 2** for the SEA Screening Determination.

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.

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 3.2**.

¹² <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/circular-sea-01-08.pdf>

¹³ DIRECTIVE 2001/42/EC: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN>

Table 3.2 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

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 & Sustainable Neighbourhoods (including well-being and quality of life), Sustainable Mobility & 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

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 & 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>Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)</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 - ‘SEA of Local Authority Land-Use Plans – EPA Recommendations and Resources’ (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

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 & 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 & 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

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 & Heritage, Minister for Environment, Climate & 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 & reporting, SEA statement, available guidance & 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. **Table 3.3** provides a checklist of the information referred to in Article 5(1) with a confirmation of where the relevant information is contained within the SEA.

The SEA Environmental Report will be placed on public display, together with the GCDEDP and for comment from statutory bodies, the public and interested parties.

Table 3.3 Information required under Annex I of the SEA Directive

Information referred to in Article 5(1)	Environmental Report Section
(a) an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	Section 2 & Section 4
(b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;	Section 5
(c) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	Section 5
(d) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC;	Section 5
(e) 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;	Section 6
(f) the likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors;	Section 8 and Appendix 1
(g) the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;	Section 9
(h) an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;	Section 7
(i) a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Article 10;	Section 10
(j) a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.	Refer to Non-technical Summary 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 3.4** below.

Table 3.4 SEA Consultation Response

Submission	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
<p>Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)</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>Biodiversity Considerations 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>Invasive Species Management and Control 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

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 & 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 & 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><i>‘Integrating Requirements for Environmental Protection, and Management and Collaboration into the Plan</i></p>

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

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

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>Traffic Management</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>Mitigation Measures</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

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>
Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment	<p>The response from the Department acknowledges the receipt of the correspondence.</p>	<p>The response has been noted.</p>
Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI)	<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 and 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
- 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
- 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
- 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
- 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

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 1/08¹⁴ (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/NIS has concluded that the GCDEDP will not affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.

¹⁴ NPWS SEA letter: <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/circular-sea-01-08.pdf>

4 Relationship with Plans and Programmes

4.1 Overview

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.

4.2 Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework

Project Ireland 2040 is the Government's overarching planning and development policy for the country to 2040. It constitutes a "strategy to make Ireland a better country for all of its people" by setting public investment policy at a high level. It comprises two documents: the *National Planning Framework* (NPF), which details the strategy for development to 2040; and the *National Development Plan* (NDP), which outlines the public expenditure required to implement this strategy and identifies priority future projects.

The National Planning Framework (as revised) was the subject of separate assessments under the SEA Directive (SEA), the Habitats and Birds Directives (AA), the Water Framework Directive and the Floods Directive (see SFRA), and this Plan and the results of those assessments have been considered in the preparation of this SEA.

The National Planning Framework (NPF), published in 2018 has been revised and updated to take account of changes that have occurred since it was published in 2018 and to build on the framework that is in place. A Draft First Revision to the National Planning Framework was published on 10th July 2024 for public consultation. On 5th November 2024, Government published a draft schedule of amendments to the First Revision to the National Planning Framework (NPF) arising from this public consultation process. Both Houses of the Oireachtas approved the Revised National Planning Framework (NPF). The approval by the Seanad and the Dáil followed the decision of Government to approve the Final Revised NPF on 8th April 2025.

The NPF is the Government's high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of Ireland to 2040. It is a framework to guide public and private investment to create and promote opportunities, and to protect and enhance the environment. At its core are ten National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs), "a shared set of goals for every community across the country" (p. 5), which the plan aims to deliver:

1. Compact Growth

2. Enhanced Regional Accessibility
3. Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities
4. High-Quality International Connectivity
5. Sustainable Mobility
6. A Strong Economy, supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills
7. Enhanced Amenity and Heritage
8. Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society
9. Sustainable Management of Environmental Resources
10. Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services

With a view to achieving these NSOs, the NPF identifies a suite of National Policy Objectives (NPOs).

The NPF identifies under NSO 7. Enhanced Amenity and Heritage that-

'This will ensure that our cities, towns and villages are attractive and can offer a good quality of life. It will require investment in well-designed public realm, which includes public spaces, parks and streets, as well as recreational infrastructure. It also includes amenities in rural areas, such as national and forest parks, activity-based tourism and trails such as greenways, blueways and peatways. This is linked to and must integrate with our built, cultural and natural heritage, which has intrinsic value in defining the character of urban and rural areas and adding to their attractiveness and sense of place.'

The NPF addresses the Plan for Ireland's growing population and economy and to promote new economic opportunities arising from digital connectivity and indigenous innovation and enterprise as well as more traditional natural and resource assets (e.g. food, energy, tourism). Local services sectors, including tourism and small-scale manufacturing, are a significant part of the rural economy and are also important local employers.

The revised Plan states that the key future planning and development and place-making policy priorities among others include -

'Tourism development and promotional branding to ensure that areas such as 'Ireland's Ancient East' and 'Ireland's Hidden Heartlands' are developed and promoted in such a way as to play their full part in tapping the economic potential of regional and rural areas in the region.'

The Plan identifies states that –

'Galway's key strengths, include a world class med-tech cluster, third level institutions embedded within the City, a vibrant arts and cultural scene, year round tourism and an attractive natural setting.'

The Plan highlights how tourism has the capacity to directly and indirectly sustain communities, create employment and deliver real social benefits for rural Ireland. The development of greenways, blueways and peatways offer a unique alternative means for tourists and visitors to access and enjoy rural Ireland. The development of a strategic national network of these trails is a priority and will support the development of rural communities and job creation in the rural economy, as well as the protection and promotion of natural assets and biodiversity.

The Plan identifies further opportunities to maximise market exposure that exist through co-operation and themed 'branding bundles' including linking the Causeway Coast with the Wild Atlantic Way and the lakelands border region with Ireland's Ancient East brand.

The National Policy Objective 34 states-

'Continue to facilitate tourism development and in particular the Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways, and a Blueways and Peatways Strategy, which prioritises:

- *A coordinated approach to the sustainable management of outdoor recreation sites;*
- *Projects on the basis of their environmental sustainability, achieving maximum impact and connectivity at national and regional level while ensuring their development is compliant with the National Biodiversity Action Plan, the national climate change objective and requirements for environmental assessments.'*

The National Policy Objective 63 states-

'Support the coordination and promotion of all-island tourism initiatives through continued co-operation between the relevant tourism agencies and Tourism Ireland, pursue the further development of sport, and invest in the diverse heritage, arts and cultural and linguistic traditions of the island.'

The NPF further elaborates on the importance of Ireland's natural heritage, cultural heritage and landscape and their role and contribution towards the tourism industry and economic investment.

The revised framework retains the original NPF focus on a more balanced distribution of growth across all of Ireland's regions – emphasising the potential for regional growth to harness the attractiveness and assets of all regions and places to a greater extent than ever before. Once finalised, the revised National Planning Framework will be incorporated into the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and the City and County Development Plans.

4.3 Tourism Policy Framework 2025-2030

The Tourism Policy Framework 2025-2030 has been published by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media in November 2024 and provides a tourism policy framework for Irish tourism for the period to 2030. It is designed to support tourism businesses in driving revenue and maintaining competitiveness, ensuring the continued growth and sustainability of Ireland's tourism industry. This Framework has been prepared with regard to the National Planning Framework (NPF) and associated National Development Plan 2021–2030. It further states that -

'The Tourism Sector overlaps many environmental, economic and social realms. As a result, there are several strategic documents at European Union (EU), national and local level that are relevant to delivering on the vision of this Tourism Policy Framework. Alignment with these strategies will ensure that the sector is adapted to and future proofed against climate change and biodiversity loss.'

The Tourism Policy Framework was the subject of separate screening assessments under the SEA Directive (SEA) and the Habitats and Birds Directives (AA), the results of those screening assessments have been considered in the preparation of this SEA.

Key components include supporting the sustainable development of year-round destinations throughout Ireland, highlighting the diverse tourism offerings across the country to boost domestic travel and new plans to strengthen the business tourism sector.

Overall, the Policy Framework is based on the following guiding principles for tourism:

- *Protect and enhance Ireland's cultural heritage, natural assets and environmental quality.*
- *Ensure that tourism contributes to meeting national and international policy commitments on climate change.*
- *Support balanced economic development and employment throughout the country.*
- *Prioritise the economic value per visitor over volume of tourists visiting.*

- *Minimise any negative impacts of tourism on host communities and maximise social benefits of tourism.*
- *Encourage innovation within the tourism sector to ensure improved visitor satisfaction.*
- *Ensure Ireland is recognised as an authentic sustainable destination.*

4.4 Northern and Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

There are three administrative Regions in Ireland: the Northern and Western Region, the Southern Region, and the Eastern and Midland Region. Under national policy, Regional Assemblies are tasked with drafting Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSESs), which effectively set the agenda for implementing the national level development policy – the NPF – at the Regional level. The GCDEDP area is situated in the Northern and Western Region and, therefore, falls under the remit of the Northern and Western RSES.

The RSES provides a high-level development framework for the Northern and Western Region that supports the implementation of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the relevant economic policies and objectives of Government. The policies in the RSES are structured under Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs) and Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) Policy Objectives.

The RSES was subjected to separate assessments under the SEA Directive (SEA) and the Habitats and Birds Directives (AA) and the results of those assessments have been considered in the preparation of this SEA.

The Northern and Western region supports sectors such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, tourism, renewables, construction and many others. The region's distinctive Cultural Heritage is a key asset that presents a competitive advantage to the region in encouraging economic activity. It has an enviable international reputation arising from the quality and originality of music, theatre, film/video, visual arts, literature, native language, song and dance. This is reinforced through archaeology, historic buildings and streetscapes, while the considerable infrastructure that has been created to facilitate their enjoyment by the public, such as in libraries, theatres and museums, is a source of employment and enjoyment for many thousands of the region's inhabitants.

The sustainable development and promotion of a successful well managed tourism industry is critical to the economy of this region. This strategy takes note of the overall Government policy, as set out in People, Place and Policy: Growing Tourism to 2025. In particular, it takes note of the policy proposal that consideration be given to the contribution that sustainable tourism can make to the protection of heritage assets.

Further, the Regional Policy Objectives states as follows:

RPO 4.1 - To support working with relevant landholders and recreational/tourism agencies to increase access to the countryside and our coastal areas, and to ensure maintenance and access to the existing network of trails, paths, ways etc.

RPO 4.2 - To support the maintenance of, and enhanced access to state lands, such as National Parks, Forest Parks, Waterways together with Monuments and Historic Properties, for recreation and tourism purposes.

RPO 4.3 - To support the preparation and implementation of Visitor Experience Development Plans (VEDPs) within the Northern and Western Region, to underpin the overarching regional tourism benefits and to promote the natural and cultural assets of the region.

The Strategy identified the Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) which is one out of the five MASPs for Ireland. It states that the location of Galway City midway along the Wild Atlantic Way provides an opportunity for expansion of the tourism product. It further states –

‘The unique environment of Galway City and County also plays an important tourism role. The extensive coastline, Lough Corrib, River Corrib, waterways and the city canal system are unique assets in the MASP area. Silverstrand and Salthill beaches which have blue flag beach status and Salthill promenade are part of a range of important coastal amenities within the city. Rinville Park and adjacent Galway Bay Sailing Club (just outside the MASP) play an important recreation and tourism role for Galway.’

Galway also provides a strong maritime culture and tradition experience and further states –

‘There are also significant amenity benefits within the marine sector with a range of beaches, open spaces and walkways offering tourism and leisure opportunities and enhancing health and well being. Biodiversity and environmental benefits are significant also, with high-quality bathing waters, and a rich and diverse range of habitats and species reflected by the presence Galway Bay Special Area of Conservation and the Inner Galway Bay Special Protection Area.’

Culture and creativity are at the heart of life in Galway City and it has a global reputation as the home of Druid Theatre Company, Galway International Arts Festival and Macnas. There is also a vibrant community arts sector that gives a strong cultural identity to the city and the county. The strength and potential of the creative sector is evidenced in particular by designations such as the UNESCO City of Film and European Capital of Culture 2020.

Galway MASP has a rich diversity of natural resources including Galway Bay and an extensive coastline, woodlands such as Merlin Park, Bearna Woods and Terryland Forest Park and waterways such as the River Corrib and the canals. The Regional Policy Objectives states as follows:

RPO 3.6.13 - The Assembly supports the delivery of a strategic Greenway Network for the GTS to include National Dublin to Galway Cycleway, Oranmore to Bearna Coastal Greenway and the Galway to Clifden Greenway (S/M).

The RSES Vision for the Northern and Western Region is - *‘To play a leading role in the transformation of this region into a vibrant, connected, natural, inclusive and smart place to work and live.’*

4.5 Galway City Development Plan 2023 – 2029

Galway city has a diversity of open spaces and natural assets such as coastline, woodlands, rivers, canals and streams which offers a high-quality environment and unique tourism assets within the city. Tourism covers a wide variety of different activities within the city. Many of the policies and objectives set out in the Plan support and facilitate the development of tourism and tourism infrastructure. This includes the enabling of tourist accommodation, the general hospitality sector and specific tourist facilities. These can benefit both visitor and citizen alike and contribute to the vitality, local economy and ultimately job creation.

Overall, the Galway City Development Plan supports sustainable tourism with respect to culture, heritage, emerging greenways and blueway activities on the waterways. It also aims to contribute to the development of tourism in the city through a variety of different synergistic measures including improving accessibility, environmental maintenance and improvements and through, the provision of recreation and amenity areas, public realm measures, protection of the natural and built heritage and the facilitation of the development of visitor activities and attractions.

Galway City Development Plan aims to protect and enhance Galway's natural environment, built, cultural and linguistic heritage, upgrade existing facilities and provide a world class experience for tourists which will ensure the continued success of the Tourism Sector for the city. The green network approach of the Plan seeks to manage and protect the environment to ensure the necessary balance between the preservation of the city's natural heritage and recreation and amenity requirements. The green network includes a range of European, national and local sites of ecological importance that are important elements of the city's landscape, forming part of an ecological network of corridors and stepping stones that allow for the movement of wildlife in the urban environment. The ecological sensitivity of open spaces varies and the Plan aims to ensure the conservation and protection of designated sites of ecological importance and habitats in the development of green network. Integrated into the green network is the range of blue spaces in the city which are significant natural resources comprising an extensive coastline, Lough Corrib, River Corrib, canals, streams and wetlands. Also integrated into the green network are community spaces which afford direct access to nature and recreation opportunities.

The key policies & objectives of Galway City Council include –

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.*
- 2. Encourage the continuing diversification in the tourism offer in the city in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland in particular through the development of greenways, blueways and connections with the evolving network of walking trails and promote opportunities in all activities and facilities that contribute to decarbonisation.*
- 3. Protect the distinctive built and natural heritage of the city and seek to maintain and implement improvements in the public realm that will sustain the attraction of the urban environment for visitors and citizens alike and will increase opportunities for the use of outdoor space and support events and gatherings.*
- 4. Work in partnership with Fáilte Ireland and key stakeholders to support the hospitality sector and promote tourism related facilities including a sustainable range of tourism accommodation.*
- 5. Support the preparation and development of a Galway Tourism brand and maximise on the legacy of the designation as Galway as European Capital of Culture 2020.*
- 6. Support the city as a destination city and support adoption of the VICE model for Destination management to ensure Sustainable Tourism which considers the interaction between Visitors, the Industry that serves them, the Community that hosts them and their collective impact on, and response to the Environment.*
- 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.*

8. *Support the promotion of Business Tourism to actively develop Galway as an events location with the appropriate infrastructure to attract international conferences, sporting, cultural and commercial events.*
9. *Encourage and support investment in digital technology in the tourism sector, with a particular focus on sectors such as visitor attractions and activities with low digital presence and/or integration.*

Policy 6.9 Marine Sector & Renewable Energy (1) - Promote, encourage and facilitate the sustainable growth and competitiveness of enterprise activities associated with the ocean and coastal economy including transport, trade, fishing, aquaculture, research, marine industries, renewable energy, tourism and leisure.

Policy 6.10 Creative Economy & Gastronomy Sectors (3) - Enable the development of gastronomy as a sustainable enterprise, supporting SME's, producers, food entrepreneurs, hospitality sector, tourism and the associated development of infrastructure, marketing and events that will strengthen the distinctive brand of Galway City and County and extend the legacy from the designation of Galway as a European Region of Gastronomy in 2018.

Policy 10.1 City Centre (1) - Maintain and enhance the resilience of the city centre by reinforcing its dominant role for commerce, shopping, tourism, cultural and leisure activities, enhancing its vitality and attractiveness as a place to work, live and visit.

Specific Objective 9 - Support proposals for the development of a destination tourism and recreational attraction at the Leisureland and Salthill park sites with the potential to provide modern, purpose built recreation, civic and cultural facilities to serve the city and region.

Specific Objective 10 - Implement actions from strategies and plans that support the development of culture and heritage in the city including: Cultural Strategy, Arts Strategy and Action Plan, Heritage Plan, Tourism Strategy and City Museum Strategic Plan.

The Development Plan was the subject of separate assessments under the SEA Directive (SEA), the Habitats and Birds Directives (AA), the Water Framework Directive and the Floods Directive (see SFRA), and this Plan and the results of those assessments have been considered in the preparation of this SEA.

4.6 Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028

County Galway has an exceptionally rich and diverse natural and cultural heritage, vibrant towns and villages and contrasting landscapes, all of which are easily accessible to visitors. The great diversity of landscape and seascape, coupled with location and climate, has resulted in a diversity of natural and semi-natural habitats in County Galway. These include woodland, grassland, wetland, marine, coastal, upland, river and lake habitats. This varied landscape supports a range of biodiversity, habitats and wildlife. There is huge diversity of species and habitats within County Galway, which because of their importance at European and National level require the designation of areas for their protection and conservation.

The tourism industry makes a significant contribution to the vitality and sustainability of a wide variety of local enterprises, particularly in rural areas, and promotes an enhanced awareness and positive appreciation of local traditions and ways of life.

Galway County Council recognises the potential of tourism as a key driver of sustainable socio-economic growth across the urban, rural, island and coastal settings of the County. Sustainable development of the tourism industry is of critical importance to the county. The Plan aims to – *'To encourage the*

development of the tourism sector as an economic driver for the County whilst ensuring the landscapes and seascapes which are one of the county's most important assets are protected.'

The Plan sets the following strategic aims to promote tourism in the County:

- *To safeguard and augment County Galway's extensive tourism sector;*
- *To maximise the potential of sustainable tourism thereby contributing to the balanced economic development of the County;*
- *To work in partnership with Fáilte Ireland, and other agencies to develop tourism in county Galway;*
- *To support the preparation and implementation of a Tourism Strategy for County Galway;*
- *To develop and enhance new and existing tourism products, attractions and tourism infrastructure;*
- *To capitalise on the distinct tourist attractions that County Galway has to offer including Destination Towns, natural, built and cultural heritage, scenic landscapes and natural amenities;*
- *To work to improve the visitor experience and to support Destination Experience Development Plans and Visitor Experience Development Plans across the county to ensure that all visitors enjoy the unique experience of County Galway;*
- *To capitalise on the County's identified nodes along the Wild Atlantic Way and Irelands Hidden Heartlands;*
- *To protect the landscape categories within the County and avoid negative impacts upon the natural environment.*

The objectives required to promote a sustainable, well-managed, and high-quality year-round tourism industry that generates economic benefits for all areas of the County are set out below:

TOU 1 Tourism Sector – To co-operate with all relevant stakeholders in initiatives that strengthen the tourism sector in the county.

TOU 2 Key Economic Pillars - To promote and facilitate tourism as an economic pillar of the County's economy and to support the provision of appropriate visitor attractions and improvement in public spaces to promote attractive and vibrant town centres as key places for tourists.

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.

TI 1 Tourist Infrastructure - Encourage and promote tourism related facilities and accommodation within existing settlements in the county. Consideration will be given to such facilities in rural areas where there is a justified requirement for the proposal at that location. These proposals are required to comply with environmental considerations and the relevant DM Standards.

TI 2 Visitor Accommodation - Encourage and facilitate visitor accommodation facilities at appropriate locations within the county where there is a justifiable requirement for such facilities. These proposals are required to comply with environmental considerations and the relevant DM Standards.

TI 3 Energy Efficiency - Support best-practice environmental management including energy efficiency, waste management, procurement and recycling in accommodation providers and tourism enterprises in the County.

TI 4 Tourism and Infrastructure Capacity - The potential environmental effects of a likely increase in tourists/tourism-related traffic volumes in particular locations/along particular routes shall be

considered and mitigated as appropriate. Such a consideration should include potential impacts on existing infrastructure (including drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) resulting from tourism proposals. Galway County Council will support Irish Water and Fáilte Ireland to ensure that tourism is serviced by adequate and appropriate water services infrastructure.

GBW 1 Walkways and Cycleways - To promote and facilitate the development of walkways and cycleways at appropriate locations throughout the County subject to environmental considerations.

GBW 2 Future Development of Network of Greenways - To support the delivery of sustainable strategic greenway/blueways projects in the county in accordance with the Strategy for Future Development of National and Regional Greenways.

CT 1 Tourism Resource – To protect beaches, and bathing areas as valuable local amenities and as a tourism resource and support the maintenance, protection and improvement of access to these amenities.

CT 2 Water Sports - To encourage the development of coastal tourism in areas such as water-sports and water-related activities and events subject to normal planning and environmental criteria.

CT 3 Tourism Development - To support proposals for tourism development in coastal areas where it can be demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the amenities of the area, the integrity of the natural, environment or the economic value of the County's coastline and beaches.

CT 5 Tourism Products - To support the protection and enhancement of our islands, coastline and waterways as tourism products and attractions, subject to community and environmental carrying capacity.

LWT 1 Lakeland and Waterways Tourism - To support the development of tourism activities in lakeland areas and waterways subject to Normal Planning and environmental criteria. All proposed developments shall be in accordance with the Water Framework Directive and all relevant EU Directives.

Ht 1 Stakeholders - To work with the relevant stakeholders including the OPW, the Heritage Council, Fáilte Ireland, Údarás Na Gaeltachta, the Arts Council, Waterways Ireland, local communities and businesses to support the development of heritage and cultural tourism in Galway.

HT2 Heritage Assets - To support and protect the heritage assets (built and natural) that are the focus for tourism development and that best practice standards in relation to the environmental management of tourism enterprises are adhered to.

HT3 Sustainable Tourism Industry - To support the development of a more sustainable tourism industry which minimises adverse impacts on local communities, the built heritage, landscapes, habitats and species; leaving them undiminished as a resource for future generations, while supporting social and economic prosperity.

FC 1 Food and Crafts - To support the development and marketing of the foods and crafts of the County through networking and developing trade links with regions, locally, nationally and internationally.

EF 1 Events and Festivals - Support and promote the existing festivals and cultural events which take place in the county and facilitate the establishment of new events where appropriate in order to increase the profile of the county as a key tourism destination.

ATE 1 Additional Tourism Initiatives - To facilitate the sustainable development of the tourism sector and provide for the delivery of a unique combination of tourism opportunities drawing on the network of attractions in County Galway and potential future attractions.

CTB 1 Tourism Branding - To support the promotion of the Wild Atlantic Way and Irelands Hidden Heartlands in their role to grow the economic contribution of tourism along their routes.

CTB 2 Tourism Stakeholders - To support Failte Ireland and any other stakeholders in identifying suitable locations for both new and improved infrastructure to cater for the growth in visitor cars, buses, and cyclists using the Wild Atlantic Way (WAW) and Irelands Hidden Heartlands (IHH) touring network and visitor attractions within the county.

CTB 3 Slow Tourism - To support the provision of Orientation and Information Points targeted at the 'Slow Tourism' market particularly the assets within Irelands Hidden Heartlands.

MCT 2 Coastal Tourism and Recreation - To facilitate sustainable tourism and recreation activities where appropriate, whilst encouraging the diversification and utilisation of existing facilities in accordance with environmental considerations.

The Development Plan was the subject of separate assessments under the SEA Directive (SEA), the Habitats and Birds Directives (AA), the Water Framework Directive and the Floods Directive (see SFRA), and this Plan and the results of those assessments have been considered in the preparation of this SEA.

4.7 Regional Tourism Development Strategies (2023-2027)

Regional Tourism Development Strategies (2023-2027) have been developed for each of Fáilte Ireland's four Regional Experience Brands (Ireland's Ancient East, Dublin, Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands). The purpose of the Regional Tourism Strategies is to identify sustainable tourism development priorities that will unlock the commercial potential of the region and generate socio-economic benefits for all local stakeholders and the tourism industry. These plans provide the strategic framework for the development of the GCDEDP.

The Wild Atlantic Way Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023 - 2027 identifies six strategic objectives to develop the tourism economy in the region. The projects outlined in the GCDEDP align to these overall regional objectives. The strategic objectives are as follows:

- *STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: Year Round Appeal: Grow the year-round appeal of the Wild Atlantic Way domestically and internationally ensuring we attract and disperse high-value visitors into and throughout the region.*
- *STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: International Profile: Raise the international profile of the northern half of the Wild Atlantic Way to increase visitation and revenue.*
- *STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: Revenue, Dispersion & Extension: Increase tourism revenue, visitor dispersion and season extension across the southern half of the Wild Atlantic Way.*
- *STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: Authenticity & Wildness: Protect the cultural authenticity and "wildness" of the Wild Atlantic Way.*
- *STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5: Capacity & Capability: Enable and assist the industry to grow its capacity and capability so that it can thrive over the period of this strategy.*
- *STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 6: Industry & Stakeholder: Foster strong coalitions of industry and stakeholders with a common purpose in creating flourishing destinations and thriving communities while also building a sustainable model of destination development across the Wild Atlantic Way.*

The Regional Tourism Development Strategy for the Wild Atlantic Way provides a new context for how all existing and future tourism projects and initiatives are planned, developed and managed in a sustainable and integrated manner. The wildness of the landscape is at the heart of the Wild Atlantic Way offering. It is crucial that the quality, character and distinctiveness of these natural assets are protected.

The Regional Tourism Development Strategy for the Wild Atlantic Way provides a new context for how all existing and future tourism projects and initiatives are planned, developed, and managed in a sustainable and integrated manner. The VICE (Visitor, Industry, Community and Environment) Model for Sustainable Tourism is the framework adopted within this plan. Fáilte Ireland recognises the need to integrate environmental considerations into this strategy in a way that responds to the sensitivities and requirements of the wider natural environment. Environmental considerations including water quality and amenity, climate change, traffic, biodiversity, built and cultural heritage, landscape, critical infrastructure and communities, all play a vital part in our tourism sector.

The Wild Atlantic Way Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023 - 2027 has been subject of separate assessments under the SEA Directive (SEA) and the Habitats and Birds Directives (AA) and the results of those assessments have been considered in the preparation of this SEA.

4.8 Galway County Tourism Strategy 2023-2031

The Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 identified the requirement for the preparation of a Galway County Tourism Strategy to support the existing tourism sector whilst also ensuring the county is maximising its tourism potential.

The Galway County Tourism Strategy 2023 – 2031 aims to build on the work undertaken to date by Galway City Council, Failte Ireland, Tourism Ireland and the tourism industry in the city and sets out to support the tourism industry throughout the year. This strategy focuses on ways that tourism initiatives can increase employment all year round, attract additional revenue and protect and promote our unique history, heritage, language and culture. The Strategic Framework provides the structure that will enable County Galway to achieve its Vision and provides coherence for activity and investment over the eight-year duration of the Strategy. Four areas for strategic focus are identified in the Framework. These include – Destination Management, Experience Development, Capacity and Skills Development and Marketing and Communications.

This strategy will help deliver on managing Galway as a visitor destination, planning for its future, developing its reputation, branding and marketing. Galway City Council, in partnership with tourism industry members and other public bodies, will work to deliver on the Strategic Priorities outlined in the strategy. The Strategy also includes an action plan that provides the context for a range of innovative tourism marketing and development plans as well as the provision of the destination and experience development plans. The actions presented within the action plan are presented under the above mentioned four strategic themes.

The Galway County Tourism Strategy was the subject of separate screening assessments under the SEA Directive (SEA) and the Habitats and Birds Directives (AA).

4.9 Other Plans and Programmes

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 st 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
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 International, National & 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

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

National & Regional Plans and Programmes	
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 th 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
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

National & Regional Plans and Programmes	
	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

Some of the key Plans / Programmes, which were subject to SEA and AA, are discussed further in the following sections.

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 and 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.

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

5.3.1 Biodiversity

Biodiversity plays a significant role in the provision of clean air, water, healthy soils and food as well as visually contributing to a plan area with its natural beauty and heritage.

The biodiversity within the study area underpins important economic sectors such as agriculture, tourism and recreation and is a core component of the green infrastructure. A number of areas in study

area have been identified as being of exceptional importance for biodiversity at a national and/or international level and are protected through national and European legislation.

5.3.1.1 Designated European Sites

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

All designated European Sites located within the study area are listed in **Table 5.1** below. There are further SPAs and SACs within the Zone of Influence (Zoi) of the study area listed in **Table 5.2** below. Also, refer to **Figure 5.2**.

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 website¹⁵. Any potential for impact on European Sites have been fully addressed in the NIS that accompanies the GCDEDP and SEA Environment Report.

Table 5.1 European sites located within the study area

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

Table 5.2 European sites located within the potential zone of influence of the study area

Site Code	Special Protection Area (SPA)	Site Code	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
004181	Connemara Bog Complex SPA	001312	Ross Lake and Woods SAC
004142	Cregganna Marsh SPA	001271	Gortnandarragh Limestone Pavement SAC
004089	Rahasane Turlough SPA	002034	Connemara Bog Complex SAC
004107	Coole-Garryland SPA	000479	Cloughmoyne SAC
004168	Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA	000996	Ballyvaughan Turlough SAC
		000020	Black-Head Poulsallagh Complex SAC
		000054	Moneen Mountain SAC
		001926	East Burren Complex SAC
		002294	Cahermore Turlough SAC
		000238	Caherglassaun Turlough SAC
		000252	Coole-Garryland Complex SAC
		002295	Ballinduff Turlough SAC

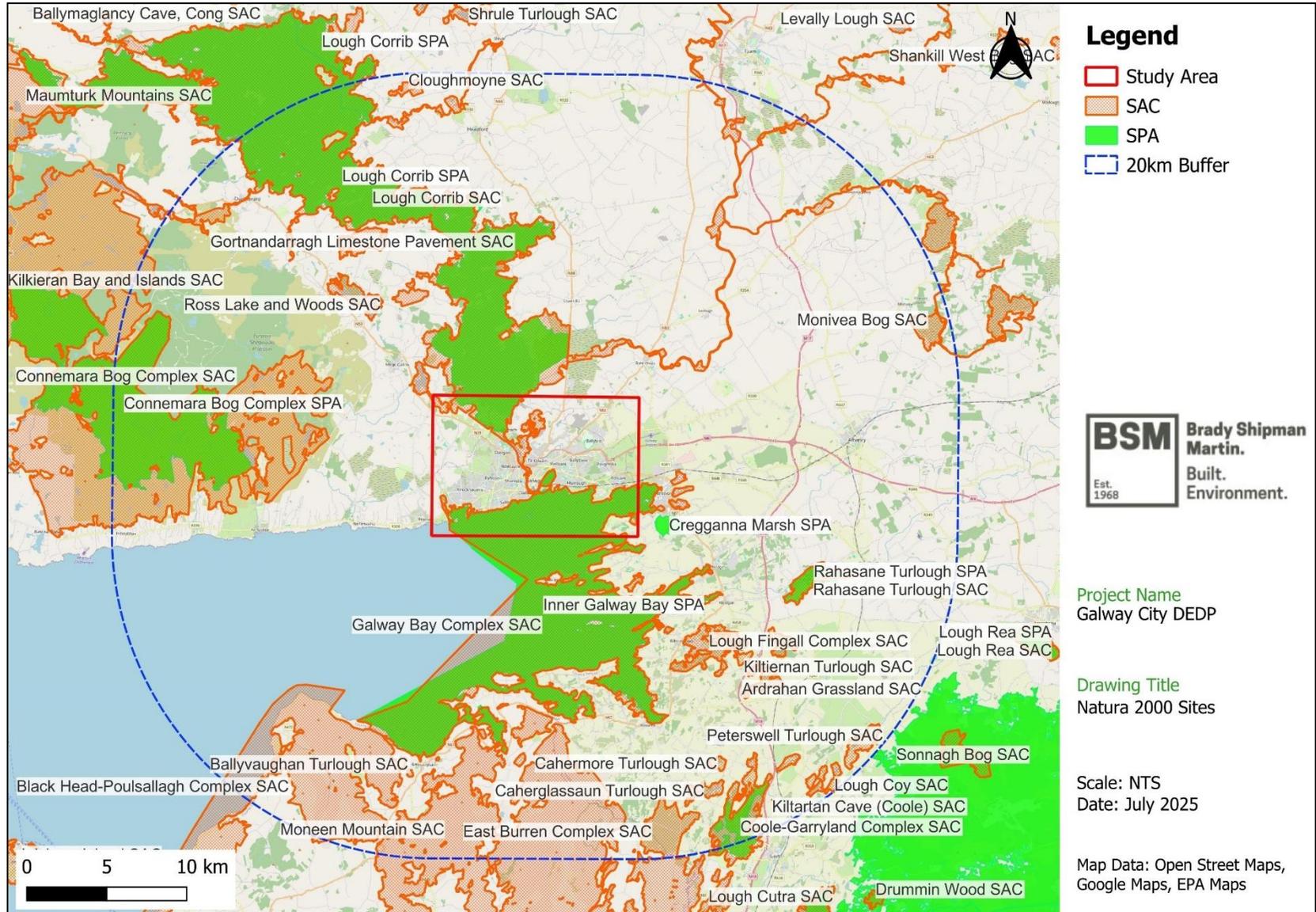
¹⁵ NPWS website 2019: <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/conservation-management-planning/conservation-objectives>

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Site Code	Special Protection Area (SPA)	Site Code	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
		000286	Kiltartan Cave (Coole) SAC
		002293	Carrowbaun, Newhall and Ballylee Turloughs SAC
		002117	Lough Coy SAC
		000318	Peterswell Turlough SAC
		000606	Lough Fingall Complex SAC
		001285	Kiltieman Turlough SAC
		002244	Ardrahan Grassland SAC
		000242	Castletaylor Complex SAC
		000322	Rahasane Turlough SAC
		002352	Monivea Bog SAC
		001321	Termon Lough SAC

Figure 5.1 European Sites within the study area and in the surrounding potential zone of influence



5.3.1.2 Nationally Designated Sites

Nationally Designated Sites include *Natural Heritage Areas* (NHAs) which are legally protected areas that are considered important for their habitats or which holds species of plants and animals whose habitat needs protection. *Proposed Natural Heritage Areas* (pNHAs) are also of significance for wildlife and habitats but have not yet been statutorily designated. However, under the Wildlife Amendment Act (2000) NHAs are legally protected from damage from the date they are formally proposed for designation¹⁶.

Refer to **Tables 5.3** and **5.4** and **Figure 5.3** below for the NHAs and pNHAs within the study area and within the zone of influence of the study area.

Table 5.3 Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) within the study area and potential zone of influence

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

Table 5.4 Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) within the study area and potential zone of influence

Site Code	Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) within study area	Site Code	Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) within zone of influence
000297	Lough Corrib pNHA	001267	Furbough Wood pNHA
000268	Galway Bay Complex pNHA	002034	Connemara Bog Complex pNHA
000287	Kiltullagh Turlough pNHA	000228	Ballycuirke Lough pNHA
		002083	Killarainy Lodge, Moycullen pNHA
		001260	Drimcong Wood
		001312	Ross Lake and Woods pNHA
		001271	Gortnandarragh Limestone Pavement pNHA
		002082	Oughterard National School pNHA
		000479	Cloughmoyne pNHA
		000385	Rostaff Turlough pNHA
		001788	Turloughcor pNHA
		001322	Turlough Monaghan pNHA
		001294	Lough Hacket pNHA
		002038	Castle Hackett Souterrain pNHA
		001288	Knockmaa Hill pNHA
		000331	Turlough O'Gall pNHA

¹⁶ NPWS website 2019: <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/nha>

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Site Code	Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) within study area	Site Code	Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) within zone of influence
		000234	Belclare Turlough pNHA
		001709	Tiaquin Bog pNHA
		000311	Monivea Bog pNHA
		000322	Rahasane Turlough pNHA
		000242	Castletaylor Complex pNHA
		000606	Lough Fingall Complex pNHA
		001285	Kiltieman Turlough pNHA
		000318	Peterswell Turlough pNHA
		000286	Kiltartan Cave (Coole) pNHA
		000252	Coole-Garryland Complex pNHA
		000238	Caherglassaun Turlough pNHA
		001926	East Burren Complex pNHA
		000071	Turloughnagullaun pNHA
		000054	Moneen Mountain pNHA
		000996	Ballyvaughan Turlough pNHA
		000020	Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex pNHA

Figure 5.2 Other Designated Sites within the study area and in the surrounding potential zone of influence

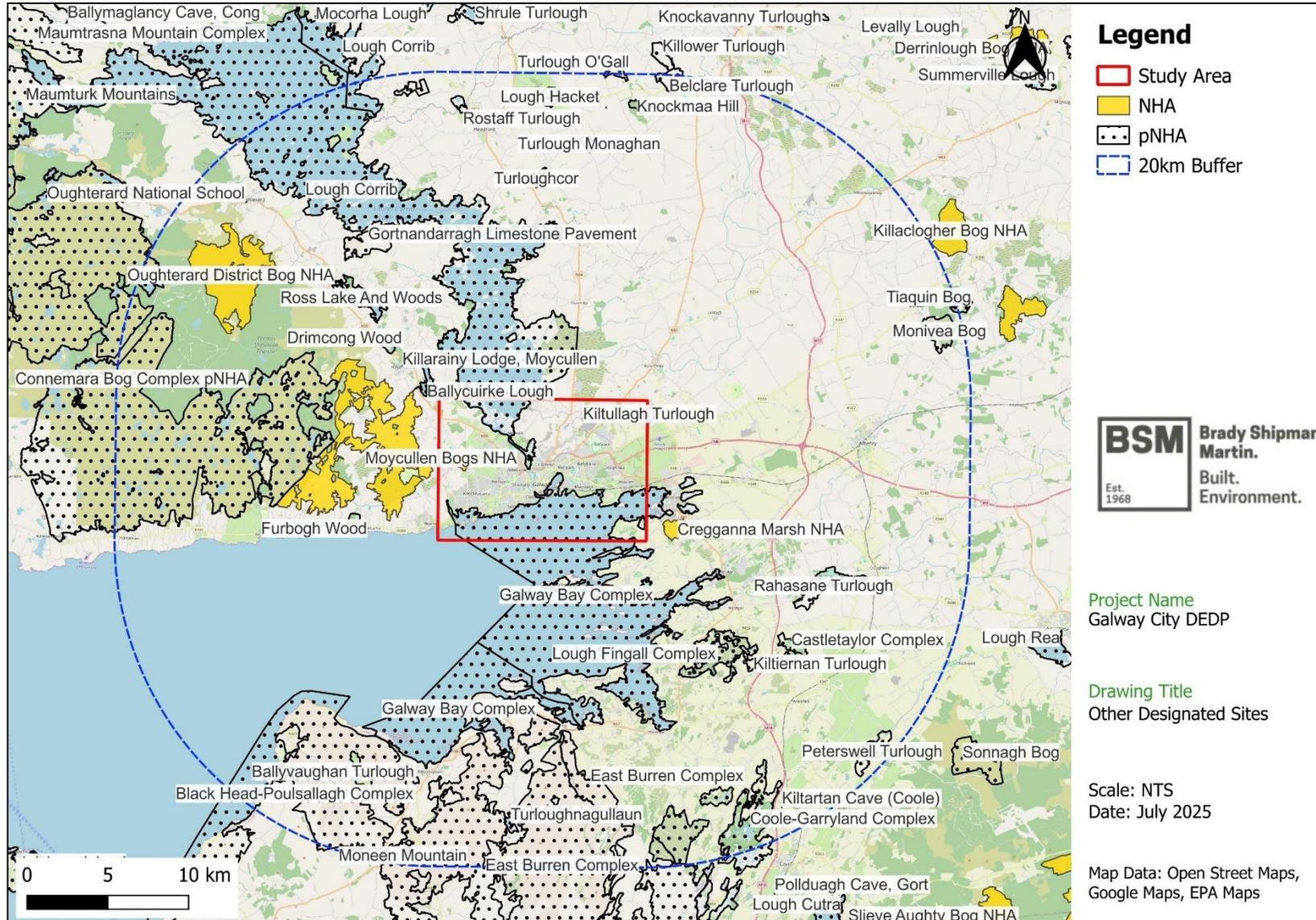
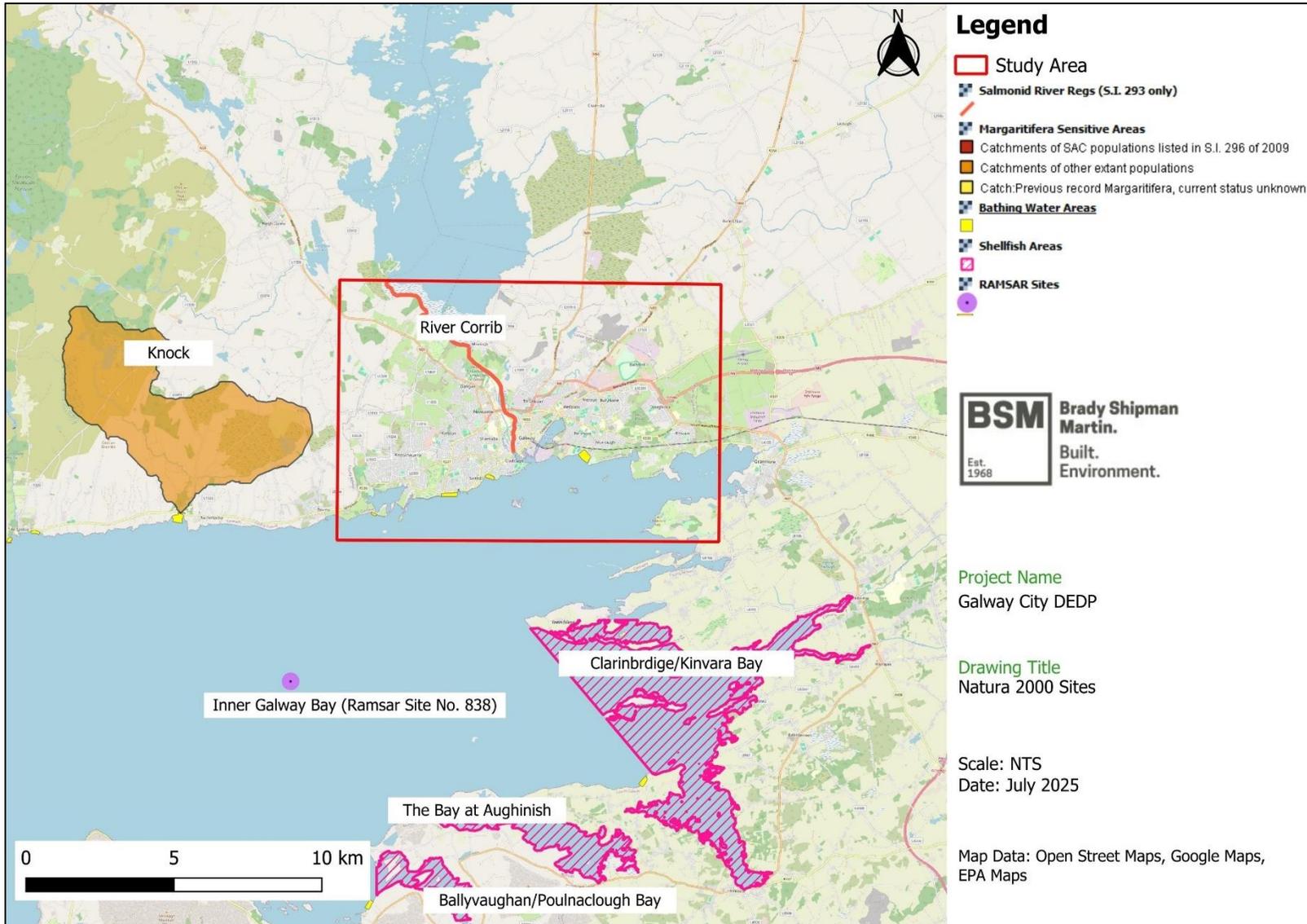


Figure 5.3 Other Designated Sites within study area and in the surrounding area



5.3.1.3 Ecological Networks and Connectivity

Article 10 of the Habitats Directive recognises the importance of ecological networks as corridors and stepping stones for wildlife, including for migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species of flora and fauna. The Directive requires that ecological connectivity and areas of ecological value outside the Natura 2000 network of designated ecological sites are maintained and it recognises the need for the management of these areas through land use planning and development policies. Ecological networks are important in connecting areas of local biodiversity with each other and with nearby designated sites so as to prevent islands of habitat from being isolated entities. They are composed of linear features, such as treelines, hedgerows and rivers / streams which provide corridors or stepping stones for wildlife species moving within their normal range.

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

Hedgerows contribute significantly to biodiversity and landscape character. They have an important farming function, they are wildlife habitats, and corridors, between habitats, and they also have historical significance as townland and field boundaries. The rivers provide a rich landscape setting for the towns and village of the county and are the primary green infrastructure network in the study area.

Wetlands include a wide range of habitats including watercourses, marshes, fens, bogs, turloughs, wet woodlands and estuaries. They support a variety of habitats and species, function in the protection of water quality and flood control, are important carbon stores contributing to climate resilience, and provide open space and recreational opportunities.

5.3.1.4 National Biodiversity Action Plan

Ireland's fourth *National Biodiversity Action Plan* (NBAP) sets national biodiversity agenda for the period 2023-2030. The Plan's vision for Ireland in 2050 is as follows:

Biodiversity in Ireland is valued, conserved, restored and sustainably used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people.

The key objectives of the NBAP are as follows:

- Adopt a Whole-of Government, Whole of-Society Approach to Biodiversity;
- Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs;
- Secure Nature's Contribution to People;
- Enhance the Evidence Base for Action on Biodiversity;
- Strengthen Ireland's Contribution to International Biodiversity Initiatives.

5.3.1.5 Water Framework Directive (WFD) Register of Protected Area

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). This register is split into five categories as outlined by the EPA:

- Areas designated for the abstraction of water intended for human consumption under Article 7;
- Areas designated for the protection of economically significant aquatic species (i.e. shellfish);

- Bodies of water designated as recreational waters, including areas designated as bathing waters under Directive 76/160/EEC;
- Nutrient-sensitive areas, including areas designated as vulnerable zones under Directive 91/676/EEC and areas designated as sensitive areas under Directive 91/271/EEC; and
- Areas designated for the protection of habitats or species where the maintenance or improvement of the status of water is an important factor in their protection, including relevant European sites (Natura 2000) designated under Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 79/409/EEC.

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

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

5.3.1.6 Designated Shellfish Waters

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

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

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

5.3.1.7 Salmonid Waters

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

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

5.3.1.8 Other Designations

RAMSAR Sites

Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention¹⁷. Wetlands are important ecosystems, which improve water quality, provide storm protection, flood mitigation, stabilise shorelines, maintain biodiversity, and provide natural products such as fish and shellfish. Ireland presently has 45no. RAMSAR sites. There is only one Ramsar site located within the study area – Inner Galway Bay (838). This site provides a shallow sheltered part of a large sea bay with

¹⁷ <https://www.ramsar.org/>

numerous intertidal inlets and small low islands composed of glacial deposits and provides important habitat for marine life along the coast. The site supports the richest seaweed flora on the Irish Coast and 65% of the Irish marine algal flora occur in the area. The site supports internationally and nationally important numbers of numerous species of waterbirds.

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

Wildfowl Sanctuaries

Wildfowl sanctuaries are areas that have been excluded from the 'Open Season Order' so that game birds can rest and feed undisturbed. There are 68 no. sanctuaries in the State¹⁸. Shooting of game birds is not allowed in these sanctuaries. The Lough Rusheen (WFS-62) wildfowl sanctuary is within the study area. There is another sanctuary within County Galway – Moyne (WFS-63).

Nature Reserves

Other nature conservation designations are *Statutory Nature Reserves*, which are protected under Ministerial order. There are no nature reserves within the study area. However, the nearest Nature Reserves include - Coole Park, Keelhilla (Slieve Carron) and Leam West Bog.

Margaritifera Sensitive Area

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

Refer to **Figure 5.4**.

5.3.1.9 Biodiversity Issues

Ireland is currently experiencing a decline in floral and faunal populations. As highlighted in the Ireland's State of the Environment Report (EPA, 2024), the leading causes of these declines are changes in agricultural practices, including intensification; pollution; the increasing spread of invasive species; and our changing climate. Implementation of measures to achieve the requirements of the Habitats Directive and the objectives of the WFD are likely to benefit protected sites in the future.

Certain developments and activities associated with urban developments, tourism and recreation that are located within, or close to, ecologically sensitive sites can give rise to significant environmental pressures. Within the study area, the protection of waterways, wetlands, coastal waters and the avoidance of the spread of invasive species are major 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.

¹⁸ NPWS (2021).

- 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.

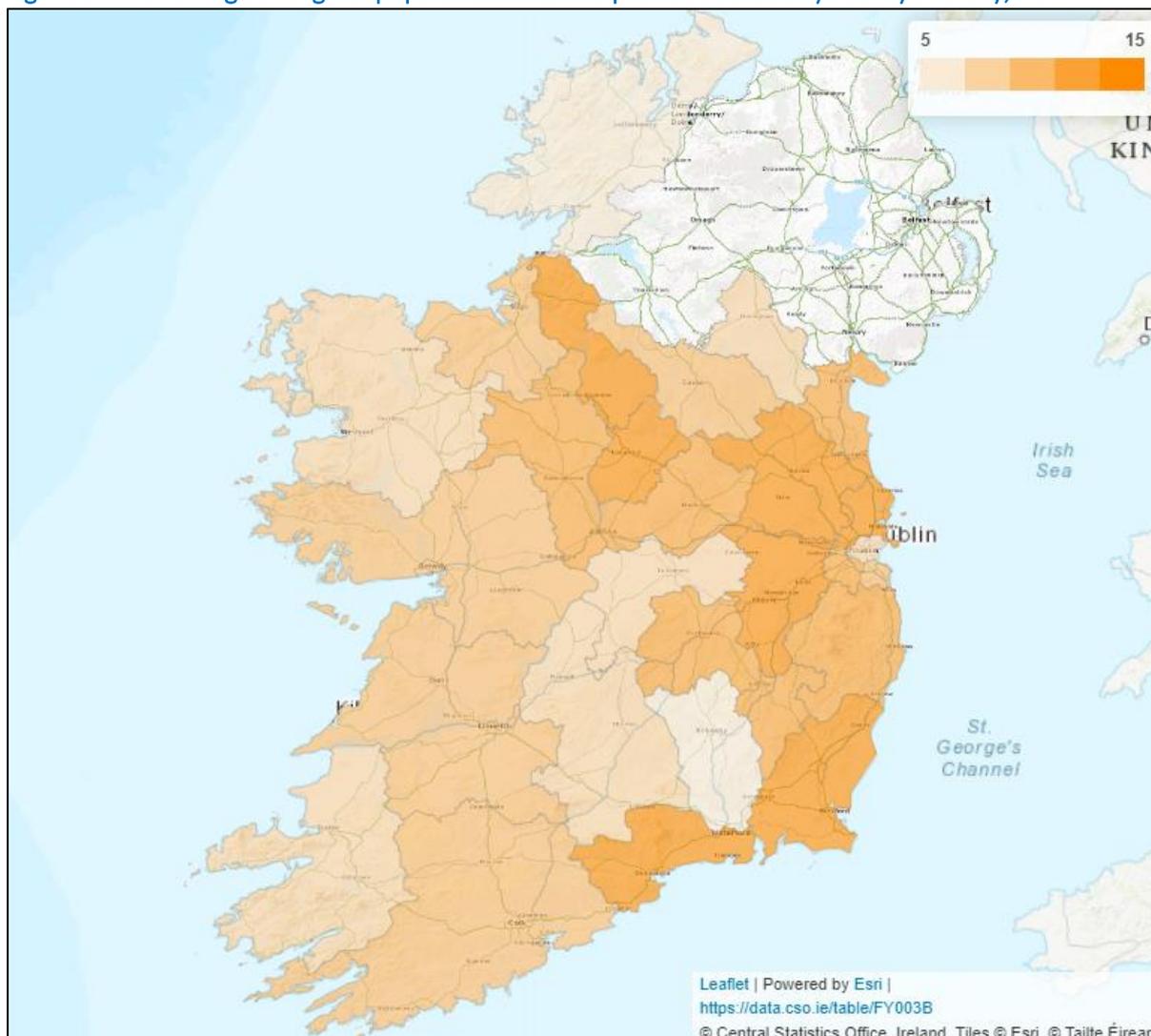
5.3.2 Population and Human Health

5.3.2.1 Population

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, 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 reports the the population of the Republic of Ireland is at c. 5.15 million (CSO, 2023). The NPF contains a target to deliver 50% of future population and employment growth to be focused in the five cities of Ireland and their suburbs, namely, Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford (Government of Ireland, 2024). It also contains a target to deliver at least half (50%) of all new homes that are targeted in the five Cities and suburbs. The population of Ireland is projected to continue to grow and become increasingly urbanised. Ireland, including Galway, is currently experiencing a significant housing shortage and the availability and affordability of the housing sector is further impacted by tourism sector.

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. Refer to **Figure 5.4** below for the overall population change for the city and county between 2016 to 2022.

Figure 5.4 Percentage change of population since the previous census by county and city, 2022¹⁹

5.3.2.2 Socio-Economic Trends

Tourism

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 and County promotes the development and strengthening of the overall value of tourism in this region as previously stated. These areas have an objective to enhance the potential for economic development in the tourism sector.

5.3.2.3 Human Health

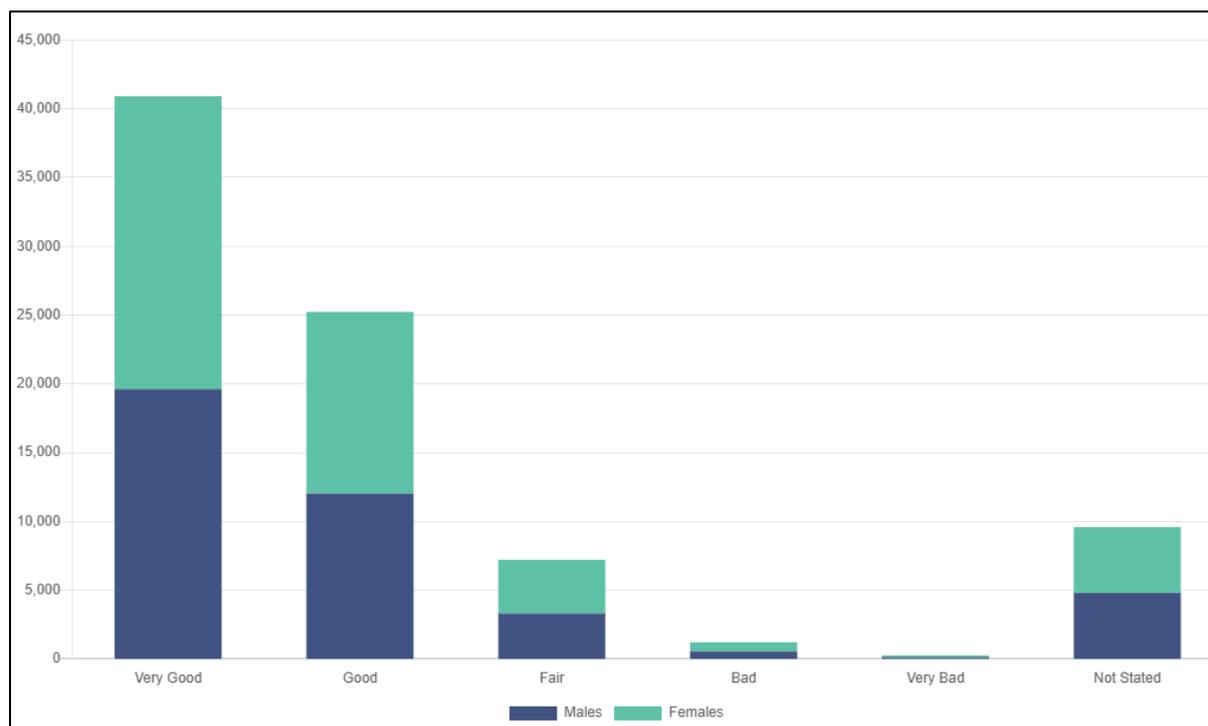
Human health has the potential to be impacted upon by environmental vectors (*i.e.* environmental components such as air, water or soil through which contaminants or pollutants, which have the potential to cause harm, can be transported so that they come into contact with human beings).

¹⁹ <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cpsr/censusofpopulation2022-summaryresults/populationchanges/>

Hazards or nuisances to human health can arise as a result of exposure to these vectors arising from incompatible adjacent land uses. The impact of development on human health is also influenced by the extent to which new development is accompanied by appropriate infrastructure and the maintenance of the quality of water, air and soil.

Figure 5.5 presents the self-reported health status of the population in Galway City, as reported in the 2022 Census. While the data are self-reported and, therefore, do not provide an entirely accurate picture of the health profile of the area, they do indicate a relatively high level of individual wellbeing in the area and also aligns with the national data.

Figure 5.5 Self-reported general health- Galway City (CSO – 2022 Census)



Infrastructure / Amenity and Human Health

Sporting, leisure and recreational facilities are essential to promoting good health, social cohesion, a sense of community and enhancing quality of life and well-being. Nationally there has been, in recent years, an increased focus on fitness, sports and recreation generally.

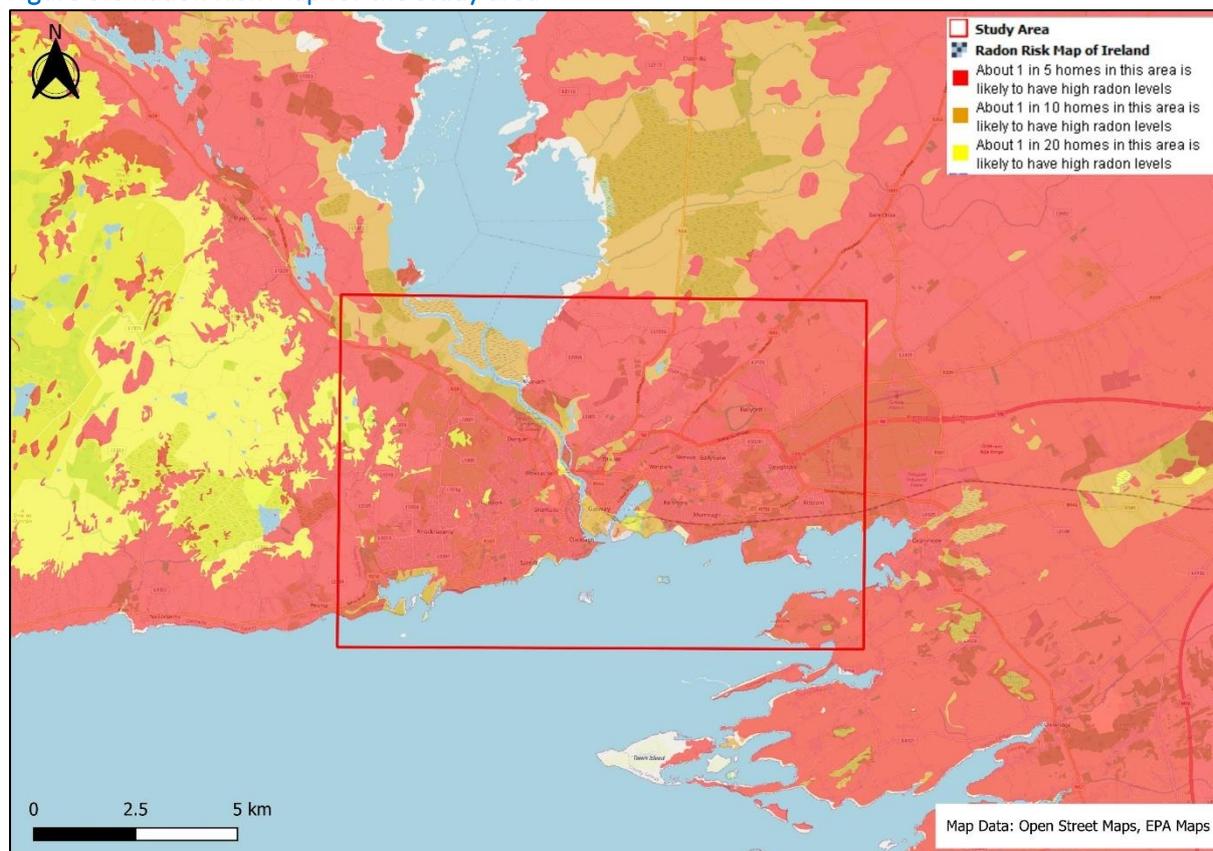
There are a large number of built recreation and sporting facilities provided throughout the study area through a mix of public, private, schools, community facilities and voluntary organisations. Community spaces integrated into the green network provide direct access to nature and recreation opportunities. Integrated into the green network is the range of blue spaces in the city which are significant natural resources comprising an extensive coastline, Lough Corrib, River Corrib, canals, streams and wetlands.

Radon and Human Health

Radon is a radioactive gas, which is naturally produced in the ground from the uranium present in small quantities in all rocks and soils. Tiny radioactive particles are produced by the gas which when inhaled can cause lung cancer. The risk of contracting lung cancer as a result of Radon depends on how much Radon a person has been exposed to over a period of time. Radon risk map levels in the Counties have been collated from the EPA *Radon Risk Map of Ireland* and are shown in **Figure 5.6** below. Areas in red are most at risk from radon and are called High Radon Areas, the areas of the map in orange and yellow

are areas of medium and low risk respectively. However, a high radon level can be found in any home in any part of the country.

Figure 5.6 Radon Risk Map for the study area²⁰



5.3.2.4 Existing Population and Human Health Issues

Existing population and human health issues / pressures on the population of 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, refer to **Figure 5.6**.
- 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.

²⁰ EPA Radon Risk Map of Ireland- <https://gis.epa.ie/geonetwork/srv/eng/catalog.search#/metadata/3b2e9226-c40a-44c9-b4f0-7234c0810769>

5.3.3 Land, Soils & Geology

Soil is composed of mineral particles, organic matter, water, air and living organisms. Land degradation is a global problem, often caused by a combination of factors such as poor land management and unsustainable development. Land degradation may exacerbate the impacts of natural disasters.

5.3.3.1 Land

Forestry and Woodlands

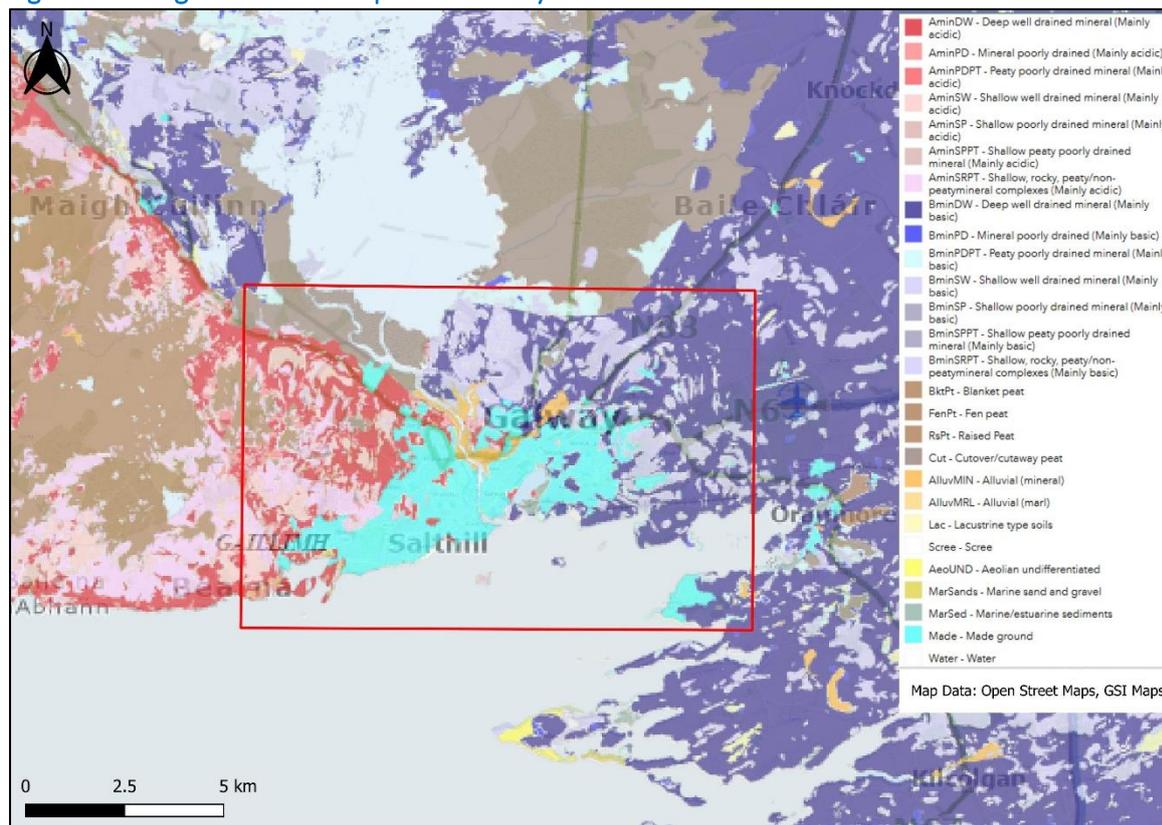
Woodlands provide recreational opportunities in addition to their heritage and economic benefits. They are also important as links in the county's green infrastructure network. Urban woodland parks and trees are important recreational amenities and natural features in the city. The following forests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

5.3.3.2 Soils

Soil is a non-renewable resource that performs many vital functions: food, storage, filtration and transformation of many substances including water, carbon, and nitrogen. Soil has a role as a habitat and gene pool, serves as a platform for human activities, landscape and heritage and acts as a provider of raw materials. The *Irish Soil Information System* (SIS) concludes a 5 year programme, supported by the EPA and Teagasc, to develop a 1:250,000 scale national soil map. The Irish Soil Information System adopted a unique methodology combining digital soil mapping techniques with traditional soil survey application.

Fertile soils also provide the basis for a thriving agricultural and food sector. The study area comprises a mix of soil types, see **Figure 5.7** below. These soils can be impacted upon by development, land use changes and water quality.

Figure 5.7 Teagasc Subsoils Map for the study area²¹



Seveso Sites

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. There are two thresholds, a lower one of 50 tonnes ('lower tier sites') and a higher one of 200 tonnes ('upper tier sites'). Lower tier sites are required to have a *Major Accidents Prevention Policy* and a *Safe Work Systems Plan*. Upper tier sites are required to carry out, in conjunction with the local competent authority (which includes the Health Service Executive (HSE), the Local Authority and An Garda Síochána) a *Major Accidents External Emergency Plan*.

Emergency Plans must take full account of objectives established for nearby waters in river basin plans. The legislation deals with the prevention of major accidents. 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.

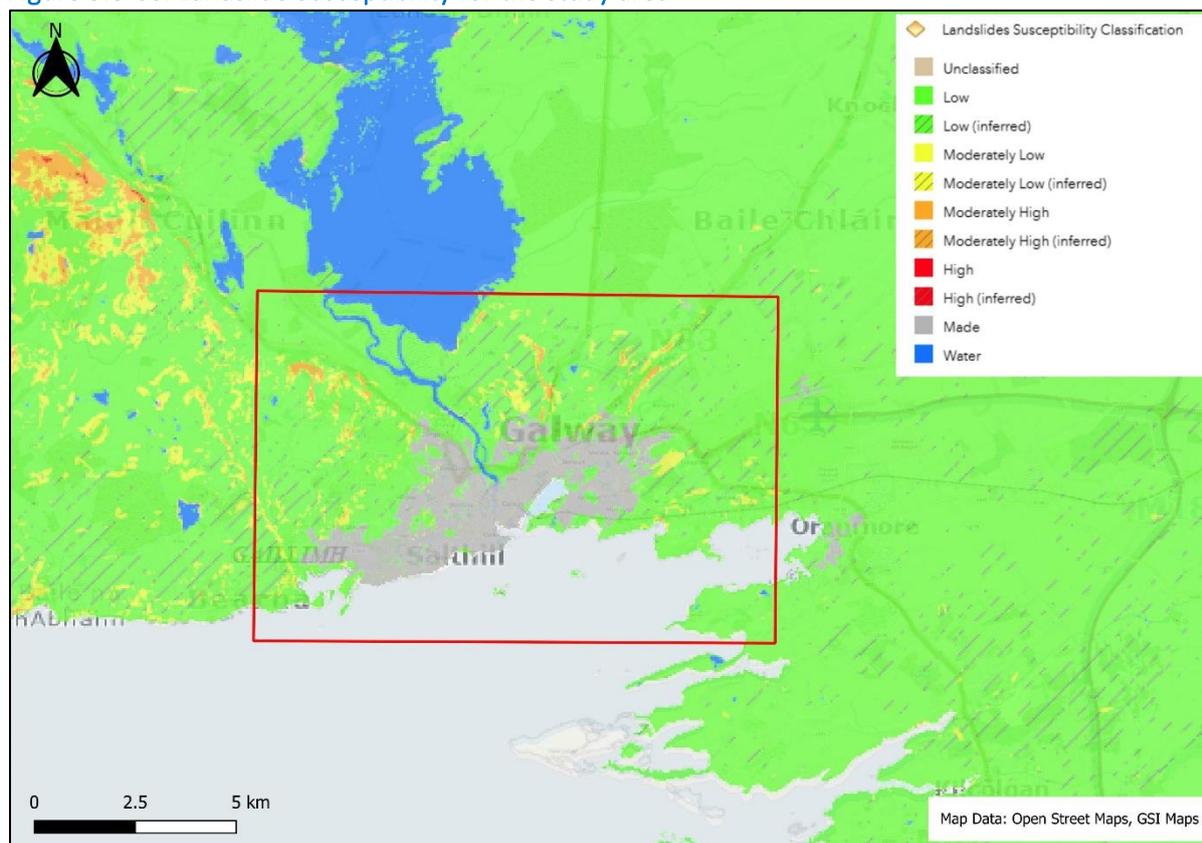
The Councils will consult with the Health & Safety Authority when assessing proposals for development of, in or near sites which are identified under the COMAH (Seveso II) Directive.

²¹ EPA Maps - <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>

Landslides

The study area has a low landslide risk as much of the county is low-lying ground. 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. Refer to **Figure 5.8**. There are no previously recorded landslide events within the study area.

Figure 5.8 GSI Landslide Susceptibility for the study area²²



5.3.3.3 Geology

Geological Heritage

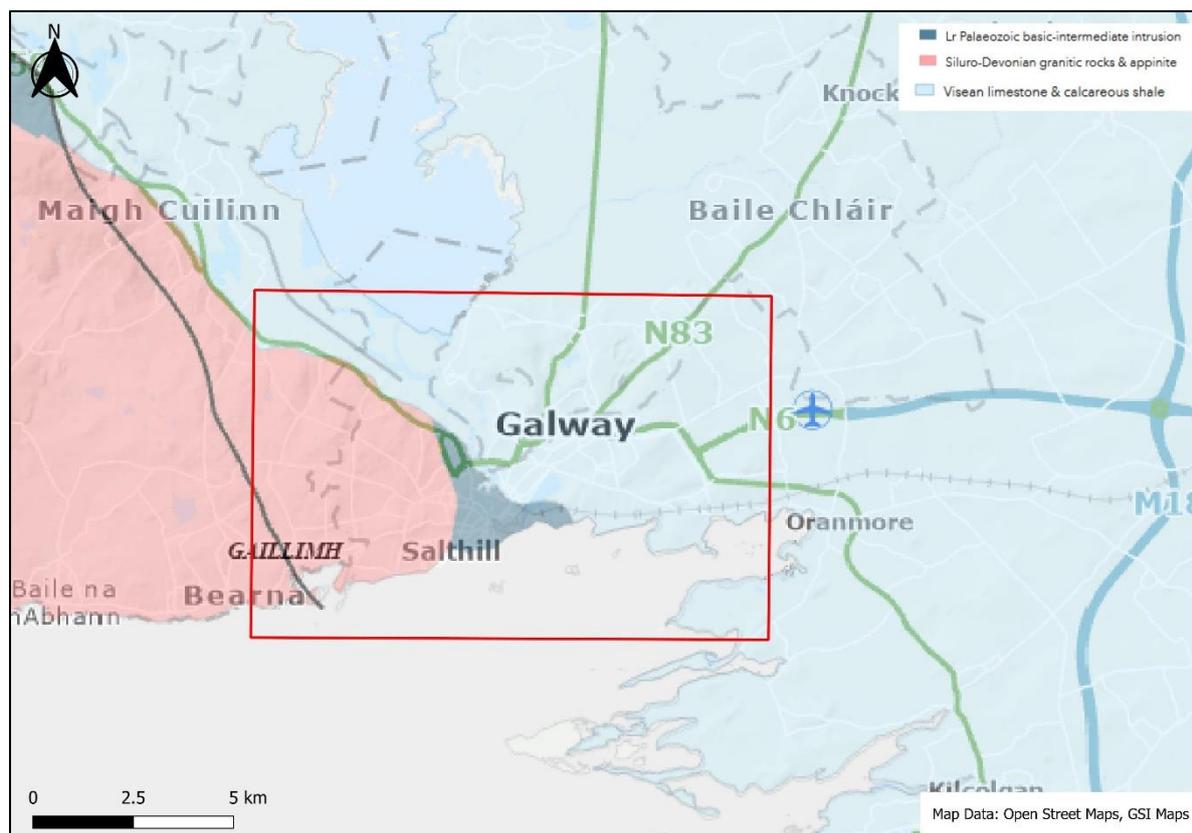
The *Geological Survey of Ireland* (GSI) provides information available on bedrock, subsoil, aquifer classifications and vulnerability. GSI has assessed the geological heritage of the study area and identified sites of geological and geomorphological importance. The bedrock foundation, with hundreds of millions of years in the formation and shaping, and the more recent history of geomorphological processes involving river channels and glaciers are what have created the underlying geological diversity, or geodiversity. The study area has a range of such natural and man-made sites.

The study area is underlain by three types of rock formations²³ and includes Visean limestone and calcareous shale, Palaeozoic basic-intermediate intrusion and Siluro-Devonian granitic rocks & appinite as shown in **Figure 5.9** below.

²² GSI Spatial Resources - <https://dcnr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=a30af518e87a4c0ab2fbde2aaac3c228>

²³ GSI Bedrock Geology - <https://www.gsi.ie/en-ie/publications/Pages/Bedrock-Geology-of-Ireland-Map-Scale-1-to-1-Million.aspx>

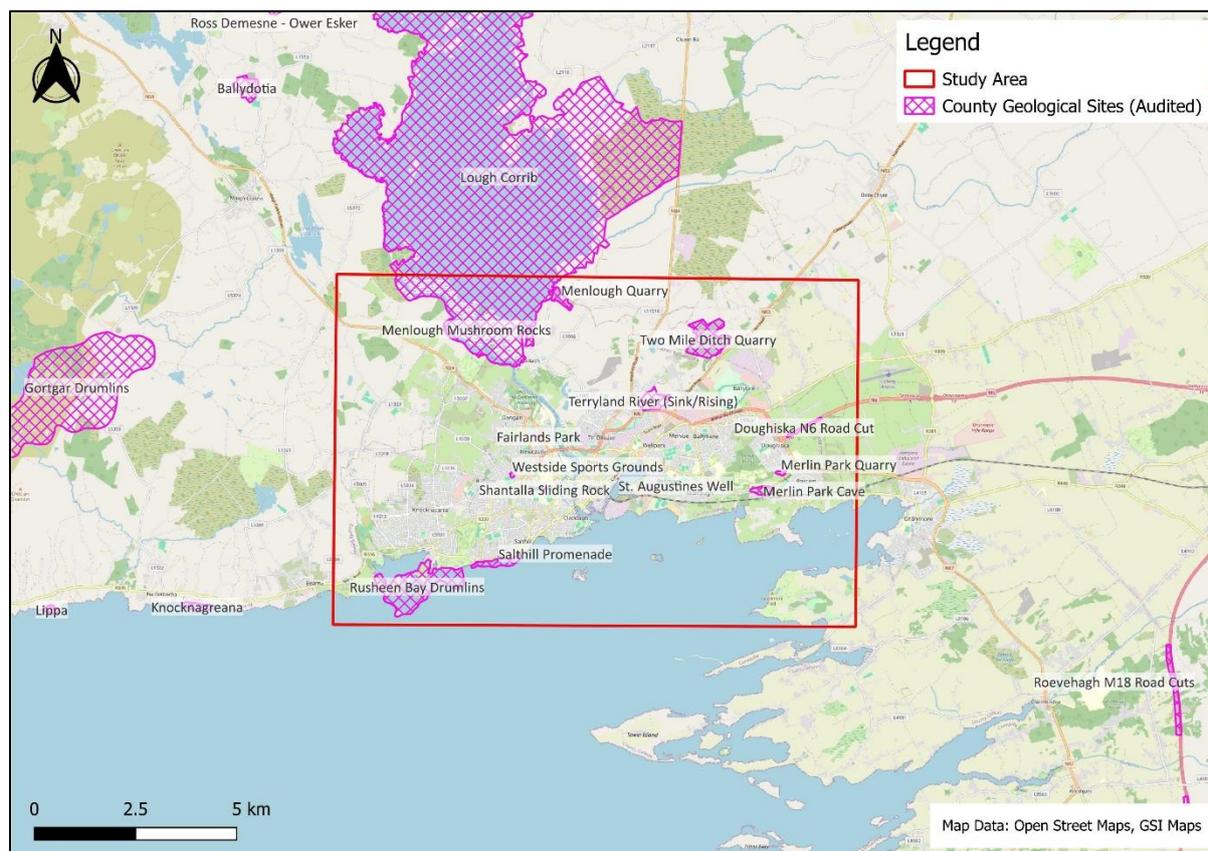
Figure 5.9 GSI Bedrock Geology (1 Million) for the study area²⁴



The identified geological sites within the study area which are important Irish Geological Heritage (IGH) sites are shown below in **Figure 5.10**. Geological Sites do not receive statutory protection like Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) but receive an effective protection from their inclusion in the planning system. The geological heritage sites within the study area include – Lough Corrib (GY093), Menlough Quarry (GC004), Menlough Mushroom Rocks (GC003), Two Mile Ditch Quarry (GY132), Terryland River (Sink/Rising) (GC011), Fairlands Park (GC002), Westside Sports Grounds (IGH11), Shantalla Sliding Rock (GC009), St. Augustines Well (GC010), Salthill Promenade (GC008), Rusheen Bay Drumlins (GC007), Merlin Park Cave (GC005), Merline Park Quarry (GC006), Doughiska N6 Road Cut (GC001).

²⁴ GSI Spatial Resources - <https://dcnr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=a30af518e87a4c0ab2fbde2aac3c228>

Figure 5.10 Geological Heritage Sites in the study area²⁵



5.3.3.4 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 CO₂ 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, see Figure 5.10.

5.3.4 Water Quality

Water is fundamental to all life; for humans, plants and animals alike. It is also critical in economic terms in generating and sustaining wealth in a number of key areas such as agriculture, fishing, power generation, industry, transport and tourism. However, it is also a fragile resource requiring continued protection. In general terms Ireland's waters are of good quality, however, preserving the high standard of water is essential for human health and the natural environment.

For the purposes of this section, the water environment is taken to include natural features such as lakes, rivers, streams and groundwater waterbodies. In addition flooding is also dealt within this section. The study area has a rich and extensive aquatic environment consisting of rivers, streams, harbour and ground waters.

²⁵ GSI – The Geological Heritage of the study area -

<https://dcenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=a30af518e87a4c0ab2fbde2aaac3c228>

Wastewater treatment and drinking water are discussed under Material Assets in **Section 5.3.6** below.

5.3.4.1 Water Framework Directive (WFD)

The *EU Water Framework Directive* (WFD) (2000/60/EC) establishes a framework for the protection of both surface water and groundwater waterbodies. Since 2000, Water Management in the EU has been directed by the WFD 2000/60/EC, which was transposed into Irish law under the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (S.I. No. 722 of 2003). This legislation requires governments to take a holistic approach to managing all their water resources based on natural geographic boundaries, *i.e.* the river catchment or basin. The WFD establishes a common framework for the sustainable and integrated management of all waters covering groundwater, inland surface waters, transitional waters and coastal waters. The WFD requires Member States to manage all of their waters and ensure that they achieve at least '*good status*' by 2015 and beyond. The ultimate deadline for Member States for achievement of '*good*' status is 2027 at the latest.

5.3.4.2 Surface Waterbodies

For the purpose of implementing the WFD, Ireland was divided into eight River Basin Districts (RBDs) or areas of land that are drained by a large river or number of rivers and the adjacent estuarine / coastal areas. The first cycle of the River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) ran from 2009-2015, where the eight RBDs devised separate plans with the objective of achieving at least '*good*' status for all waters by 2015.

The second cycle of the RBMP 2018-2021 merged all eight RBDs to form one national RBD. The RBMP sets out the actions that Ireland will take to improve water quality and achieve '*good*' ecological status in waterbodies (rivers, lakes, estuaries and coastal waters) by 2027. The third cycle of the RBMP 2022-2027 has been prepared by Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) in line with the *EU Water Framework Directive* (WFD) (2000/60/EC). The Water Action Plan 2024 is Ireland's third River Basin Management Plan and it outlines the measures the Government and other sectors are taking to improve water quality in Ireland's groundwater, rivers, lakes, estuarine and coastal waters, and provide sustainable management of the water resources.

Water quality data is also collected by the EPA to provide an overall status of water quality. 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.

Water quality in Ireland has deteriorated over the past two decades. Overall, the water quality is declining and the number of water bodies in satisfactory condition (high or good status) across rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal waters and groundwaters has decreased under the last WFD monitoring cycle 2016-2021 as compared to the previous assessment which covered the period 2013-2018.

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

5.3.4.3 Surface Water Quality

The latest *Water Quality in Ireland* report 2016-2021 was published by the EPA in 2022. This report contains the most up-to-date and comprehensive assessment of the ecological health of Ireland's groundwater, rivers, lakes, canals, transitional waters and coastal waters following the completion of

the first six-year cycle of the WFD. The results shows that a considerable amount of work is still required to meet the environmental objectives of the WFD.

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

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

The status of the **river waterbodies** in the study area range from ‘poor’ to ‘good’. The WFD water quality status of the river waterbodies within the study area is shown in **Figure 5.11** below.

Figure 5.11 WFD River Waterbody Status 2016-2021²⁶



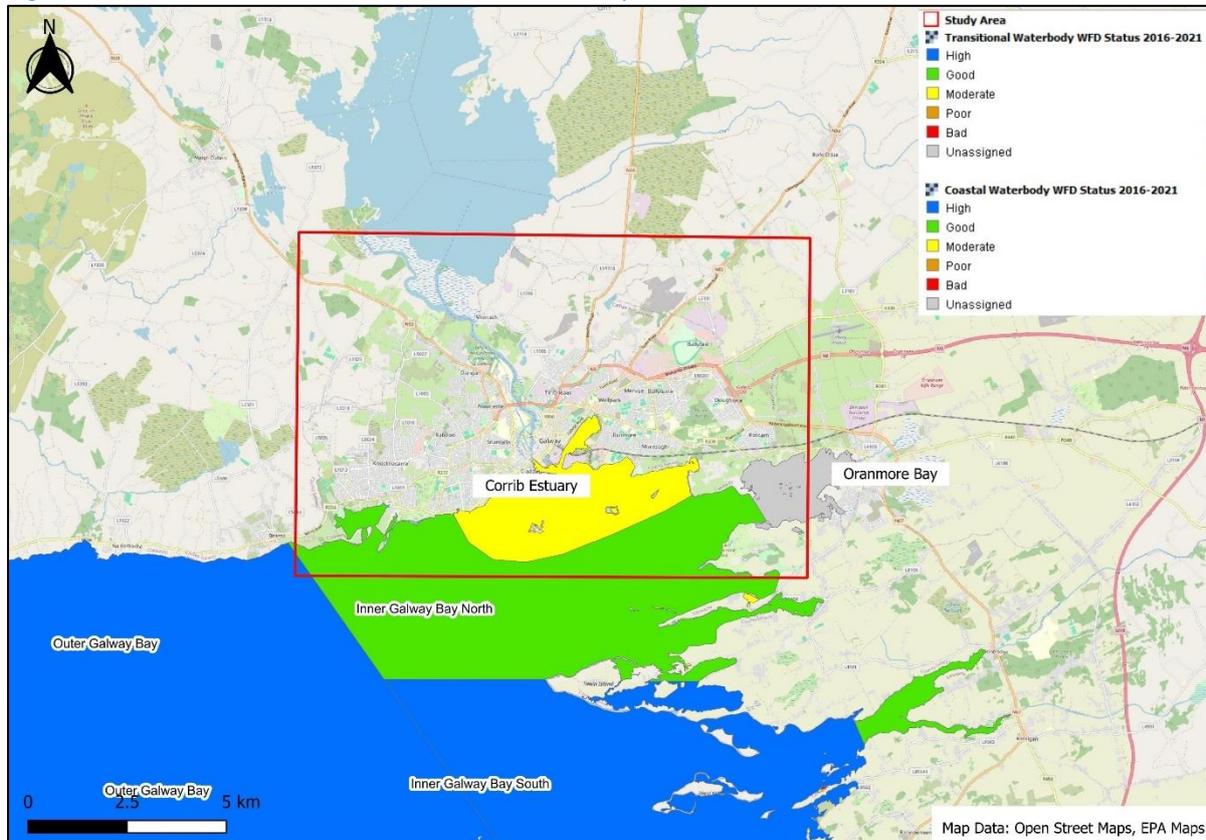
The status of the **lake waterbodies** within the study area have ‘Good’ status and includes Menlough (IE_WE_30_290 – Good) and Corrib Lower (IE_WE_30_666a – Good).

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).

²⁶ EPA Water Quality Data - <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>

The **transitional WFD waterbodies** within the study area includes Corrib Estuary (IE_WE_170_0700) which has a 'Moderate' Status (2016-2021) and Oranmore Bay (IE_WE_170_0500) the status for which is 'Unassigned'. Refer to **Figure 5.12** below.

Figure 5.12 WFD Transitional and Coastal Waterbody Status 2016-2021²⁷



5.3.4.4 Groundwater and Aquifer Vulnerability

The *EU Groundwater Directive* (2006/118/EC) uses a holistic approach to groundwater by addressing the relationships between groundwater, surface water and ecological receptors.

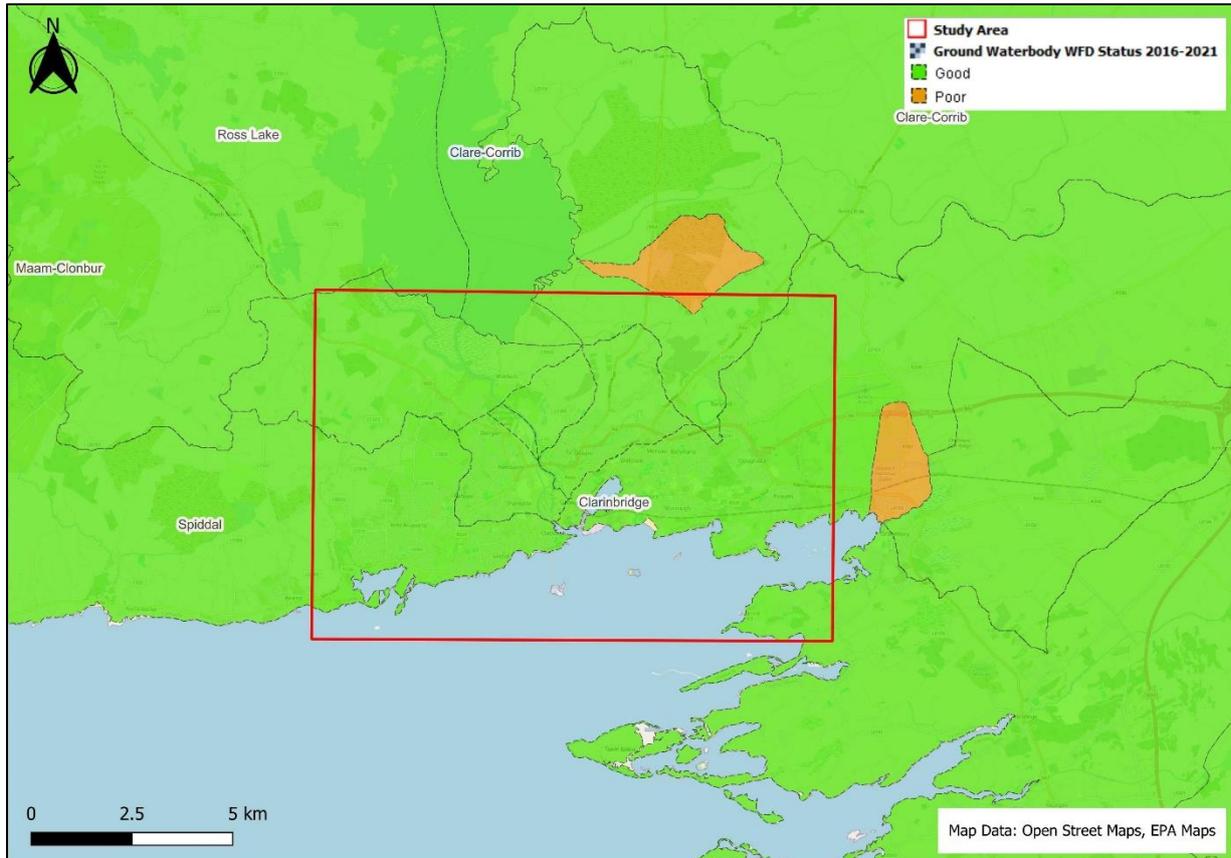
Groundwater Quality Status between 2016 and 2021 was generally 'good'²⁸ across the groundwater bodies within the study area with the exception of Waste Facility (W0013-01) (IE_WE_G_0084 - Poor) to the north and Industrial Facility (P0056-01) (IE_WE_G_0117 – Poor), c. 1km to the east of the study area. Refer to **Figure 5.13** below.

The groundwater vulnerability within the study area ranges from 'moderate' to 'extreme'. The groundwater vulnerability within the study area is shown in **Figure 5.14** below.

²⁷ EPA Water Quality Data - <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>

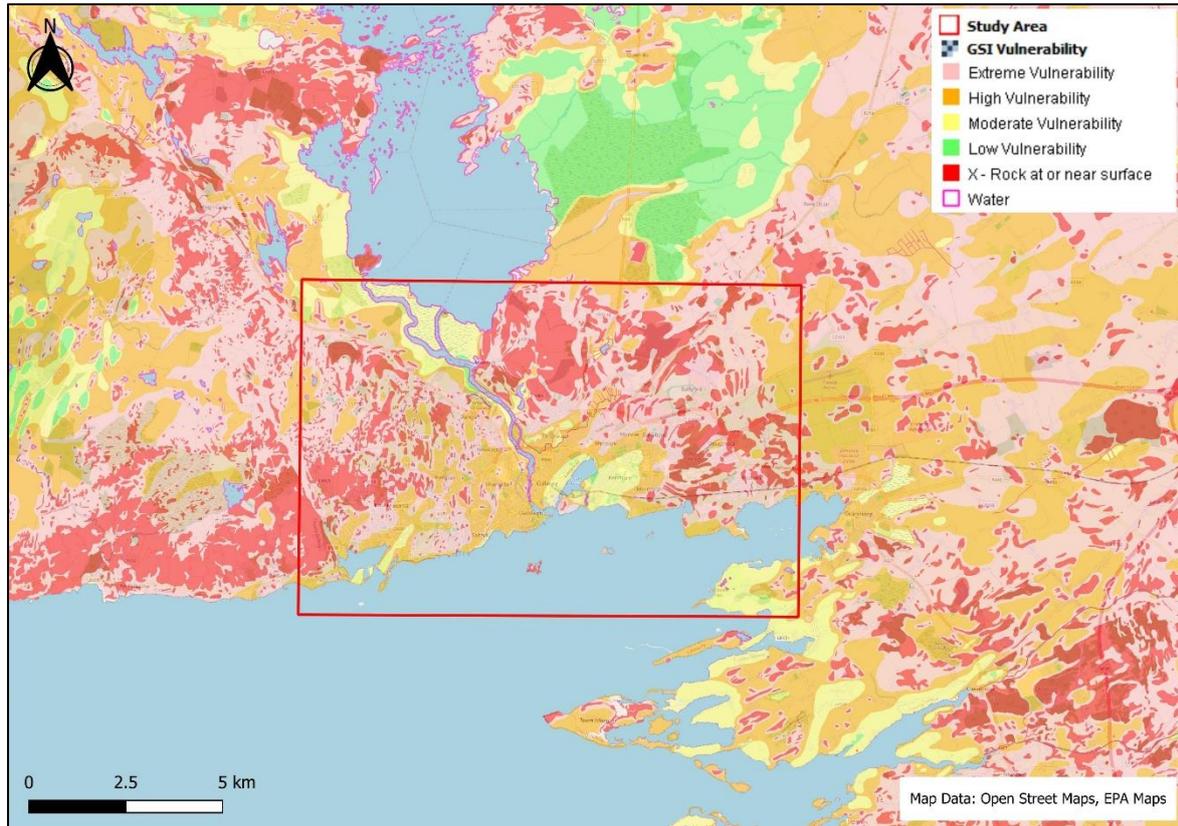
²⁸ EPA Groundwater Quality Data - <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>

Figure 5.13 WFD Groundwater Waterbody Status 2016-2021²⁹



²⁹ <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>

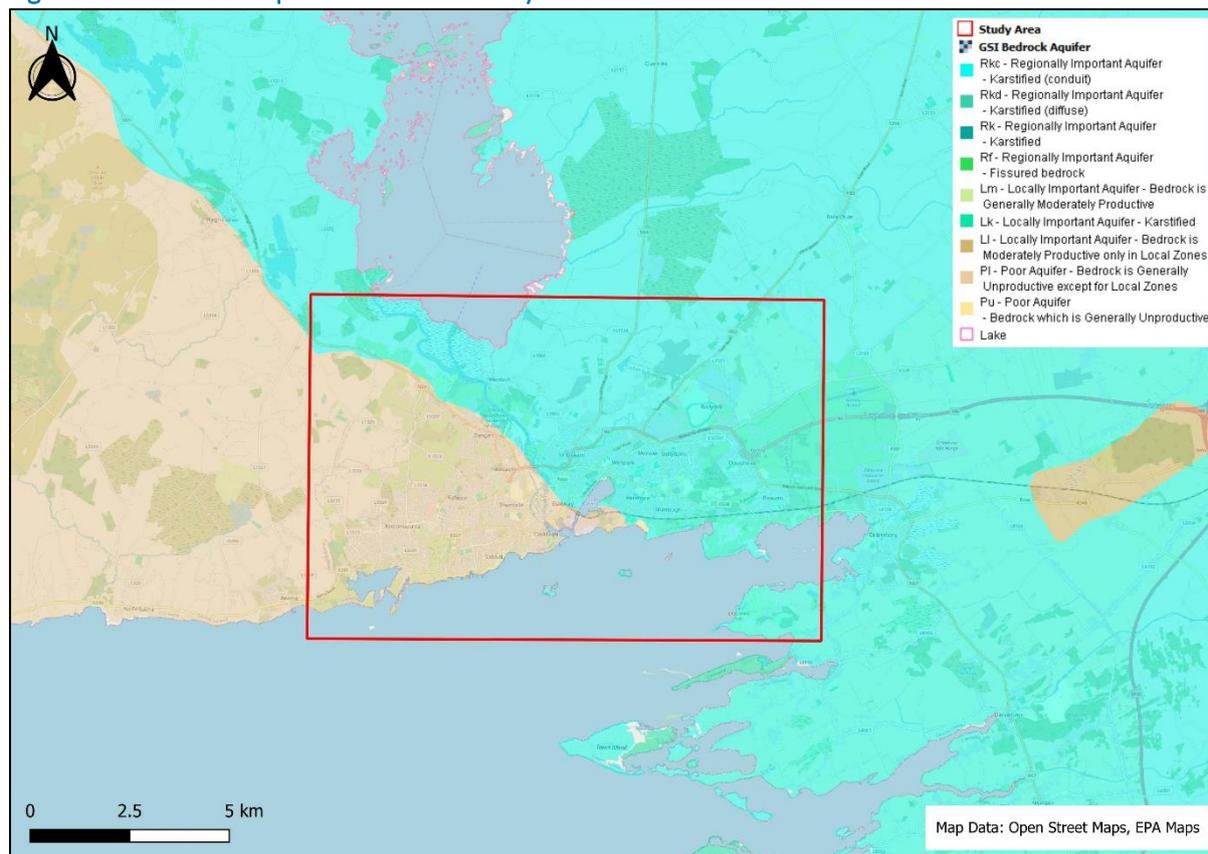
Figure 5.14 Groundwater Vulnerability in the study area³⁰



The GSI rates aquifers according to both their productivity and vulnerability to pollution. Aquifer vulnerability is the ease with which pollutants of various kinds can enter underground water. The study area is underlain with regionally important and poor bedrock aquifer. There are no gravel aquifers in the study area. Refer to **Figure 5.15**.

³⁰ GSI Spatial Resources- <https://dcenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=a30af518e87a4c0ab2fbde2aac3c228>

Figure 5.15 Bedrock Aquifer within the study area³¹



5.3.4.5 Flooding and Flood Risk

The underlying causes of flooding, heavy rain and high sea levels are, essentially uncontrollable. Floods are usually caused by a combination of events including overflowing river banks, heavy rains, coastal storms or blocked or overloaded drainage systems and an increase in development and impermeable surfacing.

The Office of Public Works (OPW) is the lead State body for flood risk management. As part of the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 and Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has been prepared.

In addition to this there is modelled Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment and Flood Risk and Hazard mapping available from the OPW including through the National Catchment Flood Risk Management Programme. These mapping sources identify flood risk from various sources, including fluvial, pluvial, coastal and groundwater.

In 2011 the OPW completed a national Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA), carried out under the EU Floods Directive, which identified areas of potentially significant flood risk. Subsequent to this, the OPW undertook the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management study (CFRAMs) which established a long term strategy and measures for the management of flood risk in the city and wider Corrib catchment. It concluded that a flood relief scheme would be a viable and effective option to protect the city against fluvial and tidal flood risk, to provide for future resilience, and to enable the city to develop in a sustainable way.

³¹ GSI Spatial Resources- <https://dcnr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=a30af518e87a4c0ab2fbde2aac3c228>

Any proposal that is considered acceptable in principle shall demonstrate the use of the sequential approach in terms of the site layout and design and, in satisfying the Justification Test (where required), the proposal will demonstrate that appropriate mitigation and management measures are put in place.

5.3.4.6 Existing Hydrogeology and Water Quality Issues

The principal threat to water is pollution which can adversely impact on all parts of the water cycle from groundwater to rivers, lakes, estuaries and coastal waters. 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

5.3.5.1 Air Quality

Air quality legislation³² in Ireland highlights the need 'to avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole'. In addition, it requires that Local Authorities where appropriate 'shall preserve through appropriate measures the best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development'.

EU legislation on air quality requires that Member States divide their territory into zones for the assessment and management of air quality. The EPA manages the national ambient air quality monitoring network and measures the levels of a number of atmospheric pollutants. The current trends in air quality in Ireland are reported in the EPA publication 'Air Quality in Ireland Report 2023' which is currently the most up to date analysis of air quality data for Ireland. Four national air quality zones have been designated in Ireland, these are:

- Zone A is the Dublin conurbation;
- Zone B is the Cork conurbation;
- Zone C comprises of 24 large towns in Ireland (including Galway); and

³² S.I. No. 739/2022 – Ambient Air Quality Standards Regulations 2022 - <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2022/si/739/made/en/print>

- Zone D (Rural Ireland) is the remaining area of 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 Rahoon, Galway and Briarhill.

The air quality index for health (AQIH) regions are calculated on an hourly basis at various locations around Ireland. The AQIH is based on measurements of air pollutants which can harm health. The five pollutants are:

- Ozone gas;
- Nitrogen dioxide gas;
- Sulphur dioxide gas;
- PM_{2.5} particles; and
- PM₁₀ particles.

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 (NO₂). 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.

5.3.5.2 Noise

The objectives of EU and Irish noise legislation is 'to avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole', and this includes noise nuisance. The Noise Directive - Environmental Noise Directive (END) 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise - is part of an EU strategy setting out to reduce the number of people affected by noise in the longer term and to provide a framework for developing existing community policy on noise reduction from source. The Directive requires competent authorities in Member States to:

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

The Directive does not set any limit value, nor does it prescribe the measures to be used in the action plans, which remain at the discretion of the competent authorities. 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 strategic noise maps are generated using noise modelling, which are the product of assimilating a collection of digital datasets. Strategic noise maps are available on the EPA website for Round 4 (2022), representing the annual average situation during 2021. The strategic noise maps include noise exposure levels for major roads, major rail, major airports and major cities and are available at EPA website³³.

³³ EPA Noise Maps - <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>

During the implementation of the GCDEDP, consideration should be given to protect, where relevant, any designated quiet areas in open country.

5.3.5.3 Climate

Climate Change is a phenomenon that has widespread economic, health and safety, food production, security, and other dimensions. Climate change refers to a long term, large scale change in global or regional climate patterns. In recent years, global temperatures have been rising. Urgent action is needed to address climate change and to move Ireland towards a low carbon, climate resilient economy and society.

The ever increasing rate of carbon dioxide combustion, and the emission of other greenhouse gases (GHG) such as methane and nitrous oxide since the industrial revolution, has resulted in the 'greenhouse affect'. Most greenhouse gases emissions are related to the energy generation, transport, agriculture, and industry sectors.

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*³⁴.

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 tourism³⁸.

The first Climate Action Plan (CAP) was published by the Irish Government in June 2019 (Government of Ireland, 2019). The Climate Action Plan 2019 outlined the current status across key sectors including Electricity, Transport, Built Environment, Industry and Agriculture and outlined the various broadscale measures required for each sector to achieve ambitious decarbonisation targets. The 2019 CAP also detailed the required governance arrangements for implementation including carbon-proofing of policies, establishment of carbon budgets, a strengthened Climate Change Advisory Council and greater accountability to the Oireachtas. The fifth and most recent climate action plan, CAP25, was published in April 2025 (Government of Ireland, 2025).

In 2024, the Government published its *Long-Term Strategy on Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions* (DECC, 2024). This strategy provides a long-term plan on how Ireland will transition towards net carbon zero by 2050, achieving the interim targets set out in the CAP.

In December 2023, CAP24 was published, establishing key actions to deliver a 51% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030 (compared to 2018 levels) and achieve climate neutrality by 2050 (DECC, 2023a). The updated and current CAP25, published in April 2025, builds on the progress of the previous four iterations of the CAP, with CAP23 first publishing carbon budgets and sectoral emission ceilings. It also reaffirms Ireland's climate ambition, with a focus on delivery, implementation and measurable

³⁴ Climate Action Plan 2023 – <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/270956/94a5673c-163c-476a-921f-7399cdf3c8f5.pdf#page=null>

outcomes, particularly ahead of the second carbon budget period (2026–2030). 2025 is the last year in the first 5-year carbon budget period. During the initial 5-year budget period the average annual reduction required was 4.8%, this increases to 8.3% in the second budget period (2026-2030). CAP25 retains the high-impact sectors where the biggest savings can be achieved, while emphasising public sector leadership and green procurement. These sectors include renewable energy, energy efficiency of buildings, transport, sustainable farming, sustainable business and land-use change.

CAP25 also includes targeted actions to decarbonise industrial heat and support the transition to carbon-neutral manufacturing processes. Public sector leadership is strengthened through a new Buying Greener: Green Public Procurement Strategy and Action Plan (2024–2027), the development of mandatory Climate Action Roadmaps, and enhanced emissions monitoring and reporting across government operations. To support innovation and ensure future economic resilience, IDA Ireland continues to attract and support businesses investing in climate technologies and low-carbon solutions.

CAP25 highlights a significant 17% reduction in electricity emissions in early 2024, with wind power supplying nearly 40% of Ireland's total electricity demand and over 100,000 rooftop microgenerators connected to the grid. Investments are ongoing in grid reinforcement, offshore wind development, and interconnectors with France and the UK to enhance renewable generation capacity.

CAP25 also reinforces targets first outlined in CAP24 to reduce the embodied carbon of construction materials, with a 10% reduction by 2025 and 30% reduction by 2030 for materials produced and used in Ireland. Cement and high embodied carbon construction materials can be reduced through product substitution, reduced clinker content in cement and uptake of low-carbon construction methods, including those outlined in the Construction Industry Federation 2021 report *Modern Methods of Construction* (Construction Industry Federation, 2021). There also remains scope for the construction industry to use more timber in construction. In 2022, 24% of new construction in Ireland was built using timber frames to satisfy the demand for housing. Public bodies are now required under the Public Sector Mandate to use best practice project design to reduce embodied carbon; procure concretes with clinker replacements (lower carbon); and require that large construction projects produce a whole life cycle GHG emissions assessment.

Furthermore, CAP25 advances sector-specific measures in green procurement, electrification of transport and heat, and just transition (with the introduction of a Just Transition Commission) to support vulnerable communities. Transport emissions increased by 0.3%. Electric vehicles and the use of biofuels are stated as the best means of transport emission reductions in the medium term.

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.

Future changes in climate and associated impacts on sea level, rainfall patterns/intensity and river flow will influence flooding frequency and extent in the future. Local Authorities in compliance with the *Regional Planning Guidelines* are attempting to adopt sustainable flood risk strategies in areas likely to be at risk of flooding in the future in the context of climate change and changing weather patterns. Changes to climate could lead to an increase in flooding events in Ireland. The OPW has undertaken a number of *Flood Risk Management Studies* for different River Basin Districts (RBDs) in Ireland. These studies have identified the areas which are most at risk and future management plans have been advised; these are adopted by the OPW. In some cases, mitigation measures will involve the construction of physical flood defences.

5.3.5.4 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 NO₂, particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM₁₀), 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 towns 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

Material assets are resources that are valued and intrinsic to a development and the surrounding area. Material assets may be of either natural or human origin and the value may arise for economic or cultural reasons. Material assets include water supply, wastewater treatment infrastructure, waste disposal including recycling, transport infrastructure, energy, telecommunications and utilities infrastructure. The sustainable growth of the County is dependent on the provision of services and infrastructure.

5.3.6.1 Water Services and Water Supply

There have been significant changes in responsibilities for water supply and wastewater treatment services. As of January 2014 Uisce Éireann (formerly known as Irish Water) replaced local authorities as a single provider of water supply and wastewater services. Uisce Éireann have prepared the Water Services Strategic Plan (WSSP), '*A Plan for the Future of Water Services*' and it provides for the first time at national level an opportunity to consider the way water services are delivered in Ireland. The WSSP sets out strategic objectives for the delivery of water services up to 2040.

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*³⁵ 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

³⁵ 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>

water, thus facilitating additional development and improving the level of service to existing consumers in the study area through the existing watermain networks.

5.3.6.2 Wastewater Services

The Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC) (amended by Directive 98/15/EEC) aims to protect the environment from the adverse effects of wastewater discharges by ensuring that wastewater is appropriately treated before it is discharged to the environment. Such treatment is essential in order to meet the requirements of the WFD.

The Galway City wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) (Mutton Island D0050-01) is located in the study area³⁶. 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.

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*³⁷.

5.3.6.3 Waste Management

Waste management in Ireland is regulated by the Waste Management Acts 1996 (as amended), which require Local Authorities to prepare detailed plans for the management of waste. Under the Waste Management Acts, a Development Plan is deemed to include the objectives of the Waste Management Plan (WMP) for its area.

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 Economy³⁸ was published in 2020 and outlines Ireland's National Waste Policy for 2020-2025.

The Council will continue to promote awareness of and promote an increase in the amount of waste that is re-used and recycled to reflect the objectives of the waste hierarchy.

³⁶ UWW Plant Locations - <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>

³⁷ EPA, 2010: <https://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/water/wastewater/code%20of%20practice%20for%20single%20houses/>

³⁸ DCCA (2020).

5.3.6.4 Transport

The maintenance and delivery of an efficient, integrated and coherent transport network in line with national and regional policy is essential to the future economic, social and physical development of the County. Land-use planning and transport planning are inextricably linked and their proper integration is a key determinant to sustainable development. The Council's transport policy relates to active travel, road transport (including public transport) and rail transport as well as freight, ports and airport.

'National Sustainable Mobility Policy Action Plan 2022-2025' is a national document which seeks to achieve a shift to more sustainable means of transport by setting actions and timeline for Modal Change. This policy sets out 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.

The Policy aims to improve the delivery of sustainable mobility by –

- *Implementing the accompanying action plan to 2025 and a reviewed and updated action plan for 2026 to 2030.*
- *Establishing a Leadership Group to oversee and drive implementation of the Policy and delivery of the action plan, and agree a programme of "pathfinder" projects at local level.*
- *Introducing a new annual National Household Travel Survey to measure progress against the Policy's targets.*
- *Convening a new National Sustainable Mobility Forum to provide a platform for collaborative engagement with national, regional and local stakeholders.*
- *Increasing public engagement around the benefits of sustainable mobility and raising awareness of the availability of alternative options to the private car.*
- *Establishing a new National Transport Authority Advisory Council to engage with the NTA around the discharge of its functions.*
- *Developing a transport research network to support existing research programmes and draw on the sustainable mobility expertise available across academia and industry, both in Ireland and internationally.*

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.

It is Council policy to support cycle and walking tourism initiatives, in tandem with the development of greenways and blueways in the study area as detailed in the CDPs.

5.3.6.5 Telecommunications

High-speed broadband and telecommunications is core to competitiveness. The National Broadband Plan 2019³⁹ (NBP) sets out the strategy to deliver high speed broadband throughout Ireland. Ireland has made significant progress in recent years in terms of broadband connectivity at all levels: international connectivity, backhaul networks, Metropolitan Area Networks (MANs) and local access networks. Since its publication, significant investment has been made in upgrading and modernising networks which support the provision of broadband and telecommunications services, with significant additional investment expected over the coming years. The *'Harnessing Digital – The Digital Ireland Framework'* (2022) is intended to assist Ireland in maximising the socio-economic benefits from the digitisation trend.

5.3.6.6 Utilities

Gas and electricity are the energy utilities which have traditionally supported homes and businesses across the Country.

ESB Networks and EirGrid are the utility providers responsible for the electricity distribution and transmission systems. EirGrid manages the higher capacity electricity network which supplies power to industry and businesses that use large amounts of energy and electricity, whilst the ESB manages and operates the distribution network supplying electricity to homes, businesses, schools and institutions.

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

Public lighting is an important component of placemaking and is essential for the operation of the city. While the city is generally an illuminated area, excessive light pollution can arise when external lighting is not properly designed or managed. Insensitive lighting can cause light pollution. Light pollution can have a negative impact on biodiversity by affecting the normal diurnal patterns of plants and animals.

5.3.6.7 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:

- 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.

³⁹ DCCAE, 2019: <https://www.dccae.gov.ie/documents/Delivering%20the%20National%20Broadband%20Plan.pdf>

- 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 physical traces left in the landscape by previous generations in archaeological monuments and sites and in historic buildings, townscapes and vernacular structures forms part of the tangible cultural heritage linking the past and present. The study area has a rich and varied built and cultural heritage resource. Archaeological sites and many other buildings and structures such as houses, shops, churches, bridges and mills are features of the study area's built 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. Galway has a rich archaeological heritage, which extends from the mesolithic, medieval and post-medieval periods and includes considerable industrial archaeology.

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.

An archaeological landscape is a natural landscape that has been deliberately modified by a group (or groups) of people during a particular archaeological period (or periods).

The term architectural heritage is defined in the *Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments Act 1999* as meaning all structures and buildings together with their settings and attendant grounds, fixtures and fittings; groups of structures and buildings; and, sites which are of technical, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social, or technical interest.

In 2019, the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht published the *Built & Archaeological Heritage Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan* (Prepared under the National Adaptation Framework). The adaptation strategy and accompanying action plan presented in the document aim to:

- Build adaptive capacity within the sector
- Reduce the vulnerability of built and archaeological heritage to climate change
- Identify and capitalise on the various potential opportunities for the sector

A *Protected Structure*, unless otherwise stated in the RPS, includes:

- the interior of the structure;
- the land lying within its curtilage;
- any other structures within the curtilage, and their interiors; and
- all fixtures and features which form part of the interior or exterior of any of these structures.

Owners or occupiers of a protected structure may request the Council to issue a declaration as to the type of works, which may or may not be permitted in their structure. The record of protected structures within the study area are presented in **Figure 5.16** and **Figure 5.17** below.

An architectural conservation area (ACA) is a place, area, group of structures or townscape, taking account of building lines and heights, that is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or that contributes to the appreciation of a protected

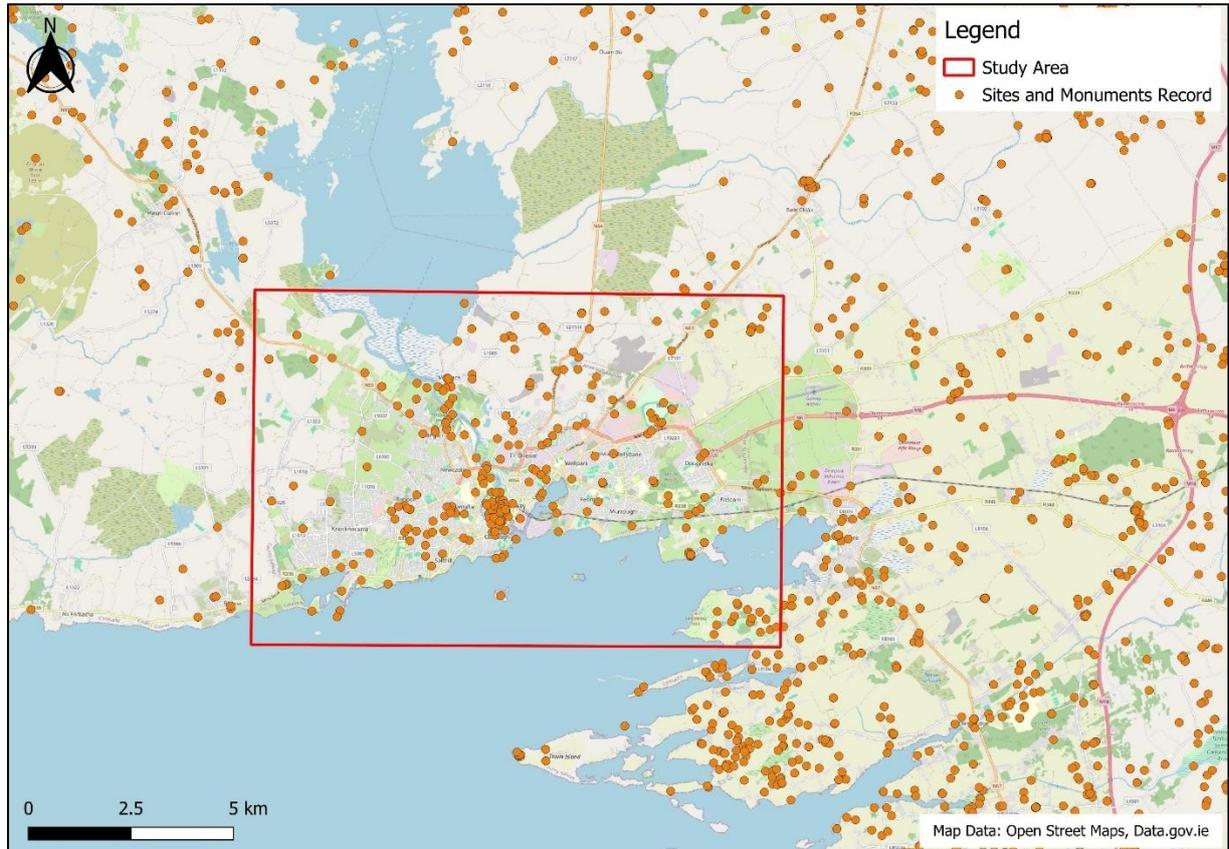
Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

structure, and whose character it is an objective of the development plan to preserve. Galway has 11 ACAs and include – the City Core, Lower Dominick Street, The Crescent/Sea Road, The Long Walk, St. Nicholas Street, St. Mary’s Terrace, Number 1-6 Dock Road, Eyre Square, Number 11-18 University Road, Number 7-14 Presentation Road, Number 34-38 St. Mary’s Road,

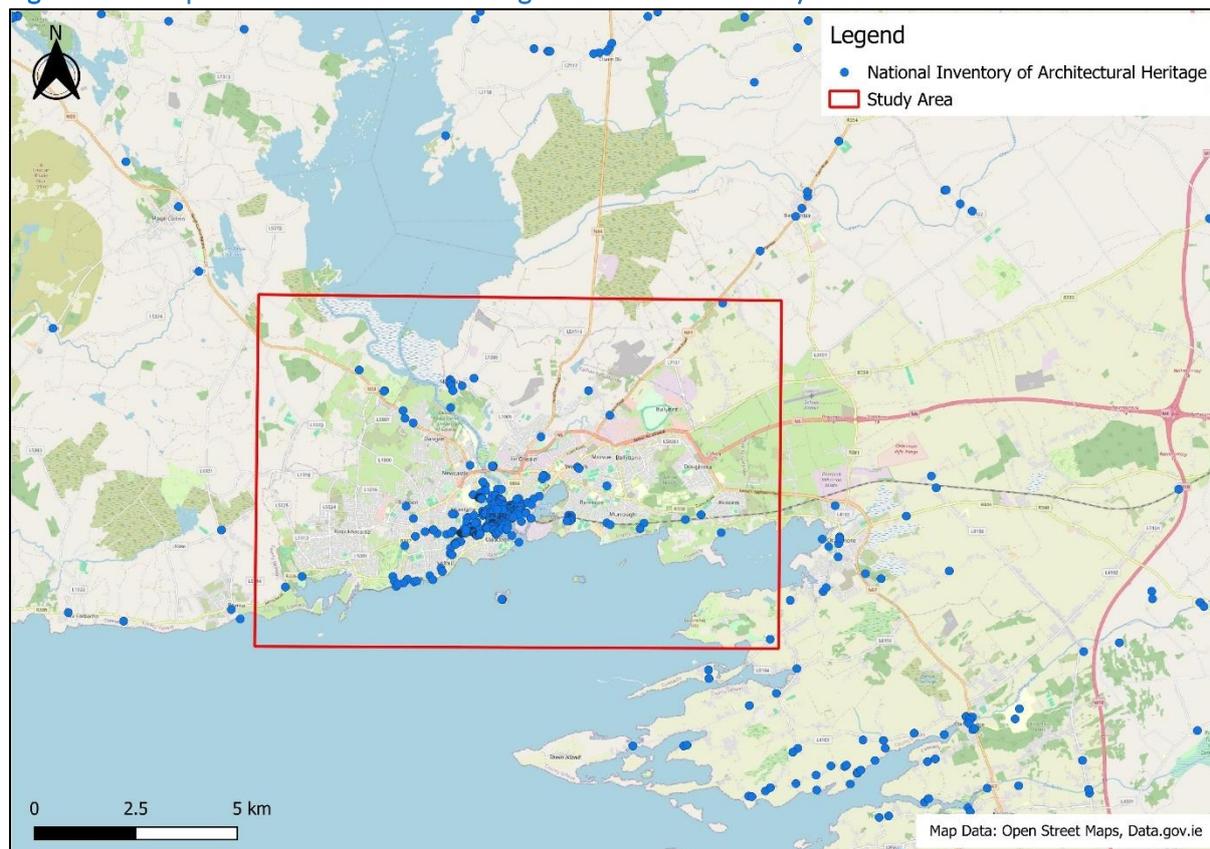
A positive approach to heritage management enhances quality of life and environmental sustainability and ensures that the cultural and natural heritage is a resource that helps the study area to compete as a cultural tourism destination.

Figure 5.16 Map of the Sites and Monuments Record within the study area⁴⁰



⁴⁰ National Monuments Service – Archaeological Survey of Ireland - <https://data.gov.ie/dataset/national-monuments-service-archaeological-survey-of-ireland>

Figure 5.17 Map of the Architectural Heritage Sites within the study area⁴¹



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.

⁴¹ National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) National Dataset - <https://data.gov.ie/dataset/national-inventory-of-architectural-heritage-niah-national-dataset>

5.3.8 Landscape & Visual

Landscape is defined as an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and / or human factors (European Landscape Convention). Landscapes provide a sense of place and characterise the county for local residents and visitors alike both in terms of a place to live and also for recreational and tourism purposes.

A National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025⁴² 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.

5.3.8.1 Landscape Character Assessment (LCA)

Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) is a process that describes maps and classifies landscapes. Landscape character is defined as '*a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse*'. Defining landscape character enables an understanding to be formed of the inherent value and importance of individual landscape elements and the processes that may alter landscape character in the future. The cultural and ecological aspects of the landscape cannot be divorced from its physical and visual characteristics so all of these elements are considered. Galway County Council has prepared a Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) for the county.

Seascape Assessment is an extension of landscape character assessment and with 1,100km of coastline; seascape is a crucial element of the study areas' history, identity and culture. A number of changes have been occurring along coastlines including the need for coastal protection works, upgrading and proposals for new ports, marinas, proposals for aquaculture schemes and investigation of wind energy and other renewable energy projects offshore.

5.3.8.2 Landscape Character Types

Landscape Character Types (LCT) are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogenous in character and are generic in nature in that they may occur in different localities throughout the country. Nonetheless, where they do occur, they commonly share similar combinations of geology, topography, land cover and historical land use, *e.g.* Hills and Upland Areas.

Landscape Character Areas are units of the landscape that are geographically specific and have their own character and sense of place. Each has its own distinctive character, based upon patterns of geology, landform, landuse, cultural, historical and ecological features.

5.3.8.3 Landscape Character Values

Landscape values can be described as the environmental or cultural benefits (including services and functions) derived from various landscape attributes. The Landscape Character Assessment highlights the special landscape value of several of the Landscape Character Areas. Areas of High Landscape Value display an intrinsic landscape character and a special amenity value.

Within these High Value Landscapes considerable care will be needed to successfully locate large scale developments without them becoming unduly obtrusive. Therefore, the location, siting and design of large-scale developments within these areas will need careful consideration and any such

⁴² National Landscape Strategy: <https://www.chg.gov.ie/app/uploads/2015/07/N-Landscape-Strategy-english-Web.pdf>

developments should generally be supported by an assessment including a visual impact assessment which would involve an evaluation of visibility and prominence of the proposed development in its immediate environs and in the wider landscape.

The landscape character areas for County Galway are shown in **Figure 5.18** below.

5.3.8.4 Landscape Character Sensitivity

The sensitivity of the Landscape Character Areas is defined as its overall resilience to sustain its character in the face of change and its ability to recover from loss or damage to its components. Sensitivity is evaluated using criteria ranging from 'Very High' to 'Low' and is based on the interaction of individual components such as landform, amount of evident historical features (time depth) and distribution of viewers. A highly sensitive landscape is likely to be vulnerable, fragile and susceptible to change whereas a landscape with low sensitivity is likely to be more robust and / or tolerant of change. Very high sensitivity landscapes are extra vulnerable landscapes (e.g. seascape area with national importance) which are likely to be fragile and susceptible to change.

5.3.8.5 Protected Views & Prospects

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 scenic routes and protected views with County Galway are shown below in **Figures 5.19 & 5.20**.

The protected views within Galway City as described in the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2027 include:

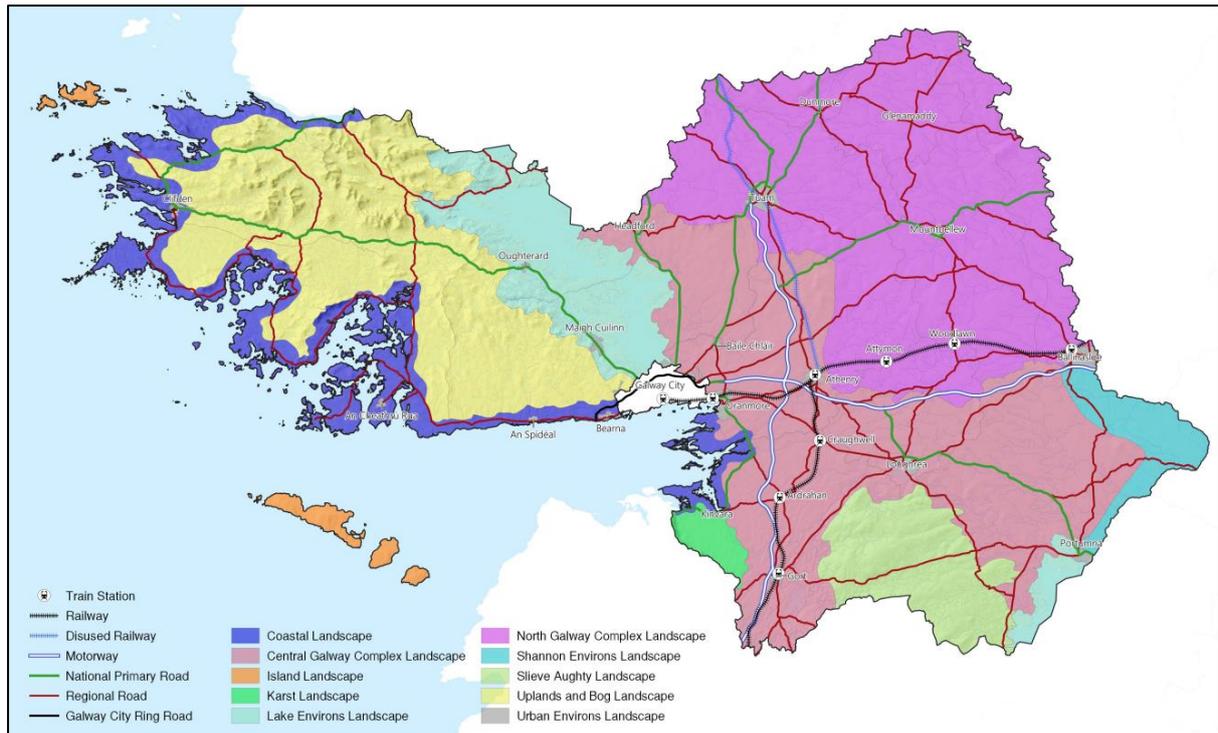
- V.1 Panoramic views of the city and the River Corrib from Circular Road.
- V.2 Views from Dyke Road and Coolagh Road encompassing the River Corrib and Coolagh fen.
- V.3 Seascape views of Lough Atalia from Lough Atalia Road, College Road, Dublin Road and Lakeshore Drive.
- V.4 Seascape views of Galway Bay from Grattan Road, Seapoint, the Salthill Promenade and the coast road to the western boundary of the golf course.
- V.5 Seascape views encompassing Lough Rusheen including section of Blakes Hill, sections of Knocknacarra Road, sections of Barna Road from Knocknacarra to city boundary and including the road to Silverstrand Beach.
- V.6 Panoramic views of the city, and the Terryland Valley from parts of the Castlegar-Ballindooley Road.
- V.7 Views encompassing Lough Corrib from parts of the Quarry Road and Monument Road.
- V.8 Seascape views of Galway Bay from the old Dublin Road to the city boundary.
- V.9 Views towards the sea at Roscam.
- V.10 Views from Galway-Moycullen Road (N59) of the River Corrib.
- V.11 Views from Waterside of the River Corrib.
- V.12 Seascape views of Galway Bay from Kingston Road.
- V.13 Seascape views of Galway Bay at Ballyloughane from south of the railway bridge.

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

- V.14 Views northwards encompassing the River Corrib and adjoining lands from Quincentenary Bridge.
- V.15 Views towards Galway Bay from Hawthorn Drive, Renmore.
- V.16 Views from Quincentenary Bridge Road southwards over Terryland Forest Park and River Corrib.
- V.17 Seascape views from Military Walk, Renmore.
- V.18 Views towards River Corrib from junction of St. Bridget's Place with St. Bridget's Terrace.
- V.19 Views encompassing Ballindooley Lough from parts of the Headford Road.

Figure 5.18 Landscape Character Areas within County Galway⁴³



⁴³ Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 - <https://consult.galway.ie/en/consultation/adopted-galway-county-development-plan-2022-2028>

Figure 5.19 Scenic Routes within County Galway

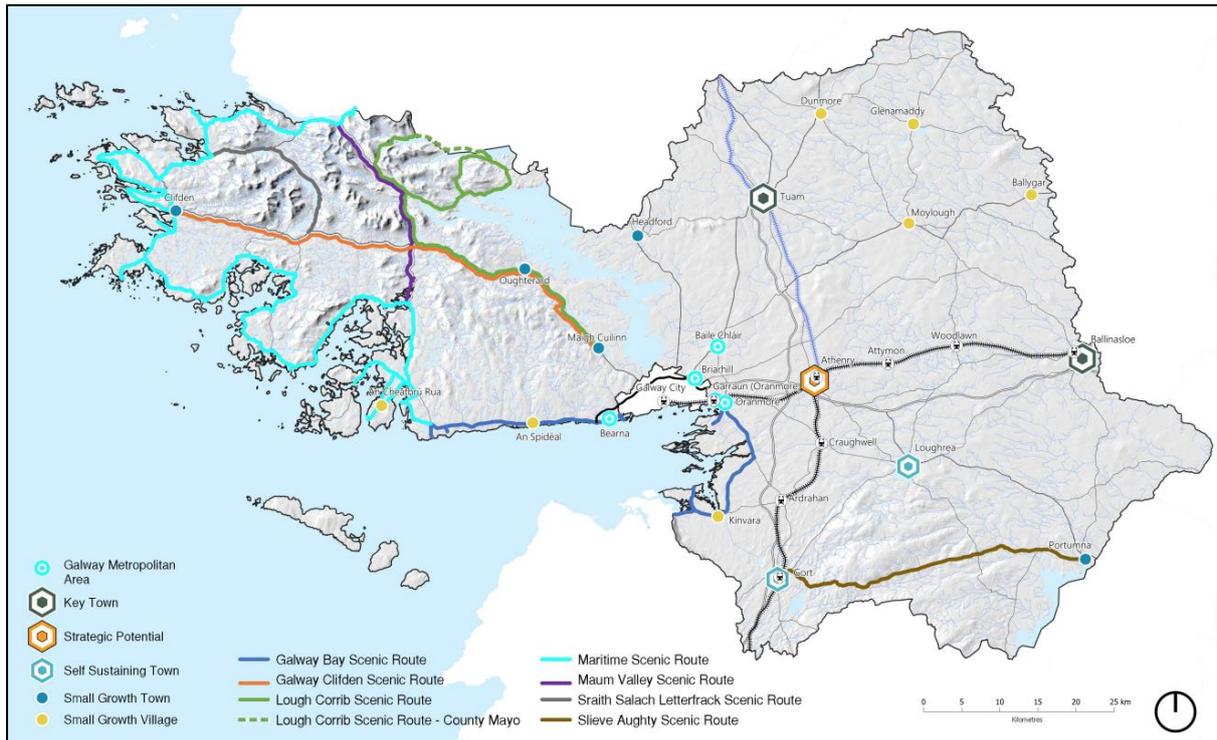
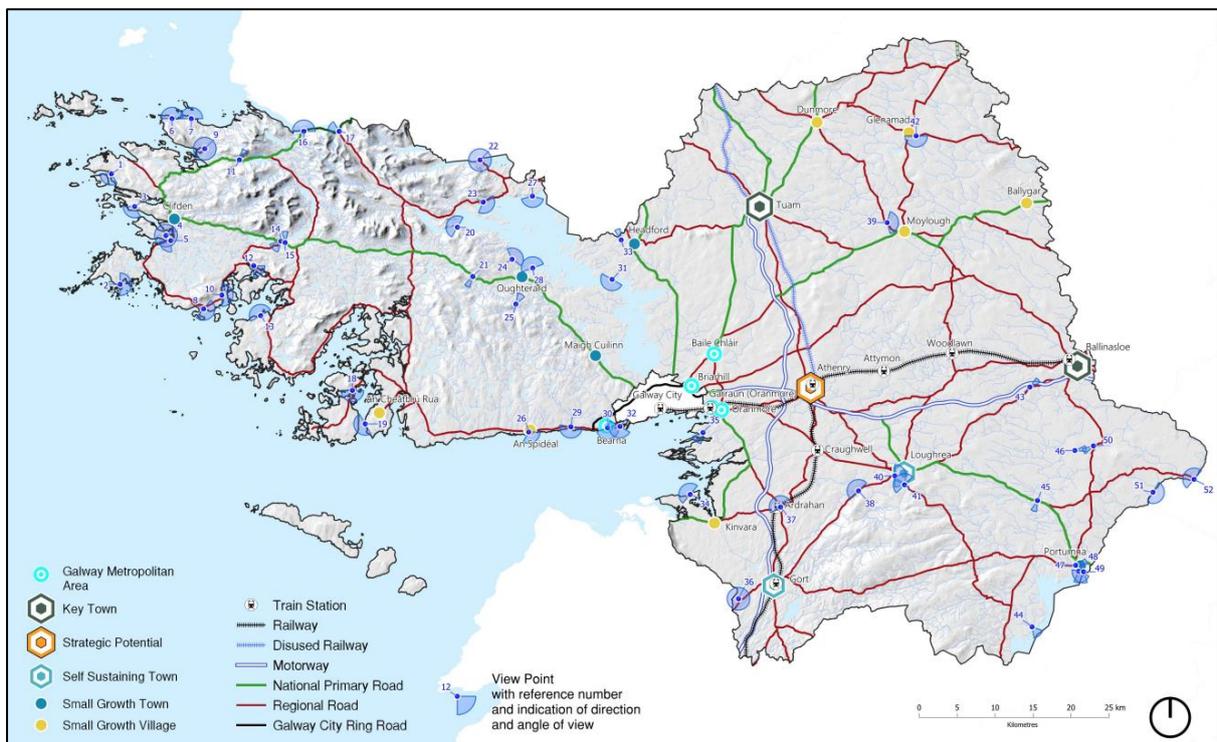


Figure 5.20 Protected Views within County Galway



5.3.8.6 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

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

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.

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 (see **Section 10** of this Report).

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 ⁴⁴ 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.
	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.

⁴⁴ ‘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.

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
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.

Table 7.1 Assessment of Alternatives for the Galway City DEDP

Reasonable Alternative	Description	SEO	Environmental Assessment	Environmental Evaluation
Alternative 1 Do-nothing / Do-Minimum	Tourism operations in Galway City & Salthill 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.	All SEOs	+/-	In comparison to other alternatives, this alternative could give rise to potential uncertain or unplanned environmental effects across all environmental factors. It is likely that this alternative will not realise the wider stakeholder benefits that would be achieved with from a coordinated plan approach. In comparison to other alternatives, this approach may generate uncertain or negative environmental effects, which would not be counterbalanced by the positive environmental effects associated with other alternatives.
Alternative 2A Do-something Prepare a Plan with Environmental Considerations	Tourism operations in Galway City & Salthill would be facilitated, promoted, supported and coordinated through the preparation of a Plan, with environmental considerations, that seeks to better manage tourism in the study area.	All SEOs	+	In comparison to other alternatives, this alternative could give rise to protection of the environment across all environmental factors. At the same time this alternative will also realise the wider stakeholder benefits that would be achieved with from a coordinated plan approach. In comparison to other alternatives, this approach would generate positive environmental effects.
Alternative 2B Do-something Prepare a Plan without Environmental Considerations	Tourism operations in Galway City & Salthill would be facilitated, promoted, supported and coordinated through the preparation of a Plan, without environmental considerations, that seeks to better manage tourism in the study area.	All SEOs	+/- or -	While it is likely that this alternative will realise the wider stakeholder benefits that would be achieved with from a coordinated plan approach, in comparison to other alternatives, this alternative could give rise to potential uncertain, unplanned or negative environmental effects across all environmental factors. In comparison to other alternatives, this approach would generate negative environmental effects.

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 2023-2029⁴⁵ and Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028⁴⁶, 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**.

⁴⁵ Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029- <https://www.galwaycity.ie/services/planning/development-plan-2023-2029>

⁴⁶ Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 - <https://consult.galway.ie/en/consultation/adopted-galway-county-development-plan-2022-2028>

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Table 8.1 Environmental Assessment of Strategic Objectives and Strategic Development Pillars 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>Vision</p> <p>The Destination Vision (2034 vision) for GCDEDP is:</p> <p><i>'A city that dances to its own rhythm, Galway blends the raw beauty of the Atlantic with a carnival-like atmosphere that makes every visit an adventure. From its cobbled streets to its vibrant neighbourhoods, visitors can partake in numerous indoor and outdoor experiences where they can engage with Galway's creativity, its colour and its love of the unexpected. Festivals celebrating music, art, culture and food bring locals and visitors together in a place where bohemian spirit meets coastal charm. Galway is also deeply committed to protecting and enhancing its</i></p>	<p>This vision statement sets an overall context for destination experience and tourism in Galway City & Salthill. This will support and underpin the local tourism economy, sustainable tourism and the quality of tourism. No specific projects are associated with the statement, and therefore the effect on the remaining environmental themes and SEOs will be neutral.</p>	<p>PHH (PHH1, PHH2)</p>			<p>B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2), LV (LV_1, LV2)</p>	<p>No</p>

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

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

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

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
1.1 Deliver on the ambition to become the tourism capital of the Wild Atlantic Way.	<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>	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2),		Yes
1.2 Grow the mix and range of saleable visitor experiences that appeal to domestic and	This objective will enhance tourism opportunities for the county and have positive effect on population and human health.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1,		Yes

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

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

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

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	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)	B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), MA (MA1, MA2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2)	CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes
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.	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
1.7 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.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1,	No

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

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)	
Strategic Objective 2: Increase tourism revenue, visitor dispersion and season extension across the Southern half of the Wild Atlantic Way						
2.1. Develop Galway as an international festivals and events city, recognised for the quality of programming and diversity of events.	<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 & soils, landscape and visual, material assets and air & 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

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

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

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
Strategic Objective 3: Protect the authenticity and “wildness” of the Wild Atlantic Way						
3.1. Grow the inclusion of the Irish language into the Galway City visitor experience and develop the tourism opportunity presented by the city's Gaeltacht status.	<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

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

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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.	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
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	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)	B (B1, B2, B3), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2)	LSG (LSG1), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

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.	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
Strategic Objective 4: Enable and assist the industry to grow its capacity and capability so that it can thrive over the period of this plan						
4.1. Develop sustainable tourism projects to showcase, protect and enhance the special character of Galway City's urban natural heritage, in partnership with local stakeholders and compliance	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	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)		Yes

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

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.	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
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.	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
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.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1,		Yes

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

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.	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
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	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1,	No

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

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.	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
Strategic Objective 5: Foster strong coalitions of industry and stakeholders with a common purpose in developing Galway City as a flourishing destination supporting thriving communities.						
5.1. Work with all stakeholders to ensure the tourism opportunity for Galway is reflected across future urban regeneration projects.	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.	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

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

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.	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
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.	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
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.	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

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

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<p>5.5. Maximise business events for the destination as a mechanism to deliver greater impact on local communities. Collectively position Galway as a thriving business hub that promotes knowledge sharing and innovation, driving enhanced networking, competitiveness and productivity.</p>	<p>This objective will enhance tourism opportunities and will 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 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.</p>	<p>PHH (PHH1, PHH2)</p>		<p>B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)</p>		<p>Yes</p>
Strategic Development Pillars						
<p>1. Developing the Day Time Visitor Experiences</p> <p>Capitalise on the large scale investment in the Galway Museum and examine opportunities for new indoor and outdoor day time visitor experiences to enhance the tourism offering in the city. This will include exploring opportunities for additional indoor attractions and growing</p>	<p>This pillar will enhance tourism opportunities for the destination and result in positive effects on population and human health.</p> <p>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</p>	<p>PHH (PHH1, PHH2)</p>	<p>B (B1, B2, B3), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2),</p>	<p>LSG (LSG1), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)</p>		<p>Yes</p>

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

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 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>2. Linking City, Village and Neighbourhoods</p> <p>Increase the levels of collaboration and connectivity among the existing city neighbourhoods to influence greater levels of visitor flow across the city and links to the 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>PHH (PHH1, PHH2)</p>		<p>B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)</p>		<p>Yes</p>

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

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>3. Galway City of Tribes: Culture, Festivals & Events</p> <p>Differentiate the Galway visitor experience through how creativity is applied to every destination experience and build on the city's international profile as a Capital of Culture. The approach will build on the uniqueness of the Galway Tribes story as the basis for experience development. This will include the Irish language, maritime, food, arts/culture, working with the creative sector and 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>PHH (PHH1, PHH2)</p>		<p>B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)</p>		<p>Yes</p>

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

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>Festivals and Events City with the structures and resources required to achieve and sustain year-round programming. The target outcome is a calendar of authentic festivals and events celebrating the City of the Tribes and the delivery of a programme of unique events only Galway can deliver.</p>						
<p>4. Atlantic & Galway Waters</p> <p>Develop the opportunities for the visitor to experience Galway's rich maritime heritage and sample Galway Bay and the Wild Atlantic Way on the city's doorstep. The strategic focus is to ensure a co-ordinated approach to developing the water themed experience in Galway. It will include a focus on many of Galway's 'iconic' landmarks that include Salthill Promenade, Blackrock Tower 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 & soils, landscape and visual, material assets and air & 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>PHH (PHH1, PHH2)</p>	<p>B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2)</p>	<p>CH (CH1, CH2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2)</p>		<p>Yes</p>

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

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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 & 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**.

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 **Appendix 1** for the detailed assessment of effects of the catalyst projects, enabling projects and actions.

Mitigation measures are presented further in Section 9.

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	☒	☑	☑	☑	☑		☒	☒

Component \ Effect	Biodiversity	Population & Human Health	Land, Soils & Geology	Water Quality	Air Quality, Noise and Climate	Material Assets	Cultural Heritage	Landscape & Visual
Cultural Heritage	✘	✔	✔	✘	✔	✔		✔
Landscape & Visual	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	
Legend: 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 4th 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

8.6 Overview

The environmental assessment of the provisions of the GCDEDP (**Section 8**) identifies potential uncertain effects on the environment as set out in **Table 8.1**. Much of this relates to uncertainty in the likely outcome of objectives and the potential nature and scope of any development, which may or may not, derive from the implementation of catalyst projects, enabling projects, destination projects and the Plan. Therefore, measures are detailed in the following which will set the context for the avoidance and / or reduction of any such potential environmental effects.

In working with the SEA process, the Plan acknowledges the requirement for any development to adhere to best practice in terms of environmental governance. Indeed protection and enhancement of the environment is a critical pillar underpinning the core objectives and success of the GCDEDP.

In this context any proposals for development arising from the GCDEDP must meet the proper planning and sustainable development policies, objectives and development management provisions of the statutory Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029.

9 Mitigation Measures

9.1 Overview

The finding of the environmental assessment in **Section 8.0** (and Appendix 1) of this 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 form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework, of which this Plan is not part and does not contribute towards. The Plan includes requirements for environmental protection and management including the ones set out in the **Regional Tourism Development Strategies 2023-2027** especially the **Wild Atlantic Way Regional Tourism Development Strategy**.

As stated in the GCDEDP these include:

- **Infrastructure Capacity** - *With respect to infrastructural capacity (including drinking water, wastewater, waste, and transport) the potential environmental impacts associated with increase visitor numbers and increase pressure on capacities of existing infrastructure (including accommodation) will require careful planning and assessment.*
The potential environmental effects of the likely increase in tourism volumes resulting from the relevant projects in this plan will need to be considered at project level and mitigated as appropriate. Critical transport infrastructure to support all forms of transport around Galway City is important. This Plan supports the completion of the Galway City Transport Action Strategy in this regard. In addition, communication where relevant, between Fáilte Ireland and Uisce Eireann over the implementation period of this plan will be important to ensure projects resulting from this plan will have sufficient water and wastewater resources to sustainably function.
This aspect should be linked to the development of visitor management plans as appropriate. The promotion of developing visitor friendly supporting infrastructure where it is required will also be encouraged.
- **Visitor Management** - *Partners tasked with progressing actions and projects shall seek to sustainably manage existing and any increase in visitor numbers and/or any change in visitor behaviour to avoid significant effects on the environment including loss of habitat and/or disturbance to sensitive species (including human beings and biodiversity) where relevant. This shall include for example, ensuring that new projects are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities. Visitor management plans will be required for proposed plans, programmes and projects that are to receive funding as relevant and appropriate.*

- **Green Infrastructure and Ecosystem Services** - *Blue and Green Infrastructure and Ecosystem Services - Those receiving funding shall contribute towards the maintenance and enhancement of existing blue and green infrastructure and its ecosystem services. Proposals for the development of any blue and green infrastructure or activities in these areas should demonstrate the synergies that can be achieved with regard to the: provision of open space amenities; sustainable management of water; protection and management of biodiversity; protection of cultural heritage; and protected landscape sensitivities.*
- **Control and Management of Invasive Species** - *Proposals and the development of Visitor Management plans shall consider the control and management of invasive species having regard to existing objectives contained within the County Development Plan to include: Developers and managers of existing tourism or recreational sites and/or future development should adhere to best practice and facilitate the development of appropriate facilities to minimise the spread of invasive species including along Blueways and Greenways. Further information and resources on “Check, Clean, Dry, Disinfect” should be sought on invasives.ie. Fáilte Ireland shall work with partners to encourage greater awareness of potential threats caused by invasive species and how they can spread.*

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

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

Therefore, the key environmental protection measures included in the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029, provide for appropriate and detailed mitigation of potential uncertain environmental effects of the GCDEDP. These measures include the following selected aims / policies / objectives as detailed in **Table 9.1** below.

Table 9.1 Protective objectives as detailed in the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
Policy Objectives	Protective Policies / Objectives
Biodiversity (including Flora & Fauna)	
<i>F5 Deforestation - To promote the avoidance of deforestation or commercial afforestation within European sites unless directly relating to the management of the site for its qualifying interests.</i>	<i>Policy 5.1 Green Network and Biodiversity 1. Support sustainable use and management of areas of ecological importance, parks and recreation amenity areas and facilities through an integrated green network policy approach in line with the Galway Recreation and Amenity Needs Study and where superseded by the Green Space Strategy, where it can be demonstrated that there will be no adverse impacts on the integrity of European sites.</i>
<i>MCH 2 Marine Based Environment - It is a policy objective of the Local Authority to protect and enhance where appropriate marine biodiversity in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.</i>	<i>Policy 5.1 Green Network and Biodiversity 4. Support the implementation of the National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) 2017- 2021 (and any subsequent NBAP) and the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (2021-2025) and support the actions of the City Council's Heritage Plan 2016-2021 and Biodiversity Action Plan 2014-2024 relating to the promotion of ecological awareness, biodiversity and best practices.</i>
<i>MCC 1 Environmental Value of the Coast - Protect the amenity, character, visual, recreational, economic potential and environmental values of the coast. Ensure that natural coastal defences including sand dunes, beaches and coastal wetlands are not compromised by inappropriate development.</i>	<i>Policy 5.1 Green Network and Biodiversity 6. Promote the integration of nature based solutions and green/blue infrastructure in all new developments as appropriate to contribute to the city's climate resilience and require large scale development proposals to include a green infrastructure and biodiversity plan.</i>
<i>MCC 2 Protection of Coastal Habitats - To strictly control the nature and pattern of development within coastal areas and ensure that it is designed and landscaped to the highest standards and sited appropriately so as not to detract from the visual amenity of the area.</i>	<i>Policy 5.2 Protected Spaces: Sites of European, National and Local Ecological Importance 1. Protect European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network (including Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation) in accordance with</i>

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
<p><i>(a) Development shall be prohibited where the development poses a significant or potential threat to coastal habitats or features, and/or where the development is likely to result in altered patterns of erosion or deposition elsewhere along the coast;</i></p> <p><i>(b) To prohibit development along the coast outside existing towns and villages where such development is not adequately safeguarded over the lifetime of the development without the need to construct additional coastal defences.</i></p>	<p><i>the requirements in the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) and associated national legislation.</i></p>
<p><i>MCC 3 Protection of Coastal Area - It is a policy objective to protect the Coastal Area through the following measures:</i></p> <p><i>(a) Ensure that conservation works undertaken in coastal areas are in accordance with best practice and measures to protect the coast, the coastal edge and coastal habitats are supported;</i></p> <p><i>(b) Seek to prevent the unauthorised removal of sand and related beach material;</i></p> <p><i>(c) Protect, enhance and conserve beaches in the County from inappropriate development and seek to maintain the current status of the designated Blue Flag beaches and Green Coasts and to increase the number of beaches and coasts holding this status in the future;</i></p> <p><i>(d) Facilitate an Integrated Coastal Zone Management approach to ensure the conservation, management and protection of man-made and natural resources of the coastal zone</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 5.2 Protected Spaces: Sites of European, National and Local Ecological Importance</i></p> <p><i>2.Ensure that all plans or projects within the Plan area will only be authorised and / or supported after the competent authority has ascertained based on scientific evidence, screening for appropriate assessment and /or a Habitats Directive Assessment that:</i></p> <p><i>i. The plan or project will not give rise to an adverse direct, indirect or secondary effect on the integrity of any European site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects); or</i></p> <p><i>ii. The plan or project will have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site (that does not host a priority natural habitat type/and or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000; or</i></p> <p><i>iii. The plan or project will have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site (that hosts a natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but</i></p>

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
	<p><i>there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons for overriding public interest, restricted to reasons of human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000.</i></p>
<p><i>MCC 4 Integrated Framework Management Plan - Support the preparation of an Integrated Galway Bay Framework Management Plan by all relevant stakeholders to provide for the sustainable and integrated development of the Galway Bay Area in a co-ordinated manner.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 5.2 Protected Spaces: Sites of European, National and Local Ecological Importance</i></p> <p><i>3. Protect, conserve and promote the nationally designated sites of ecological importance, including existing and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (NHA and pNHAs) in the city.</i></p>
<p><i>NHB 1 Natural Heritage and Biodiversity of Designated Sites, Habitats and Species - Protect and where possible enhance the natural heritage sites designated under EU Legislation and National Legislation (Habitats Directive, Birds Directive, European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 and Wildlife Acts) and extend to any additions or alterations to sites that may occur during the lifetime of this plan.</i></p> <p><i>Protect and, where possible, enhance the plant and animal species and their habitats that have been identified under European legislation (Habitats and Birds Directive) and protected under national Legislation (European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI 477 of 2011), Wildlife Acts 1976-2010 and the Flora Protection Order (SI 94 of 1999).</i></p> <p><i>Support the protection, conservation and enhancement of natural heritage and biodiversity, including the protection of the integrity of European sites, that form part of the Natura 2000 network, the protection of Natural Heritage</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 5.2 Protected Spaces: Sites of European, National and Local Ecological Importance</i></p> <p><i>4. Protect, conserve and support the development of an ecological network throughout the city which will improve the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network in accordance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.</i></p>

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
<p><i>Areas, proposed Natural Heritage Areas, Ramsar Sites, Nature Reserves, Wild Fowl Sanctuaries (and other designated sites including any future designations) and the promotion of the development of a green/ ecological network.</i></p>	
<p><i>NHB 2 European Sites and Appropriate Assessment - To implement Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and to ensure that Appropriate Assessment is carried out in relation to works, plans and projects likely to impact on European sites (SACs and SPAs), whether directly or indirectly or in combination with any other plan(s) or project(s). All assessments must be in compliance with the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011. All such projects and plans will also be required to comply with statutory Environmental Impact Assessment requirements where relevant.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 5.2 Protected Spaces: Sites of European, National and Local Ecological Importance</i></p> <p><i>6. Protect Local Biodiversity Areas, wildlife corridors and stepping stones based on the Galway Biodiversity Action Plan 2014-2024 and support the biodiversity of the city in the Council's role/responsibilities, works and operations, where appropriate.</i></p>
<p><i>NHB 3 Protection of European Sites - No plans, programmes, or projects etc. giving rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on European sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans, programmes, etc. or projects.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 5.2 Protected Spaces: Sites of European, National and Local Ecological Importance</i></p> <p><i>7. Encourage, in liaison with the NPWS, the sustainable management of features which are important for the ecological coherence of the network of European sites and essential, by their linear or continuous nature or as stepping stones for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.</i></p>
<p><i>NHB 4 Ecological Appraisal of Biodiversity - Ensure, where appropriate, the protection and conservation of areas, sites, species and ecological/networks of biodiversity value outside designated sites. Where appropriate require an ecological appraisal, for development not directly connected with or necessary to the management of European Sites, or a proposed European Site and which are likely to have significant effects on that site either individually or cumulatively.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 5.2 Protected Spaces: Sites of European, National and Local Ecological Importance</i></p> <p><i>8. Support the actions of the Galway City Council Heritage Plan 2016-2021 and any update and Biodiversity Action Plan 2014-2024 relating to the promotion of ecological awareness and biodiversity, the protection of wildlife corridors and the prevention of wildlife habitat fragmentation.</i></p>

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
<p><i>NHB 5 – Ecological Connectivity and Corridors - Support the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and ecological connectivity in non-designated sites, including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, semi-natural grasslands, rivers, streams, natural springs, wetlands, stonewalls, geological and geomorphological systems, other landscape features and associated wildlife areas where these form part of the ecological network and/or may be considered as ecological corridors in the context of Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 5.2 Protected Spaces: Sites of European, National and Local Ecological Importance</i></p> <p><i>10. Protect and conserve rare and threatened habitats and their key habitats, (wherever they occur) listed on Annex I and Annex IV of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43EEC) and listed for protection under the Wildlife Acts 1976-2000 and plant species listed in the Flora Protection Order 2015.</i></p>
<p><i>NHB 6 Implementation of Plans and Strategies - Support the implementation of any relevant recommendations contained in the National Heritage Plan 2030, the National Biodiversity Plan, the All Ireland Pollinator Plan and the National Peatlands Strategy and any such plans and strategies during the lifetime of this plan.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 5.2 Protected Spaces: Sites of European, National and Local Ecological Importance</i></p> <p><i>11. Ensure that plans and projects with the potential to have a significant impact on European sites (SAC or SPA) whether directly, indirectly or in combination with other plans or projects are subject to Appropriate Assessment, under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (92/43EEC) and associated legislation and guidelines, to inform decision making.</i></p>
<p><i>NHB 7 Mitigation Measures - Require mitigating measures in certain cases where it is evident that biodiversity is likely to be affected. These measures may, in association with other specified requirements, include establishment of wildlife areas/corridors/parks, hedgerow, tree planting, wildflower meadows/marshes and other areas. With regard to residential development, in certain cases, these measures may be carried out in conjunction with the provision of open space and/or play areas.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 5.2 Protected Spaces: Sites of European, National and Local Ecological Importance</i></p> <p><i>14. Support and implement measures to control and manage alien/invasive species, where appropriate in accordance with the EU (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011.</i></p>
<p><i>NHB 9 Protection of Bats and Bats Habitats - Seek to protect bats and their roosts, their feeding areas, flight paths and commuting routes. Ensure that development proposals in areas which are potentially important for bats, including areas of woodland, linear features such as hedgerows, stonewalls, watercourses and associated riparian vegetation which may provide migratory/foraging uses shall be subject to suitable assessment for potential</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 5.2 Protected Spaces: Sites of European, National and Local Ecological Importance</i></p> <p><i>15. Protect the ecological integrity of statutory Nature Reserves, Wildfowl Sanctuaries, refuges for fauna and Annex 1 Habitats.</i></p>

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
<p><i>impacts on bats. This will include an assessment of the cumulative loss of habitat or the impact on bat populations and activity in the area and may include a specific bat survey. Assessments shall be carried out by a suitably qualified professional and where development is likely to result in significant adverse effects on bat populations or activity in the area, development will be prohibited or require mitigation and/or compensatory measures, as appropriate. The impact of lighting on bats and their roosts and the lighting up of objects of cultural heritage must be adequately assessed in relation to new developments and the upgrading of existing lighting systems.</i></p>	
<p><i>NHB 10 NPWS & Integrated Management Plans - Article 6(1) of the Habitats Directive requires that Member States establish the necessary conservation measures for European sites involving, if need be, appropriate management plans specifically designed for the sites or integrated into other development plans. The NPWS's current priority is to identify site specific conservation objectives; management plans may be considered after this is done. Where Integrated Management Plans are being prepared by the NPWS for European sites (or parts thereof), the NPWS shall be engaged with in order to ensure that plans are fully integrated with the Plan and other plans and programmes, with the intention that such plans are practical, achievable and sustainable and have regard to all relevant ecological, cultural, social and economic considerations, including those of local communities.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 8.8 Public Realm</i></p> <p><i>5.Promote nature based SUDS solutions in the public realm where possible to enhance biodiversity and resilience to climate change.</i></p>
<p><i>NHB 11 Increases in Visitor Numbers to Semi-Natural Areas, Visitor and Habitat Management - Seek to manage any increase in visitor numbers in order to avoid significant effects including loss of habitat and disturbance, including ensuring that any new projects, such as greenways, are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities, such as riparian zones. Where relevant, the Planning Authority and those receiving permission for development under the Plan shall seek to manage any increase in visitor numbers and/or any</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 9.7 Light Pollution</i></p> <p><i>3. Lighting on linear infrastructures, including greenways and blueways, should be carefully managed to ensure coherence of the supporting habitats of European sites, as outlined in Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.</i></p>

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
<p><i>change in visitor behaviour in order to avoid significant effects, including loss of habitat and disturbance. Management measures may include ensuring that new projects and activities are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities. Visitor/Habitat Management Plans will be required for proposed projects as relevant and appropriate.</i></p>	
<p><i>WTWF 1 Wetland Sites - Protect and conserve the ecological and biodiversity heritage of the wetland sites in the County. Ensure that an appropriate level of assessment is completed in relation to wetland habitats that are subject to proposals which would involve drainage or reclamation that might destroy, fragment or degrade any wetland in the county. This includes lakes and ponds, turloughs, watercourses, springs and swamps, marshes, fens, heath, peatlands, some woodlands as well as some coastal and marine habitats. Protect Ramsar sites under The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (especially as Waterfowl Habitat).</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 9.7 Light Pollution</i></p> <p><i>4. Ensure the design of external lighting does not have an adverse impact on wildlife and ecosystems and encourage the use of dark zones and sensor lighting where feasible.</i></p>
<p><i>P 1 Protection of Peatlands - Ensure that peatland areas which are designated (or proposed for designation) as NHAs, SACs or SPAs are conserved for their ecological, climate regulation, education and culture, archaeological potential including any ancient walkways (toghers) through bogs.</i></p>	
<p><i>IS 1 Control of Invasive and Alien Invasive Species - It is a policy objective of the Planning Authority to support measures for the prevention and eradication of invasive species</i></p>	
<p><i>IS 2 Invasive Species Management Plan - Ensure that proposals for development do not lead to the spread or introduction of invasive species. If developments are proposed on sites where invasive species are currently or were previously present, an invasive species management plan will be required. A landscaping plan will be required for developments near water bodies and such plans must not include alien invasive species.</i></p>	

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
<p><i>PO 1 Delivery of All Ireland Pollinator Plan - To facilitate the delivery of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan where possible. In the interest of preserving and enhancing biodiversity and working in conjunction with the All Ireland Pollinator Plan - It shall be the policy objective of the Planning Authority to ensure that at least 20% of the green space on all housing estates being built will have to be dedicated, developed and maintained as a pollinator zone. The area dedicated can be confined to one single lot or various lots around the site providing that the total area of the lots meets the minimum requirement of 20%. The pollinator zones should be planted with a mix of pollinator friendly-bulbs, self seeding annuals and biennials, perennials, shrubs, trees, fruit trees and fruit bushes and the majority of this planting should consist of native plants.</i></p>	
<p><i>TWHS 1 Trees, Hedgerows, Natural Boundaries and Stone Walls - Protect and seek to retain important trees, tree clusters and tree boundaries, ancient woodland, natural boundaries including stonewalls, existing hedgerows particularly species rich roadside and townland boundary hedgerows, where possible and replace with a boundary type similar to the existing boundary. Ensure that new development proposals take cognisance of significant trees/tree stands and that all planting schemes developed are suitable for the specific site and use suitable native variety of trees of Irish provenance and hedgerows of native species. Seek Tree Management Plans to ensure that trees are adequately protected during development and incorporated into the design of new developments.</i></p>	
<p><i>TWHS 3 Protection of Forestry - Protect all substantial areas of deciduous forest, other than areas of commercial forestry. Proposals for development in these areas should seek to interact with the landscape character of the forested areas and its limits while also enhancing the forested areas so as to increase biodiversity value.</i></p>	

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
<p><i>GBI 1 New Developments - Require all proposals for large scale development to contribute to the protection, management and enhancement of the existing green/blue infrastructure of the County and the delivery of new green/blue infrastructure, where appropriate by including a green/ blue infrastructure plan as an integral part of any planning application. This plan should identify environmental and ecological assets, constraints and opportunities and shall include proposals which protect, manage, and enhance the development of green infrastructure resources in a sustainable manner.</i></p>	
<p><i>SRA 2 Promote Public Access to Natural Amenities - Recognize the role played by natural amenities as a major resource for visitors and local people and support, protect and promote public access to natural amenities that have been traditionally used for outdoor recreation (water-based facilities, recreational activities, and marinas).</i></p>	
Population and Human Health	
<p><i>MAS 1 Separation Distances from SEVESO Sites - To ensure that appropriate distances are maintained between any proposed development and any existing Seveso II establishment, in the interest of the health and safety of the occupiers of the proposed development.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 9.5 Safe Environment - Control of Major Accident Hazards Directive (Seveso III Directive)</i></p> <p><i>1. Consult with the Health and Safety Authority (also known as the National Authority for Occupational and Health Standards) when changing any policies/objectives and assessing any proposed relevant developments in or in the vicinity of sites identified under the Control of Major Accident Hazards Directive (Seveso III Directive), in order to prevent major accidents involving dangerous substances and to limit their consequences to the environment and community.</i></p>
<p><i>MAS 3 SEVESO III Sites - Take into account the provisions of the Major Accidents Directive, relating to the control of major accident hazards involving dangerous substances, and the recommendations of the Health and</i></p>	

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
<i>Safety Authority in the assessment of all planning applications located within the consultation distance of such sites.</i>	
Land, Soils and Geology	
<i>SQ 1 Soil Impact Assessments - Ensure good soil quality throughout the county by requiring developments of a certain nature (as specified in the relevant environmental legislation) to carry out assessments of the impact of the development on soil quality.</i>	
<i>SQ 2 Soil Protection Measures - To ensure that adequate soil protection measures are undertaken where appropriate.</i>	
<i>SQ 3 Soil Protection, Contamination and Remediation - Adequate and appropriate investigations shall be carried out into the nature and extent of any soil and groundwater contamination and the risks associated with site development work, where brownfield development is proposed.</i>	
<p><i>All undeveloped, contaminated sites shall be remediated to internationally accepted standards prior to redevelopment. All applications shall be accompanied by a report from a qualified, expert consultant remediation incorporating international best practice and expertise on innovative ecological restoration techniques including specialist planting and green initiatives that create aesthetically improved sites, healthy environments and contribute to the provision of new green open spaces as integral parts of newly created areas.</i></p> <p><i>Treatment/management of any contaminated material shall comply as appropriate with the Waste Management Act 1996 (waste licence, waste facility permit), as amended, and under the EPA Act 1992 (Industrial Emissions licensing, in particular the First Schedule, Class 11 Waste), as amended. These measures will ensure that contaminated material will be</i></p>	

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
<p><i>managed in a manner that removes any risk to human health and ensures that the end use will be compatible with any risk.</i></p>	
<p><i>MAS 2 Soil Protection Measures - To require that, the siting of new establishments, or modification of existing establishments classified under the Seveso II Directive, and new development in the vicinity of existing establishments shall take into account the need to prevent major accidents involving hazardous substances and safeguard both the public and the environment.</i></p>	
<p><i>PG 1 Geological and Geo-Morphological Systems - Protect and conserve geological and geo-morphological systems, county geological heritage sites and features from inappropriate development that would detract from their heritage value and interpretation and ensure that any plan or project affecting karst formations, eskers or other important geological and geo-morphological systems are adequately assessed with regard to their potential geophysical, hydrological or ecological impacts on the environment.</i></p>	
<p><i>PG 2 Geological Heritage of County Galway - Support the implementation of recommendations made in the Geological Heritage of County Galway – An Audit of County Geological Sites in County Galway (2019). Consult with the Geological Survey of Ireland when undertaking, approving or authorising developments which are likely to impact on County Geological Sites or involve significant ground excavations including sites identified as part of the Geological Heritage of County Galway – An Audit of County Geological Sites in County Galway (2019).</i></p>	
<p><i>PG 3 Promotion of and Access to Geological Sites - Encourage greater awareness of the geological heritage sites of the county and promote, where appropriate, public access to geological and geomorphological sites and avoid inappropriate development.</i></p>	

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
<p><i>ESK 1 Protection of Eskers Systems - Protect and conserve the landscape, natural heritage and biodiversity value of esker systems in the county. Assess applications for quarrying and other proposed developments with reference to their status or relative importance, for example, amenity, landscape and scientific value in the context of the overall esker system.</i></p>	
Water Quality	
<p><i>CT 1 Tourism Resource - To protect beaches, and bathing areas as valuable local amenities and as a tourism resource and support the maintenance, protection and improvement of access to these amenities.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 5.3 Blue Spaces: Coast, Canals and Waterways</i> 1. Protect and maintain the integrity of the coastal environment and waterways by avoiding significant impacts and meeting the requirements of statutory bodies, national and European legislation and standards.</p>
<p><i>CT 5 Tourism Products - To support the protection and enhancement of our islands, coastline and waterways as tourism products and attractions, subject to community and environmental carrying capacity.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 5.3 Blue Spaces: Coast, Canals and Waterways</i> 2. Conserve and protect natural conservation areas within the coastal area and along waterways and ensure that the range and quality of associated habitats and the range and populations of species are maintained.</p>
<p><i>LWT 1 Lakeland and Waterways Tourism - To support the development of tourism activities in lakeland areas and waterways subject to Normal Planning and environmental criteria. All proposed developments shall be in accordance with the Water Framework Directive and all relevant EU Directives.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 5.3 Blue Spaces: Coast, Canals and Waterways</i> 5. Support the implementation of the recommendations of the River Basin Management Plan in relation to the protection of water quality of surface waters, groundwater and coastal waters.</p>
<p><i>NMPF 1 Marine Planning Framework - To seek to implement the policy objectives as set out within the National Marine Planning Framework to support the effective management of marine activities and more sustainable use of the county's marine resources.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 5.3 Blue Spaces: Coast, Canals and Waterways</i> 6. Ensure development and uses adhere to the principles of sustainable development and restrict any development or use which negatively impact on water quality.</p>
<p><i>MCD 1 Protection of the Coastline - To protect the special character of the coast by preventing inappropriate development, particularly on the seaward side of coastal roads. New development, wherever possible, shall be</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 5.3 Blue Spaces: Coast, Canals and Waterways</i> 7. Have regard to European and national best practice when assessing development in or near coastal areas which is likely to have significant effects</p>

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
<i>accommodated within existing developed areas and shall be climate resilient in its location and design.</i>	<i>on the integrity, defined by the structure and function, of any designated European sites, protected coastal and marine fauna and flora.</i>
<i>MCD 2 Pattern of Development along the Coast - To strictly control the nature and pattern of development within coastal areas and ensure that it is designed and landscaped to the highest standards and sited appropriately so as not to detract from the visual amenity of the area.</i>	<p><i>Policy 5.3 Blue Spaces: Coast, Canals and Waterways</i></p> <p><i>8. Ensure the conservation of the canal corridor and require that developments abutting the canal relate to the context of the adjacent environment and contribute to the overall amenity, and explore the possibility of opportunities for public access.</i></p>
<i>SF1 Shellfish Waters Directive - To continue to work with local communities, relevant stakeholders and with the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine to ensure the proper and successful implementation of the Shellfish Waters Directive along County Galway's coastline.</i>	<p><i>Policy 5.3 Blue Spaces: Coast, Canals and Waterways</i></p> <p><i>12. Ensure the protection of the River Corrib as a Salmonid River, where appropriate.</i></p>
<i>SF2 Protection of Shellfish Waters - To seek to protect the quality of designated shellfish waters off the County Galway coast.</i>	<p><i>Policy 5.3 Blue Spaces: Coast, Canals and Waterways</i></p> <p><i>14. Facilitate sustainable flood defence and coastal protection works in order to prevent flooding and coastal erosion, subject to environmental and visual considerations as guided by the Corrib go Cósta, Galway City Flood Relief Scheme project.</i></p>
<i>MCT 1 Water Based Sports and Marine Recreation - To encourage proposals that promote sustainable development of water-based sports and marine recreation in coastal areas and on river systems across the County in accordance with environmental considerations.</i>	<p><i>Policy 5.3 Blue Spaces: Coast, Canals and Waterways</i></p> <p><i>16. Ensure any development within the aquatic environment shall be carried out in consultation with prescribed bodies and with adherence to their guidelines.</i></p>
<i>MCT 2 Coastal Tourism and Recreation - To facilitate sustainable tourism and recreation activities where appropriate, whilst encouraging the diversification and utilisation of existing facilities in accordance with environmental considerations.</i>	<p><i>Policy 5.3 Blue Spaces: Coast, Canals and Waterways</i></p> <p><i>17. Protect and maintain, where feasible, undeveloped riparian zones and natural floodplains along the River Corrib and its tributaries.</i></p>

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
<p><i>WR 1 Water Resources - Protect the water resources in the plan area, including rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, springs, turloughs, surface water and groundwater quality, as well as surface waters, aquatic and wetland habitats and freshwater and water dependant species in accordance with the requirements and guidance in the EU Water Framework Directive 2000 (2000/60/EC), the European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (as amended), the River Basin District Management Plan 2018 – 2021 and other relevant EU Directives, including associated national legislation and policy guidance (including any superseding versions of same) and also have regard to the Freshwater Pearl Mussel Sub-Basin Management Plans.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 5.3 Blue Spaces: Coast, Canals and Waterways</i></p> <p><i>18. Ensure that development does not have a significant adverse impact, incapable of satisfactory mitigation, on protected species.</i></p>
<p><i>WR 2 River Basin Management Plans - It is a policy objective of the Planning Authority to implement the programme of measures developed by the River Basin District Projects under the Water Framework Directive in relation to: Surface and groundwater interaction, Dangerous substances, Hydromorphology, Forestry, On site wastewater treatment systems, Municipal and industrial discharges, Urban pressures, Abstractions.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 5.4 Green Spaces: Urban Woodlands and Trees</i></p> <p><i>3. Integrate existing trees and hedgerows on development sites where appropriate and require tree planting, as part of landscaping schemes for new developments.</i></p>
<p><i>IW 1 Inland Waterways –</i></p> <p><i>(a) Protect and conserve the quality, character and features of inland waterways by controlling developments close to navigable and non-navigable waterways in accordance with best practice guidelines.</i></p> <p><i>(b) Preserve, protect and enhance Galway’s inland lakes and waterways for their amenity and recreational resource amenity.</i></p> <p><i>(c) Protect the riparian zones of watercourse systems throughout the County, recognising the benefits they provide in relation to flood risk management and their protection of the ecological integrity of watercourse</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 9.1 Flood Risk</i></p> <p><i>3. Ensure the recommendations of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 are taken into consideration in the assessment of developments in identified areas of flood risk and require site specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and associated design and construction measures appropriate to the scale and nature of the development and the risks arising, in all areas of identified flood risk including on sites where a only small proportion of the site is at risk of flooding and adopt a sequential approach in accordance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009).</i></p>

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
<p>systems and ensure they are considered in the land use zoning in Local Area Plans.</p> <p>(d) The Planning Authority will support in principle the development and upgrading of the Inland Waterways and their associated facilities in accordance with legislation, best practice and relevant management strategies, key stakeholders and bodies including Waterways Ireland.</p> <p>(e) Ensure all abstractions of water will be subject to assessment for compliance with the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.</p> <p>(f) Seek to provide additional accesses to lake shores and rivers for public rights of way, parking and layby facilities, where appropriate.</p> <p>(g) Developments shall ensure that adequate soil protection measures are undertaken, where appropriate, including investigations into the nature and extent of any soil/groundwater contamination.</p>	
<p>FL 1 Flood Risk Management Guidelines - It is the policy objective of Galway County Council to support, in co-operation with the OPW, the implementation of the EU Flood Risk Directive (2007/60/EC), the Flood Risk Regulations (SI No. 122 of 2010) and the DEHLG/OPW publication The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines (2009) (and any updated/superseding legislation or policy guidance) and Department Circular PL2/2014 or any updated / superseding version.</p>	<p>Policy 9.1 Flood Risk</p> <p>4. Protect and promote sustainable management and uses of water bodies and watercourses from inappropriate development, including rivers, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains.</p>
<p>FL 2 Flood Risk Management and Assessment - Comply with the requirements of the DoEHLG/OPW The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities and its accompanying Technical Appendices Document 2009 (including any updated/superseding documents). This will include the following:</p>	<p>Policy 9.1 Flood Risk</p> <p>7. Continue to protect the coastal area and the foreshore and avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of coastal erosion and/or would cause and escalate coastal erosion in adjoining areas.</p>

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
<p><i>(a) Avoid, reduce and/or mitigate, as appropriate in accordance with the Guidelines;</i></p> <p><i>(b) Development proposals in areas where there is an identified or potential risk of flooding or that could give rise to a risk of flooding elsewhere will be required to carry out a Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment, and justification test where appropriate, in accordance with the provisions of The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009 (or any superseding document); Any flood risk assessment should include an assessment of the potential impacts of climate change, such as an increase in the extent or probability of flooding, and any associated measures necessary to address these impacts;</i></p> <p><i>(c) Development that would be subject to an inappropriate risk of flooding or that would cause or exacerbate such a risk at other locations shall not normally be permitted;</i></p> <p><i>(d) Galway County Council shall work with other bodies and organisations, as appropriate, to help protect critical infrastructure, including water and wastewater, within the County, from risk of flooding.</i></p>	
<p><i>FL 3 Principles of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines - The Planning Authority shall implement the key principles of flood risk management set out in the Flood Risk Management Guidelines as follows:</i></p> <p><i>(a) Avoid development that will be at risk of flooding or that will increase the flooding risk elsewhere, where possible;</i></p> <p><i>(b) Substitute less vulnerable uses, where avoidance is not possible; and</i></p> <p><i>(c) Mitigate and manage the risk, where avoidance and substitution are not possible. Development should only be permitted in areas at risk of flooding when there are no alternative, reasonable sites available in areas at lower</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 9.1 Flood Risk</i></p> <p><i>8. Protect and maintain, where feasible, undeveloped riparian zones and natural floodplains along the River Corrib and its tributaries.</i></p>

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
<p><i>risk that also meet the objectives of proper planning and sustainable development. Vulnerable development in areas which have the highest flood risk should be avoided and/or only considered in exceptional circumstances (through a prescribed Justification Test) if adequate land or sites are not available in areas which have lower flood risk</i></p>	
<p><i>FL 6 Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) - Maintain and enhance, as appropriate, the existing surface water drainage system in the County. Ensure that new developments are adequately serviced with surface water drainage infrastructure and promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems in all new developments. Surface water run-off from development sites will be limited to predevelopment levels and planning applications for new developments will be required to provide details of surface water drainage and sustainable drainage systems proposals.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 9.2 Water Quality</i></p> <p><i>1. Support the actions of the River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 and future River Basin Management Plan in order to promote and achieve a restoration of good status, reduce chemical pollution and prevent deterioration of surface, coastal and groundwater quality, where appropriate.</i></p>
<p><i>FL 7 Protection of Waterbodies and Watercourses - Protect waterbodies and watercourses within the County from inappropriate development, including rivers, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains. This will include protection buffers in riverine, wetland and coastal areas as appropriate.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 9.2 Water Quality</i></p> <p><i>3. Ensure development adheres to prevailing environmental standards and guidelines and accords with emerging legislation and strategy on the marine environment.</i></p>
<p><i>FL 8 Flood Risk Assessment for Planning Applications and CFRAMS - Protect Flood Zone A and Flood Zone B from inappropriate development and direct developments/land uses into the appropriate Flood Zone in accordance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009 (or any superseding document) and the guidance contained in Development Management Standard 68.</i></p> <p><i>Site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is required for all planning applications in areas at elevated risk of flooding, even for developments appropriate to the particular flood zone. The detail of these site-specific FRAs</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 9.4 Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS)</i></p> <p><i>1. Ensure the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and sustainable surface water drainage management, wherever practical in the design of development to enable surface water run-off to be managed as near to its source as possible and achieve wider benefits such as sustainable development, water quality, biodiversity local amenity and climate adaptation.</i></p>

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
<p><i>will depend on the level of risk and scale of development. A detailed site-specific FRA should quantify the risks, the effects of selected mitigation and the management of any residual risks. The Planning Authority shall have regard to the results of any CFRAM Studies in the assessment of planning applications.</i></p> <p><i>Development proposals will need to be accompanied by a Development Management Justification Test in addition to the site-specific Flood Risk Assessment. Where only a small proportion of a site is at risk of flooding, the sequential approach shall be applied in site planning, in order to seek to ensure that no encroachment onto or loss of the flood plain occurs and/or that only water compatible development such as Open Space would be permitted for the lands which are identified as being at risk of flooding within that site.</i></p> <p><i>In Flood Zone C, where the probability of flooding is low (less than 0.1%, Flood Zone C), site-specific Flood Risk Assessment may be required and the developer should satisfy themselves that the probability of flooding is appropriate to the development being proposed.</i></p> <p><i>In addition to the County Plan SFRA datasets (including the Flood Zones, CFRAMS mapping, historical and predictive groundwater mapping, predictive pluvial mapping and historical flood risk indicator mapping, such as the Benefitting Lands mapping), new and emerging datasets (such as the OPW's National Fluvial Mapping that will supersede existing PFRA fluvial mapping for catchments greater than 5km²) must be consulted by prospective applicants for developments and will be made available to lower-tier Development Management processed in the Council.</i></p> <p><i>Applications for developments in coastal areas and associated assessments shall also consider wave overtopping and coastal erosion.</i></p>	

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
Air Quality, Noise and Climate	
<p><i>AQ 1 Ambient Air Quality - To promote the preservation of best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development in accordance with the EU Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFÉ) Directive (2008/50/EC) and ensure that all air emissions associated with new developments are within Environmental Quality Standards as set out in the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (SI No. 180 of 2011) (or any updated/superseding documents).</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 9.6 Air Quality and Noise</i></p> <p><i>1. Maintain air quality to a satisfactory standard by regulating and monitoring atmospheric emissions in accordance with EU policy directives on air quality and Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFÉ) Directive (2008/50/EC) by promoting and supporting initiatives to reduce air pollution and by increasing the use of sustainable transport modes and developing urban woodlands, encouraging tree planting, conserving and creating green open space.</i></p>
<p><i>AQ 2 Assessment of Air Quality - To require developments which would have the potential to have adverse impacts on air quality to carry out assessments of the impact of the development on air quality.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 9.6 Air Quality and Noise</i></p> <p><i>2. Ensure the design of development incorporates measures to minimise noise levels in their design and reduce the emission and intrusion of any noise or vibration which might adversely impact on amenities, in particular residential amenities where appropriate.</i></p>
<p><i>AQ 3 – Air Quality Mitigation Measures - To require the use of appropriate mitigation measures such as dust dampeners to minimise the potential impacts of developments on air quality.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 9.6 Air Quality and Noise</i></p> <p><i>3. Consider the details of Galway City Council Noise Action Plan 2019-2023 in the assessment and design of relevant development applications in the interests of protecting future amenity.</i></p>
<p><i>NP 1 Galway County Council Noise Action Plan 2019-2023 - To implement the Galway County Council Noise Action Plan 2019-2023 (and any subsequent Plan) in order to avoid, prevent and reduce the harmful effects, including annoyance, due to environmental noise exposure.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 8.7 Urban Design and Placemaking</i></p> <p><i>3. Ensure that development delivers high quality urban design, place making and public realm that contributes to urban regeneration in the city and that is resilient to potential impacts of climate change.</i></p>
<p><i>NP 2 Developments within Noise Maps (Noise Action Plan 2019-2023) - To require that where new developments are proposed within the noise limits of the noise maps for the designated sections of roads in the County, appropriate mitigation measures are undertaken so as to prevent harmful effects from environmental noise.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 8.7 Urban Design and Placemaking</i></p> <p><i>4. Encourage innovation in architecture and promote energy efficiency and green design.</i></p>

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
<p><i>NP 3 Noise Impact Assessments - To require an assessment of impact of the development on noise levels, having regard to the provisions of the Environmental Protection Agency Acts 1992 and 2003 and the EPA Noise Regulations 1994 when assessing planning application.</i></p>	
<p><i>NP 4 Noise Pollution and Regulation - Restrict development proposals causing noise pollution in excess of best practice standards and regulate and control activities likely to give rise to excessive noise, other than those activities which are regulated by the EPA.</i></p>	
<p><i>NP 5 Noise Mitigation Measures - Require activities likely to give rise to excessive noise to install noise mitigation measures and monitors. The provision of a noise audit may be required where appropriate.</i></p>	
<p><i>LP 2 Lighting and Climate Action - To require the use of low energy LED (or equivalent) lighting in support of Climate Action.</i></p>	
Cultural Heritage	
<p><i>HT2 Heritage Assets - To support and protect the heritage assets (built and natural) that are the focus for tourism development and that best practice standards in relation to the environmental management of tourism enterprises are adhered to.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 7.4 Bilingual City</i></p> <p><i>1. Protect and promote the distinctive cultural and linguistic heritage of the city and continue to support Galway’s status as a Bilingual City and recognise the importance of the Irish language as a cultural, community and economic resource.</i></p>
<p><i>HT3 Sustainable Tourism Industry - To support the development of a more sustainable tourism industry which minimises adverse impacts on local communities, the built heritage, landscapes, habitats and species; leaving them undiminished as a resource for future generations, while supporting social and economic prosperity.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 8.1 Record of Protected Structures</i></p> <p><i>1. Protect structures listed in the Record of Protected Structures, in accordance with legislation and DEHLG Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines 2011.</i></p>

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
<p><i>MCH 1 Cultural and Marine Heritage - To prevent where possible marine development from compromising the quality and significance of marine culture and heritage in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 8.1 Record of Protected Structures</i></p> <p><i>2.Ensure new development enhances the character or setting of a protected structure.</i></p>
<p><i>TWHS 1 Tentative World Heritage Sites - Protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the tentative World Heritage Sites in County Galway namely the Western Stone Forts and the Burren that are included in the UNESCO Tentative List and engage with other national and international initiatives which promote the special built, natural and cultural heritage of places in the County. Collaborate with landowners, local communities and other relevant stakeholders to achieve World Heritage Site status for the sites identified in County Galway.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 8.1 Record of Protected Structures</i></p> <p><i>5.Have regard to the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage in the assessment of development.</i></p>
<p><i>AH 1 Architectural Heritage - Ensure the protection of the architectural heritage of County Galway which is a unique and special resource, having regard to the policy guidance contained in the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines 2011 (and any updated/superseding document).</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 8.1 Record of Protected Structures</i></p> <p><i>6. Consult with the DHLGH and have regard to recommendations of the DHLGH on planning applications relating to protected structures.</i></p>
<p><i>AH 2 Protected Structures –</i></p> <p><i>(a) Ensure the protection and sympathetic enhancement of structures including their curtilage and attendant grounds included and proposed for inclusion in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) that are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest, together with the integrity of their character and setting.</i></p> <p><i>(b) Review the Record of Protected Structures in order to provide a comprehensive schedule for the protection of structures of special importance in the County during the lifetime of the plan.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 8.1 Record of Protected Structures</i></p> <p><i>7.Implement proactive measures to encourage the conservation of protected structures</i></p>

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
<p>(c) Ensure that development proposals are appropriate in terms of architectural treatment, character, scale and form to the existing protected structure and not detrimental to the special character and integrity of the protected structure and its setting.</p> <p>(d) Ensure high quality architectural design of all new developments relating to or which may impact on structures (and their settings) included in the Record of Protected Structures.</p> <p>(e) Promote and ensure best conservation practice through the use of specialist conservation professionals and craft persons.</p> <p>(f) Prohibit development proposals, either in whole or in part, for the demolition of protected structures, save in exceptional circumstances.</p>	
<p>AH 3 Protection of Structure on the NIAH - Give regard to and consideration of all structures which are included in the NIAH for County Galway, which are not currently included in the Record of Protected Structures, in development management functions.</p>	<p>Policy 8.1 Record of Protected Structures</p> <p>8. Promote sustainable building design, best conservation practice and the appropriate maintenance, adaption and reuse of historic buildings.</p>
<p>AH 4 Architectural Conservation Areas - Protect, conserve and enhance the special character of the Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA) included in this plan through the appropriate management and control of the design, location and layout of new development, modifications, alterations or extensions to existing structures, surviving historic plots and street patterns and/or modifications to the character or setting of the Architectural Conservation Area. Works within the ACA shall ensure the conservation of traditional features and building elements that contribute to the character of the area. The special character of an area includes its traditional building stock and material finishes, spaces, streetscape, shop fronts, landscape and</p>	<p>Policy 8.2 Architectural Conservation Areas</p> <p>1. Protect and enhance the character and special interest of designated Architectural Conservation Areas, in accordance with legislation and DEHLG Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines 2011.</p>

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
<p><i>setting. New proposals shall have appropriate regard to scale, plot, form, mass, design, materials, colours and function.</i></p> <p><i>This will be achieved by;</i></p> <p><i>(a) Protecting all buildings, structures, groups of structures, sites, landscapes and all features which contribute to the special character of the ACA from demolition and non-sympathetic alterations.</i></p> <p><i>(b) Promote appropriate and sensitive reuse and rehabilitation of buildings and sites within the ACA.</i></p> <p><i>(c) Ensure new development within or adjacent to an ACA respects the established character of the area and contributes positively in terms of design, scale, setting and material finishes to the ACA.</i></p> <p><i>(d) Promote high quality architectural design within ACAs.</i></p> <p><i>(e) Seek the repair and reuse of traditional shopfronts and where appropriate, encourage new shop fronts of a high-quality architectural design.</i></p> <p><i>(f) Ensure that all new signage, lighting, advertising and utilities to buildings within ACA are designed, constructed, and located in such a manner that they do not detract from the character of the ACA.</i></p> <p><i>(g) Protect and enhance the quality of open spaces within ACAs and ensure the protection and where necessary reuse of street furniture and use of appropriate materials during the course of public infrastructure schemes within ACAs.</i></p> <p><i>(h) Prohibit development proposals, either in whole or in part for the demolition of a structure within an Architectural Conservation Area that contributes to the special character of the area.</i></p>	

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
<p><i>(i) Protect structures in ACAs from non-sympathetic alterations and encourage appropriate infill developments.</i></p> <p><i>(j) Works materially affecting the character of a protected structure or the exterior of a building/ structure within an ACA will require planning permission;</i></p> <p><i>(k) Any works carried out to a protected structure or the exterior of a building/structure within an ACA shall be in accordance with best conservation practice and use sustainable and appropriate materials.</i></p> <p><i>(l) Ensure that any development, modifications, alterations, or extensions materially affecting the character of a protected structure, or a structure adjoining a protected structure, or a structure within or adjacent to an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA), is sited and designed appropriately and is not detrimental to the character or setting of the protected structure or of the ACA</i></p>	
<p><i>AH 5 Maintenance and Re-use of existing Building Stock</i></p> <p><i>Promote the maintenance and appropriate re-use of the existing stock of buildings with architectural merit as a more sustainable option to their demolition and redevelopment.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 8.2 Architectural Conservation Areas</i></p> <p><i>3. Ensure that developments within an Architectural Conservation Area respects and enhances the character and special interest of the ACA.</i></p>
<p><i>AH 10 Designed Landscapes - Protect the surviving historic designed landscapes in the County and promote the conservation of their essential character, both built and natural. Consider protection of the designed landscape by inclusion in an Architectural Conservation Area. Development proposals in designed landscape shall be accompanied by an appraisal of the contributing elements and an impact assessment.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 8.2 Architectural Conservation Areas</i></p> <p><i>4. Ensure the character of Architectural Conservation Areas is preserved by protecting and conserving historic street furniture and paving features and ensure that new street furniture and surfacing is designed to be compatible with the character of the ACA.</i></p>
<p><i>ARC 1 Legislative Context - Support and promote the preservation, conservation and appropriate management and enhancement of the</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 8.3 Vernacular Heritage</i></p>

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
<i>County's archaeological sites and monuments, together with the settings of these monuments, having regard to the legislative, statutory and policy provisions relevant to the conservation of the archaeological heritage.</i>	2. Take cognisance of the 'The Inventory of Thatched Buildings' in the assessment of any proposed works to such structures.
<i>ARC 4 Protection of Archaeological Sites - Protect archaeological sites and monuments their settings and visual amenity and archaeological objects and underwater archaeological sites that are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places, in the ownership/guardianship of the State, or that are subject of Preservation Orders or have been registered in the Register of Historic Monuments, or that are newly discovered and seek to protect important archaeological landscapes.</i>	Policy 8.4 Archaeology 1. Protect, preserve and promote the archaeological heritage of the city including underwater archaeology in rivers, lakes, intertidal and subtidal environments.
<i>ARC 5 Development Management - All planning applications for new development, redevelopment, any ground works, refurbishment, and restoration, etc. within areas of archaeological potential or within close proximity to Recorded Monuments or within the historic towns of County Galway will take account of the archaeological heritage of the area and the need for archaeological mitigation.</i>	Policy 8.4 Archaeology 2. Ensure that proposed development within the designated city centre Zone of Archaeological Notification is not detrimental to the character of an archaeological site or its setting.
<i>ARC 8 Underwater Archaeological Sites - To protect and preserve the archaeological value of underwater archaeological sites and associated features. In assessing proposals for development, the Council will take account of the potential underwater archaeology of rivers, lakes, intertidal and subtidal locations.</i>	Policy 8.4 Archaeology 3. Have regard to the archaeological recommendations of the DHLGH on any planning applications.
<i>ARC 9 Recorded Monuments - Ensure that any development in the immediate vicinity of a Recorded Monument is sensitively designed and sited and does not detract from the monument or its visual amenity.</i>	Policy 8.4 Archaeology 5. Require the surveying, recording or excavation of archaeological heritage to include standing historic buildings and underwater archaeological heritage during the development process, where appropriate.

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
<p><i>ARC 10 Zones of Archaeological Potential - To protect the Zones of Archaeological Potential located within both urban and rural areas and around archaeological monuments generally as identified in the Record of Monuments and Places. Any development within the ZAPs will need to take cognisance of the potential for subsurface archaeology and if archaeology is demonstrated to be present appropriate mitigation (such as preservation in situ/buffer zones) will be required.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 8.4 Archaeology</i></p> <p><i>6. Seek the preservation in situ or, at a minimum, preservation by record of archaeological sites/monuments included in the Record of Monuments and Places and of previously unknown sites, features or objects of archaeological interest that are revealed through development activity.</i></p>
<p><i>ARC 11 Industrial and Post Medieval Archaeology - Protect and preserve the archaeological value of industrial and post medieval archaeology such as mills, limekilns, bridges, piers, harbours, penal chapels and dwellings. Proposals for refurbishment, works to or redevelopment/conversion of these sites should be subject to careful assessment.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 8.4 Archaeology</i></p> <p><i>7. Ensure that any development proposal with potential to impact on archaeological heritage, including the setting and amenity of sites and monuments, includes for an archaeological assessment. This includes within terrestrial, riverine, inter-tidal and sub-tidal environments.</i></p>
<p><i>CUH 1 Cultural Heritage - Protect and promote the cultural heritage assets and the intangible cultural heritage assets of County Galway as important social and economic assets.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 8.5 Industrial Archaeology</i></p> <p><i>1. Promote the protection of the varied industrial heritage of the city and encourage greater appreciation and public awareness of this heritage.</i></p>
<p><i>CUH 2 Special Places of Historic Interest - To protect and promote where possible special places of historical interest.</i></p>	
<p>Landscape & Visual</p>	
<p><i>LCM 1 Preservation of Landscape Character - Preserve and enhance the character of the landscape where, and to the extent that, in the opinion of the Planning Authority, the proper planning and sustainable development of the area requires it, including the preservation and enhancement, where possible of views and prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest.</i></p>	

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
<p><i>LCM 2 Landscape Sensitivity Classification - The Planning Authority shall have regard to the landscape sensitivity classification of sites in the consideration of any significant development proposals and, where necessary, require a Landscape/Visual Impact Assessment to accompany such proposals. This shall be balanced against the need to develop key strategic infrastructure to meet the strategic aims of the plan.</i></p>	
<p><i>LCM 3 Landscape Sensitivity Ratings - Consideration of landscape sensitivity ratings shall be an important factor in determining development uses in areas of the County. In areas of high landscape sensitivity, the design and the choice of location of proposed development in the landscape will also be critical considerations.</i></p>	
<p><i>LCM 4 Open/Unfenced Landscape - Preserve the status of traditionally open/unfenced landscape. The merits of each case will be considered in light of landscape sensitivity ratings and views of amenity importance.</i></p>	
<p><i>PVSR 1 Protected Views and Scenic Routes - Preserve the protected views and scenic routes as detailed in Maps 8.3 and 8.4 from development that in the view of the Planning Authority would negatively impact on said protected views and scenic routes. This shall be balanced against the need to develop key infrastructure to meet the strategic aims of the plan.</i></p>	
<p><i>ESK 2 Esker Areas - Have regard to the Landscape Character Assessment of the County of Galway and its recommendations relating to the Esker areas and any other subsequent relevant reports/ data.</i></p>	
Material Assets	
<p><i>GCTPS 1 - It is a policy objective of Galway County Council to support and facilitate the implementation of the Galway County Transport & Planning Study and Galway Transportation Strategy across all modes of transport.</i></p>	<p><i>Policy 4.4 Sustainable Mobility – Walk and Cycle 8. Promote, facilitate and maintain maximum connectivity and permeability for pedestrians and cyclists in the design and management of new public and</i></p>

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
	<i>private projects and in upgrading and retrofitting existing developments in accordance with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2019) and Permeability a Best Practice Guide, NTA (2015).</i>
<i>NR3 Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) and Road Safety Audit (RSA) - Require all applications for significant development proposals which have the potential to impact on the National Road Network to be accompanied by a Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) and Road Safety Audit (RSA), carried out by suitably competent persons, in accordance with the TII's Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines and TII Publications (Standard) GE-STY-01024 (Road Safety Audit) respectively.</i>	<i>Policy 4.6 Road and Street Network and Accessibility 5. Implement best practice in road and street design according to the hierarchy of road users as set out in the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2013) as updated (2019) and 2020, where road design is subject to DMURS.</i>
<i>NNR 1 Restricted Regional Roads - To safeguard the capacity and safety of Restricted Regional Roads listed in Table 6.3, against development where a maximum speed limit applies in order to protect the carrying capacity and safety of such roads.</i>	<i>Specific Objectives – Modal Change: Public Transport 13. Ensure biodiversity and appropriate greening/nature based solutions are incorporated, into greenways, segregated cycleways and pathways where appropriate and ensure that paths and structures are constructed from suitable materials and incorporating a SuDS approach that supports and contributes to ecological connectivity and biodiversity.</i>
<i>NNR 2 Safeguard Regional and Local Roads - To safeguard the carrying capacity and safety of the County's regional and local road network.</i>	<i>Policy 9.7 Light Pollution 1. Ensure the design of external lighting minimises the incidence of light pollution, glare and spillage into the surrounding environment and has due regard to the visual and residential amenities of surrounding areas.</i>
<i>NNR 3 Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets - Implement the national design standards outlined in the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS 2019) for urban streets and roads within the 50/60 kph zone.</i>	<i>Policy 9.8 Waste Management 6. Promote the implementation of the City Council Litter Management Plan and other litter management initiatives in order to minimise and control the extent of litter pollution in the city.</i>
<i>NNR 6 Transport and Traffic Assessments and Road Safety Audits - To require the preparation of Transport and Traffic Assessments and Road Safety Audits</i>	

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
<p><i>for new developments in accordance with the requirements set out in the TII Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines.</i></p>	
<p><i>NNR 7 Mobility Management Plans - To require mobility management plans to be submitted with applications for trip intensive developments.</i></p>	
<p><i>WS 2 Protection of Water Supplies - Collaborate with Irish Water and the Group Water Federation Scheme to protect, conserve and enhance all existing and potential water resources in the County to ensure compliance with the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014 (as amended) and compliance of water supplies with the parameters identified in these Regulations.</i></p>	
<p><i>WS 3 River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021 - Support the implementation of the relevant recommendations and measures as outlined in the relevant River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021, and associated Programme of Measures, or any such plan that may supersede same during the lifetime of this plan.</i></p>	
<p><i>WS 4 Requirement to Liaise with Irish Water – Water Supply - Ensure that new developments are adequately serviced with a suitable quantity and quality of drinking water supply and require that all new developments intending to connect to a public water supply liaise with Irish Water with regard to the water (and wastewater) infrastructure required.</i></p>	
<p><i>WS 7 Water Quality - Require that new development proposals would ensure that there would not be an unacceptable impact on water quality and quantity including surface water, ground water, designated source protection areas, river corridors and associated wetlands.</i></p>	

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
<p><i>CWS 1 Water Conservation with all Development - To ensure all developments incorporate water conservation measures such as rainwater harvesting to minimise wastage of water supply.</i></p>	
<p><i>CWS 3 Promotion of Water Conservation - To support Irish Water in promoting public awareness and involvement in water conservation measures by households, business and industry.</i></p>	
<p><i>WW 4 Requirement to Liaise with Irish Water – Wastewater - Ensure that new developments will only be permitted which are adequately serviced with sufficient capacity for appropriate collection, treatment and disposal (in compliance with the Water Framework Directive and River Basin Management Plan) to the public sewer unless provided for otherwise by the plan. Developers shall liaise with Irish Water with regard to the wastewater (and water) infrastructure to ensure sufficient capacity is available prior to the submission of a planning application.</i></p>	
<p><i>WW 7 Sustainable Drainage Systems - To require the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems to minimise and limit the extent of hard surfacing and paving and require the use of SuDS measures be incorporated in all new development (including extensions to existing developments). All development proposals shall be accompanied by a comprehensive SuDS assessment including run-off quantity, run off quality and impacts on habitat and water quality.</i></p>	
<p><i>WW 8 Storm Water Infrastructure - To support the improvement of storm water infrastructure and to increase the use of sustainable drainage and reduce the risk of flooding in urban environments.</i></p>	
<p><i>WW 10 Surface Water Drainage - To require all new developments to provide a separate foul and surface water drainage system and to incorporate</i></p>	

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
<p><i>sustainable urban drainage systems where appropriate in new development and the public realm.</i></p>	
<p><i>WW 11 Protection of Irish Water Collection Systems - To prohibit the discharge of additional surface water to combined (foul and surface water) sewers in order to maximise the capacity of existing collection systems for foul water.</i></p>	
<p><i>WM 1 Connacht and Ulster Waste Management Plan 2015-2021 - Support the implementation of the Connacht and Ulster Waste Management Plan 2015- 2021 or any updated version of this document within the lifetime of the plan.</i></p>	
<p><i>WM 2 Requirements for Waste Management - Support and promote the circular economy principles, prioritising prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery, and to sustainably manage residual waste. New developments will be expected to take account of the provisions of the Waste Management Plan for the Region and observe those elements of it that relate to waste prevention and minimisation, waste recycling facilities, and the capacity for source segregation.</i></p>	
<p><i>WM 4 Waste Legalisation - To require that all waste disposal shall be undertaken in compliance with the requirements of the Environmental Protection Agency and relevant Waste Management Legislation.</i></p>	
<p><i>WM 5 Construction and Environmental Management Plans - Construction Environment Management Plans shall be prepared in advance of the construction of relevant projects and implemented throughout. Such plans shall incorporate relevant mitigation measures which have been integrated into the Plan and any lower tier Environmental Impact Statement or</i></p>	

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
<p><i>Appropriate Assessment. CEMPs typically provide details of intended construction practice for the proposed development, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>(a) location of the sites and materials compound(s) including area(s) identified for the storage of construction refuse;</i> <i>(b) location of areas for construction site offices and staff facilities;</i> <i>(c) details of site security fencing and hoardings;</i> <i>(d) details of on-site car parking facilities for site workers during the course of construction;</i> <i>(e) details of the timing and routing of construction traffic to and from the construction site and associated directional signage;</i> <i>(f) measures to obviate queuing of construction traffic on the adjoining road network;</i> <i>(g) measures to prevent the spillage or deposit of clay, rubble or other debris;</i> <i>(h) alternative arrangements to be put in place for pedestrians and vehicles in the case of the closure of any public right of way during the course of site development works;</i> <i>(i) details of appropriate mitigation measures for noise, dust and vibration, and monitoring of such levels;</i> <i>(j) containment of all construction-related fuel and oil within specially constructed bunds to ensure that fuel spillages are fully contained (such bunds shall be roofed to exclude rainwater);</i> <i>(k) disposal of construction/demolition waste and details of how it is proposed to manage excavated soil, including compliance with 2006 Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction</i> 	

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
<p><i>and Demolition Projects, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government;</i></p> <p><i>(l) a water and sediment management plan, providing for means to ensure that surface water runoff is controlled such that no silt or other pollutants enter local water courses or drains;</i></p>	
<p><i>WM 9 Separate Collection of Waste - Encourage and support the provision of separate collection of waste in accordance with the requirements of the Waste Management (Food Waste) Regulations 2009, the Waste Framework Directive Regulations, 2011 and other relevant legislation.</i></p>	
<p><i>ICT 5 Siting and Design of Telecommunications Infrastructure - To require best practice in both siting and design in relation to the erection of communication antennae and support infrastructure, in the interests of visual amenity and the protection of sensitive landscapes.</i></p>	
<p><i>LP 1 Lighting Schemes - To require that all developments shall ensure lighting schemes are designed so that excessive light spillage is minimised to ensure light pollution in the surrounding environment including residential amenity, wildlife and near public roads is limited. Such lighting schemes shall be submitted and agreed with the Planning Authority</i></p>	
<p><i>LP 3 Dark Skies - To encourage the maintenance of dark skies in rural areas and to limit light pollution in urban and rural areas.</i></p>	
<p><i>MCT 3 Existing Coastal Walkways - To support proposals that improve the existing network of coastal walks within the county in accordance with environmental considerations.</i></p>	
<p><i>TI 4 Tourism and Infrastructure Capacity - The potential environmental effects of a likely increase in tourists/tourism-related traffic volumes in particular locations/along particular routes shall be considered and mitigated as</i></p>	

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029
<i>appropriate. Such a consideration should include potential impacts on existing infrastructure (including drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) resulting from tourism proposals. Galway County Council will support Irish Water and Fáilte Ireland to ensure that tourism is serviced by adequate and appropriate water services infrastructure.</i>	

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.

The implementation of the Galway City DEDP will be overseen by the creation of a working group that will operate until 2030. The DEDP Working Group is tasked with ensuring stakeholder commitment to project delivery and implementing the DEDP as a five-year operational plan based on the agreed destination development focus for Galway City.

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.

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Table 10.1 Environmental Monitoring Programme

SEO Ref.	SEO Description	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources and Monitoring Frequency
Biodiversity (Flora & Fauna) (B)				
B1	Ensure compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to the protection of Natura 2000 Sites and Annex habitats and species ⁴⁷ 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>
B2	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>

⁴⁷ '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.

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

SEO Ref.	SEO Description	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources and Monitoring Frequency
B3	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.
Population & Human Health (PHH)				
PHH1	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.
PHH2	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.

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

SEO Ref.	SEO Description	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources and Monitoring Frequency
Land, Soils & Geology (LSG)				
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.
Water Quality (WQ)				
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>

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

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.
Air Quality, Noise & Climate (ANC)				
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.
Material Assets (MA)				
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.

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

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.
MA2	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.
MA3	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.

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

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	
Cultural Heritage (CH)				
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.
Landscape & Visual (LV)				
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.

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

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.

SEA Environmental Report

11 References

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12 Appendices

Appendix 1: Detailed Assessment of Environmental Effects of the Destination Catalyst Projects and Destination Enabling Projects listed within the Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

Table 8.1A Environmental Assessment of the Action Plan 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)

No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
1	CATALYST PROJECT 1 : Galway Museum & City Attractions						
1.1	Galway Museum	Deliver sustainably a best-in-class visitor experience at Galway Museum to maximise the significant investment in the existing museum and the adjacent Comerford House, Spanish Arch experience and wall walk, and construction of a new three-storey building contiguous to Comerford House, incorporating the Sea Gate archaeological site.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), ANC (ANC1, ANC2)	CH (CH1, CH2)	Yes
1.2	Galway Museum and public realm – iconic Galway sites	Deliver an iconic visitor experience at the Galway Museum by introducing the visitor to the many stories, heritage and 'tribes' of Galway.					
1.3	Signature Visitor Experiences	Undertake an analysis of the opportunity for Galway to develop signature visitor attractions for the city centre linked to the themes of culture, creativity and science. This will include concept and feasibility analysis of possible locations and future options to consider e.g. a Macnas visitor experience in Galway City.					
1.4	University of Galway Visitor Experiences	Undertake a feasibility analysis on developing the visitor experience at the main University of Galway campus to ensure the campus is an integral part of the Galway city visitor experience. Undertake an assessment of the potential of existing displays and university department museums to create new on campus visitor experiences.					
<p>SEA Evaluation: The listed projects and associated actions will result in positive effects on population and human health.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the actions could have the potential to result in negative environmental effect on cultural heritage. The projects where there is a requirement for development of existing and new infrastructure might also give rise to uncertain environmental effects on other environmental themes</p>							

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
		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.					
2.	CATALYST PROJECT 2: Vibrant Galway Neighbourhoods						
2.1	Vibrant Galway Neighbourhoods	Support the neighbourhood business communities to achieve their full tourism potential. This will include Eyre Square, West End, Latin Quarter, Docklands, Woodquay and Salthill.	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
2.1a	Galway Tribes – Streets and Lanes	Undertake a review of the requirements to develop a Galway Tribes / Living City project on the streets and lanes to highlight the personalities of the local neighbourhoods and highlighting the character of the people living in Galway City. The story of City of the Tribes should be widely embraced across the neighbourhoods and by the tourism industry to bring the stories back to life.					
2.1b	Evening Time Innovation	Develop the evening time opportunity by developing distinctive neighbourhoods evening experiences to grow the city wide programme of evening time activity by supporting the Night Time Economy Officer.					
2.1c	Evening Time and Venues	Assess the opportunity to develop a programme of evening time performances in iconic Galway venues and sites as part of the development of evening time economy linked to Galway’s profile for culture and creativity.					
2.1d	Enhancement of place	Undertake an assessment of the requirements to enhance the presentation of city centre buildings and the rejuvenation of sites that contributes to the sense of vibrancy across the various neighbourhoods in Galway.					
2.1e	Outdoor dining	Review the current outdoor dining opportunities in the city and review the current policies to identify new opportunities through the Galway					

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
		Neighbourhoods initiative to strengthen the appeal of Galway as a dining and food destination.					
2.2	City to Salthill Orientation	Enhance the orientation and visitor experience from the City to Salthill to encourage increased visitor footfall from the city to Salthill.					
2.3	Woodquay Urban Regeneration	Deliver the projects that will impact positively on the visitor experience to Galway through the Woodquay Urban Regeneration investment and PFG 2 - Facility Centres for Water Sports Activities Scheme. This will include access to the bus connects, Woodquay plaza, blueway, greenway, PFG 2 Facility Centres for Water Sports Activities, University campus, Nuns Island.					
2.4	Augustine Hill Urban Regeneration	Examine the visitor experience and destination enhancement opportunities for tourism, culture and food as part of any future urban regeneration of the Augustine Hill area and identify how it can contribute to the development of Galway City as a tourism destination. This will include the examination of a visitor attraction, food experiences and cultural facilities.					
2.5	Claddagh Ring Experience	Develop a Claddagh Ring experience telling visitors the story of the origin of the ring linked to the story of Galway City.					
2.6	Outdoor Performance Spaces	Undertake a review of existing and new outdoor performance & event spaces across the city and develop a plan for year round usage and understand associated opportunities and challenges to address. The assessment will also include the identification of potential new spaces and maximising the investment in urban regeneration funding delivering new outdoor performance space across the city.					
2.7	Festival / Event Programme & Neighbourhoods	Host elements of Galway festivals and events programming across a mix of Galway neighbourhoods that will encourage attendees to explore more of the city e.g. mix of festival/event programmes linked to the neighbourhoods theme e.g. Ukulele, Oyster Festival, Blas festival.					

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
2.8	Music in the City	Review the requirements to create a year round Galway Trad Trail and Music City Trail.					
2.9	Medieval Galway Experience	Examine the visitor experience potential of a trail linking the Medieval points of interest across the city e.g. Medieval Stones of Galway incorporating Browne's Door and the Medieval Stones of Galway story into future public realm projects.					
<p>SEA Evaluation:</p> <p>The listed projects and associated actions will result in positive effects on population and human health.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the actions could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect. The projects 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. Increased tourism in this location would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management and the effect on material assets and water quality is also uncertain. The development of these projects could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast. These works can also potentially result in the spread of invasive species.</p>							
3.	CATALYST PROJECT 3: Destination Visitor Orientation						
3.1	Destination Town Project	Complete the visitor orientation project under the Destination Town to create a Galway outdoor museum connecting with the Galway neighbourhoods.					
3.2	City Centre Orientation	Deliver a programme of public realm enhancements incorporating visitor orientation to ensure that the city centre visitor experience plays a role in visitor dispersion across the city.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1,		Yes
3.3	City Pedestrianisation	Examine the short term to long term opportunities for the pedestrianisation of areas within the city that open up new visitor experiences and encourage greater dispersion of visitors across the city during the day time and night time. This will include the					

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
		pedestrianisation of Middle Street and Cross Street on a full time basis and identify how they can contribute to the visitor experience in the city.			MA2), CH (CH1, CH2)		
3.4	Night Time Economy Accessibility and Inclusivity	Explore collaboration opportunities with businesses within the Night Time Economy, and tourism and hospitality sectors generally, to raise awareness and encourage practical steps to be taken at business level to improve accessibility and inclusivity for all visitors.					
3.5	Galway Welcome Sites	Develop a Galway Welcome programme to ensure a stronger sense of arrival and welcome to Galway at key arrival points and on the approach to the city. The project will identify key sites to create a sense of welcome to Galway City as an international visitor destination. The project will also link with future transport infrastructure e.g. Ceant Station. The Galway Welcome initiative will also align with future city destination branding.					
3.6	Galway Creative & Culture Route – Arts and Science Trail	Undertake an assessment of the requirements to create a creative culture city trail linked to the medtech profile and creative expertise in Galway to deliver a creative arts and science trail/visitor experience in Galway.					
3.7	Destination Visitor Orientation	Develop a city mapping approach linked to the Galway/Gaillimh brand and apply the branding to all future mapping and visitor orientation activity.					
3.8	Tech & Smart City	Undertake a review of compatibility of current visitor wayfinding and orientation with Google Maps and identify how visitors are influenced pre-visit and while in the destination to explore the wider area.					
3.9	Galway City Tourist Information Office	Undertake an assessment of a suitable location in Eyre Square for a Discover Ireland tourist information office.					

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
<p>SEA Evaluation: The listed projects and associated actions will result in positive effects on population and human health.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the actions could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect. The projects 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. Increased tourism in this location would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management and the effect on material assets and water quality is also uncertain.</p>							
<p>4. CATALYST PROJECT 4: Food Market / Hall</p>							
4.1	Galway Food Market	Support the development of a year round indoor food market for Galway that will accommodate a daytime and night market	PHH (PHH1, PHH2) MA (MA3)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2), CH (CH1, CH2)		Yes
<p>SEA Evaluation: This objective will enhance tourism opportunities and will have positive effect on population and human health.</p> <p>However, the new development 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. Increased tourism in these locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management.</p>							
<p>5. CATALYST PROJECT 5: Bilingual City</p>							
5.1	Gaeltacht City Experience Development	Develop a Bilingual City Gaelige tourism experience toolkit that integrates the Irish language further into the Galway City visitor experience with a primary focus on assessing the viability of an Irish language festival to be hosted as part of the profiling of Galway as	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)	B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ			No

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
		Ireland's Bilingual City with potential to incorporate living Irish culture aspects including traditional music, song and dance and language- based events.		(WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)			
5.2	Urban Gaeltacht Experience	Develop an Irish language tourism itinerary for Galway City, and a programme of Irish language weekends to create the Urban Gaeltacht experience for visitors combining the Irish language, music and other cultural activity e.g. Trad on the Prom.					
5.3	Ionad Gaeilge Visitor Experience	Undertake a feasibility analysis of the development of an Ionad Gaeilge and visitor experience focused on the Irish language in Galway City.					
5.4	Irish language Saleable Experiences	Develop a suite of saleable Irish language experiences, building on the Failte Ireland Gaeilge agus Failte project working on experience development to bringing the experiences to market.					
<p>SEA Evaluation: These actions will enhance visitor experience and promote tourism resulting in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.</p> <p>No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.</p>							
<p>6. CATALYST PROJECT 6: Festivals & Events</p>							
6.1	Galway's Festival and Event Strategy	Assess the Events and Festival offering of Galway City and identify potential areas for further growth by creating a Festival and Events team within City Hall. Adopt a strategic approach for existing festivals in Galway City that will deliver a strong portfolio of Festivals and Participative Events that are rooted in the destination and unique to Galway City. Thus creating an authentic year-round (excluding July and August) Festivals and Events calendar, with a few selected as Hero's to headline the City of Tribes.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2),		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), MA (MA1,		Yes

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
6.2	Festival Audit	Undertake an audit of all festivals in Galway to assess the capability, type, scale and ambition of Festivals. Identify Festivals within this cohort that have the resources, capability and ambition to grow. Identify the potential around ensuring festivals take place throughout the year to tackle seasonality challenges. A focus of this could be to also build on existing one day events to expand into two day festivals or more.			MA2, MA3), CH (CH1, CH2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2)		
6.3	Year Round Festival Venue	Maximise the opportunity of the Galway International Arts Festival for Galway City through the identification/development of a showcase venue suitable for the event as part of the scoping study on the current Cultural infrastructure in Galway City. Leverage the international and domestic tourism profile opportunity provided by the Galway International Arts festival for Galway and establish the suitable venue as a proposition capable off hosting events year round.					
6.4	Christmas in Galway	Develop the destination's capacity to grow the Christmas in Galway programme and maximise the value of the event by increasing the range of things to do and see in establishing Galway as Ireland's Christmas destination.					
6.5	Galway Races and City Engagement	Deliver an annual city/neighbourhoods engagement programme around the Galway Racing Festival to ensure a connection between the event and the city.					
6.6	Off-peak Events	Maximise the off-peak event opportunity for Galway through a packaging focus around Events in the shoulder season e.g. Connacht Rugby, Race Meetings, GAA, Galway United, Christmas Market, Comedy Festival, Blas, Tonnta.					
6.7	Galway Bank Holidays	Devise a strategic approach to grow the destination's ownership of the bank holiday calendar where international and domestic visitors will consider Galway as Ireland's destination for bank holiday weekends. The bank holiday development approach will focus on protecting the					

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
		reputation of Galway as a leading bank holiday destination by providing more things for visitors to do and see during these periods.					
6.8	Outdoor / Active Festivals	Develop Festivals within the Outdoor Active cohort – looking primarily at sea swimming, rowing, sailing and kayaking. This will assist the natural landscape (e.g. coastline and waterways) in offering sustainable tourism products on a year round basis.					
<p>SEA Evaluation: The listed projects and associated actions will result in positive effects on population and human health.</p> <p>The projects 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. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast. Increased tourism in these locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management.</p>							
7.	CATALYST PROJECT 7: Cultural Venue / Arts Focal Point						
7.1	Municipal Cultural Venue	Undertake a scoping study on existing cultural infrastructure in Galway City followed by feasibility analysis of a Municipal and Cultural venue for Galway City.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), LV (LV_1, LV2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2,		Yes
7.2	Merchant's Road	Deliver a new cultural experience in the venue proposed as part of the Merchants Road Lower development.					
7.3	Dominic Street	Integrate new cultural infrastructure into the proposed Galway Creative and Culture Route across the city to demonstrate the depth of cultural assets accessible by visitors during the day and evening.					
7.4	The 'Manse' Nuns Island Theatre	Deliver the cultural infrastructure at The Nuns Island Theatre on Nuns Island.					

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
7.5	Galway Cultural Venues	Co-ordinate the year round programming across Galway's cultural venues and opportunities to package culture events and performances around the off-peak periods.			MA3), CH (CH1, CH2)		
<p>SEA Evaluation: The listed projects and associated actions will result in positive effects on population and human health.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the actions could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect on cultural heritage. The projects 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. Increased tourism in these locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management.</p>							
8. CATALYST PROJECT 8: Galway Waters Experience							
8.1	Leisureland	Deliver a framework for leisureland & Salthill Park that will maximise its potential for the local community and attract visitors on a year round basis to Galway and develop a Vision that provides the basis for future masterplanning.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		ANC (ANC1, ANC2), CH (CH1, CH2)	B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2),	Yes
8.2	Leisureland Visioning	Develop a sustainable tourism vision for Leisureland & Salthill Park to maximise its potential for the local community and attract visitors on a year round basis to Galway. This vision will contribute to the wider masterplanning and framework for Salthill and the Seafront Framework examining it in the context of its role in the Galway DEDP.					
8.3	Salthill Village Visitor Experience	Undertake a Salthill Village and Seafront Masterplan that will set out a vision framework to guide planned and future projects and initiatives in Salthill including the promenade flood defence & improvements, traffic and parking management, tidal pools, Leisureland & Salthill Park redevelopment, Blackrock Tower maintenance and other potential projects to ensure an integrated and strategic approach that builds on the uniqueness of Salthill and contributes to an enhanced visitor experience.					

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
8.4	Galway Water Experience PFG 2 - Facility Centres for Water Sports Facilities	Maximise the opportunity through the PFG 2 - Facility Centres for Water Sport Activities scheme and the potential for year round activation of the Terryland River Corrib - River Facilities with the addition of the floating pontoon and access via tributary to the River Corrib as a catalyst for developing the Galway City Blueway water experiences.					
8.5	Galway City Blueway	Commence the Blueway accreditation process for the Galway City Blueway based on the feasibility analysis and develop- a number of Blueway pods/hubs along the waterways system in Galway City including the River Corrib, identified locations in Lough Corrib, Canal network, and Claddagh basin.					
8.6	Galway Waterscapes & Blue Spaces	Examine the feasibility of a Galway Water Trail linking Salthill, Galway Bay, River Corrib and the Galway City Blueway. This will include examination of an ecotourism interpretation trail that combines the Galway maritime story and building on the legends of the Corrib Trail experience.					
8.7	Blue Flag Beaches	Protect the Blue Flag awards of the Salthill & Silverstrand beaches and deliver a programme of works to achieve Blue Flag status at Ballyloughane to help develop the international profile of Galway as a city with easy access to coastal activities.					
8.8	Salthill LIDO – Tidal Pool	Examine the requirements to develop a LIDO in Salthill based on project feasibility analysis.					
<p>SEA Evaluation: While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g. blueways, water sports facilities etc.) could have negative or uncertain effects for biodiversity, water, land & soils, landscape and visual, material assets and air & noise. The development of new and existing blueways, seafronts, river facilities etc. has the potential to contribute to sustainable mobility and a better management of movements in sensitive areas, thereby benefiting various environmental components including habitats at certain locations.</p> <p>The development of these projects, however, 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 have potential to be located in</p>							

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
		ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast. These works can also potentially result in the spread of invasive species. Increased tourism in these locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. This would also result in increased footfall in sensitive areas.					
9.	ENABLING PROJECT 1 – Saleable Galway Experiences						
9.1	Saleable Experience Development	Deliver a saleable experience development programme for Galway City to grow the range of things to do and see across each of the strategic development pillars within the Galway City DEDP. The areas for immediate focus will include building on the uniqueness of the Galway Tribes story as the basis for experience development, Irish language, maritime, food, arts/culture, working with the creative sector and unique Galway neighbourhood experiences.	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)		Yes
9.2	Accessible tourism experiences development	Undertake an assessment of current visitor experiences to improve the accessibility of Galway visitor experiences across attractions and activities. This will include recommendations for future experience development and ensuring accessibility is a core feature of all future destination and experience development.					
9.3	Accessible tourism in the West End	Support the delivery of the West End Inclusive Tourism project in conjunction with the Galway Autism Partnership. Based on the learnings of the project examine ways to expand the reach of the project and other accessible tourism initiatives.					
	<p>SEA Evaluation: The listed projects and associated actions will result in positive effects on population and human health.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the actions could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect on cultural heritage. The projects 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. Increased tourism in these locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management.</p>						
10.	ENABLING PROJECT 2 – Tourism Industry & Network Development						

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
10.1	Industry Development	Undertake a programme of capability building focused on growing the online presence of Galway tourism industry and digital capabilities.	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
10.2	Tourism Creatives	Deliver a Tourism Entrepreneurship Programme for the arts and culture community to grow awareness of the tourism opportunity among the Galway cultural community.					
10.3	Brand Gaillimh	Develop a brand activation programme to develop and implement a destination brand programme supported by content development, brand activation and investment in training.					
10.4	Galway Family Experiences	Develop the capabilities of the tourism industry to develop family focused experiences and identify how the city and county can connect with each other in areas such as outdoor activities and opportunities presented by the blueway and greenway investment.					
10.5	Increasing Value From Cruise Tourism	Prepare the tourism industry to maximise the opportunity from potential growth in cruise ship business and grow the economic value of cruise visits for the destination.					
<p>SEA Evaluation: These actions will enhance visitor experience and promote tourism resulting in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.</p> <p>No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.</p>							
11.	ENABLING PROJECT 3 – Galway Food Destination						
11.1	Galway Food in Tourism Plan	Develop a food in tourism plan for Galway City with five year action plan to grow the city's profile as a national food destination.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)	B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ			No
11.2	Food in Tourism – Seafood City	Examine the opportunity to develop Galway City as the Seafood Experience City animated by a programme of supporting initiatives from					

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
		dining weeks, leveraging the Oyster Festival, dedicated food weekends and highlighting the food personalities of Galway.		(WQ1, WQ2), ANC (ANC1, ANC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3), LV (LV_1, LV2), CH (CH1, CH2)			
11.3	Region of Gastronomy	Examine the opportunity to leverage the European Region of Gastronomy designation for Galway and how to maximise this designation with future food in tourism activity.					
<p>SEA Evaluation: These actions will enhance visitor experience and promote tourism resulting in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.</p> <p>No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.</p>							
12.	ENABLING PROJECT 4 – Urban Green and Blue Activities						
12.1	Connemara Greenway (Galway to Clifden)	Support the sustainable development of the Galway to Clifden Greenway and maximise the associated tourism opportunity for the city and communities on the route through capability building. The preferred/selected route to the city should take in the University of Galway Campus and the old railway bridges at Woodquay.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2)		ANC (ANC1, ANC2), CH (CH1, CH2)	B (B1, B2, B3), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), MA (MA1, MA2), LV (LV_1, LV2)	Yes
12.2	Greenway Trails Heads	Support the sustainable development of the Galway Greenway Trail Head Experience Plan for Woodquay and future links to the Westend to ensure wider dispersion of Greenway users across the city.					
12.3	Galway Urban Green Spaces	Support the sustainable development of the Galway City Green Spaces Strategy developing the tourism potential of public parks and their					

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
		future capacity to provide additional event or performance spaces and become part of the Galway City family experience.					
12.4	Public Realm Strategy	Support the sustainable development of the Galway City Public Realm Strategy to include visitor orientation and wayfinding in the city. Incorporate the Galway/ Gailimh Brand into any developments.					
12.5	Galway Cycleways & Active Travel	Support the sustainable development of the Urban Cycleway network leveraging the links to the Connemara Greenway (Galway to Clifden) and the proposed Athlone to Galway Greenway through Active Travel investment to grow the number of cycling routes in the city and improved access to the Eurovelo 1 route.					
12.6	Walking & Cycling Orientation	Undertake a study of existing walking and cycling orientation infrastructure in Galway City and Salthill. The outputs will include a recommended approach to improve visitor orientation around the city through walking and cycling options.					
12.7	Tourism Enterprise Development	Work with education and training agencies to stimulate tourism entrepreneurship in the activities sector that can animate future investment across the city e.g. blueways, greenways and new activity experiences for Galway City.					
12.8	Galway Hooker Experience	Examine the requirements to develop a market ready visitor experience to tell the story of the Galway Hooker and their restoration as a community / sustainability project.					
12.9	Wild Atlantic Way Coastal Path	Assess how existing and planned Greenway, Blueway and walking/cycling infrastructure projects in Galway and Salthill will be integrated with the proposed Wild Atlantic Way Coastal Path.					
12.10	Trail Infrastructure	Assess the opportunity to develop land activity and trail infrastructure around the Waterworks building site linking it with the Castles (Menlo					

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
		Castle and Terryland Castle). This assessment will also explore the linking of the proposed Terryland Forest Park with the City.					
<p>SEA Evaluation: While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g. blueways and greenways) could have negative or uncertain effects for biodiversity, water, land & soils, landscape and visual, material assets and air & noise. The development of new and existing greenways / blueways has the potential to contribute to sustainable mobility and a better management of movements in sensitive areas, thereby benefiting various environmental components including habitats at certain locations.</p> <p>The development of these projects, however, 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 have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast. These works can also potentially result in the spread of invasive species. Increased tourism in these locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. This would also result in increased footfall in sensitive areas.</p>							
13.	ENABLING PROJECT 5 – Accomodation						
13.1	Accomodation Development	Support the development of sustainable accommodation and associated critical infrastructure across the city and attracting private sector investment into Galway City to increase current accommodation levels.	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)		Yes
13.2	Campervan Facilities	Undertake a feasibility assessment of delivering an Aire de Service 2025-2028 in Galway City to accommodate campervan/RV parking. This assessment should examine short term to long term opportunities and the engagement with site owners across the city to identify short term opportunities.					
<p>SEA Evaluation: This action will result in positive effects on population and human health.</p>							

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
	The development of new and existing accommodations might result in uncertain environmental effects on the 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. Increased tourism would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management.						
14.	ENABLING PROJECT 6 – Business Events						
14.1	Business Events Sectors	Develop the networks of industry partners sectoral clusters and platforms to attract conferences and facilitate knowledge sharing and innovation, and provide access to opinion leaders, speakers, and other engagement opportunities.	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)		Yes
14.2	Dexcom Stadium at Connacht Rugby	Support the development and ongoing investment into Dexcom Stadium as a business events venue, to maximise its potential to attract and host impactful business events to the City.					
14.3	Business Events – Beyond Tourism	Position Galway as a leader in hosting impactful business events, and deliver on the value of business events, for tourism and beyond, achieving benefits for Galway as a community, ensuring positive impacts on our focal communities and long-term legacy benefits for the participating sectoral collectives. Connect local communities with business event delegates and organisers who seek opportunities for positive social contributions.					
14.4	Gala Dining Venue/Business Events	Maximise the business tourism opportunity for Galway presented by future investment in gala dining venues such as Claregalway Castle & St Nicholas Church, and the enhancement of Galway as a business events destination.					
14.5	Business Events Value	Leverage business events to achieve regionality and seasonality objectives. Grow the number of business events hosted in Galway, whilst prioritising a value over volume model and promoting extended delegate stays.					

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
14.6	Business Events Showcase	Leverage the AIPCO Conference as showcase for business events development in Galway.					
<p>SEA Evaluation: The listed projects and associated actions will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the actions could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effects. 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. Increased tourism in these sensitive locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management.</p>							
15.	ENABLING PROJECT 7 – Sustainable Tourism						
15.1	Sustainable Galway Destination	Deliver on the Galway City Climate Action Plan and collaborate with industry to collective commitment to developing Galway as a sustainable city destination and work with partners to roll out the All Ireland Certification Assurance Scheme.	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)		Yes
15.2	Salthill Environmental and Biodiversity Projects	Undertake a scoping exercise to explore potential projects to be included in a Salthill Environmental and Biodiversity project. This will include assessing the potential for projects such as Clean Coasts, Sand Dunes Projects, Land based biodiversity projects and partnering on projects such as the Aquarium, Galway Convention Bureau and Marine Institute.					
15.3	Sustainable tourism observatory partnership	Explore the opportunity to create a sustainable tourism observatory partnership working with third level colleges to develop a repository of visitor information that can inform sustainable tourism development.					
15.4	Biodiversity Hub	Assess the feasibility study of delivering a Biodiversity Hub in the City or Salthill to educate and raise awareness of Nature Way Solutions in place in the destination.					

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
15.5	Biodiversity Walks	Expand and protect the suite of Biodiversity Walks available in the City, particularly along Eglinton Canals and Coastal locations, giving careful consideration for the non disturbance of wildlife and fauna.					
15.6	Sustainability Initiatives	Encourage buy in from tourism and hospitality business to the Coffee Cup deposit scheme in place in the City to enhance the City's reputation as a sustainable destination.					
15.7	Sustainable Initiatives for Business Events	Explore opportunities to mobilise programmes for business events delegates to the city to contribute to the environment/biodiversity of the destination through activities such as coastal clean ups, litter picks, tree planting. mapping of seagrass beds, swallow/swift box workshops etc.					
15.8	City Transportation Strategy	Complete the City Transportation Review to maximise the future potential of increased public transport access e.g. Bus Connects, Ceannt Station, Coach Drop and sustainable transport options around the city e.g. cycle. The City Transportation Strategy will also examine the long term requirements to alleviate traffic pressures around the city and the potential negative impact it has on the visitor experience.					
15.9	City Park and Ride	Undertake a review of the development of Park and Ride as a viable option for visitors and an alternative transport option for the local community.					
15.10	Sustainable Saleable Experiences	Deliver sustainable tourism and biodiversity related saleable experiences for Galway City.					
<p>SEA Evaluation: The listed projects and associated actions will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, the actions could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effects. 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</p>							

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

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

Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan 2025-2030

SEA Environmental Report

No.	Project	Action	Likely Positive Effects	Likely Neutral Effects	Likely Uncertain Effects	Likely Negative Effects	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
16.4	Community Enabler for Tourism	Establish active citizenship/ volunteerism programmes and initiatives to support tourism developments in Galway City.					
<p>SEA Evaluation: The listed projects and associated actions will result in positive effects on population and human health.</p> <p>The projects 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.</p>							

Appendix 2: Strategic Environmental Assessment Determination

Screening Determination for Strategic Environmental Assessment under SEA Directive 2001/42/EC as transposed into Irish law under S.I. 435/2004, as amended concerning the proposed Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan

Fáilte Ireland as the Competent Authority for the proposed Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan has undertaken screening for SEA under Directive 2001/42/EC as transposed into Irish law under S.I. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. 200 of 2011.

The screening assessment was carried out using the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects as set out in Schedule 1 of S.I. 435/2004, as amended and having regard to Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08¹, which directs that:

“In any case where, following screening, it is found that the draft plan or amendment may have an impact on the conservation objectives of a Natura 2000 site or that such an impact cannot be ruled out, adopting a precautionary approach-

- an appropriate assessment of the plan must be carried out and*
- in any case where a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) would not otherwise be required, it must also be carried out.”*

Following assessment of the criteria and having regard to the nature of the Plan and the potential for likely significant environmental effects from implementation of the Plan, including on the conservation objectives of a Natura 2000 site, Fáilte Ireland has determined that the Plan will require SEA.

This determination has been made following consideration of the information contained in the SEA Screening Report, the criteria set out in Schedule 1 to S.I. 435/2004, as amended, the conclusion of the AA Screening Report, and following consultation with the statutory Environmental Authorities for SEA, from whom responses were received from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Development Applications Unit (DAU) of the Dept. of Housing, Local Government & Heritage.

The principal reason the Plan does require SEA is as follows:

- As directed under Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08: because the potential for likely significant environmental effects on 6no. European sites could not be ruled at Appropriate Assessment screening stage.

Signed on behalf of Fáilte Ireland:



Dated: May 2025

**Determination for Strategic Environmental Assessment under SEA Directive 2001/42/EC
as transposed into Irish law under S.I. 435/2004, as amended**

Concerning the proposed Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan

Fáilte Ireland as the Competent Authority for the proposed Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan has undertaken SEA under Directive 2001/42/EC as transposed into Irish law under S.I. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. 200 of 2011.

Fáilte Ireland has determined that Strategic Environmental Assessment was required in respect of the Draft Galway City Destination and Experience Development Plan. The SEA Environmental Report prepared for the Draft Plan has been finalised in advance of adoption of the Plan. An SEA Statement has been prepared following adoption, which details how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan and the SEA and associated Plan preparation process.

Signed on behalf of Fáilte Ireland:



Dated: October 2025

Brady Shipman Martin

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