



Volume 1 Written Statement

Draft Galway County Development Plan **2022~2028**

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Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

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Chapter 1 Introduction

“Promote the creation of an attractive county to live, work, visit and enable businesses to flourish in an environment that offers a range of housing options, robust and diverse range of employment opportunities, access to quality infrastructure and community facilities with a high quality sustainable environment for all”.

1.1 Introduction

The Galway County Development Plan 2022 – 2028 sets out a range of proposed policy objectives with supporting narrative for development up to 2028. In accordance with national policy, the plan is seeking to develop in a sustainable and environmentally sensitive manner. It promotes the climate change agenda and it sets out the housing and economic priorities for the relevant period.

In 2016 the CSO recorded a population of almost 180,000 persons in County Galway. Geographically Galway is the second largest county in Ireland. The county borders Mayo to the north, Clare to the south and Roscommon and Offaly to the east and Tipperary to the south-east. Other natural boundaries include Galway Bay to the west along with Shannon and Lough Derg to the east and south east respectively. The county is characterised by a diverse and natural landscape that includes features such as the mountainous Conamara region west of the River Corrib, fertile agricultural lands to the east and a more varied limestone area to the south. These topographical attributes combine to give Galway its outstanding and widely varied landscape setting.

There is a considerable network of settlements of varying scales and the largest Gaeltacht population in Ireland, which accounts for approximately 49.7% of the Gaeltacht population nationally as recorded by the CSO in 2016.

The county now forms part of the North-West Region along with the seven counties of Mayo, Roscommon, Leitrim, Sligo, Donegal, Monaghan, Cavan and Galway City. The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) identifies a new metropolitan area which includes the entirety of Galway City and the settlements of Baile Chláir, Bearna and Oranmore. Ballinasloe and Tuam are designated as Key Towns and Athenry is identified as an area with Strategic Potential. The historic status of Ballinasloe as the County Town is acknowledged.

Galway is now served with a motorway network to the east of the county (M6 and M17/M18) and rail service from Galway to Dublin/Limerick provide a sustainable means of travel.

Figure 1 overleaf illustrates key demographic data relating to the 2016 census. It includes reference to the overall population, where people live, work and household formation.

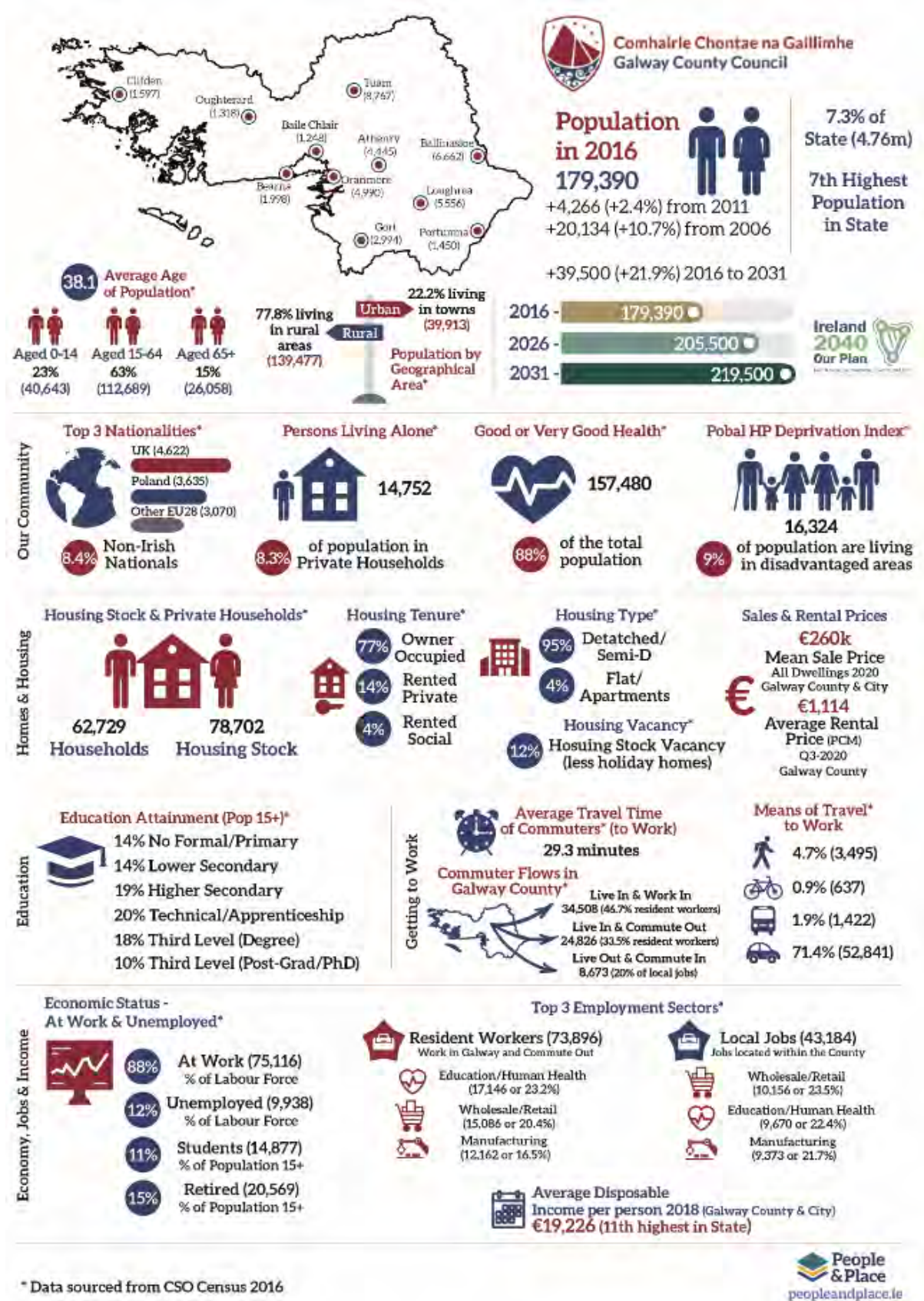


Figure 1: County Galway Overview

1.2 Legislative Context

The Galway County Development Plan 2022 – 2028 has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). Since the adoption of the existing Galway County Development Plan 2015 – 2021, there has been a significant amount of planning related changes in Ireland. New National and Regional policy has been adopted since 2018 which sets out a clear growth agenda in accordance with sustainable development over the coming years. The overarching national framework now in place is the National Planning Framework with three Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies providing for the implementation and delivery of the NPF. The county now forms part of the North West Region and the RSES now includes a Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan. This draft Plan has considered this policy framework and it has been set out in accordance therewith.

1.2.1 Mandatory Objectives

Section 10(2) of the Act lists the mandatory objectives which have, where relevant, been incorporated in the Plan. These include:

- Zoning of land for particular purposes;
- Provision, or facilitation of the provision, of infrastructure including transport; energy and communication facilities, water supplies, wastewater services, waste recovery and disposal facilities and any ancillary facilities or services;
- Conservation and protection of the environment including in particular the archaeological and natural heritage and the conservation and protection of European sites; Management of features of the landscape such as traditional field boundaries, important for the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network;
- Promotion of compliance with environmental standards and objectives established for bodies of surface waters and groundwater;
- Integration of the planning and sustainable development of the area with the social, community and cultural requirements of the area and its population;
- Preservation of the character of the landscape, including the preservation of views and prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest
- Protection of structures, or parts of structures, which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest,
- Preservation of the character of architectural conservation areas;
- Development and renewal of areas, identified having regard to the core strategy, that are in need of regeneration in order to prevent adverse effects on existing amenities in such areas in particular as a result of the ruinous or neglected condition of any land, urban blight or decay, anti-social behaviour or a shortage of habitable houses or of land suitable for residential use or a mixture of residential use or other uses;
- Provision of accommodation for travellers and the use of particular areas for that purpose;

- Preservation, improvement and extension of amenities and recreational amenities;
- Control of establishments under the provisions of the Major Accidents Directive;
- Provision, or facilitation of the provision, of services for the community, including, in particular, schools, crèches and other education and childcare facilities;
- Protection of the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht where there is a Gaeltacht in the area of the Plan;
- Promotion of sustainable settlement and transportation strategies in urban and rural areas including the promotion of measures to reduce energy demand, reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions and address the necessity of adaptation to climate change in particular having regard to the location, layout and design of new development;
- Preservation of public rights of way which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other places of natural beauty or recreational utility; and
- Provide a framework for the identification, assessment, protection, management and planning of landscapes.

1.2.2 National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF) replaces the National Spatial Strategy (NSS). The NPF outlines the national growth strategy for Ireland up to 2040 when it forecasts Ireland having a population of an extra 1 million people. The Framework now has statutory requirements and has been developed around ten National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) along with supporting text and a suite of National Policy Objectives (NPOs). The draft plan is required to comply with the NSOs and NPOs. The NPF encourages compact growth of towns and villages, good connectivity and a strong economy with the climate change responsibilities at its core. The NPF plays a key role in progressive climate change mitigation through good spatial planning practices and the transition to a low carbon climate resilient society.

The National Development Plan (NDP) is linked to the NPF. Combined, both plans form Project Ireland 2040. The NDP complements the NPF with a greater emphasis on infrastructure investment and service provision across Ireland. It includes an infrastructure and service investment plan in delivering its projects.



Figure 2: National Strategic Outcomes

1.2.3 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)

The main purpose of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) is to support the implementation of the NPF and wider Project Ireland 2040 aspirations. The RSES also supports the economic policies and objectives of the Government by providing a detailed strategic planning and economic framework for the development of the North-West Region. As Galway forms part of the North-West Region, the plan must comply with the provisions of the RSES. The RSES provides a framework for the development of the region up to 2032. It focuses on the delivery of housing, job creation, infrastructure, community facilities and ensuring that the region remains attractive for investment.

The Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan is contained within the RSES. The MASP area is identified to grow considerably in population within the plan period. This growth must be in a planned and co-ordinated manner where residential and employment areas are adequately serviced with infrastructure and services such as access to public transport and a good range of community facilities.

1.2.4 Ministerial Guidelines

The Draft Plan has been prepared in full consideration and in accordance with Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended). A Statement of Compliance has also been carried out in this regard. In addition, a series of environmental assessments have also been carried out which are referenced below.

1.2.5 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The SEA provision ensures involved the systematic evaluation of the potential environmental impacts of implementing a plan or programme, prior to the adoption decision being taken. This step is required under the EU SEA Directive which was ratified by Ireland under the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (SI No. 436 of 2004) as amended.

The SEA process has been integral to the preparation of this Draft County Development Plan and the associated SEA Environmental Report is appended thereto.

1.2.6 Appropriate Assessment (AA)

The provision of AA provides for the protection of both habitats and species of European importance. This has been achieved through the establishment of an EU network of sites that are known as the Natura 2000 Network of European sites. The AA assessment focuses on the implications of a plan or project on European sites. The findings of the AA are set out within the AA Natura Impact Report that is appended to this draft plan. It sets out the likely consequences of the draft plan on the integrity of European Sites.

All of the recommendations of the AA have been integrated into the draft plan and the emerging conclusion suggests that the plan will not affect the integrity of the European sites, alone or in combinations with other plans or projects.

1.2.7 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment involves an assessment of flood risk and it includes a range of maps that show boundaries for indicative flood risk zones. The process considers a range of factors in doing this exercise which includes local knowledge, site walkovers and flood risk indicators. SFRA is required under The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of Environment and Office of Public Works, 2009) and associated Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government Circular PL2/2014. The SFRA recommendations appended have been integrated into the plan.

1.2.8 Office of Planning Regulator (OPR)

The role of the Office of Planning Regulator (OPR) is to oversee and enhance the planning system in Ireland. It ensures the implementation of national, regional and local planning policy. It also monitors the performance of the Planning Authority and An Bord Pleanála. The OPR also independently evaluates and assesses development plans, regional strategies and variations accordingly. This ensures that the plan or strategy provides for proper planning and sustainable development. The OPR has powers to serve Notice on the Minister with a recommendation for a Ministerial Direction to be issued. However, it remains the role of the Minister to issue a Direction to require the Planning Authority to address any issue.

1.3 Structure of the Plan

There are two Volumes to the County Development Plan, and a number of documents that are appended to the Draft Plan which include:

- Volume 1 Written Statement
- Volume 2 Settlement Strategy
- Appendix 1 Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy

- Appendix 2 Housing Strategy and Housing Need Demand Assessment
- Appendix 3 Galway County Transport & Planning Strategy
- Appendix 4 Landscape Character Assessment
- Appendix 5 Rural Housing Design Guidelines
- Appendix 6 Record of Protected Structures
- Appendix 7 Architectural Conservation Areas
- Appendix 8 Geological Heritage of Ireland
- Appendix 9 Environmental Reports

The Written Statement comprises 15 chapters listed below. Chapters 1 – 14 include a vision, strategic aims and policy objectives. Chapter 15 sets out the Development Management Standards.

Chapter Heading	Chapter Summary
<i>Introduction</i>	This chapter provides an overview of the county and the statutory process of making the development plan. The key legislative and guidance requirements to which the plan must adhere have also been addressed.
<i>Core Strategy, Settlement Hierarchy and Housing Strategy</i>	The Core Strategy set the growth agenda in the county over the plan period. This is informed by the projected level of growth set out in the NPF and RSES. The Settlement Hierarchy has outlined the role and function of the identified settlements in accordance with and close alignment to the RSES. The Housing Strategy is informed by this process with the focus on the provision of housing, household size and housing types that will meet the forecasted growth.
<i>Placemaking, Regeneration and Urban Living</i>	This chapter outlines the process of placemaking and how the towns and villages can achieve this and deliver attractive places for people to live. Regeneration focuses on the various legislative requirements that must be carried out while urban living supports the development of sustainable communities that facilitates the changing circumstances in which people live.
<i>Rural Living and Development</i>	This chapter sets out the development priorities for the rural area including villages and the open countryside. There is also a focus on rural development, which includes agriculture, agri-development and farm diversification.
<i>Economic, Enterprise and Retail</i>	The focus of this chapter is on the creation of jobs across the county. It details the jobs profile of the county and sets out how the plan can support continued job prosperity and enterprise development. The retail section of the chapter sets the development priorities for the main shopping streets in the town and villages.

	The chapter also touches on the changing work habits and the needs of the population in terms of its integration with towns and villages.
<i>Transport and Movement</i>	In accordance with the national agenda this chapter places particular emphasis on sustainable modes of transport where possible while recognising that private transport will remain dominant in the more remote parts of the county. The Galway County Transport Planning Study is appended to the plan and it sets out the transport and movement priorities for the county during the plan period.
<i>Infrastructure, Utilities and Environmental Protection</i>	The chapter recognises the importance of achieving sustainable growth. The role of key infrastructure in delivering this growth is recognised. It includes the provision of water supply and wastewater treatment as well as the importance of broadband infrastructure to assist modern living. The importance of environmental protection is also recognised and how planning must ensure that a high standard of environmental quality and amenity is maintained.
<i>Tourism and Landscape</i>	This chapter identifies the main tourism priorities that are pertinent to the county. The aims and supporting narrative of the chapter outlined the continued development of the tourism industry while the supporting policy objectives equip prospective applicants in contributing to the tourism industry aspirations. The significance of the landscape and its varying character is recognised in this chapter. It is also recognised that the landscape is a living and changing feature in the county where a balance must be struck between change and preservation.
<i>Marine and Coastal Management</i>	This chapter provides guidance on the range of various opportunities that present themselves in the marine sector such as food production and off shore renewable energy generation. The impact of coastal flooding and coastal erosion has also been referenced.
<i>Natural Heritage, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure</i>	The importance of natural heritage and biodiversity in the county is recognised and a range of appropriate policy objectives have been formulated to ensure the county continues to prosper while simultaneously acknowledging the importance of these assets. The provision of green infrastructure (GI) networks across the county and adjoining wider regional and national GI routes is recognised as a key sustainable amenity for use by inhabitants and visitors in the county alike.

<i>Community Development and Social Infrastructure</i>	This chapter sets out the development priorities in delivering sustainable, inclusive communities with a broad range of community facilities and social infrastructure such as access to social, educational and other amenities that cater for a range of users.
<i>Architecture, Archaeology and Culture</i>	This chapter promotes the conservation of the architectural, archaeological and cultural heritage of the key asset to the county while facilitating sustainable development at appropriate locations across the county.
<i>Gaeltacht and Islands</i>	In this chapter the importance and preservation of the Gaeltacht, Irish Language, traditions and customs of the Gaeltacht and island communities are identified as priorities in the plan. The chapter sets out an approach for the continued development and support of the Gaeltacht and Island communities throughout the plan period.
<i>Climate Change, Energy and Renewable Resource</i>	This chapter accords with the findings set out in the Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy that is appended to this plan. The various sources of energy and the supporting infrastructure and conditions requires to secure their delivery is also referenced and supported as necessary. The national climate change responsibilities as per the Climate Action Plan are adhered to in this chapter.
<i>Development Management Standards</i>	This chapter provides detailed guidance which assist in meeting the aspirations of requirements of the policy objectives contained within the plan. It sets out the development parameters for prospective applicants to consider, that must be adhered to throughout the plan period.

1.4 Climate Action

The county is fortunate to have favourable wind conditions to generate renewable energy which contribute to our carbon reduction targets. In accordance with the Climate Action Plan a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy has been adopted by the Council which further demonstrates commitment to the climate action agenda. Climate action responsibilities have been outlined for every chapter in the plan. Therefore, the responsibilities of climate action must be adhered to in a multi-faceted manner by all sectors and the development plan policy objectives have been thoroughly climate proofed to secure sufficient contribution to the climate action agenda.

1.5 UN Sustainable Goals

In 2015 the UN General Assembly formulated and set 17 no. Sustainable Development Goals. These form the basis of a blueprint which aims to achieve better and more sustainable development for all. The County Development Plan will strive to contribute, as practicable, towards achievement of the 17

Sustainable Development Goals¹ of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which came into force in 2016. The subsequent NPF and RSES has been prepared and adopted with close alignment to the SDGs where for example the NPF places sustainability at the heart of long-term planning and the NPF seeks to ensure that the decisions we take today meet our own needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The policy objectives contained within the plan have been formulated to concur with the delivery of the SDGs.



Figure 3: Sustainable Development Goals

1.6 Ministerial Statement

In accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), this statement is provided to confirm the following:

- How the planning authority has implemented the policies and objectives of the Minister as set out in the guidelines when considering their application to the area or part of the area of the Development Plan, or
- If applicable, that the planning authority has formed the opinion, that it is not possible, because of the nature and characteristics of the area or part of the area of the development plan, to implement certain policies and objectives of the Minister contained in the guidelines when considering the application of those policies in the area or part of the area of the development plan and shall give reasons for the forming of the opinion and why policies and objectives of the Minister have not been so implemented.

¹ Including:

- Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

The following table demonstrates how the Galway County Development Plan 2022 – 2028 implements applicable Ministerial Planning Guidelines, issued under Section 28 of the Act.

Section 28 Guidelines	Galway County Development Plan 2022 - 2028
Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities (2009)	The preparation of the Plan has had regard to this guidance document. A Natura Impact Report was prepared and accompanies the Plan.
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Guidelines (2004)	The preparation of the Plan has had regard to these Guidelines. Strategic Environmental Assessment was initiated with the preparation of an SEA Environmental Report accompanying this plan.
Architectural Heritage Protection – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2004), as updated (2011)	Chapter 12 <i>Architecture, Archaeology and Culture</i> has been prepared in accordance with the Guidelines.
Implementing Regional Planning Guidelines – Best Practice Guidance (2010)	Chapter 2 <i>Core Strategy, Settlement Hierarchy, and Housing Strategy</i> sets out the policy objectives to ensure that the Core Strategy requirements of the Plan are consistent with national and regional policy (National Planning Framework 2018, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the North Western Region) as required by the 2010 Guidance document (which refers to the former national and regional strategy).
Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001) as updated by Circular letter PL3/2016 (2016)	Chapter 11 <i>Community Development and Social Infrastructure</i> has addressed the provision of community facilities across the county in accordance with the Guidelines and Circular PL3/2016.
Development Management Guidelines (2007)	Chapter 15 <i>Development Management Standards</i> has been prepared having considered the Development Management Guidelines.
Development Plan – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2007)	The Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities have informed the preparation of this Development Plan.
Guidance Note on Core Strategies (2010)	Chapter 2 <i>Core Strategy, Settlement Hierarchy and Housing Strategy</i> has been carried out in accordance with these guidelines.
Quarries and Ancillary Activities (2004)	The role and impact of quarries has been considered and incorporated into the development plan in accordance with the Guidelines.

Provision of Schools and the Planning System (2008)	Chapter 11 <i>Community Development and Social Infrastructure</i>
Retail Planning Guidelines (2012)	Chapter 5 <i>Economic, Enterprise and Retail</i> refers to the Guidelines and contains the policy objectives pertaining to retail.
Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines (2005)	Chapter 4 <i>Rural Living and Development</i> sets out the rural housing policy objectives for the county. These policy objectives incorporate the recommendations of the Guidelines.
Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009)	These Guidelines have been considered in the context of Chapter 15 <i>Development Management Standards</i> and also Chapters 3 <i>Placemaking, Regeneration and Urban Living</i> and 4 <i>Rural Living and Development</i> to encourage the provision of high quality design and density in the settlement areas of the county in accordance with the Guidelines.
The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009)	An SFRA has been carried out for the county having regard to the Guidelines. The SFRA document accompanies the plan and identified areas at risk of flooding. Policy objectives in relation to flood risk have also been included in the plan.
Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines (2012)	Chapter 6 <i>Transport and Movement</i> contains a specific policy objective that alleviates national primary and secondary roads, outside of urban speed limits in accordance with these Guidelines.
Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2013) as updated in 2019	Chapters 6 <i>Transport and Movement</i> and Chapter 15 <i>Development Management Standards</i> address these Guidelines set out provision of practical design measures to encourage more sustainable travel patterns in urban areas and best practice in the design of street networks and individual streets.
Urban Development and Building Heights – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2018)	Chapter 3 <i>Placemaking, Regeneration and Urban Living</i> cover this item in accordance with the guidelines.
Wind Energy Development Guidelines (2006 and draft 2019)	Chapter 14 <i>Climate Change, Energy and Renewable Resource</i> and the Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy has been formulated having regard to the Wind Energy Guidelines.
Development Contribution Schemes – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2013)	These guidelines have been considered in the making of the plan. It is recognised that the guidelines assist planning authorities in

	achieving a balance between the cost of the services provided and the need to support economic activity and renewal through the development contribution scheme.
National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025	Chapter 8 <i>Tourism and Landscape</i> and the Landscape Character Assessment has taken cognisance of the National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025 which recognises the importance of landscape protection and its interconnectivity with biodiversity and climate change.
Sustainable Urban Housing Design Standards for New Apartments (2015), as updated (2018)	These guidelines have been considered and complied with.
Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities – Design Guidelines (2007)	These guidelines have been considered and complied with throughout the plan making process.
Tree Preservation – Guidelines for Planning Authorities	These guidelines have been considered and complied with throughout the plan making process.
Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures – Guidelines for Planning Authorities	Chapter 7 <i>Infrastructure, Utilities and Environmental Protection</i> recognises the importance of critical communication infrastructure in accordance with these Guidelines.
Interim Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Statutory Plans, Renewable Energy and Climate Change (2017)	The plan has been prepared in accordance with these Guidelines.

1.7 Implementation and Monitoring

The plan will be monitored to ensure that the policy objectives in place are effective and robust. They must be altered or amended if it transpires later that circumstances have changed. The monitoring process should continually monitor the performance of the policy objectives and by doing so identify any issues, taking action as necessary. Part of the monitoring exercise will assess if the plan is still in compliance and consistent with national and regional policy. Where these national and regional policy objectives change, monitoring will establish whether the plan should be varied to maintain consistency.

The provision of plan monitoring is set out within Section 15 of the Planning and Development Act (2000). It requires that a report must be prepared by the Chief Executive for the Elected members within two years of making the plan which details the progress achieved in delivering the policy objectives in the plan. The Planning Authority can take steps necessary to secure the policy objectives of the plan.

It is recommended in the Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2007) that an annual monitoring and evaluation report be prepared. This report will assist in highlighting any issues concerning the implementation of the

plan and it will inform the 2-year review required under Section 15. The Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report also informs the mandatory review of the existing plan and preparation of a new by as required by Section 11 of the Act.

Chapter 2 Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy and Housing Strategy

“The promotion of a balanced urban and rural county that ensures future growth is based on the principles of sustainable development, delivering a high quality living and working environment meeting the needs of all residents”

2.1 Introduction

The Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy and Housing Strategy has been prepared and informed by the National Planning Framework (NPF), the Implementation Roadmap for the NPF, The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Northern and Western Region, and Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines. The Planning and Development Act 2000(as amended) requires an evidence-based Core Strategy to be included in all development plans. Its primary purpose is to ensure local authorities identify and reserve an appropriate amount of land in the right locations to meet population and housing targets. This is achieved through the expression of a medium to long term quantitative strategy for the spatial development of the area of the planning authority, which is consistent with the national and regional policy objectives as outlined in the National Planning Framework(NPF) and in the Regional Spatial Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Western Region. The Core Strategy includes a Settlement Hierarchy for the County transposing prescribed regional population targets set for county level to settlement and rural areas identified within the settlement hierarchy. The Core Strategy identifies the quantum, location and phasing of development in County Galway for the plan period which reflects the nationally and regionally defined population targets, settlement hierarchy while being cognisant of the availability of existing services, planned investment, sequential development and environmental requirements.

2.2 Purpose of Core Strategy

The purpose of the Core Strategy is to articulate a medium to long term based strategy for the spatial development of the county and in doing so demonstrate that the Development Plan and its policy objectives are consistent with national and regional development policy objectives set out in the NPF, the RSES, and specific planning policy requirements in section 28 Guidelines.

The preparation of a Core Strategy as part of the County Development Plan establishes a transparent evidence-based strategy for the sustainable spatial development of the county. It identifies the quantum, location and phasing of development of the Plan period linked back to the population target, in the form of a settlement hierarchy.

2.2.1 Statutory Requirements for the Core Strategy

The Planning and Development Act requires the Core Strategy to:

- Provide relevant information to demonstrate that the Development Plan and the Housing Strategy are consistent with the National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines;
- Take account of any policies of the Minister in relation to population targets;
- Quantify the requirements for zoning of lands for residential and or a mix of residential and other uses and quantify the housing units to be included in the area;

- Demonstrate how the zoning proposals accord with national policy and that development will take place on a phased basis;
- Demonstrate that in setting out policy objectives regarding retail development in the plan, the Planning Authority has had regard to any Ministerial guidelines that relate to retail;
- Set out a settlement hierarchy;
- Include a diagrammatic type Core Strategy Map/visual representation, depicting the above information;
- Include a Core Strategy Table, summarising the key statistics in the Core Strategy regarding the distribution of future population and housing and its alignment with the Regional Planning Guidelines.

2.3 Devising the Core Strategy

2.3.1 Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework (NPF)

Development Plans sit within a hierarchy of National and Regional Spatial plans at the top of which sits the NPF. The NPF is a high-level strategic plan that identifies future growth and development of the country to 2040. The main vision of the NPF is as follows:

- Developing a new region-focused strategy for managing growth;
- Linking this to a new 10-year investment plan. the Project Ireland 2040 National Development Plan 2018 -2027;
- Supporting and strengthening more environmentally focused planning at local level.

The NPF identifies a set of goals expressed as National Strategic Outcomes (NSO's), which underpin the overarching vision for the Country.

One of the underlying principles of the NPF Strategy is to rebalance growth in the Country, which historically has disproportionately favoured growth in the Eastern and Midland Region. It enables all parts of the Country whether urban or rural, to successfully accommodate growth whilst recognising Dublin's role as the principal economic driver of the country. The NPF targets 50% of overall national growth between five cities of Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford. The NPF also references the development and implementation of a strategic metropolitan area spatial plan for Galway city and environs, including the settlements of Baile Chláir, Bearna and Oranmore. An important element of the growth strategy, intrinsic to the NPF, is securing compact and sustainable growth within the regions. Compact development is identified as a key priority of the NPF, which focusses on reusing previously developed "brownfield lands", development of infill sites and buildings. To this end the NPF requires at least 30 % delivery of all new homes in settlements of over 1500 population to be within the existing built up footprint.

As part of the review process a full examination of lands in these towns were examined and Volume 2 of this plan identifies a quantum of lands in the Metropolitan plan (Baile Chláir, Bearna and Oranmore) that have been identified as Town centre/Infill Residential. This will also be carried through

to the Key Towns, Strategic Potential and Self-Sustaining Towns as they are reviewed in the course of the next year.

2.3.2 Population Trends

Census 2016 recorded a population of 4,761,865 in April 2016, representing an increase of 3.8 % on Census 2011. County Galway's population in 2016 was 179,390, which was an increase on the 2011 census, albeit at a slower rate from the levels experienced in previous inter-censal periods.

Year	1991	1996	2002	2006	2011	2016
Population	129,511	131,613	143,245	159,256	175,124	179,390
Actual Change	-	2,102	11,632	16,011	15,868	4,266
% Change	-	1.6	8.8	11.2	10.0	2.4

Table 2.1: Population and its Changing Trends in 1996-2016

As can be examined above, the county has had a steady growth of population since 1991. The growth rates had a moderate increase when comparing years 1996 and 2016, but considerable fluctuations can be observed across that period. As illustrated above there was a major increase of growth rate during 1996-2002 from 1.6% to 8.8% which was then followed by more moderate increase to 11.2 in 2006 and a slight drop to 10% in 2011. This was followed by a drop to 2.4% in 2016 with a small growth in population.

2.3.3 Population Distribution

The population of the county is distributed across a network of urban and rural settlements and the open countryside. At the county level and based on the CSO's parameters a total of 39,913 people (22.2%) were living in urban settlements in 2016. 139,477 (77.8%) were living in smaller towns and villages, as well as the rural remainder of the County. In 2011, census results showed a distribution between the urban and rural population as 22.6 % and 77.4% respectively. From analysis Galway West had a larger share of population decline, while there was a growing population mostly in Galway East and around major workplaces, such as Galway City and Tuam and along the M17 and M6. The towns of Athenry, Gort and Loughrea experienced an overall rate of growth considerably higher than the county average between 2011 and 2016, with the population increasing by 11.49% from 11,656 persons in 2011 to 12,995 persons in 2016. Thereafter the settlements identified as the Metropolitan Area had the highest growth rate, with the population growing by 4.33% from 7,894 persons in 2011 to 8,236 persons in 2016.

Settlement Typology	Settlement	Population 2011	Population CSO 2016	Growth Rate 2011-2016 (%)
Metropolitan Area	Baile Chláir	1,217	1,248	2.55
	Bearna	1,878	1,998	6.39
	Oranmore	4,799	4,990	3.98
Key Towns	Ballinasloe	6,659	6,662	0.05
	Tuam	8,242	8,767	6.37
Strategic Potential	Athenry	3,950	4,445	12.53
Self-Sustaining Towns	Gort	2,644	2,994	13.24

	Loughrea	5,062	5,556	9.76
Small Growth Towns	Clifden	2,056	1,597	-22.32
	Maigh Cuilinn	1,559	1,704	9.30
	Oughterard	1,333	1,318	-1.13
	Portumna	1,530	1,450	-5.23
	Headford	889	973	9.45
Small Growth Villages	An Cheathrú Rua	814	786	-3.44
	An Spidéal	250	237	-5.20
	Ballygar	660	687	4.09
	Dunmore	577	600	3.99
	Glenamaddy	500	480	-4.00
	Kinvara	620	730	17.74
	Moylough	503	518	2.98
Rural Settlements & Rural Area		129,382	131,650	2.91

Table 2.2: Population Growth in County Galway 2011-2016

2.3.4 Implementation Roadmap for the National Planning Framework

The Implementation Roadmap for the National Planning Framework highlights the Governments focus on achieving alignment between national, regional and local planning and practice. This roadmap provides transitional population projections at a County scale in order to inform Development Plans for the period 2026 to 2031. The transitional populations for Galway City and county combined in table below:

Regions & Counties	2016	2026	2031
Mid-West			
Galway	258,000	300,000-308,500	322,000-334,500

Table 2.3: Implementation Roadmap for the National Planning Framework

2.3.5 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)

The RSES provides a high-level development framework for the Northern and Western Region (NWRA) that supports the implementation of the NPF and the relevant economic policies and objectives of Government. It provides a 12-year strategy to deliver the transformational change that is necessary to achieve the objectives and vision of the Assembly.

This RSES provides a robust strategy to deliver anticipated growth, building upon this region's key strategic assets and opportunities and addressing challenges ahead. It also provides Regional Development Objectives that guide policy responses to ensure that people's needs - such as access to housing, jobs, ease of travel and overall well-being - are met, up to 2040 and beyond.

The overarching ambition of the strategy is for a region that is *"Vibrant, Connected, Natural, Smart and a Great Place to Live, consolidated by a strong settlement strategy focusing on 'People' and 'Places'. The intention is that it becomes a living framework, which will be supported as required by detailed action plans, investment proposals and delivery partnerships."*

In this regard, the following Growth Ambitions are described as follows:

- *PEOPLE AND PLACES - Compact growth will be pursued to ensure sustainable growth of more compact urban and rural settlements, supported by jobs, houses, services and amenities, rather than continued sprawl and unplanned, uneconomic growth.*
- *VIBRANT AMBITION - The NWRA believes that strong economic growth, which creates permanent, sustainable jobs, is best achieved by building a competitive and productive economy. Focusing policies on scale, investing in connectivity and our people whilst aggressively pursuing a low carbon approach to enhance our differentiation.*
- *NATURAL AMBITION - It has been identified that more strategic actions are required to prepare the region for what is to come and highlights the need to create a combined long term vision for the future of both energy supply and our ability to use renewable energy. To address our energy requirements our RSES emphasises the need for coordination, new thinking, investment, and skills to implement change. All considerations need to be cognisant of our natural resources, landscape, and heritage (natural, social and cultural).*
- *CONNECTED AMBITION - Accessibility and mobility within the region have a direct effect on the region's economic competitiveness. It also has an effect on the attractiveness of the region as a favourable living and visiting environment. The RSES will support further investment in sustainable transport measures. In addition, to achieve our Vision for the region we need to strengthen our digital network and enable new technologies to work by ensuring that policies and systems are in place that can help people transition to a world much more digitally connected.*
- *INCLUSIVE AMBITION - One of the strongest foundations and emerging propositions this region has to build on is its 'livability'. The region aspires to be one of the most liveable places in Europe with a commitment to sustainable and inclusive growth.*
- *INFRASTRUCTURE AMBITION - Provision and maintenance of economic infrastructure, such as energy, water, and wastewater, are key to delivering compact growth and a connected, vibrant, inclusive, resilient, and smart region.*

In terms of demographics for the region, the population of the Northern and Western Region is dispersed unevenly and has historically had a lower level of urbanisation compared to other regions. However, Galway is identified as the fastest growing city in Ireland over the past 50 years. In 2016 the total population residing within the region was 847,442. This figure represents approximately 17.8% of the entire population of Ireland. The National Planning Framework provides a target growth rate for Galway of between 50%-55% to 2040.

The RSES has targeted the Metropolitan Area of Galway to grow by 27,500 to 2026 and by a further 14,500 to 2031 with a population of the city and suburbs accommodating 23,000 to 2026 and a further 12,000 to 2031. As the settlements of Baile Chláir, Bearna and Oranmore are in the county environs there is a population allocation to this part of the county of 4,500 by 2026.

	Settlement	Population 2016	% increase to 2040 (min)	Proposed 2026 Uplift (min)	Proposed 2030 Uplift (min)	Transitional Population Target
Metropolitan Area	Galway City	79,900	42,200	23,000	12,000	115,000

Table 2.4: Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

2.3.6 Population Scenarios at Settlement/County Level

Several population projection scenarios for County Galway have been investigated up to 2031, ranging from “non-intervention” to “policy-intervention” scenarios. While, non-intervention methods are evidence-based projection relying on demographic trending of the State or County, the policy-intervention method seeks to facilitate the national and regional planning policy to achieve a balanced compact pattern of growth. The results for 2022 and 2028 which mark the Plan period are summarised in table 2.4.

Scenario	Population 2022	Population 2028
Non-Intervention-A	190,100-193,269	202,936-206,154
Non-Intervention -B	207,329	212,415
Policy Intervention (Galway calcs-City Calcs)	195,855	212,432
Policy Intervention (Midway NPF target)	192,356	205,900
Policy Intervention (High NPF target)	195,056	211,100
ESRI Figures (Avg.ESRI NPF and ESRI Baseline)	187,831	198,750

Table 2.5: Results of Population Projections in Different Scenarios

Accordingly, two variations of the non-intervention scenario were explored. The first variation relies on the State projection figures provided by CSO StatBank, applying the growth rate of the State to the County 2016 onwards. The second variation utilises the Cohort Component Method (CCM) method, known as the best-in-class methodology for demographic projection. CCM projects the population by age groups and sex using survival rates, net migration, and birth rates over the Plan period.

The policy-intervention scenario on the other hand relies on the NPF/RSES population targets, utilising these figures as the fixed variables to interpolate the required level of change per annum within the County. Different variations under this scenario were explored: (1) performing the calculation for both City and Galway using the NPF and RSES high population targets over the Plan period and estimating the County population by subtracting City from the overall figure, (2) taking the mid-way NPF population target and performing the calculations, (3) taking the high NPF population target and performing the calculations. The third variation of policy-intervention scenario was selected for the purpose of HNDA and the Core Strategy.

With the ESRI research work “*Structural Housing Demand at County Level*” published on 14th December 2020, the “*Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Planning*” published by DHLGH in December 2020, and the Ministerial Letter advising these publications as the most up to date approach towards demand projection, a third alternative was available for the population projection. In this alternative, ESRI NPF and ESRI Baseline figures were taken to calculate an adjusted population projection scenario for the County. However, as illustrated in the Table above, while the

non-intervention- and policy-intervention scenarios show more consistency, especially in the long-run up to 2028, the ESRI results stands out by a considerable deviation which is not fully reflective of the on-going demographic trends in the County. Therefore, the policy-intervention relying on the high NPF population target is taken as the preferred scenario. The NPF sets out a targeted pattern of growth for Galway to 2026 with the projected population to range between 300,000 to 308,500 persons. Specific population targets for Galway City are also set out in the RSES. As per Variation no. 5 of the City Development Plan 2017-2023, the target for the city is to reach a population of 102,900 by 2026, that is an increase of 23,000 people from the Census 2016 City and Suburbs population of 79,900. Longer term to 2031, the target for the city is to grow by a further 12,000 to 114,900 population. Taking the 308,500 as the anticipated population for Galway, the population projection of the County Galway will be as the following:

Settlement	Census 2016	NPF/RSES Population Target 2026	NPF/RSES Population Target 2031
City and Suburbs	80,000	23,000	12,000
Galway County	180,000	25,500	14,000
Total	260,000	48,500	26,000

Table 2.6: Population Projections for Galway

In this policy intervention scenario, the above population targets are used as the fixed variables and then an interpolation of the required level of change per annum was developed from baseline year 2016 to NPF/RSES target years 2026 and 2031; thus, producing annualised figures over the period of 2022 and 2028 which is the lifetime of the Development Plan.

Year	Total Population in County Galway	Annual Population Increase during year	Annual Population Increase 2022-2028	Total Population Increase 2022-2028	Total Population Increase 2016-2028
2006	159,256	68.70%			
2011	175,124	69.90%			
2016	179,390	69.50%			
2017	182,001	1.46%	2,611		
2018	184,612	1.46%	2,611		
2019	187,223	1.46%	2,611		
2020	189,834	1.46%	2,611		
2021	192,445	1.46%	2,611		
2022	195,056	1.46%	2,611		
2023	197,667	1.46%	2,611		
2024	202,278	1.46%	2,611		
2025	2028,889	1.46%	2,611		
2026	205,500	1.46%	2,611		
2027	208,300	1.36%	2,800		
2028	211,100	1.36%	2,800	18,655	31,810

Table 2.7: Projected Population Growth Over the Plan Period based upon NPF/RSES 2026 & 2031 Targets

2.3.7 Average Household Size

The census 2016 data indicates that Galway has a population to household size of 2.8 which is slightly higher than the state average of 2.7. However, the NPF states that this state average is expected to decline to around 2.5 by 2040, while also acknowledging that household sizes in urban areas tend to be smaller than in suburbs or rural parts of the county. As outlined in the Housing Strategy (Appendix 2) an analysis of historical trends of household size in the county was carried out to determine the evidence based graduated reduction in average household size, which has been identified as 2.5 for the plan period. By applying the relevant household size to the projected population increases, it is possible to forecast required household numbers to 2028 and beyond.

2.3.8 Household Size Cohort

As outlined in Section 6.6 of the NPF, household composition and projections are informative evidence input which can assist with building up an understanding of the future demand market of the county. Analysis of the historic trending of the households with a concentration on the household size cohort per household would help to identify the patterns of change and apply that to the projected households to estimate how the composition of households may change during the plan period. This analysis demonstrates a trend towards smaller size households, including single to two persons households. However within the county area there is still a relative demand for large households.

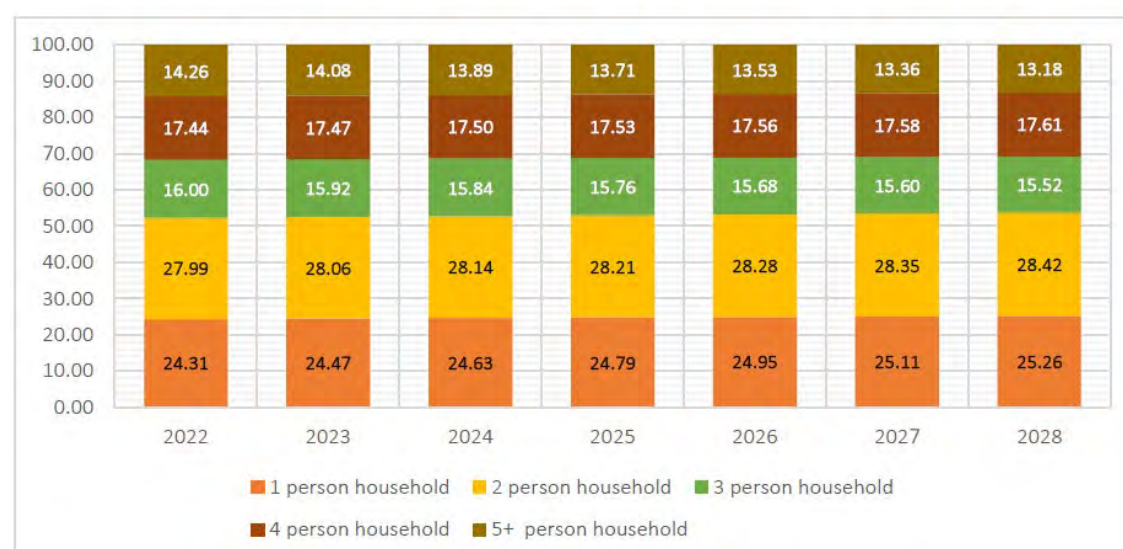


Table 2.8: Household Size Cohort

2.3.9 Galway's Core Strategy

Galway's core strategy has been informed by the principal elements of the RSES growth strategy in conjunction with the environmental sensitivities of the county. It is based on strengthening its strong urban settlements, whilst simultaneously protecting and supporting population in the rural areas, which also provides valuable natural resources, biodiversity, environmental quality and landscape features. Population and economic growth will be accommodated primarily in the MASP, Key Towns, Strategic Potential and Self-Sustaining Towns with recognition of the potential for the smaller towns and villages to develop at a sustainable rate.

The focus on the core strategy for County Galway can be summarised as follows:

- Prioritise targeted population and economic growth to the MASP, Key Towns, Strategic Towns and Self-Sustaining Towns and promote their continued sustainable growth;

- Capitalise on the location of the settlements within the MASP, to drive linkages and synergies between Galway city and the wider MASP area;
- Support the Key Towns and Strategic Potential town which are important local drivers providing levels of jobs and services for the resident population and surrounding catchments;
- Support Self-Sustaining Towns requiring contained growth, focusing on investment in services employment and infrastructure whilst providing a viable alternative to single housing in the countryside;
- Support the Small Growth Towns and Small Growth Villages as areas for local services, residential and employment potential;
- Contribute to urban regeneration lands and the development of brownfield sites for the revitalisation of settlements;
- Management of urban generated growth in Rural Areas under urban influence, by ensuring single houses in the open countryside are based on the core consideration of demonstrable economic or social need to live in the rural area in addition to compliance with statutory guidelines, plans and having regard to ensuring the viability of villages and towns;
- All lands identified for development are in accordance with the “Tiered Approach to Land Use Zoning” as set out in NPF.

The Settlement Strategy for future growth in the county is detailed further in section 2.4 of this chapter.

2.3.10 Overview of Approach to Core Strategy

The Core Strategy has been prepared with the following parameters and the Housing Strategy and HNDA. It is considered that the Core Strategy table overleaf which outlines the approach by the Council has been informed by the following:

- The allocation of population growth to the settlements on a sustainable tiered approach based on the settlement hierarchy set out in the RSES (2019), the infrastructural services, demand, past delivery and potential growth means that the settlements will grow at an appropriate rate and at a more self-sufficient level, thereby reducing the need to commute;
- The distribution of many land use types within settlement boundaries including a mix of uses in the centre of settlements which will facilitate reduced travel demand and also increase usage of sustainable modes of transport;
- A number of different land uses are permitted or open for consideration in the land use zonings within these settlements. This allows for the integration of various uses in proximity to each other, thereby reducing the need to travel in the first instance, and secondly encourages walking and cycling;
- The density approach is reflective of the higher order settlements i.e MASP, Key Towns, Strategic Potential and Self-Sustaining Towns and other towns and villages and the existing built environment;
- The quantum, location and distribution of new development has had regard to the capacity of existing and planned wastewater service infrastructure;
- Population growth has been identified within strong employment and service centres of all sizes, supported by continued employment growth;
- Environmental considerations have been taken in account in the preparation of the Core Strategy.

2.3.11 Key Principles

The position of each town in the settlement hierarchy has been clearly linked to the quantitative population allocations and the distribution of future population and household growth. This is in accordance with the “Tiered Approach to Land Use Zoning” set out in the NPF.

- **Compact Growth**

In accordance with the principles of compact growth, at least 30 % of housing within settlements is to be within the existing built up footprint area in conjunction with sequential development of settlements. There are limiting factors which are applicable eg the historic formation of many of the main towns in County Galway, flooding implications, inadequate access, limited and fragmented land holdings and the requirement to facilitate retail development in these locations in accordance with the sequential test under the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DECLG,2012). An analysis of the potential capacity of town centre/infill residential indicates that approximately 1,820 units could be delivered on these lands.

- **Climate Change and Environmental Sensitivity**

Climate Change has an increasing role to play in how the county is planned in the future. The plan has a critical role to play in ensuring the communities develop having regard to sustainable infrastructure networks which build resilience to climate change. Consideration is given to; ground and surface water vulnerability and any potential environmental impact (including SEA, HAD, EU Water Framework Directive, River Basin Management Plans and Flood Risk Management) requirements; availability of services and infrastructure; potential for economic and social development of the settlement; the sequential test; ground and surface water vulnerability; planning history and market availability/choice. A Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment has been prepared in tandem with the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy has had regard to both assessments with any changes/recommendations incorporated into the strategy.

- **Retail Development**

The Core Strategy is also statutorily required to contain information to show that in setting out policy objectives for retail development, the Planning Authority has had regard to the Retail Planning Guidelines and that the estimates of required future retail development are based on and take account of the specific population targets. In addressing this requirement, Galway County Council intends to prepare a Retail Strategy in conjunction/consultation with Galway City Council as set out in *Chapter 5 Economic, Enterprise and Retail*, of this plan. This Retail Strategy shall take account of the above requirements. Chapter 5 of the plan sets out the retail hierarchy for the County and provides a number of other policy objectives regarding retail management, set within the framework of the *Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012*. The retail hierarchy aligns with the designation of Settlement Hierarchy and the population projections within the Core Strategy, with the MASP, Key Towns, Area of Strategic Potential, Self-Sustaining Towns, as the main focus for new retail developments. Appropriately scaled new retail development in centrally located sites within ‘Small Growth Towns and Small Growth Villages’ shall also be encouraged.

- **Economic Development and Other Land Uses**

Land uses such as employment/industry uses and transport options have also informed the Core Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy in terms of assisting in identifying the role and capacity that individual settlements have for development and also in determining where the population allocations under the Core Strategy should go. The Spatial and Core Strategy, in line with the RSES, recognises priority areas in relation to economic activity for the County, such as the provisions for a Strategic Economic Corridor to the eastern area of the County, the role of urban areas in sustaining economic buoyancy, the importance of attracting foreign direct investment, promoting indigenous industry, the

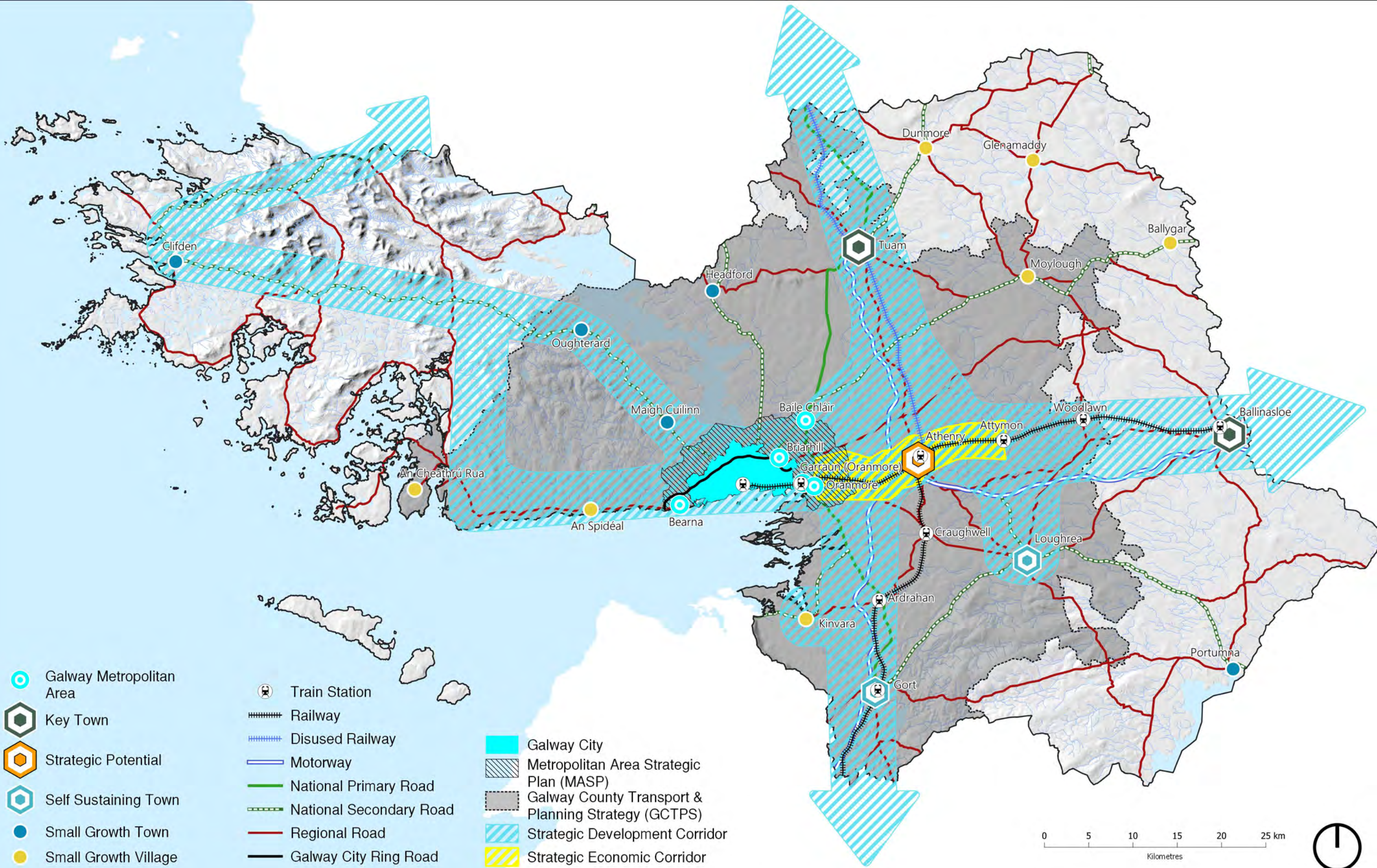
food and craft sector, tourism, renewable energy and the smart economy, which are all detailed in Chapter 5 of the Plan.

- **A Tiered Approach to Development**

The NPF sets out a new standardised methodology that addresses the differentiation between zoned land that is available for development and zoned land that requires significant further investment in services for infrastructure for development where they are able to connect to existing development services, i.e road and footpath access including public lighting, foul sewer drainage, surface water drainage and water supply, for which there is capacity available and can therefore accommodate new development. In accordance with this, the Plan has been prepared in accordance with the National Policy Objective 72a requiring Planning authorities to apply a standardised, tiered approach to differentiate between i) zoned land that is serviced and ii) zoned land that is serviceable within the life of the plan. As a result of this assessment, growth has been targeted in the towns and villages within the county that have available wastewater and water capacity.

2.3.12 Core Strategy Map & Core Strategy Table

The Core Strategy Map (Map 2.1) is a diagrammatic representation of the spatial planning Strategy for County Galway. The Core Strategy table 4.2 on page 39 sets out the population projections and household allocation for each settlement and rural countryside up to 2028. Settlement Plans in Volume 2 reflect these figures and indicates the quantum of future development for the plan period.



Map 2.1 Core Strategy

Settlement Typology	Settlement	Population CSO 2016	Core Strategy 2022-2028 Population Allocation	Housing Units	Density	Housing Land Requirement	Up to 30% of Residential Units into Built Up Footprint
County	Galway	179,390	18,655	7,469		283	1,427
Metropolitan Area	Baile Chláir	1,248	975	390	30	13.00	117.00
	Bearna	1,998	750	300	30	10.00	90.00
	Oranmore	4,990	1540	616	30	20.53	184.80
	Briarhill**	0	977	391	30	13.03	0
	Garraun**	0	1258	503	35	14.38	0
Totals		8,236	5,500	2,200	3	71	392
Key Towns	Ballinasloe	6,662	1,999	799	30	26.65	239.38
	Tuam	8,767	2,630	1,052	30	35.07	315.61
Totals		15,429	4,629	1,851		62	555
Strategic Potential	Athenry	4,445	1,350	540	20	27.00	162.00
Totals		4,445	1,350	540	20	27.00	162.00
Self-Sustaining Towns	Gort	2,994	800	320	20	16.00	96.00
	Loughrea	5,556	1,400	560	20	28.00	168.00
Totals		8,550	2,200	880		44	264
Small Growth Towns	Clifden	1,597	470	195	16	12.19	58.50
	Headford	973	290	116	16	7.25	34.80
	Maigh Cuilinn	1,704	350	140	16	8.75	42.00
	Oughterard	1,318	350	140	16	8.75	42.00
	Portumna	1,450	300	120	16	7.50	36.00
Totals		6,069	1,760	711		45	215.70
Small Growth Villages	An Cheathrú Rua	786	150	60	11	5.45	18.00
	An Spidéal	237	55	22	11	2.00	6.60
	Ballygar	687	175	70	11	6.36	21.00
	Dunmore	600	120	48	11	4.36	14.40
	Glenamaddy	480	130	52	11	4.73	15.60
	Kinvara	730	200	80	11	7.27	24.00
	Moylough	518	125	50	11	4.55	15.00
Totals		4,038	955	382		35	115
Totals per Towns and Villages		47,740	16,394	6,564			
Rural Settlements & Rural Area		131,650	2,261	904			

Table 2.9 Core Strategy Table

** Urban Framework Plans-Prepared for Briarhill and Garraun, these are contained in Volume 2 of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028.

2.3.14 Core Strategy Policy Objectives

Galway County Council shall ensure that the future spatial development of Galway is informed by means of a plan led approach, directing residential and employment generating development to locations in accordance with national and regional policy and with environmental carrying capacity, which can support investment in public infrastructure and services and which is sensitive to the physical character of the built and natural environment. This approach is enshrined in several Core Strategy Policy Objectives as below:

Policy Objectives Overarching Core Strategy

CS 1 Implementation

To secure the implementation of the Core Strategy and the Settlement Hierarchy in so far as practicable, by directing sustainable growth towards the designated settlement.

CS 2 Compact Growth

To achieve compact growth through the delivery of new homes in urban areas within the existing built up footprint of settlements, by developing infill, brownfield and regeneration sites and prioritising underutilised land in preference to greenfield sites.

CS 3 Population Growth

To support and manage the self-sufficient sustainable development of all settlements in a planned manner, with population growth and the development of economic, physical and social infrastructure.

CS4 Initiatives

Promote measures to reduce vacancy and the underuse of existing building stock and support initiatives that promote the reuse, refurbishment and retrofitting of existing buildings within urban centres and targeted settlements in the County.

CS5 Population within Tiers

It is a policy objective of the Council to support the delivery of the population projections within the different settlement tiers of the Core Strategy. Where individual settlements are not progressing to reach their population allocation at the half way point in the lifetime of the plan the population allocation maybe redistributed within the individual tier subject to servicing and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2.3.15 Monitoring and Management

With the adoption of specific population targets for the county and each settlement/settlement typology, the monitoring of the extent of residential development is required to ensure that development occurs in a coherent, reasoned and evidence-based manner.

Policy Objectives Monitoring and Management

MM 1 Monitoring and Management

The Council shall, in conjunction with the Regional Assembly and other sources as relevant, implement the monitoring programme as set out in the SEA Environmental Report and Statement. This will include the preparation of stand-alone SEA Monitoring Reports:

1. To accompany the report required of the manager under section 15(2) of the Act, including information in relation to progress on, and the results of, monitoring the significant environmental effects of implementation of the Development Plan
2. On the significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan, in advance of the beginning of the review of the next Plan.

2.4 Settlement Hierarchy

The Settlement Hierarchy of this plan has been developed to take account of the function and role of each of the identified settlements in accordance and close alignment with the identified settlement hierarchy in the RSES.

2.4.1 Purpose

A Settlement Hierarchy is a spatial expression of sustainable population distribution, settlement hierarchy and settlement role. It provides a strategic direction to the appropriate management of growth, investment and resources in accordance with the Core Strategy in a climate resilient manner. With the identification of projected population growth for County Galway within the lifetime of this Plan and the identification of the relevant tiers of the settlement hierarchy, housing land has been allocated to deliver new homes to meet a growing population in a sustainable manner. In terms of the settlements, this land can be viewed on the Land Use Zoning Maps in Volume 2 of this plan, and in Local Area Plans.

2.4.2 Settlement Hierarchy Context

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) defines 'rural' as the areas outside settlements with a population of 1,500 or more people. This includes smaller settlements of fewer than 1,500 people and individual dwellings in the countryside. The CSO defines a settlement of more than 1,500 people as 'urban'. These definitions have been carried through into the NPF. The settlement hierarchy is categorised with these parameters, but also settlements of similar function are grouped together.

2.4.3 Settlement Hierarchy

Consistency and alignment between National, Regional and Local plans is a requirement of the Planning and Development Act 2000(as amended). Galway's planned framework for growth is therefore guided and directed by the RSES. The RSES has identified a robust evidence-based approach to derive a settlement hierarchy which identifies locations for population and employment growth with matched infrastructure and service investment to satisfy and accommodate future growth needs. This relates to Galway as follows:

Settlement	Settlement Category	Description	Settlement
1	Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan	The MASP has been identified to accommodate critical mass in population growth within the area that will ensure the vitality and appeal of Galway City and the surrounding towns and villages	Baile Chláir Bearna Oranmore Garraun Briarhill
2	Key Towns	Towns that are regionally strategic employment centres of significant scale that can act as regional drivers that complement and support the higher order areas within the settlement hierarchy (Galway MASP).	Tuam Ballinasloe
3	Strategic Potential	Large economically active service centre that provides employment for the surrounding areas	Athenry
4	Self Sustaining Towns	Self Sustaining Towns with high levels of population growth and a limited employment base which are reliant on other areas for employment and/or services and which require targeted “catch-up” investment to become more sustaining.	Gort Loughrea
5	Small Growth Towns	Small Towns with local service and	Clifden Maigh Cuilinn

Settlement	Settlement Category	Description	Settlement
		employment potential. There is a need to promote regeneration and revitalisation of towns and support local enterprise and employment opportunities to ensure their viability as service centres for surrounding rural areas	Oughterard Portumna Headford
6	Small Growth Villages	Small villages with local service and employment potential.	An Chearthú Rua An Spidéal Ballygar Dunmore Glenamaddy Kinvara Moylough

Settlement	Settlement Category	Description	Settlement
7	Rural Settlements and Rural Countryside	Rural villages and the wider rural region. Rural encompasses villages and the wider open countryside. There may not be good public transport or regional connections and maybe highly car dependent. The open countryside provides for rural economies and rural communities, based on agriculture, forestry, tourism and rural enterprise.	Craughwell, Corofin, Clarinbridge, Ardrahan, Kilcolgan, An Tulaigh/Baile na hAbhann, Cor an Dola, Woodlawn, Kilconnell, New Inn, Ballymacward, An Carn Mór, Lackagh, Turloughmore, Abbeyknockmoy, Cluain Bú, Eanach Dhúin, Ahascragh, Attymon, Monivea, Eyrecourt, Banagher, Aughrim, Caltra, Clonfert, Kiltormer, Menlough, Lawrencetown, Fohenagh, Killoran, Castleblakeney, Ballinamore Bridge, Gorteen, Cappataggle, Willimastown, Kilkerrin, Barnaderg, Belclare, Kilbennan, Briarfield, Newbridge, Ballymoe, Milltown, Kilconly, Caherlistrane, Brownsgrrove, Sylane, Lavally, Foxhall, Newbridge, Cashla, Kiltelva, Glinsk, Ballyglunin, Laragh More, Woodford, Killimor, Ballymana, Esker, Carrabane, Kiltullagh, Derrydonnell Beg, Ballinderreen, Kilchreest, Ballinakill, Moyglass, Peterswell, Killeenadeema, Drim, Kilconieran, Labane, Tynagh, Kilreekil, Abbey, Bullaun, Castledaly, Coose, Newcastle, Cooloo, Shanaglish, Na Forbacha, An Cnoc, Na Minna, Ros an Mhíl, Rosscahill, Tulaigh Mhic Aodháin, Leitir Móir, Cill Chiaráin, Cill Rónáin, Roundstone, Carna, Tully/Renvyle, Glinsk, Leitir Mealláin, Béal an Daingin, Tullycross, Rosmuc, An Fhairche, Leenane, Cleggan, Letterfrack, Casla, Corr na Móna, Ballyconneely, Sraith Salach, Claddaghduff, An Mám, Maam Cross, An Aird Mhóir, Maree, Kilbeacanty, Cloghanover, Camas.

*Urban Framework Plans-Prepared for Briarhill and Garraun, these are contained in Volume 2 of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028.

Table 2.9: Settlement Hierarchy

2.4.4 Future Settlement Growth

Complying with the strategic outcomes of the NPF and the five growth ambitions of the RSES, it is essential that the spatial approach to sustainably developing County Galway is reflective of these approaches. Future development will be directed in the following manner:

- Growth, with a focus on town centre/infill residential in levels 1,2,3 and 4 where applicable and infill residential on residential zoned lands in all levels;
- Promote Opportunity Sites in levels 5 and 6 as outlined in Volume 2 of the plan;
- Support the designation of the MASP and the settlements of Baile Chláir, Bearna and Oranmore;
- Support the concept of the Urban Framework Plans for Briarhill and Garraun;
- Develop the designated Key Towns of Ballinasloe and Tuam of sufficient scale and quality to be a driver of regional growth, investment and prosperity, followed by Strategic Potential

Town, Self-Sustaining Towns and Small Growth Towns and Villages to grow to a sustainable level;

- Strengthening villages in level 7 as an alternative to rural housing in the open countryside;
- Making better use of under-utilised land and buildings including vacant, derelict and under occupied buildings;
- Supporting, facilitating and promoting a transition to a low carbon society;
- Strengthening town and village centres to meet their full potential;
- Aligning population, employment, community and housing growth in a balanced fashion;

The county's most significant place-making challenge will be to plan and deliver future development in a way that moves more towards self-sustaining, rather than commuter driven activity, therefore allowing its towns, villages and rural components to play to their strengths, while above all, moving from a sprawl-led development model.

The Settlement Hierarchy seeks to strengthen the urban fabric of the county, with an emphasis on building critical mass in the MASP, Key Towns, Strategic Potential Town, the Self-Sustaining Growth Towns and Self-Sustaining Towns. The focus is on achieving the consolidated growth of the settlements, with a significantly high proportion of housing in the existing built-up footprints of each settlement, strengthening town centres to their full potential by utilising under-utilised land and buildings and developing the settlements in a sequential manner. Two Urban Framework Plans have been prepared for Briarhill and Garraun and are contained in Volume 2 of the plan. The UFP for Garraun is centred around the train station at Oranmore. The Briarhill UFP is integral to the IDA/Employment sites at Parkmore and will be connected to an existing public transport corridor.

2.4.5 MASP

The Galway Metropolitan Area, the subject of the MASP, extends from Bearna in the west to include Galway City and suburbs and continuing eastwards to Baile Chláir and Oranmore. The eastern Metropolitan Area includes planned growth areas at Ardaun, Garraun and Briarhill.

Garraun and Briarhill are identified as key strategic growth areas within County Galway that will contribute significantly to meeting the aspirations of the NPF and RSES. Urban Framework Plans have been prepared by Galway County Council for both Garraun and Briarhill and are included Volume 2 of this plan. The role of the Metropolitan Area is to accommodate population growth within the area that will ensure the vitality and appeal of Galway City and the surrounding towns and village settlements. A robust Metropolitan Area, incorporating high quality and integrated physical infrastructure and community facilities will strengthen the role of the Northern and Western region and help it to compete at a national level.

2.4.6 Key Towns

The Key Towns are to grow their population by at least 30%, relative to Census 2016 (i.e., Ballinasloe and Tuam). In relation to Ballinasloe, one of the Key Future Priorities for the town includes: *"realising the town's potential as a 'County Town', ensuring a balance of development in the town centre of Ballinasloe, and providing for compact growth and brownfield development, revitalising Dunlo Street, Market Square, Society Street and Main Street, and to reduce vacancies and support the vitality and vibrancy of these core shopping streets/side streets and the town centre."*

The Key Future Priorities for Tuam differ slightly, as the focus for the town lies in promoting Tuam as a destination for business, however, the following priorities apply: *"to develop Tuam as the focus for future development in North Galway providing the infrastructure and services for its surrounding small towns/villages and rural lands"*, as well as to *"capitalise on the compact urban form of Tuam town"*

centre by encouraging greater connectivity for new development which promotes and encourages walking and cycling ensuring that principles of sustainable transportation along with practical design measures become central to the development of new neighbourhood.”

2.4.7 Area of Strategic Potential

Athenry is identified as an Area of Strategic Potential. Athenry has easy access to the Galway-Dublin railway line and the Galway -Limerick railway line. The town has existing access to broadband infrastructure and associated infrastructure services. Athenry can develop further and accommodate enterprises, e.g. Economic Corridor from Oranmore to Athenry. Economic corridors particularly employment corridors such as the Oranmore – Athenry Strategic corridor must be developed/promoted and serviced to high international standards to attract further Foreign Direct Investment and indigenous industries/ businesses, building on the existing strategic location and infrastructure. This corridor will be promoted sustainably as a centre for major national and international enterprises in a manner that shall be further defined in local planning policies.

2.4.8 Self Sustaining Towns

Gort and Loughrea have been identified as Self-Sustaining Towns with high levels of population growth, however there are limited employment base which are reliant on other areas for employment and/or services and which require targeted “catch-up” investment to become more sustaining. The growth strategy for both Gort and Loughrea is to consolidate their designation as Self -Sustaining Town’s and continue to support expansion of their employment base. In addition, residential development will be facilitated that will support the sustainable growth of the towns.

2.4.9 Small Growth Towns

The towns listed in this category have an important function in supporting the development of local areas. The residential development will be proportioned to the growth of the towns. The growth strategy will focus on the localised sustainable growth that meets the needs of the local population and wider hinterland. Economic and employment related development that would strengthen the local employment base and reduce the dependence on commuting will be supported where appropriate. Volume 2 of this plan provides a Written Statement and associated Land Use Zoning Maps.

2.4.10 Small Growth Villages

The villages listed in this category have an important function in supporting the development of local areas. The residential development will be proportioned to the growth of the villages. The growth strategy will focus on the localised sustainable growth that meets the needs of the local population and wider rural hinterland. Volume 2 of this plan provides a Written Statement and associated Land Use Zoning Maps.

2.4.11 Rural

Rural population will continue to be supported through the villages and through a sustainable approach to maintaining the rural economy and population, balanced against reasonable environmental protection. Support for housing and repopulation, as necessary, taking place within towns and villages will help to act as a viable alternative to one-off housing in the open countryside and will contribute to the principle of compact growth. A national programme will be developed for ‘new homes in small towns and villages’ with local authorities, public infrastructure agencies such as

Irish Water, and local communities providing serviced sites with appropriate infrastructure acting as a viable alternative to houses in the open countryside. The open countryside is and will continue to be, a living and lived-in landscape focusing on the requirements of rural economies and rural communities, based on agriculture, forestry, tourism and rural enterprise, while at the same time avoiding ribbon and over-spill development from urban areas and protecting environmental qualities. The Council will ensure that development of the open countryside takes place in a way that is compatible with the protection of key economic, environmental, biodiversity and cultural / heritage assets such as the road network, water quality and important landscapes. In accordance with the RSES, it will be necessary to demonstrate a 'functional economic or social requirement' for housing need in Rural areas under urban influence. This is represented by the Galway County Transport & Planning Strategy (GCTPS) on the core strategy map above and detailed analysis is contained in *Chapter 4 Rural Living and Development*.

2.4.12 Rural Typologies

As required by the Core Strategy Guidance 2010, the Core Strategy must contain the classification of differing rural areas in map format in accordance with the 2005 Planning Guidelines on Sustainable rural housing, which has been included in the Core Strategy Map. This classification is also an important factor in facilitating the development of rural one-off dwellings in the countryside in accordance with the National Policy Objective 19 of the RSES, which is outlined further in *Chapter 4 Rural Living and Development and indicated in Map 2.1 Core Strategy Map*. Rural area typologies were established by analysing data for each Electoral Division against a range of criteria including commuting pattern, planning application for rural housing over the last five years, environmental sensitivity and population change. A Galway County Transport & Planning Strategy (GCTPS) was also prepared which analysed the parameters outlined above. The GCTPS area illustrated on the Core Strategy Map above is essentially regarded as the Areas under Strong Urban Influence.

In County Galway the following rural designations apply:

Areas under Strong Urban Influence (GCTPS)

These areas exhibit characteristics such as:

- Proximity to immediate environs of Galway city and close commuting catchment of large towns;
- Rising population;
- Pressure for residential development due to proximity to urban environments/transport corridors.

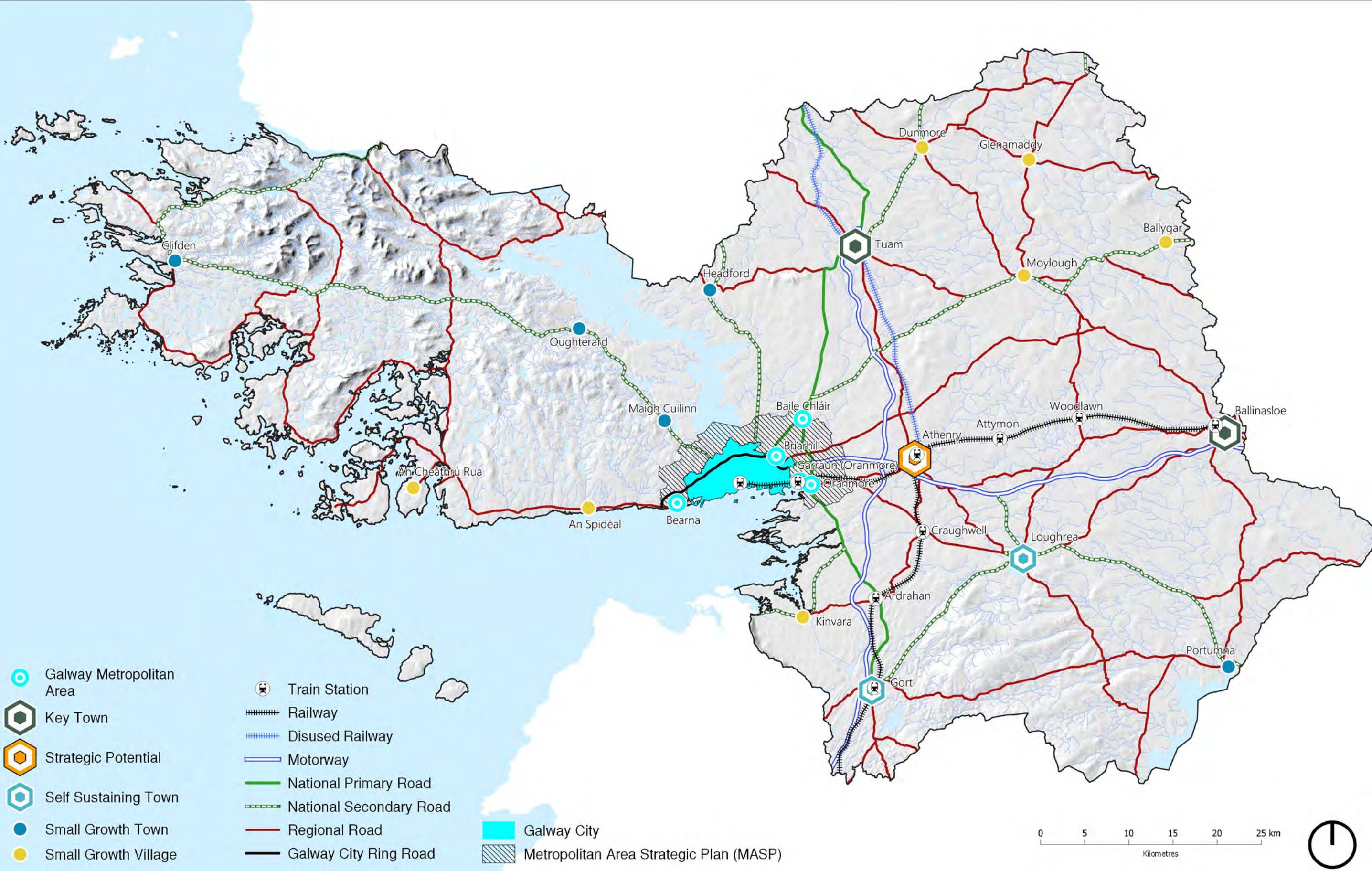
Structurally Weak Areas

These areas exhibit characteristics such as;

- Decline in population;
- Weaker economic structure based on indices of income, employment and economic growth.

2.4.13 Settlement Typology

The following map illustrates levels 1-6 of the settlements as per the settlement hierarchy for Galway County.



Map 2.2 Settlement Hierarchy

Policy Objectives Settlement Hierarchy

SS1 MASP (Level 1)

Galway County Council shall support the important role of the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan(MASP) which is inextricably linked to Galway City, as a key driver of social and economic growth in the County and in the wider Western Region and will support the sustainable growth of the strategic settlements, including the future development of the Urban Framework Plans identified for Briarhill and Garraun and the settlements of Baile Chláir, Bearna and Oranmore, within the Galway Metropolitan Area.

SS2 Key Towns (Level 2)

Recognise the Key Towns of Ballinasloe and Tuam as important drivers of growth in the County and support their sustainable development in line with the Core Strategy, in order to sustain their commercial core, retain their population and accommodate additional population and commercial growth.

SS3 Strategic Potential (Level 3)

Support the development of Athenry as a town of Strategic Potential as outlined in the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy in order to sustain a strong, vibrant urban centre which will act as an important driver for the local economy, reduce travel demand and support a large rural hinterland, while providing a complementary role to the Key Towns and MASP and the smaller towns and villages in the County.

SS4 Self-Sustaining Towns (Level 4)

Support the development of Gort and Loughrea as *Self Sustaining Towns* as outlined in the Core Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy in order to improve local employment, services and sustainable transport options in order to become more self-sustaining settlements.

SS5 Small Growth Towns (Level 5)

Protect and strengthen the economic diversity of the *Small Growth Towns* enabling them to perform important retail, service, amenity, residential and community functions for the local population and rural hinterlands

SS6 Small Growth Villages (Level 6)

Protect the consolidation of *Small Growth Villages* in order to improve local employment, services, rural housing and sustainable transport options

SS7 Development of Small Villages (Level 7)

In the case of smaller settlements for which no specific plans are available, development shall be considered on the basis of its connectivity, capacity (including social, cultural, and economic, infrastructural and environmental capacity) and compliance with the Core Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy, good design, community gain and proper planning and sustainable development.

SS8 Development of Rural Communities

Galway County Council shall recognise the important role of rural communities to the sustainable development of County Galway and shall ensure the careful management of development in these areas, having due regard to the relevant policy objectives set out elsewhere in the plan.

2.5 Housing Strategy

2.5.1 Context

In accordance with planning legislation a detailed Housing Strategy has been carried out for County Galway which details existing and future population for the County in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development. The Strategy includes a Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) in accordance with NPO 37 of the NPF which is to ensure that the supply of housing is sufficient to meet the needs of the existing and future population of County Galway. The HNDA must underpin and support the Housing Strategy and that of its findings. The HNDA in combination with the Housing Strategy identifies any potential housing supply issues likely to occur throughout the lifetime of the Plan.

The Strategy anticipates that household formation will increase to 82,846 by 2028 which equates to a number of 11,511 households over the Plan period. Of the total household increase a total of 3,554 householder will not qualify for a mortgage during the Plan period. These 3,554 households also will not meet the affordability criteria for the private rental market and therefore are considered to require social and affordable housing. There is a sufficient quantity of zoned and serviced land for residential units to meet the requirements of the Housing Strategy. Throughout the Plan period the Council will utilise a range of options to meet the various housing needs of County Galway's population. These are discussed below.

2.5.2 National Planning Framework

Priorities and Principles for Future Housing as per the National Planning Framework are as follows:

- Building resilience into our housing stock through: Reuse, energy efficiency, lifetime adaptability, sustainable accessibility, and integration to ensure vibrant sustainable communities;
- Develop a Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA);
- Consistently excellent design and place-making;
- Allow for choice in housing location (within the context of the Core Strategy), type, tenure and accommodation;
- Prioritise the location of housing in existing settlements and in accordance with the Core Strategy as a means to maximising a better quality of life for people through accessing services, ensuring a more efficient use of land and allowing for greater integration with existing infrastructure;
- Tailor the scale and nature of future housing provision to the size and type of settlement. Sufficient supply and affordability;
- Ensure there is a mixture of house types and sizes developed to reasonably match the requirements of the different categories of households.

Policy Objectives Housing Strategy

HS 1 Housing Requirements

It is the Council's policy objective to facilitate the housing needs of the existing and future population of County Galway through the management of housing development in the county in accordance with the Housing Need Demand Assessment, Core Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy.

HS 2 Social and Affordable Housing

It is a policy objective of the Council to procure vacant homes to ensure their continued use for residential purposes into the future and develop housing in infill and brownfield sites within town and village centres for social and affordable housing provision.

HS 3 Monitor Housing Strategy

It is a policy objective of the Council to monitor the effectiveness of the Housing Strategy in meeting and resolving identified housing needs.

HS 4 Monitor Housing Need Demand Assessment

It is a policy objective of the Council to support the ongoing monitoring and review of the Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA) in accordance with a forthcoming HNDA methodology to be issued by Central Government.

HS 5 Social Housing Stock

It is a policy objective of the Council to increase and effectively manage the stock of social housing within the county in order to meet the long-term housing needs of those households on the local authority housing list.

2.6. Specific Housing Needs**2.6.1 Affordable Homes**

The provision and delivery of affordable housing must continue throughout the lifetime of the Plan. These will primarily be provided in towns and villages in close proximity to services and areas of employment.

2.6.2 Homelessness

Efforts to address the homeless issue and those in need of crisis accommodation will continue to be progressed in accordance with Government guidance and in conjunction with voluntary groups and other agencies.

2.6.3 Traveller Accommodation

In 2016 the County Galway Traveller population amounted to 2647. This was an increase from the 2011 figure of 2,476. The customs and traditions of the Travelling Community in and around County Galway are recognised and cognisance is taken of the needs of the Traveller culture. The Council will continue to implement measures, in accordance with national legislation and guidance in accordance with the Housing Strategy and the Traveller Accommodation Programme to provide accommodation for members of the Travelling Community. Traveller Accommodation needs will continue to be delivered as far as reasonable and practical utilising a variety of house types. This will be delivered through consultation with the Travelling Community and with a number of statutory and voluntary agencies concerned with the needs of Travellers

2.6.4 Housing for Older People, People with Disabilities and/or Learning Disabilities

Residential units will continue to be delivered for particular or identified needs of the population. This will be based on the principle of universal design and lifelong adaptability. These residential units will be located in sustainable locations in the first instance to ensure immediate access to local services and infrastructure and facilitate a greater degree of social inclusion.

The Council will continue to provide older persons housing in close proximity to local services such as community facilities. Smaller residential units will be included for those who wish to downsize in later life. The addition of sheltered housing, nursing homes and other residential facilities will be accommodated in suitable locations throughout the lifetime of the Plan.

Policy Objectives Specific Housing Need

SH 1 Affordable Housing

Promote the delivery of affordable housing primarily in sustainable locations in towns and villages across County Galway in the first instance in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.

SH 2 Homeless Housing

Facilitate the provision of suitable accommodation for the homeless and for those in need of emergency accommodation.

SH 3 Traveller Accommodation

Support and implement the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019 – 2024 for County Galway (or any updated/superseding document).

SH 4 Adaptable Housing

Promote and support the development of sustainable housing for older people and those with disabilities or learning disabilities, the concept of independent living will also be promoted.

2.7 Part V Provision

Social and affordable housing is delivered through a provision known as Part V in an effort to address housing segregation and provide a good mix of housing tenure in any location. Section 94 of the Planning and Development Act stipulates that a percentage not exceeding 10% of land with a residential zoning or a mix of uses that includes residential shall be reserved for the provision of social and affordable housing. This is secured through a Part V agreement.

Policy Objective Part V Provision

PV1 Part V Provision

It is a policy objective of the Council to secure implementation of the Part V Housing Strategy in accordance with section 95(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), in particular, through the reservation of 10% of all land zoned solely for residential use, or for a mixture of residential or other uses, to be made available for the provision of social and affordable housing referred to in section 94(4)(c) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and shall be provided in accordance with an Agreement referred to in section 96 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and in accordance with Part V Ministerial Guidance or any future revised Guidance.

Chapter 3 Placemaking, Regeneration & Urban Living

“To develop the urban and rural settlements of the county as vibrant, connected and serviced locations that are attractive places to live, work and visit in a sustainable manner, based on the principles of placemaking, compact growth, high quality public realm where residential developments are connected to services and employment locations”.

3.1 Introduction

The network of towns and villages across the county have always played an important function in providing people with a place to live, do business, retail, leisure, hospitality and other amenities. Therefore, each town and village has played a central role in generating economic activity across the County. The Settlement hierarchy as outlined in *Chapter 2 Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy and Housing Strategy* of this plan has categorised the settlement types within the county into seven levels in accordance with their role and function as identified by the Core Strategy. Each settlement has a unique role and set of circumstances that require consideration from a placemaking and regeneration perspective. The provisions of this chapter are applicable to settlements identified as 1-6 in *Chapter 2*.

Through good placemaking and regeneration, towns and villages will enhance their attractiveness and improve their vibrancy and vitality for individuals and businesses alike. The principles of good placemaking will be applied within the county to build sustainable communities along with supportive economic activity as outlined in *Chapter 5 Economic, Enterprise and Retail Development*.

Quality housing development that accords with compact living and placemaking will be encouraged in the correct locations as identified within the settlement hierarchy. The appropriate densities will be applied that respects the principles of compact living and placemaking. It is considered that the existing character and appearance of each individual town and village should be considered as part of any developments and accord with proper planning and sustainable development. Housing will be promoted in sustainable locations where good placemaking principles have been employed and a have access to suitable infrastructure and services. The benefits of good placemaking are far reaching. It ensures the creation of towns and villages across the county that are attractive and well serviced, feel safe and are attractive locations for people to live, work, invest and visit.

Chapter 4 Rural Living and Development addresses rural living and the villages that fall within this category of the settlement hierarchy, but the principles contained in this chapter would be considered especially in relation to placemaking. *Chapter 5 Economic, Enterprise and Retail Development* sets out the economic aspirations for the towns and villages. It is anticipated that the application of good placemaking principles will be of economic benefit to these locations around the county.

3.2 Strategic Aims

Galway County Council shall work with the appropriate stakeholders and agencies in relation to placemaking in our towns and villages quality housing and regeneration in the appropriate locations and settings will also be considered. This will accord with the following strategic aims:

- To promote town and village centre living in a high-quality environment with good connectivity and access to local services;
- To reinforce the vitality and future of urban and rural settlements and recognise the role that they play in a wider social and economic context;
- To facilitate town and village centre public realm improvement works, regeneration and infrastructure upgrades as deemed appropriate;

- To support and promote the sustainable social and economic development of urban and rural settlements;
- To ensure the delivery of good quality public open space of varying scales for use by inhabitants and visitors;
- To encourage a mix of house types and sizes, enable homeowners to modify their properties to facilitate modern living as their needs change.

3.3 Strategic Context

This chapter has been prepared in the context of the following National and Regional Plans, Policies and Guidelines:

Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities (2007)
Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities (2007)
Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (2007)
Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009)
Urban Design Manual A Best Practice Guide (2009)
Government Policy on Architecture (2009)
Public space lessons - Designing and planning for play, CABI Space (2008)
Ready, Steady, Play! – A National Play Policy, National Children’s Office (2019)
Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects – Guidance for Planning Authorities (2009)
Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2018)

3.3.1 National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF) places a considerable emphasis on the role of urban and rural settlements in delivering high quality housing and jobs. It is closely linked to sustainability and reducing car reliance. This aspiration will be delivered through a series of measures. These measures relate to regeneration, public realm improvements, a high standard of placemaking, high-quality design and active land management. It promotes the development of brownfield and infill developments in settlements. These parameters are centred on a compact growth agenda which is set out as a key National Strategic Outcome in the Framework. NPO 32 of the NPF sets an ambitious national housing target of 550,000 up to 2040. The county has an important role to play in this regard.

Emphasis is being placed on the towns and villages as they can provide for a form of compact development that is sustainable for larger populations. They can provide residential development and employment development in close proximity to each other which facilitates sustainable mobility. Servicing employment and residential areas with facilities for community use, infrastructure such as wastewater and water supply can be delivered to serve a consolidated population rather than a dispersed population.

3.3.2 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) places a similar emphasis on the revitalisation of urban and rural settlements as attractive and vibrant places to live and work with high quality services and facilities including integrated public transport. The provision of high-quality housing in a variety of sizes and styles also contribute to good placemaking and making an area attractive.

It is considered that attractive places will draw companies and larger employers to a settlement therefore it is important to enhance the quality of our settlement network with high quality housing,

public realm, accessibility, services, green spaces and regeneration as necessary. Shorter commuter patterns to employment areas are supported in the RSES which contribute to a healthy, attractive and climate friendly region in accordance with RPO 6.51.

The regeneration of towns and villages has been referenced in the RSES as a major priority action for the region as reflected in RPO 3.4 which supports regeneration and renewal. This will be achieved through the sufficient supply of housing and jobs to the settlements which will be partly delivered through the utilisation of existing buildings, along with brownfield and infill developments. RPO 3.2 makes reference to the delivery of housing of brownfield sites.

A range of settlements have been targeted for population and employment growth over the plan period which is reflective of RPO 3.13 which requires that the role of smaller and medium sized towns be supported which demonstrates an important role in terms of service provision and employment.

3.4 Climate Change

An important component to successful placemaking, regeneration and delivery of urban housing requires a strong emphasis on climate change and transitioning to a low carbon climate resilient society. The urban settlements of County Galway must continue to overcome the challenges posed by climate change. These areas play a pivotal role in providing housing and services for residents now and into the future. Within the county some of the urban and rural areas are susceptible to the effects of climate change such as flooding given their proximity to coastal waters and rivers. There are a number of policy objectives that are included in this plan to mitigate against the impact of climate change which include ensuring that flood plains remain as such or as open space. The plan requires the incorporation of adaptable multi-functional and sensitive design solutions that support the transition to a low carbon climate resilient society *Chapter 14 Climate Change, Energy and Renewable Resource* addresses this important issue and what role the county plays in mitigating against climate change.

3.5 What is Placemaking?

Placemaking is a holistic approach to the planning, design, management and use of our shared environment to improve the quality of peoples' lives. Within the planning system this can be delivered through the application of certain interventions that make a place attractive for people to live work, visit and invest. It is not simply an aesthetic exercise, but one that considers all the social, environmental, and economic characteristics and opportunities specific to the place to shape an integrated response. Good placemaking can be delivered by applying a range of suitable placemaking principles which are outlined below. These can include public realm improvements, good access to open space, high quality design and good access to a range of local services. With a focus on people and the environment in which they live, successful placemaking combines the key factors from understanding peoples' needs to influence responses that deliver better outcomes for them now and for the future. The plan will seek to deliver enhanced placemaking to the towns and villages across the county up to 2028 and beyond. Urban Framework Plan (UFP) areas have been prepared in Garraun and Briarhill which are centred around the principles of good placemaking. For example, in the case of Garraun, the UFP is centred around Oranmore Train Station which is a sustainable public transportation corridor while the Briarhill UFP has developed with pedestrian and cycle connections to Parkmore as the primary means of travel to that employment site. *Chapter 15 Development Management Standards* sets out further steps to be taken to achieve good placemaking.

3.5.1 Benefits of Placemaking for County Galway Towns and Villages

There are a wide range benefits to be derived from good placemaking practices. The role of settlements has evolved into service centres that must compete globally and be attractive places for

people to live and employers to locate to. There is a clear link between good placemaking standards and levels of employment investment, this is discussed further in *Chapter 5 Economic, Enterprise and Retail Development*.

Good placemaking requires close monitoring of human behaviour and patterns of change utilising opportunities where necessary for example such as the roll out of working hubs and home working which can contribute in an economic and social perspective to the towns and villages. This shift in working patterns mean increased daytime activities within the towns and villages which is a clear departure from a dormitory style living arrangement. Good placemaking practices set out below will contribute to the positive growth and prosperity for the settlements.

3.5.2 Context Understanding The Place

The success of proposals in delivering the most attractive, sustainable and resilient outcomes relies heavily on the understanding of context as the starting point for good placemaking and urban design. Context comprises all the social, environmental and economic characteristics that define the existing condition and distinctive spirit and atmosphere of the place. It requires those engaged in the planning, design or management of proposals to understand the characteristics of their site and consideration of the area beyond the red line boundary to identify the key drivers that should shape proposals and ensure they make a meaningful and positive contribution to the overall place. This is particularly important for urban and rural centres in need of regeneration, where the proposed development can have a positive impact on the town or village to achieve improvement in the quality of place. The principles that should be followed to ensure this context is achieved is outlined in *Chapter 15 Development Management Standards*.

3.5.3 Access and Movement

The planning and design of access and movement networks has implications for the physical outcome of development of all scales. The impact it has on the environment and the quality of peoples' lives. A sustainable access and movement strategy is intrinsically linked to the location of the facilities and services that people need. This is important to consider from a strategic and neighbourhood and individual site perspective in placemaking.

The development of towns and villages of all scales as compact, walkable neighbourhoods providing a diverse mix of uses will be essential to reduce pressure on existing and planned strategic infrastructure. This will contribute to the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society.

The location of proposed development should be at or close to the services that people will rely on to support sustainable living. The planning and design of access and movement networks at individual sites should ensure that it promotes sustainable modes of transport as the preferred choice. This is particularly important for development located on the edge of towns and villages which can lead to a significant proportion of short trips by private car. Measures should include the creation of routes that are attractive for pedestrians and cyclists.

A key part of creating a successful walkable neighbourhood is to ensure that there is a sufficient frequency of connections to enable people to move easily between different parts within the settlement.

3.5.4 Inclusivity

Placemaking will ensure that towns and villages are inclusive for everyone. A sustainable place is an equitable one and good planning and design should demonstrate how inequalities have been identified, prioritised and the specific interventions proposed to resolve them.

It is especially important to prioritise socio-economic inequalities.

People should have the option to live their whole life in one place. This is important for the creation of well balanced, integrated, and functioning communities. It supports intergenerational structure of families, reinforces community bonds and economic viability of places.

The supporting infrastructure including community buildings, open space, streets and squares should be planned and designed to enable people of all ages, ability, disability, cultural, social and economic groups to access and use them. The provision of community facilities is set out in greater detail in *Chapter 11 Community Development and Social Infrastructure*.

3.5.5 Health and Wellbeing

A key indicator of the success of a place is the health and wellbeing of its people. The evidence linking the value and importance of our shared environment to our mental and physical health is growing.

Good placemaking in the planning, design and management of towns and villages enables all these goals to be achieved simultaneously by providing the essential services integral to health and wellbeing. This includes assets such as parks, both useable and incidental greenspace, greenways, active travel and recreational routes.

3.5.6 Character and Identity

The distinctive character of our urban and rural settlements varies as they have grown and evolved over time. Their settlement pattern responds to a range of factors including physical geography, their history, function, economic activity and the surrounding area. This is reflected in the pattern of streets, spaces, built form and plots which are distinctive to each place. Recognising this reinforces character and identity, ensures the proposals work with the context of the place and the aim of connectivity are more easily achieved.

Well planned and designed development should take the opportunity to design urban form to retain visual connections with landmark features where possible within the settlement. The relationship of settlements to their wider landscape is also an important defining feature of the identity of places.

The built form and landscape of the towns and villages are characterised by distinctive materials which combine with colour, tone and texture to reinforce visual and tactile identity. The Council encourages innovation in construction and encourages creative design solutions that achieve innovation whilst respecting the materials (hard and soft), colours, tones and textures that are positively associated with the identity of the place.

3.5.7 Vitality

The walkable neighbourhood concept directs a response to placemaking and urban design that will drive vitality in our towns and villages. With the emphasis on people, these locations will become places of social, cultural and economic exchange that sustains their attractiveness to investment. In accordance with the ability to walk to the range of services which sustain a good quality of life is at the core of the walkable neighbourhood concept. The specific needs and market demand in the place will shape the appropriate mix of uses and their location to support the overall placemaking and vitality aims. Well planned and designed neighbourhoods should aim to deliver higher density development at an appropriate scale and location, coordinated with use mix, to support an increase

in the permanent population of the town and village centre, sustain intensity, vibrancy, and economic viability. Compact growth is promoted in suitable locations in the settlements.

3.5.8 Design Quality

Attractive and liveable places need to also achieve good design standards. The quality of design will inform the perception of a place. To achieve good design, it must be applied in a holistic manner. It must relate to buildings, streets and public spaces as well as our homes and workplaces. Well-designed towns and villages result in increased economic activity as people spend time in places that are pleasant.

Design guidance is provided in the Urban Design Manual which forms part of the *Guidelines for Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas*. The Manual sets out 12 design criteria which set our good design criteria for three key areas – Neighbourhood, Site and Home. The three areas that inform the 12 design criteria inform the design of residential, mixed use and commercial development in a town or village.

Chapter 15 Development Management Standards set out the 12 design criteria referenced above. It is anticipated that this chapter and chapter 15 would inform designers in relation to their approach to the design of new developments and potential uses in the towns and villages. The incorporation of Design Statements is also encouraged as a means to consider good placemaking principles and good quality design for residential, commercial and mixed-use schemes.

Policy Objectives Placemaking

PM 1 Placemaking

To promote and facilitate the sustainable development of a high-quality built environment where there is a distinctive sense of place in attractive streets, spaces, and neighbourhoods that are accessible and safe places for all members of the community to meet and socialise.

PM 2 Regeneration

To prioritise projects and proposals which will result in both social and economic rejuvenation and regeneration within towns and villages. The Council will leverage the variety of funds available including LIHAF, Urban and Rural Regeneration and Development Funds, Climate Activation Fund and Disruptive Technologies Fund in pursuance of this objective.

PM 3 Town and Village Centre Management Plans

To promote the preparation of town and village centre management plans across the county that accord with proper planning and sustainable development.

PM 4 Sustainable Movement within Towns

It is a policy objective of the Council to encourage modal shift in our towns to more sustainable transport alternatives through mixed use development that enables local living and working which is well connected to sustainable transport infrastructure such as walking, cycling, public bus and rail transport.

PM 5 Sustainable Transport

Promote sustainable transport options as an alternative to the private car for people to access local services which will facilitate the transition to a low carbon climate resilient society.

PM 6 Health and Wellbeing

Promote the development of healthy and attractive places by ensuring:

- (a) Good urban design principles are integrated into the layout and design of new development;
- (b) Future development prioritises the need for people to be physically active in their daily lives and promote walking and cycling in the design of streets and public spaces
- (c) New schools and workplaces are linked to walking and cycling networks
- (d) The provision of open space considers different types of recreation and amenity uses with connectivity by way of safe, secure walking and cycling routes.
- (e) Developments are planned for on a multi-functional basis incorporating ecosystem services, climate change measures, Green Infrastructure and key landscape features in their design.

PM 7 Inclusivity

To ensure our urban settlements are inclusive and welcoming to all people of all ages regardless of their physical ability ensuring that they have access to the services available in the towns and villages across the County.

PM 8 Character and Identity

Ensure the best quality of design is achieved for all new development and that design respects and enhances the specific characteristics unique features of the towns and villages throughout the County.

PM 9 Vitality in Towns and Villages

- (a) To provide an appropriate mix of uses and densities in settlements that are responsive to the needs of people and market demand to support delivery of sustainable, viable and thriving walking neighbourhoods;
- (b) To encourage a greater usage of backland areas and to promote the redevelopment of sites in the town or village centre where development will positively contribute to the commercial and residential vitality of the town or village settlement.

PM 10 Design Quality

To require that new buildings are of exceptional architectural quality, and are fit for their intended use or function, durable in terms of design and construction, respectful of setting and the environment and to require that the overall development is of high quality, with a well-considered public realm.

PM 11 Details of Materials

To ensure that the appearance of buildings, in terms of details and materials (texture, colour, patterns and durability), is of a high standard with enduring quality and has a positive impact on the visual quality of the area.

3.6 Compact Growth and Regeneration

Compact Growth is set out as the first NSO in the NPF. It calls for the sustainable growth of towns and villages as a means to add value and create more attractive places for people to live and work. Compact growth can only be delivered where there is a streamlined and co-ordinated approach to development. Enabling infrastructure, services and supporting amenities must be delivered alongside compact growth in our towns and villages.

There is a renewed emphasis on regeneration which requires a proactive approach to address adverse effects on amenity. The purpose of regeneration is to improve quality of place. Regeneration can be delivered in tandem with good placemaking and quality design. A range of measures have been put in place to address regeneration in our towns and villages. These include funding along with the Vacant and Derelict Site Registers which aim to encourage and deliver regeneration and sustainable development. The smaller rural villages will also be required to consider the aspirations of compact growth and regeneration within an appropriate scale. *Chapter 4 Rural Living and Development* provides further guidance and detail relating to these locations.

3.6.1 Vacant Sites

The provision of the Vacant Site Levy (VSL) is set out within the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 which aims to incentivise the development of vacant or idle sites in certain residential and regeneration land in towns and villages. The Council has adopted a strategy of active land management in this regard and detailed guidance on appropriate development is set out in this chapter and in *Chapter 15 Development Management Standards* to incentivise development in appropriate locations. The purpose of the Levy is to assist in delivering compact growth and the regeneration of under-utilised lands, which should assist in meeting the housing need requirements of the county.

The Council will deliver the aspirations of the VSL through the identification of eligible sites for entry onto the Vacant Site Register in accordance with the criteria set out in the Act.

For the purposes of the 2015 Act, a site is vacant if

- (a) In the case of residential land the site is in an area in which there is a need for housing, is suitable for the provision of housing and is, or the majority of the site, is vacant or idle.
- (b) In the case of regeneration land, the site or the majority of the site is vacant or idle and the site being vacant or idle has adverse effects on existing amenities or reduces the amenity provided by existing public infrastructure and facilities in the area in which the site is situated or has adverse effects on the character of the area.

The implementation of the Vacant Site Levy requires the Council to identify sites in the county which are vacant and come within the scope of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 (as amended). Any sites identified are to be entered on a Vacant Sites Register that is to be monitored by the Council. The approach to the VSR is informed by the findings of the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) and Housing Strategy as outlined in *Chapter 2 Core Strategy Settlement Strategy and Housing Strategy* (see Appendix 2) which identifies the areas in the county with demand for housing. The VSR will be an evolving document that will be updated continually as circumstances change.

3.6.2 Derelict Sites

The Derelict Site Act 1990 (as amended) requires owners or occupiers of any land to take reasonable steps to ensure the land and any structure within, does not become or continue to be a derelict site. Derelict sites include buildings or land that are detracting from the amenity, character or appearance of land in the neighbourhood of the land. It is considered that the implementation of the Derelict Sites Act will assist in the preservation of amenity in our towns and villages.

3.6.3 Density and Typology

Compact Growth is a key component of the growth agenda in Ireland up to 2040. This requires careful consideration pertaining to the level of residential density to apply across the County during the lifetime of the Plan. Higher densities are to be provided along sustainable transport corridors such as

railway lines. It provides for a more sustainable form of development where people have a viable alternative to the private car. However, there are parts of the County that do not have high quality public transport links, therefore, a balance will have to be struck in applying a fair and realistic level of density that is in keeping with the character of the surrounding area and meets the needs of its residents. A It is envisaged that a Density Typology Study will be carried out to establish a strategy for applying the appropriate level of density across the county.

3.6.4 Buildings Heights

A greater level of development with higher building heights is promoted in sustainable locations such as towns that have supporting infrastructure in place. They can facilitate a more efficient use of land and achieve much higher densities. This is a more sustainable development pattern than urban sprawl and taller buildings can enable transport, employment and other development types can achieve the desired level of intensity for sustainability.

The Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities set out the scope to consider general building heights in appropriate locations. In order for a site to be deemed suitable for accommodating a tall building, it must comply with the highest standards of placemaking and good design. *Chapter 15 Development Management Standards* sets out further requirements for tall building proposals.

3.6.5 Town and Village Centres

Town and village centres and their purpose has changed quite dramatically in recent years. The role of retail in these locations has also been subject to change due to a variations in consumer spending patterns and habits, such as online retailing. This creates a challenge for the settlements which calls for the drop-in footfall and increasing vacancy rates to be addressed. This should be done in partnership with good placemaking practices. To combat these challenges the plan will take cognisance of this evolving retail environment and adopt a multi-faceted strategy that will re-energise the towns and villages, enabling them to once again become vibrant locations.

The temporary use of space for a wide range of potential occupiers and uses such as creative markets, and work spaces provide opportunities to explore potential uses and add vibrancy to an area.

In certain circumstances where there is no viable prospect of commercial activity in a vacant building, residential uses will be considered at ground floor level. Residential development will only be appropriate where it would accord with proper planning and sustainable development and it would make a positive contribution to the town/village centre as a focal point providing services for the local population. Further guidance and detail concerning development within the rural villages is set out in *Chapter 4 Rural Living and Development*.

3.6.6 Public Realm and Regeneration

A high quality public realm must be delivered across the towns and villages. Public realm relates to the public outdoor spaces including squares, open spaces along with pavements and streets. Public realm influences perception of a place and encourages people to live work and invest in these locations.

With the correct investment in the various settlements across the county these locations will become enterprising places that have thriving commercial activity, provide opportunities to local entrepreneurs and businesses to be an integral part of the community and have a visible presence. The services and utilities infrastructure that is available, its condition and capacity to support

additional development will be an important factor influencing the priority locations for investment. Of critical importance is the provision of broadband internet to support people living and working in our settlements. Town and village centre strategies should include proposals to work with national government strategies for the roll out of broadband and infrastructure support.

3.6.7 Town Centre Infill and Brownfield Sites

A number of settlements in the county offer brownfield development opportunities that could deliver the aspirations of Placemaking and Compact Growth. They are very often serviceable and located along existing public transport corridors and their re-development would improve the quality public realm in a place. In accordance with the NPF and RSES it is anticipated that a substantial portion of development will be delivered on brownfield and infill sites.

3.6.8 Opportunity Sites

A range of Opportunity sites have been identified in the settlements across the county and are contained in Volume 2 of this plan. They have been selected on the basis of the contribution that they could make to their respective town and village centres. Their re-development would be sustainable, in close proximity to local services and local infrastructure which is supported in national policy. They would also contribute to the aspirations of the Placemaking section outlined earlier.

3.6.9 Funding

Two funds were established under Project Ireland 2040 to support and deliver the aspirations of the NPF. The funds seek to further drive the delivery of sustainable homes and jobs in attractive and vibrant settlements across Ireland. The fund can be used to address an area in need of regeneration. It can also include public realm improvement works or proposals pertaining to delivering a low carbon climate resilient society. It is anticipated that funding in various urban locations will stimulate growth and investment.

Policy Objectives Compact Growth and Regeneration

CGR 1 Compact Growth

To require that all new development represents an efficient use of land and supports national policy objectives to achieve compact growth in towns and villages. Development of lands with no links to the town or village centre will be discouraged.

CGR 2 Regeneration

To promote the redevelopment and renewal of areas in towns and villages that are in need of regeneration.

CGR 3 Vacant Sites Register

To use specific powers, such as the Vacant Sites Register as provided for under the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, 2015, to address under-utilisation of lands in towns and villages. The Council will examine and identify sites on these lands in order to facilitate regeneration and to increase the supply of housing.

CGR 4 Derelict Sites

To implement the provisions of the Derelict Sites Act and encourage and facilitate the redevelopment of derelict sites to bring them back into productive use and address environmental and visual amenity concerns.

CGR 5 Typology Study

Prepare a Density Typology Study as considered appropriate within the lifetime of the Development Plan as resources permit.

CGR 6 Density

Promote the provision of higher density development in close proximity to sustainable transport corridors such as train stations.

CGR 7 Building Heights

It is a policy objective of the Council to identify appropriate locations for increased building heights which will be considered as appropriate in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.

CGR 8 Town and Village Centre

To encourage and support a range of appropriate uses in town and village centres that will assist in the regeneration and reuse of vacant and under-utilised buildings and land and will re-energise the town and village centres, subject to a high standard of development being achieved.

CGR 9 Delivering Improved Public Realm

Provide for a high-quality public realm and public spaces in towns and villages by promoting quality design that accommodates creative patterns of use having regard to the physical, cultural, and social identities of individual settlements.

CGR 10 Public Realm Strategy

Consider the preparation of a Public Realm Strategy for County Galway within the lifetime of the Development Plan as resources permit.

CGR 11 Strategic Sites

It is a policy objective of the Council to establish a database of strategic brownfield and infill sites so that brownfield land re-use can be managed and co-ordinated across multiple stakeholders as part of an active land management process.

CGR 12 Opportunity Sites

It is a policy objective of the Council to facilitate, promote and encourage the re-development of Opportunity Sites identified in Volume 2 of the Plan and Local Area Plans for appropriate development that contributes positively to good placemaking within the settlement.

3.7 Urban Living

This section of the chapter covers urban living and presents an overview of the types of residential development that is likely to occur in the towns and villages to support modern living. It is clear that residential areas need good connectivity to local services; however, good layout, modernisation and other upgrades of existing residential properties is also required to ensure areas remain attractive to potential inhabitants, meeting their current and future needs. These residential areas are an important component of the towns and villages in which communities develop over time.

3.7.1 Infill Sites

Infill sites are located in settlements within residential areas and are capable of accommodating a limited number of residential units. As with brownfield development they are supported in the NPF given their typical proximity to existing services and infrastructure. Therefore they are a more sustainable means of development. Infill development is only permitted in the existing built up area. Sub-division of sites within towns can also be permitted in certain circumstances where the character of an area or residential amenity is not adversely affected. Sub-division of sites will only be supported where it accords with proper planning and sustainable development and the appropriate minimum standards.

Corner sites and backland sites in existing built-up areas can also provide for new residential development. They can potentially make a positive contribution to the regeneration of an area as contemporary and innovative design approaches may be utilised. Certain settlements and Local Area Plans have identified a variety of infill sites which may be suitable for single residential development as an alternative to single rural housing.

3.7.2 Layout and Design

National policy and guidance advocate compact growth for sustainable neighbourhoods. Along with efficient use of land, high quality living environment with good access to infrastructure is also promoted and this is reflected in this chapter. Neighbourhoods must be attractive, safe and vibrant for people to live there.

Future development proposals will be required to ensure that:

- The principles good placemaking are adhered to as set out in this chapter;
- While residentially zoned areas are intended primarily for housing development, a range of other uses, particularly those that have the potential to foster the development of new residential communities may be considered e.g. crèches, schools, nursing homes or homes for older persons, open space, recreation and amenity uses;
- Development proposals must comply with the set out within the *Development Management Standards set out in Chapter 15*;
- Proposed developments must have regard to the relevant policy objectives set out within the plan.

3.7.3 Housing Types/Design Mix

As outlined in *Chapter 2 Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy and Housing Strategy* of the plan, the average household size has been identified as 2.5 persons per residential unit.

The mix of house types in the County is influenced by a range of factors including:

- The findings of the HNDA and the Housing Strategy
- The Core Strategy
- The Settlement Strategy
- The existing housing stock in the County
- The preferred mix to benefit the wider community and future population
- Provision of a range of housing types and tenures to meet demand
- Provide a variety of house types that cater for people of various ages with varying degrees of mobility.

Good placemaking in the towns and villages across the County can be delivered if the neighbourhoods offer a good mix of unit types that are attractive to inhabitants. The completion of unfinished housing estates will be supported to enable continued housing in the towns and villages.

3.7.4 Public and Private Open Space

The importance of well-planned and considered public and private open space provision in an area is key to providing a high-quality residential environment for residents and visitors alike. Residential areas should have a suitable mix of both types. The amount of open space, where it is located and the benefits it provides people are the key attributes that all proposed development should ensure is addressed. Development proposals should consider the specific open space needs of an area, the priorities to be addressed and the actions that will be implemented as part of a development proposal. The provision of open space will vary in scale from large regional parks to pocket parks close to people's homes.

It is acknowledged that the specific characteristics of a place may make it difficult or impossible to meet specific elements of the provision and location standards. The Plan allows for a flexible approach and will encourage creative responses to deliver the open space policy objectives through well-coordinated open space strategies that work at scale and across sectors in a collaborative partnership approach.

The provision of open space must be planned in a coherent manner. It is not sufficient to provide a leftover residual piece of land after a site has been designed.

The standards pertaining to the provision of private, semi-private and communal open space for residential development is set out in *Chapter 15 Development Management Standards*.

3.7.5 Extension to a Dwelling House

Alterations and extensions to existing dwelling houses within the county to improve living standards for occupants will generally be encouraged as it is a more sustainable option than a newly built structure. The layout, size and design of extensions should have regard to the character of the existing properties in the vicinity and the impact that any extension would have on residential amenity. In particular any compromise to sunlight, daylight, overshadowing or privacy should be avoided.

3.7.6 Sub-Division of a Dwelling

Sub-division of existing residential properties into multiple units can in some cases lead to an over intensification of residential activity to the detriment of neighbouring amenity. Generally sub-division of a dwelling into multiple residential units will be discouraged. However, exceptions will be made for large dwelling units with a large plot size that are well served by infrastructure including public transport.

Policy Objectives Urban Living

UL 1 Infill Sites

To encourage and promote the development of infill, corner and backland sites in existing towns and villages in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.

UL 2 Layout and Design

To comply with the principles of good placemaking in delivering residential developments within the towns and villages of the county.

UL 3 Housing Mix

To promote a mix of house types and sizes that appeal to all sectors of the community and contribute to a healthy neighbourhood.

UL 4 Unfinished Housing Estates

In order to address housing supply, public safety and environmental improvement within unfinished housing estates, the Council will continue to work with developers and residents of private residential developments where possible.

UL 5 Open Space

To provide well planned and considered open space that is of sufficient size and in locations that respond to the identified needs of people in accordance with best practice and the scale and function of the surrounding area.

UL 6 Extensions to Residential Units

To encourage sensitively designed subservient extension to existing dwelling houses which do not compromise the quality of the surrounding environment, residential amenity or the character of the surrounding area.

Chapter 4 Rural Living and Development

“Support the role of rural areas in maintaining a stable population base through a strong network of villages and small towns and strengthening rural communities by supporting a resilient rural economy and the sustainable management of land and resources”.

4.1 Introduction

Galway County Council recognises the important role that the rural area plays in the county from a housing, economic and social perspective. The county boasts a rich variety of natural amenities, vibrant towns, attractive villages, uplands, extensive grasslands, lake environs, inland rivers, streams, islands and scenic coastline.

Galway is one of the most rural counties in Ireland, with almost 78% of the population living in the rural areas. Therefore, the rural area and its importance will be reflected with key policy objectives and will accord with national policy. ‘Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities’. Rural areas play a key role in defining the identity, in driving the economy and the high-quality environment and will form a key part of the county’s strategic development during the plan period.

As outlined in *Chapter 2 Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy and Housing Strategy*, the settlement hierarchy identifies a number of villages and the general rural countryside. It is the Council’s policy objective that the Settlement Hierarchy will facilitate the rural generated housing requirements of the local rural community while also making the villages within this category as attractive places to live whilst still experiencing rural living. The balance between reinforcing and strengthening sustainable rural communities whilst protecting the rural countryside from over development will be a key priority of this plan.

With the changing work practices and more remote working there is an opportunity to provide rural villages as a real alternative for people wishing to live in a rural setting. There will be greater requirement to provide alternatives to living in large urban centres, but a balance is required in order to sustain the urban and rural areas. It is considered that the towns and villages now present an opportunity for people who would like to live in a rural area, but who do not comply with housing need criteria.

The county is home to a diverse range of uses ranging from agriculture, horticultural and equine industries, centres of local food production, agri-food businesses and recreational and agri- tourism activities. These combine to provide both residents and visitors with an opportunity to enjoy a quality environment to live, work and recreate.

4.2 Strategic Aims

Galway County Council shall ensure that developments in rural areas are provided in accordance with the following strategic aims:

- To harness a pride of place among rural communities and to assist rural communities to promote their cultural and natural resources;
- To reinforce the vitality and future of rural villages and the open countryside and to recognise the roles that they play in the wider social and economic context;
- To encourage and support the social and economic development of rural parts of the County;
- To support local rural economies and facilitate the diversification of local rural enterprises;
- To maintain and support into the future the County’s rural/coastal communities including the traditional family farm;

- To help foster ‘green growth/management practices’ (including food security, quality and diversity) in primary food production methods within the agri-food, fisheries and forestry sectors within the County;
- To support and promote the sustainable social and economic development of rural areas
- To protect and enhance the visual qualities of rural areas through the sensitive design of associated development

4.3 Strategic Context

This chapter is prepared in the context of the following National and Regional Plans, Policies and Guidelines:

National Planning Framework – Ireland 2040
National Development Plan 2018-2027
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region 2020-2032
Climate Action Plan 2019
Sustainable Rural Housing, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2005
Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future - A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009- 2020
Food Wise 2025
Food Harvest 2020
Realising our Rural Potential: Action Plan for Rural Development
Our Rural Future Governments Blueprint to Transform Rural Ireland
Charter for Rural Ireland, 2016 Department of Environment, Community and Local Government

4.3.1 National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF) acknowledges that rural areas have a major role to play in Ireland and encourages Local Authorities to ensure that connectivity gaps are addressed and that planning and investment policies support job creation in the rural economy. NSO 3 Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities is of relevance to rural development. The NPF acknowledges that there are numerous examples of vibrant rural communities right across the country in towns, villages and the countryside and that there are clear differences between these types of rural areas and rural communities in relation to scale, accessibility and pressure from adjoining urban areas. There is also the acknowledgement that there are challenges facing these rural communities which range from urban generated pressures in areas adjacent to the large urban areas to a declining and ageing population and poor accessibility in relation to infrastructure and new technologies. It seeks to manage the growth of areas that are under strong urban influence to avoid over-development, while sustaining vibrant rural communities.

4.3.2 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) recognises the importance that smaller towns, villages and the rural area play in the region. While the vibrancy and vitality of the rural areas are required to be conserved, at the same time a sense of place, culture and the quality, character of the landscape is also required to be maintained. The RSES also recognise the important economic role of rural settlements at a local level, whilst identifying the need to strengthen rural economies and communities by broadening the employment base of rural areas, improving connectivity and addressing infrastructural deficits. Several Regional Policy Objectives (RPO) are included that strive to make the rural areas more resilient to challenges that they are experiencing. RPO 3.4, RPO 3.7, RPO 3.8 and RPO 3.13 are the key RPO's to address rural development which will be considered in detail in this chapter and throughout the plan

4.4 Climate Change

Rural housing and Rural Development will play a key determinant in addressing the challenges faced by climate change in the county. In supporting rural communities and protecting the countryside, consideration must be given to the impact of the pattern of development associated with one off housing and rural development on the climate and environment. The sporadic nature of one-off housing results in an over-dependence on the car, with limited opportunities for people to walk or cycle due to the distance between homes and school, work or local services. As we strive to mitigate against the impacts of climate change, it is important that future development patterns reduce our carbon footprint, protect our environment and promote more sustainable ways of living. It is considered that the settlement hierarchy in Chapter 2 and the policy objectives contained in this chapter relating to villages and the open countryside promotes a sustainable pattern of development where growth is envisaged in settlements within the county. In relation to agriculture sector there is support for the transition to economically and environmentally viable farming methods that reduce greenhouse gases emission and are beneficial for local biodiversity and rural communities whilst still providing high quality food and animal welfare. The policy objectives in this chapter will promote a balanced rural development strategy.

4.5 Profile of Rural Communities

In Galway there are a number of rural villages that provide a key function in the provision of facilities such as places of worship, educational, social and housing. In the last number of years these villages have suffered a decline in population and in the provision of local services that cater for the local population and wider hinterland. Historically there would have been residents of these villages commuting to the larger towns and Galway city for employment and secondary education especially. However, in the last year there has been a significant change in work practices with more remote working and it is this change in work practices that provide rural villages within the county an opportunity to “regenerate” with inward population in order to sustain and develop further. The policy objectives of this plan are to continue to support the sustainable development of rural areas in Galway by encouraging growth in villages that are identified in level 7 of the settlement hierarchy and balanced and sustainable development in our rural countryside. The provision of rural housing in the open countryside is also an important parameter to consider when referring to rural communities, these areas have witnessed significant development pressure and as such a balanced approach to sustain these communities is required. The approach to rural living and development is based on promoting sustainable rural development which is aimed at maintaining a vibrant and viable rural communities, while also seeking to transition to a low carbon resilient society and protect the amenity, recreational and heritage value of the rural landscapes and countryside of the county. A number of the level 7 villages within the settlement hierarchy are serviced with wastewater and water infrastructure. Other villages do not have this benefit, but they play a critical role in the community and the wider rural hinterland. This critical community role merits their inclusion at level 7 villages with limited development potential.

4.5.1 Strengthening Residential Rural Communities

The NPF and RSES recognise the importance of towns and villages in creating a vibrant and sustainable rural community. Throughout the county there are villages that have suffered a reduction in services and a loss of vitality in the community. The rural Settlement Hierarchy for the county recognises the importance of striking a balance between facilitating residential development in the open countryside and revitalising the villages. As outlined in National Policy Objective 18b of the NPF a national programme will be developed for “new homes in small towns and villages” with Local Authorities,

public infrastructure agencies such as Irish Water, and local communities providing serviced sites with appropriate infrastructure which would act as an alternative to single houses in the open countryside. If this initiative was successfully implemented, this would provide a platform for the development of sustainable rural communities, whereby there would be a co-ordinated increase in population, which would help create or sustain in some instance's businesses and local services.

4.5.2 Residential Development Potential in Level 7 Settlements-Serviced /Un-Serviced Villages and Countryside

A number of the villages in this category of the settlement hierarchy are small villages that consist of a cluster of houses and limited level of services available. Some of these villages are served by public mains water and /or wastewater supply, whilst there are others that are un-serviced. It is recognised in this plan that there is capacity in these villages to accommodate a small level of growth, with the capacity to accommodate growth dependant on the size of the village. Placemaking within the rural villages as outlined in *Chapter 3 Placemaking, Regeneration and Urban Living* are key components to enhance the rural vitality and rural experience.

4.5.2.1 Serviced Villages

In the serviced villages it is considered that there is potential for mutli unit-development is considered be appropriate with a site-specific design strategy required to guide the development of each plot. Several design elements are required to be considered for the development to fit within the individual village.

4.5.2.2 Un-Serviced Villages

In addressing the villages that have a deficiency in wastewater infrastructure it is warranted to support the clustering of five houses or less on sites with individual waste water treatment plants in in certain circumstances to enhance the viability and attractiveness of these areas and to provide a viable alternative to the single house in the countryside. Rural Clustering in relation to the Village of Clarinbridge.

4.5.2.3 Open Countryside

The open countryside is and will continue to be a living and lived in landscape focusing on the requirements of rural economies and rural communities as outlined in section 4.7 of this chapter, however there is a necessity to avoid ribbon and over spill development from the urban area. The NPF prescribes national policy in relation to the development of rural housing and as outlined in NPO 19, there is a requirement to provide a clear distinction between areas under urban influence and elsewhere, which will be further expanded on in section 4.6 to follow.

Policy Objectives Rural Communities

RC 1 Sustainable Development in Villages

It is the policy objective of the Council to encourage the sustainable, balanced development of our villages in an incremental manner, with the emphasis on small scale development over a medium to long term period, in keeping with the character of the settlement.

RC 2 Rural Housing in the Countryside

To manage the development of rural housing in the open countryside by requiring applicants to demonstrate compliance with the Rural Housing Policy Objectives as outlined in Section 4.6.3.

RC 3 Small Towns and Villages

To support the development of a “New Homes in Small Towns and Villages” initiative in consultation with Irish Water and other stakeholders through the provision of water services and serviced sites within the existing footprint of rural villages.

RC 4 Mixed Use Development in Villages

Support the provision of appropriately scaled commercial development within villages, this may include limited new mixed use development, including employment generating development, childcare and other appropriate commercial development.

RC 5 Rural Clustering on un-serviced lands in Villages

Support the development of clusters of five houses or less within the footprint of existing villages with individual wastewater treatment plants in accordance with the most up to date EPA Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems serving single houses. All proposals shall ensure that there is the provision of safe water supply. Proposals for development in these villages shall include an assessment undertaken by a qualified hydrologist, that demonstrates that the outfall from the septic tank will not, in combination with other septic tanks within the village and wider area, contribute towards any surface or ground water body not meeting the objective of the water group under the Waste Framework Directive.

RC 6 Residential Development Potential of Villages

Within the footprint of villages, development will be considered where it involves multi-house developments, subject to services, siting, design, protection of residential amenities and normal Development Management criteria as outlined in *Chapter 3 Place Making, Regeneration and Urban Living* and *Chapter 15 Development Management Standards*.

RC 7 Guidelines for Cluster Housing Schemes in Villages

Prepare Guidelines for Cluster Housing Schemes in Rural Villages within the lifetime of the Development Plan as resources permit.

4.6 Rural Housing Strategy in the Open Countryside

The approach of the Rural Settlement Strategy for the county is guided by the NPF and the RSES. The Rural Housing: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG 2005) and the new Galway County Transport Planning Strategy (GCTPS). The Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines (2005) states that “Structurally Weak Rural Areas” will exhibit characteristics such as persistent and significant population decline as well as a weaker economic structure based on indices of income, employment and economic growth. In contrast, “Strong Rural Area under Significant Urban Influence” will exhibit characteristics such as proximity to the immediate environs or close commuting catchment of large cities and towns, rising population, evidence of considerable pressure for development of housing due to proximity to such urban areas, or to major transport corridors with ready access to the urban area, and pressure on infrastructure such as the local road network.

The Galway County Transport & Planning Strategy (GCTPS) has can be found in Appendix 3 of this plan. This strategy has indicated the pressure on the major transport corridors mainly along the M6/M17 motorways and areas surrounding the main urban areas and the metropolitan area of the county.

The Planning Authority has carried out an assessment in accordance with the following approach:

- Analysis and mapping of the data on planning applications for housing submitted since the adoption of the *Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021*
- Analysis of housing development using the An Post Geo Directory;
- Analysis of ED's that are under significant development pressure and the environs of the main urban settlements and within the Metropolitan area of the county based on commuter trips to these areas;
- Analysis of Census data 2006 and 2016 on population and household trends;
- Analysis of Landscape Character Assessment.

The main findings of this analysis are as follows:

- The pace of activity within the commuter area around Galway city;
- The level of individual houses granted between February 2015 and February 2021 in the GCTPS is approximately 1499, and areas outside the GCTPS is approximately 1059;
- Geo-Directory indicates there has been approximately 2,388 new addresses in the period from February 2015 to February 2021 in the GCTPS and approximately 1175 new addresses outside the GCTPS in the same period;
- The population variation between the 2006 and 2016 Census is significant.
 - (a) In the GCTPS area, the population in Electoral Divisions (ED's) has increased in excess of 10 to 25% and in some ED's this increase is in excess of 25%, especially around Athenry and Oranmore;
 - (b) In areas of the County to the east of the GCTPS, the population in ED's has decreased in the region of 0 to -5%;
 - (c) Areas of the County to the west of the GCTPS have also witnessed a general decrease in population numbers in ED's with less than 10% of an increase.

All of the above analysis and strategies have been considered in the identification of the areas that are under urban pressure.

4.6.1 Rural Areas under Strong Urban Pressure –Metropolitan Area and GCTPS

From the analysis carried out in Section 4.6 above it was determined that the areas as shown on Map no 2 reflect closely the characteristics of rural areas under strong urban pressure. These areas exhibit characteristics of growth in population at locations in close proximity to the larger towns and to which the residents of these rural areas commute to in large numbers. It is also evident from the analysis undertaken that there was pressure for development for housing due to the proximity to Galway City. The objective of these areas is to maintain a stable population base in rural areas within a strong network of small towns and villages.

The key objectives of the Council are:

- To facilitate the genuine housing requirements of the local rural community (rural generated housing), subject to satisfactory site suitability and technical considerations;
- To direct urban-generated development to areas for new housing development in the adjoining urban centres, towns identified in the metropolitan area and the towns and villages as identified in the Settlement Strategy;
- To support rural housing in areas designated as structurally weak areas
- To accommodate residential development proposals in accordance with *Chapter 15 Development Management Standards*.

In accordance with the NPF and the *Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines*, it is a generally accepted principle that urban generated housing should take place within the built-up areas or on lands identified, through the Settlement Plans/Local Area Plan process. With the designation of the Metropolitan Plan for Galway city and environs which encompasses the settlements of Bearna, Baile Chláir and Oranmore it is considered that the rural areas between these settlements and the administrative boundary of Galway city should be protected from sporadic rural housing. Within the metropolitan area of the county, the Applicant must be from a member of farm family and meet a number of criteria which will be outlined in policy objectives to follow.

In areas outside the metropolitan area, the areas under urban pressure, the Applicant will be required to demonstrate an established a substantiated Rural housing need.

In relation to the urban areas around Gort, Loughrea, Athenry and Tuam it is considered that the principles of proper planning and sustainable development would dictate that the erosion of the urban fringe around these towns should be discouraged. Applicants whose family home is within the Urban Fringe of these towns will be requested to establish a substantiated Rural Housing Need and only this category of persons will be allowed to construct a dwelling in these areas.

4.6.2 Structurally Weak Rural Areas (East and West of GCTPS)

From the analysis carried out in Section 4.6 above, it was determined that the areas west and east of the GCTPS can be categorised as Structurally Weak Rural Areas. This rural area can be categorised as the rural area to the west and east of the GCTPS as illustrated on 4.1. These areas consist mainly of a low population base and have not experienced the same level of growth in population as the areas within the GCTPS/Urban pressure. There are areas that have declined in population, while a number of areas have experienced an increase in population between the 2006 and 2016 Census. There are reduced services and infrastructure available in these areas due to the low population base.

In this rural area type, the key objectives of the Council are:

- To accommodate residential development proposals as they arise subject to satisfactory site suitability and technical considerations;
- To accommodate residential development proposals in accordance with *Chapter 15 Development Management Standards*;
- To maintain and strengthen existing towns and villages and to direct urban generated housing demand into these areas;
- To protect areas located in Landscape Categories 2, 3 and 4

4.6.3 Rural Housing Development Strategy 2022-2028

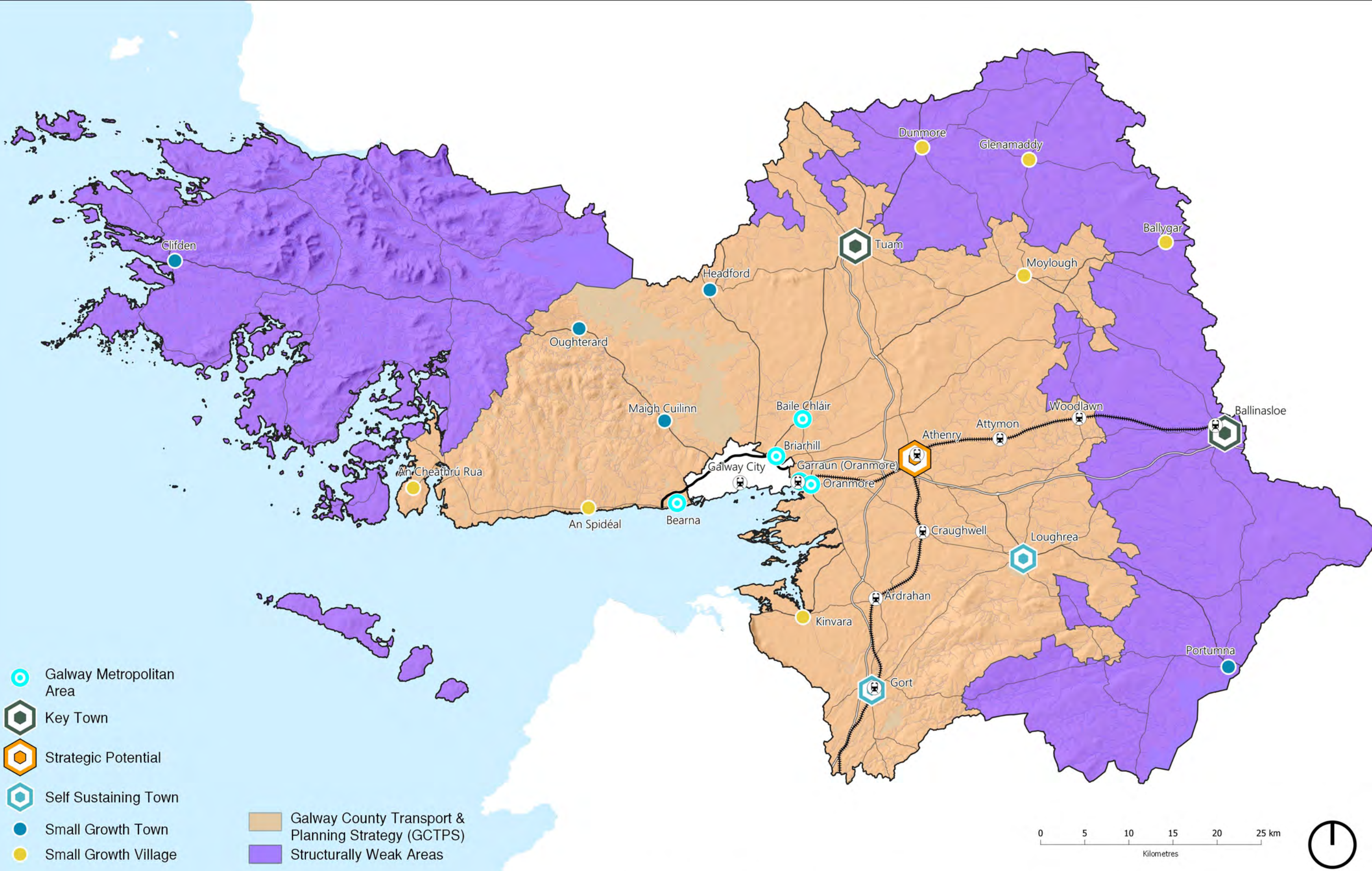
In order to incorporate the requirements of the *NPF* and the *Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines* (2005) it is considered necessary that the following specific policy responses are incorporated into the plan to ensure that the provision of rural housing in the open countryside is managed efficiently and appropriately.

In addition to the areas identified above (Rural Metropolitan Area, Rural Areas Under Strong Urban Pressure and Structurally Weak Areas), it is considered necessary to include the areas affected by Landscape Sensitivity 2, 3 and 4 and also the areas located within the Gaeltacht. In areas which are classified in the Landscape Sensitivity 2, 3 and 4 an applicant seeking to construct a rural house in the open countryside is required to demonstrate substantiated Rural Housing Need and their Rural Links.

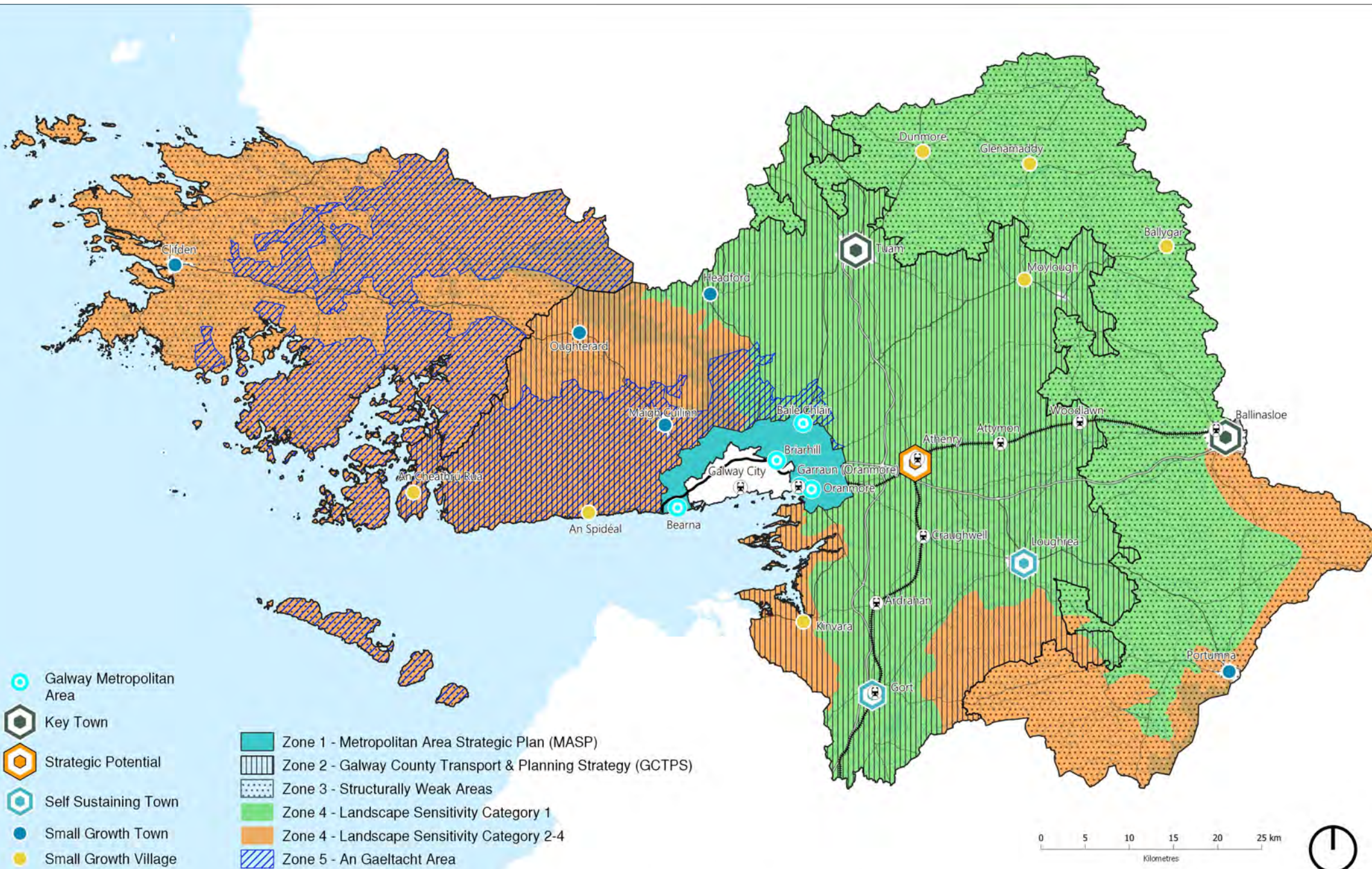
The specific policy objectives for rural housing in the open countryside are as follows:

- Rural Housing Zone1: Rural Metropolitan Area-

- Rural Housing Zone 2: Rural Area Under Strong Urban Pressure-GCTPS
- Rural Housing Zone 3: Structurally Weak Areas
- Rural Housing Zone 4: Landscape Sensitivity 2,3 and 4
- Rural Housing Zone 5: An Gaeltacht



Map 4.1 Rural Area Types



- Galway Metropolitan Area
- Key Town
- Strategic Potential
- Self Sustaining Town
- Small Growth Town
- Small Growth Village

- Zone 1 - Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP)
- Zone 2 - Galway County Transport & Planning Strategy (GCTPS)
- Zone 3 - Structurally Weak Areas
- Zone 4 - Landscape Sensitivity Category 1
- Zone 4 - Landscape Sensitivity Category 2-4
- Zone 5 - An Gaeltacht Area

Policy Objectives Rural Housing

RH 1 Rural Housing Zone 1(Rural Metropolitan Area)

It is policy objective to facilitate rural housing in this Rural Metropolitan Area subject to the following criteria:

Those applicants with long standing demonstrable economic and/or social Rural Links* to the area through existing and immediate family ties, seeking to develop their first home on the existing family farm holdings. Documentary evidence shall be submitted to the Planning Authority to justify the proposed development and will be assessed on a case by case basis. An Enurement condition shall apply for a period of 7 years, after the date that the house is first occupied by the person or persons to whom the enurement clause applies.

RH 2 Rural Housing Zone 2 (Rural Area Under Strong Urban Pressure-GCTPS-Outside Rural Metropolitan Area Zone 1)

It is policy objective to facilitate rural housing in this rural area under strong urban pressure subject to the following criteria:

1(a). Those applicants with long standing demonstrable economic and/or social Rural Links* to the area through existing and immediate family ties seeking to develop their first home on the existing family farm holding. Documentary evidence shall be submitted to the Planning Authority to justify the proposed development and will be assessed on a case by case basis.

OR

1(b). Those applicants who have no family lands but who wish to build their first home within the community in which they have long standing demonstrable economic and or social Rural links* and where they have spent a substantial, continuous part of their lives i.e. have grown up in the area, schooled in the area and have immediate family connections in the area e.g. son or daughter of longstanding residents of the area. Having established a Substantiated Rural Housing Need*, such persons making an application on a site within a 8km radius of their original family home will be accommodated, subject to normal development management criteria. Documentary evidence shall be submitted to the Planning Authority to justify the proposed development and will be assessed on a case by case basis.

OR

1(c). Those applicants who can satisfy to the Planning Authority that they are functionally dependent in relation to demonstrable economic need on the immediate rural areas in which they are seeking to develop a single house as their principal family Residence in the countryside. Documentary evidence shall be submitted to the Planning Authority to justify the proposed development and will be assessed on a case by case basis.

OR

1(d). Those applicants who lived for substantial periods of their lives in the rural area, then moved away and who now wish to return and build their first house as their permanent residence, in this local area. Documentary evidence shall be submitted to the Planning Authority to illustrate their links to the area in order to justify the proposed development and it will be assessed on a case by case basis.

2. An Enurement condition shall apply for a period of 7 years, after the date that the house is first occupied by the person or persons to whom the enurement clause applies.

*See definitions on Page 81

RH 3 Rural Housing Zone 3 (Structurally Weak Areas)

It is a policy objective of the Council to facilitate the development of individual houses in the open countryside in "Structurally Weak Areas" subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the *Development Management Standards* outlined in Chapter 15 and other applicable standards with the exception of those lands contained in Landscape Classifications 2,3 and 4 where objective RH4 applies.

RH 4 Rural Housing Zone 4 (Landscape Classification 2,3 and 4)

Those applicants seeking to construct individual houses in the open countryside in areas located in Landscape Classification 2,3 and 4 are required to demonstrate their demonstrable economic or social Rural Links* and where they have spent a substantial, continuous part of their lives i.e have grown up in the area, schooled in the area and have immediate family connections in the area e.g son or daughter of longstanding residents of the area and require to establish a Substantiated Rural Housing Need*. In addition, an Applicant maybe required to submit a visual impact assessment of their development, where the proposal is in an area identified as "Focal Points/Views" in the Landscape Character Assessment of the County or in Class 3 and Class 4 designated landscape areas. Documentary evidence shall be submitted to the Planning Authority to justify the proposed development and will be assessed on a case by case basis. An Enurement condition shall apply for a period of 7 years, after the date that the house is first occupied by the person or persons to whom the enurement clause applies.

RH 5 Rural Housing Zone 5 (An Ghaeltacht)

It is a policy objective of the Council to facilitate Rural Housing in the open countryside subject to the following criteria:

(a) Those applicants within An Ghaeltacht which are located in Zone 1 (Rural Metropolitan Area) and Zone 2 (The Rural Area Under Strong Urban Pressure-GCTPS) and Zone 4 (Landscape Sensitivity) shall comply with the policy objectives contained in RH 1, RH 2 and RH 4 as appropriate.

(b) It is a policy objective of the Council that consideration will be given to Irish speakers who can prove their competence to speak Irish in accordance with Galway County Council's requirements and who can demonstrate their ability to be a long term asset to the traditional, cultural and language networks of vibrant Gaeltacht communities. This consideration will apply to applicants seeking to provide their principal permanent residence, in landscape designations Class 1 and 2. It will extend into Class 3 areas that are not in prominent scenic locations. This consideration will not apply to applicants seeking to build in Zone 1 (Rural Metropolitan Area).

A Language Enurement of 15 years duration will apply to approved developments in this category

RH 6 Replacement Dwelling

It is a policy objective of the Council that the refurbishment of existing habitable dwelling houses would be encouraged, as a more sustainable option than the demolition and construction of a new dwelling house, unless a conclusive case for demolition based on technical evidence is made for the Planning Authority's consideration on a case by case basis. It will be a requirement that any new dwelling house be designed in accordance with Galway County Council's Design Guidelines for Rural Housing in the countryside. Applicants, who require the demolition of an existing family home shall be accommodated without the requirement to establish a Housing Need and will not be subject to an enurement clause.

RH 7 Renovation of Existing Derelict Dwelling

It is a policy objective of the Council that proposals to renovate, restore or modify existing derelict or semi-derelict dwellings in the County are generally dealt with on their merits on a case by case basis, having regard to the relevant policy objectives of this plan, the specific location and the condition of the structure and the scale of any works required to upgrade the structure to modern standards. The derelict/semi derelict dwelling must be structurally sound and have the capacity to be renovated or extended and have the majority of its original features in place. A structural report will be required to illustrate that the structure can be brought back into habitable use, without compromising the original character of the dwelling. Where the total demolition of the existing dwelling is proposed an Enurement Clause for seven years duration will apply.

RH 8 Substantially Completed Single Dwelling

Where planning permission has elapsed on a previously permitted development that has been substantially completed (external walls and roofs) and the dwelling remains unfinished it will not be a requirement to establish a Rural Housing Need if it were not a condition of the previously granted planning permission.

RH 9 Design Guidelines

It is a policy objective of the Council to have regard to Galway County Council's Design Guidelines for the Single Rural House with specific reference to the following:

- a). It is the policy objective to encourage new dwelling house design that respects the character, pattern and tradition of existing places, materials and built forms and that fit appropriately into the landscape;
- b). It is the policy objective to promote sustainable approaches to dwelling house design and encouraging proposals to be energy efficient in their design and layout;
- c). It is the policy objective to require the appropriate landscaping and screen planting of proposed developments by using predominately indigenous/local species and groupings.

RH 10 Vacant/Unfinished Housing

Applicants for rural housing on lands other than family lands shall be encouraged to consider the option to avail of existing or permitted housing in areas where there are high levels of such stock available. A statement relating to same should be submitted as part of the application indicating that an examination of such stock was carried out and clear reasons for the unsuitability of any developments considered.

RH 11 Waste Water Treatment provision

Provide for sustainable rural housing in the county in accordance with the EPA Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment Systems for Single Houses (2009).

RH 12 Adaptation of Existing Housing Stock

Facilitate the provision of accommodation for older people and dependent relatives in the existing family home subject to compliance with the following criteria:

- Be attached to the existing dwelling;
- Be linked internally with the existing dwelling;
- Not have a separate access provided to the front elevation of the dwelling;
- Be of appropriate size and length;
- Be capable of being served by adequate foul drainage facilities.

RH 13 Rural Housing Capacity

Residential Development on landholdings in Zones 1, 2 4 and 5, will be limited where there is a history of development through the sale or development of sites, notwithstanding an applicant's compliance with the local need criteria.

RH 14 Linear Development

Discourage the extension of linear development (defined as five or more houses alongside 250 meters of road frontage). The Council will assess whether a given proposal will exacerbate such linear development, having regard to the site context.

RH 15 Backland Development in the open countryside

In all areas subject to the other provision of Rural Housing policy objectives considerations will be given to family members including nieces and nephews of the land owners and will not be restricted to only one immediate family member on family lands as backland development. Backland development will not be restricted to only where this pattern of development already exists.

This is subject to the following:

- Where no alternative lands are available on the family holding;
- Where there is an existing/historical pattern of backland/cluster residential development within the rural area;
- The proposed development shall not have a negative impact on third parties/neighbouring property owners;
- Viable sites with sufficient independent percolation areas will be required in order to meet technical guidelines;
- Access shall in normal circumstances be by means of the existing entrance;
- The site must be capable of satisfying all other criteria such as separation distance.

RH 16 Direct Access to National Road

Residential development along National Roads will be restricted outside the 50-60kmp speed zones in accordance with the *DoECLG Spatial Planning and National Road Guidelines (2012)*. Consideration shall be given to the need of farm families to live on the family holding on a limited basis and a functional need to live at this location must be demonstrated. Documentary evidence shall be submitted to the Planning Authority to justify the proposed development and will be assessed on a case by case basis. Where there is an existing access, the combined use of same must be considered and shown to be technically unsuitable before any new access can be considered. Access via local roads shall always be the preferred access and in all cases, it must be demonstrated that this is not possible. An Enurement condition will be attached to grants of planning permission for the above.

RH 17 Direct Access onto Restricted Regional Roads

Proposed access onto any restricted Regional Road outside the 50-60kmp speed zones shall be restricted to members of the farm family on the family holding and must be accompanied by a justification for the proposed access including an assessment of the scope for sharing an access and/or achieving access onto an alternative minor road which will be the preferred option. An Enurement condition will be attached to grants of planning permission for the above.

RH 18 Log Cabins and Pods

The construction of log cabins and pods or wooden structures will be permitted in locations where they can be integrated into the existing landscape or where an application can demonstrate that an appropriate landscape will be designed around the structure.

RH 19 Lands in Family Ownership

Where applicants can supply land registry or folio details that demonstrate that the lands on which they are seeking to build their first home, as their permanent residence, in the area have been in family ownership for a period of 20 years or more, their eligibility will be considered. Where this has been established to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority, additional intrinsic links will not have to be demonstrated.

Definitions applied above:***Rural Links:**

For the purpose of the above is defined as a person who has strong demonstrable economic or social links to the rural area and wishes to build a dwelling generally within an 8km radius of where the applicant has lived for a substantial continuous part of their life.

***Substantiated Rural Housing Need:**

Is defined as supportive evidence for a person to live in this particular area and who does not or has not ever owned a house/received planning permission for a single rural house or built a house (except in exceptional circumstances) in the area concerned and has a strong demonstrable economic or social need for a dwelling for their own permanent occupation. In addition, the applicants will also have to demonstrate their rural links as outlined above.

4.7 Rural Development

As outlined in section 4.1 a national strategic outcome of the NPF is ‘Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities’. Rural areas play a key role in defining our identity, in driving our economy and our high-quality environment and are part of the county’s strategic development during the plan period. In addition to the natural resources and food sector as traditional pillars of the rural economy, improved connectivity facilitating home working and digital hubs, broadband and rural economic development opportunities offer the potential to ensure our rural area develops in a sustainable and orderly manner as a living and working community. In accordance with the economic strategy outlined in Chapter 5 for the overall county, employment related development within the rural area should in general, be directed to lands within our settlement plans and local area plans which cater for local investment and small-scale industry. However, there are certain industries that are suitable within the rural area outside of designated settlements. These industries include for example agriculture, horticulture, forestry, tourism and rural resources-based enterprise. These should be supported where appropriate.

Policy Objectives Rural Development**RD 1 Rural Enterprise Potential**

To facilitate the development of the rural economy through supporting a sustainable and economically efficient agriculture and food industry, together with forestry, fishing and aquaculture, energy and extractive industries, the bio-economy and diversification into alternative on-farm and off-farm activities, while at the same time noting the importance of maintaining and protecting the natural landscape and built heritage which are vital to rural tourism.

RD 2 Smart Economy

To support and develop a diverse base of smart economic specialisms as dynamic drivers in our rural economy, including innovation and diversification in agriculture.

RD 3 Assimilation of Buildings

To ensure that all buildings are appropriately sited and sympathetic to their surroundings in terms of scale, design, materials and colour. The grouping of buildings will be encouraged in the interests of visual amenity. In general, the removal of hedgerows to accommodate agricultural buildings will not be permitted.

RD 4 Remote Working

To support remote working in the rural area, at an appropriate scale, for enterprise/businesses that do not require visiting members of the public, subject to normal planning considerations.

4.8 Agriculture

Agriculture is by far the biggest influence in rural development in Galway. Although the economic character of rural areas is no longer synonymous with agriculture, the sector remains the single most important contributor to the economic and social viability of rural areas.

Agricultural practices are continually changing and modernising. The increasing scale of farming, together with increasing use of chemicals, and new methods of production mean that there is pressure on the environment, in particular through soil contamination, ground and surface water pollution⁶ and impacts on natural and built heritage. Agricultural methods also have the potential to both add to and mitigate climate change. The Council will facilitate and encourage best practice in terms of new agricultural development.

The traditional form of agricultural buildings, farm layouts and field pattern are a valuable part of the character of our rural areas and are worthy of protection. While the Council acknowledges that new farm buildings must be functional and efficient, they will also be required to be sympathetic to their surroundings and should be sited and designed to assimilate with the rural landscape.

Policy Objectives Agriculture Development

AD 1 Sustainable Agriculture Practices

To facilitate the development of sustainable agricultural practices and facilities within the county, subject to complying with best practice guidance, normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management standards in *Chapter 15 Development Management Standards*.

AD 2 Agricultural Lands

To protect good quality agricultural lands from development which could be accommodated elsewhere and that would undermine the future agricultural productivity of the lands or irreversibly harm the commercial viability of existing or adjoining agricultural land.

AD 3 Modernisation of Agriculture Buildings

To facilitate the modernisation of agriculture and to encourage best practice in the design and construction of new agricultural buildings and installations to protect the environment, natural and built heritage and residential amenity.

AD 4 Agriculture Waste

To ensure agricultural waste is managed and disposed of in a safe, efficient and sustainable manner having regard to the environment and in full compliance with the European Communities Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters Regulations (2014) and relevant best practice guidelines.

4.9 Agri-Diversification

The agri-food sector is one of Ireland's most important indigenous industries and is vitally important to the economy of the county. Food production, on all scales, is continuously growing and is particularly important in rural areas where a strong speciality/artisan food sector has emerged. National level strategies such as Food Wise 2025 emphasise the importance of this sector and its potential for enhanced growth. The agri-food industry, and in particular local food production, has an important role to play in ensuring sustainability and resilience. Local food production can provide both local employment and a better product for the consumer. Artisan food and beverage production is also playing an increasingly important role in the economy of the county, particularly in rural areas.

It is Council policy to facilitate the development of the rural economy through supporting sustainability and economic efficiency in agriculture and diversification into alternative on-farm and off-farm activities such as the food and drinks sector, forestry, horticulture, crafts, agri-business, fishing, aquaculture, waste management, rural tourism, renewable energy and the bio-economy, while at the same time noting the importance of maintaining and protecting the natural landscape and built heritage which are vital to rural tourism.

Policy Objective Agri-Diversification

AGD 1 Agri-Diversification

It is Council policy objective to favourably consider proposals for on-farm based diversification, which are complementary to the agricultural operation on the farm such as:

- (a) Specialist farming practices, for example, flower growing, equine facilities, poultry, mushroom growing, and specialised animal breeding;
- (b) Farm enterprises such as processing, co-ops, farm supply stores and agri-business;
- (c) The production of organic and specialty foods to meet the increase in demand for such products; and
- (d) The conversion of redundant farm buildings of vernacular importance for appropriate owner-run enterprises such as agri-tourism, as a way of supporting a viable rural community, subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

4.10 Horticulture

In recent years there has been growth in the demand for fresh local produce. The importance of the horticultural industry to Galway's rural economy is recognised. Further development in horticulture and in value added food and agricultural production in the county could provide opportunities for growth. Local Country Markets are also making an important contribution to the food sector and local economy with markets held throughout the county on a weekly basis.

Policy Objectives Horticulture

HO 1 Horticulture Enterprises

To facilitate the establishment of new horticulture enterprises and the expansion of existing enterprises in rural areas subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the Development Management Standards contained in *Chapter 15*.

HO 2 Horticulture Developments

To ensure that applications for horticulture related development include adequate measures to mitigate impacts on soil water contamination, adopt sustainable practices in terms of soil and peat use and use of pesticides and insecticides and adopt sustainable practices for the sustainable management of water from roofs by incorporating sustainable drainage systems and retention areas within the developments.

4.11 Forestry

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DoAFM) published a forest policy in 2014, 'Forests, Products and People - Ireland's Forest Policy - A Renewed Vision' sets out Government policy in relation to this sector of the rural economy. Forests and woodlands provide important social (recreational and amenity value), economic (supporting rural employment and rural diversity) and environmental benefits (climate change management and carbon sequestration, biodiversity and as a source of renewable/alternative energy sources).

Forestry is encouraged in appropriate areas, where it will not significantly impact upon designated habitats, archaeology, interfering with high amenity areas, protected views or scenic routes, be obtrusive in the landscape or present a risk to sensitive ecosystems or water quality.

Policy Objectives Forestry

F 1 National Policy

To support National policy in relation to forestry in order to develop an internationally competitive and sustainable forest sector that provides a full range of economic, environmental and social benefits to society, subject to normal planning criteria.

F 2 Sustainable Development

To encourage the development of a well-managed sustainable forestry sector, which is compatible with the protection of the environment including the avoidance of likely significant effects on European sites (SACs and SPAs) and is planted, managed and harvested in accordance with the Forest Service Guidelines for Landscape, Forest Harvesting and Environmental, Archaeology, Biodiversity and Water Quality.

F 3 Native Woodlands

To ensure that existing native woodlands are protected and enhanced and, where appropriate, encourage the conversion of coniferous forest to native woodlands with a focus on opportunities for habitat linkage and wider eco-services.

F 4 Forestry Development

To encourage forestry and forestry related development, as a means of diversifying from traditional agriculture activity with a preference for native species.

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.

F6 Afforestation

The development of afforestation shall not take place within 100m of residential units.

4.12 Equine Industry

There are several equine based industries situated within the county. The importance and significance of local breeds such as the Conamara Pony and the Irish Draught Horse are known throughout the world with their association with the county. Regular horse sales and shows are held throughout the year. There are several equestrian schools and facilities throughout the county for related leisure and sporting activities. There are considerable number of people employed both directly and indirectly in the equine industry which is an important economic contributor in the county.

Policy Objective Equine Industry**EQ1 Equine Industry**

To support and promote the equine industry in the county as an economic and employment provider and in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

4.13 Commercial Developments in Rural Areas

Rural businesses and enterprises are an important source of local employment in the County. Many examples of fine rural businesses exist throughout the county. This includes agricultural, equine, engineering/manufacturing, recreational, tourism, energy/renewable energy, and rural resource-based enterprises. Whilst the plan supports such enterprises and the diversification of the rural economy, it is also recognised that a balance is required between supporting rural based enterprises and projects and protecting the local environment.

In the first instance, new employment related developments are directed to settlements where services are available, and lands have been identified for employment uses.

It is also recognised that there are instances where a development can be more readily accommodated or is more appropriate to a rural area. This can be due to a locational specific, or resourced based development, or a development of regional or national importance.

In relation to the expansion of an existing rural enterprise, consideration will be given to the scale of the existing and proposed development, the capacity of local infrastructure to accommodate the expansion, and the compatibility of the development with the surrounding area.

Policy Objective Commercial Developments in Rural Area

CD 1 Rural Enterprises

Consider and support the establishment of small scale rural orientated enterprises in unserved rural areas outside of town or village settings which can be accommodated in existing farm buildings or can be established on a brownfield site, subject to satisfying the following criteria:

- (a) Compatibility and general suitability to an unserved rural area (primary consideration will be given to agriculture, renewable and marine resources, forestry, tourism, recreation or food production related enterprise activities and services);
- (b) Scale of development (assimilate appropriately into a rural setting);
- (c) Nature of development (raw materials sourced locally);
- (d) Consideration of social and environmental impacts (enterprise must not have a significant adverse impact on the environment or rural amenity);
- (e) The enterprise must not constitute a road safety hazard or have a major adverse impact on the road network, road capacity and traffic levels;
- (f) Residential amenity (enterprise must not have a significant adverse impact on residential amenity).

4.14 Mineral Extraction and Quarries

Extractive industries by their nature are resource based and result in the removal of soil and rock. Quarrying and other extractive industries are recognised as important to the local rural economic development of the County in terms of generating employment and providing raw material to the construction industry. The geology of the County produces aggregate resources in terms of sand, limestone and gravel, which are currently exploited at quarries throughout the County and the Council recognises this resource as a significant economic asset. Extractive industries can also give rise to detrimental environmental and residential amenity effects including increased traffic, dust, noise, water pollution, visual intrusion and the effects on local road networks may also be significant.

The Council will facilitate harnessing the potential of the area's natural resources while ensuring that the environment and rural and residential amenities are appropriately protected. The Council having regard to the substantial number existing number of quarries within the county have a preference for the continued sustainable extraction of these quarries over the development of new greenfield sites. In considering development applications relating to existing or proposed quarries, the Council will take full account of the following DECLG guidelines *Quarries and Ancillary Activities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities* 2004 (including any updated/superseding document) and have regard to the protection of residential and natural amenities, the prevention of pollution and the safeguarding of aquifers and groundwater. The development of new quarries will be strictly controlled in areas of high landscape value, in areas of significant archaeological potential, on European Sites, Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), Nature Reserves or other areas of importance for the conservation of flora and fauna and development shall also have regard to the requirements of the EU guidance document *Undertaking Non-Energy Extractive Activities in Accordance with Natura 2000 Requirements*.

Policy Objectives Mineral Extraction and Quarries

MEQ 1 Aggregate Resources

Ensure adequate supplies of aggregate resources to meet future growth needs within County Galway and the wider region and to facilitate the exploitation of such resources where there is a proven need and market opportunity for such minerals or aggregates, and ensure that this exploitation of resources does not adversely affect the environment or adjoining existing land uses.

MEQ 2 Protection of the Environment

The Council shall require the following in relation to the management of authorised aggregate extraction -

- (a) All quarries shall comply with the requirements of the *EU Habitats Directive*, the *Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010* and by the guidance as contained within the *DoEHLG Quarries and Ancillary Facilities Guidelines 2004*, the EPA Guidelines '*Environmental Management in the Extractive Industry: Non Scheduled Minerals 2006* (including any updated/superseding documents) and to DM Standard 19 of this Development Plan;
- (b) Require development proposals on or in the proximity of quarry sites, to carry out appropriate investigations into the nature and extent of old quarries (where applicable). Such proposals shall also investigate the nature and extent of soil and groundwater contamination and the risks associated with site development works together with appropriate mitigation;
- (c) Require Development Proposals to assess the potential impact of extraction in areas where geomorphological interest, groundwater and important aquifers, important archaeological features and Natural Heritage Areas are located;
- (d) Have regard to the *Landscape Character Assessment of the County* and its recommendations;
- (e) Ensure that any quarry activity has minimal adverse impact on the road network and that the full cost of road improvements, including during operations and at time of closure, which are necessary to facilitate those industries are borne by the industry itself.
- (f) Ensure that the extraction of minerals or aggregates does not adversely impact on residential or environmental amenity;
- (g) Protect all known un-worked deposits from development that might limit their scope for extraction.

MEQ 3 Sustainable Management of Exhausted Quarries

Encourage the use of quarries and pits for sustainable management of post recovery stage construction and demolition waste, as an alternative to using agricultural land, subject to normal planning and environmental considerations.

MEQ 4 Landscaping Plans

Ensure that all extractions shall be subjected to landscaping requirements and that worked out quarries should be rehabilitated to a use agreed with the Planning Authority which could include recreational, biodiversity, amenity or other end-of-life uses. The use of these rehabilitated sites shall be limited to inert waste and sites shall be authorised under the appropriate waste regulations.

Chapter 5: Economic Development, Enterprise and Retail Development

“To develop and build on the economic strengths and assets of the county as a thriving, competitive and attractive place for a range of sectors to locate, based on the principles of a well-established economic base that is highly appealing to both investors and employees”.

5.1 Introduction

Galway County Council recognises the pivotal role of the economic, enterprise and retail sectors to the county. It is the primary aim of the plan to build on the economic strengths within the county and address in a sustainable manner, the areas of the county that requires attention in this regard.

Galway forms part of the North-West Region and is regarded as the region’s primary economic engine in terms of job creation and economic prosperity. This chapter will identify policy objectives to support key economic sectors and employment generators in the county. There are a range of new economic issues facing the county that were not apparent in previous County Development Plans and these have been the subject of uncertainty in recent years. These include: the impact of Brexit; the Covid 19 pandemic, carbon emission targets and the pronounced shift towards remote working in hubs and the provision of home working. A suite of robust policy objectives is included which promote economic development within the county.

This chapter will also cover the related area of retail development. In particular, it will focus on the provisions set out in the RSES regarding the provision of retail development and the application of the Retail Planning Guidelines, 2012. In line with the settlement hierarchy of the County a retail analysis has been included which guides retail development to appropriate locations across the County.

It is considered that this chapter is consistent with and reinforces other aspects of the Plan including the Settlement Hierarchy, urban design and placemaking policies and the plan’s transport and climate adaptation strategy. This will deliver quality development outcomes including sustainable mixed use development models encompassing residential and employment activity. Timely delivery of critical infrastructure, which includes effective and reliable access to public transport, is also critical to the delivery of sustainable forms of development.

5.2 Strategic Aims

Galway County Council shall work with the appropriate agencies and stakeholders in order to safeguard the delivery of sustainable economic growth in accordance with the following strategic aims:

- To promote growth and employment across the county in accordance with the core strategy and Galway County Transport and Planning Strategy enabling people to work in the county and enjoy a good standard of living;
- To support the delivery of a range of employment uses including retail on brownfield and infill sites in towns and villages across the County;
- To ensure the attractiveness of Galway is retained and developed further as a location for domestic and foreign direct investment;
- To continue the delivery of high quality living environments across Galway so as to retain and build on the County’s reputation as an attractive business environment for foreign direct investment;

- To support where appropriate the establishment of remote working hubs in towns and villages across the county with access to high speed broadband which will enable people to ‘log-on’ anywhere regardless of where they work;
- To support individuals in being able to work from home.

5.3 Strategic Context

This chapter is prepared in the context of the following, national, regional plans, policies and guidelines:

National Planning Framework 2018
National Development Plan 2018 – 2027
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Northern and Western Region 2020
Food Wise 2025: A 10 Year Vision for the Irish Agri-Food Industry 2015
Galway County Council Local Economic and Community Plan 2017
Enterprise 2025 Renewal 2018
Retail Planning Guidelines 2012
Realising our Rural Potential 2017
National Policy Statement on the Bioeconomy 2018
National Mitigation Plan 2017
Galway Transport and Planning Strategy
Galway Transportation Strategy 2016
Making Remote Work: National Remote Work Strategy 2021

5.3.1 National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF) recognises the economic contribution of Galway within the North West Region. A number of NPO’s reference the interconnection of employment with land use planning. NPO 7 encourages population growth in strong employment and service centres, regeneration of smaller urban centres, addressing legacy of unplanned growth and facilitating ‘catch-up’, balance population and employment growth.

NPO 11 states a presumption in favour of development that can encourage more people and generate more jobs and activity within existing towns and villages. Brownfield and infill development will be encouraged in the towns and villages across the county in order to strengthen the county’s urban structure as identified in the NPF as set out by this policy objective.

5.3.2 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

The focus of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) is on place-based assets as well as sectors and clusters. The RSES approach aims to realise the full potential of the region through investments in placemaking, developing places that are attractive for business investment and for people to live and work.

At a macro level there are a number of RPO’s that encourage settlements to; harness their export capacity by promoting trade and global opportunities; by being vibrant and distinctive, where our communities act as a spur for quality of life, creativity and innovation and are attractive for innovators, investors, business, visitors and all residents.

5.3.3 Galway County Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2022

The Galway County Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) sets out the vision for County Galway: An inclusive County with a clear sense of identity where we work together towards achieving the full economic, social, community, linguistic and cultural potential of County Galway and of its people through citizen engagement at a local level.

Policy objectives identified in this economic chapter support Theme 1: Employment and Enterprise of the LECP and the high-level goal of enhancing the quantity and quality of employment and enterprise opportunities throughout the County. Objective 3 which is supportive of infrastructural investment seeks a collaborative approach with the IDA Ireland to promote Galway as a location for Bio-Pharma development and investment, leveraging off the existing Life Sciences cluster including the Monksland area of County Roscommon and the existing utility-intensive Strategic Sites in Oranmore and Athenry.

5.4 Climate Change

Along with infrastructure such as high-quality public transport, broadband and access to childcare facilities, economic development and delivery of jobs must be provided in full consideration of the climate action agenda. The Climate Action Plan (CAP) for Ireland highlights the importance of the enterprise sector in ensuring that we meet our climate change targets for the years ahead. In effect, the ambition is to transition to a low carbon climate resilient society as set out in NPO 54 and 21 in the NPF.

The manufacturing sector is identified in the CAP as the industry that creates the highest level of emissions in Ireland, which are typically caused by chemicals, food processing, beverages and cement.

The level of carbon emissions related to economic activity peaks during times of economic prosperity, due to the intensification of activity and reduces during times of recession, which can be attributed to a dilution in economic activity.

In identifying areas for employment, enterprise and retail related development a concerted emphasis will be placed on facilitating and encouraging carbon reduction through various mechanisms. The focus on delivering jobs in close proximity to residential areas to enable people to use sustainable transport modes to access work (walking, cycling and public transport) is at a most basic level something that is supported to help address the Climate Change agenda.

The shift to a low carbon economy across Galway is seen as an opportunity for further employment creation within this sector through technological innovation and investment.

5.5 Economic Profile of County Galway

The population in the county is growing with 179,390 persons recorded in the 2016 census, 2.4% higher than at the previous census (2011). Total employment also increased with 8.5% growth over the same period. Some 61.3% of Galway County's adults are in the labour force, either working or looking for work, close to the national average (61.9%). The 85,054 people who are in the county's labour force represents a 0.6% increase on the 2011 figure, compared with 3.2% growth nationally. The share of Galway County's adults who are 'at work' (54.1%) is above the national average, while the share unemployed is somewhat lower.

The broad sectors where the 75,116 Galway County residents who are 'at work' are employed are identified in Figure 5.1 below. The main sectors of employment include construction, retail and wholesale, professional, scientific & technical, along with industry and health and care. More recently

the agri-food and agri-engineering sectors have gained momentum locally and the tourism industry has always been a sustained source of employment.

Sectors that employ a higher percentage of the workers when compared to the state overall include industry, health and social work, education, agriculture forestry and fishing and construction.

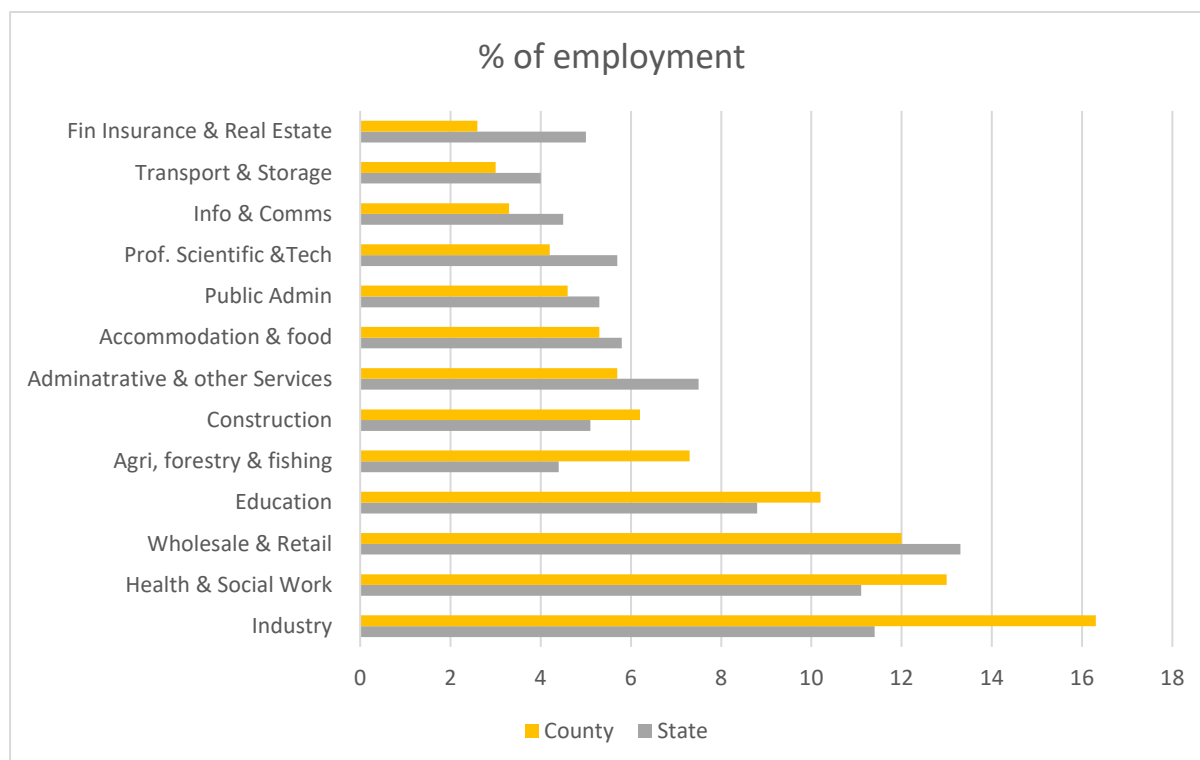


Figure 5.1 Percentage of total employment in each broad sector in Galway County and State, 2016

Wholesale & Retail is less important in Galway County than elsewhere. Employment in Wholesale & Retail declined 0.4% since 2011; compared with a slight increase nationally (1.7%). Financial services in contrast saw employment decline by 7.7% compared with a 1.3% decline nationally. This is linked to closures of local bank and insurance branches. Meanwhile accommodation & Food Service enjoyed strong employment growth, up 13.3%, slightly above the 12.9% national growth, indicating strengthening tourism activity.

Knowledge intensive services (Professional, Scientific & Technical activities, Financial, Insurance & Real Estate and Information & Communications) are among the county's smallest employers. However Information & Communications had the county's second strongest employment growth (18.7%), while Professional services also increased (8.3%); though both below State average growth of 31.4% and 22.2% respectively.

5.5.1 Jobs Forecast - County Jobs Ratio

Jobs growth across the county will be delivered in tandem with population growth during the lifetime of this Plan. To maintain current levels of employment, it is estimated that the labour force of Galway could increase to as much as 103,606 persons by 2031 (54.1% Population 15+ yrs) and that almost 16,321 new jobs will be required up to 2031 to achieve a jobs ratio of 0.70 (see Tables 5.1-5.3 below). These figures provide a broad parameter for the assessment of the supply of zoned employment land in the county and will also be used on a settlement by settlement basis within LAPs to identify towns where additional policy measures are required.

The jobs ratio is an indicator of the balance that exists between the location of the labour force and the location of jobs and is often used as an indicator to measure the sustainability of settlements. The National Planning Framework provides data in relation to population and employment in urban settlements based on the Census of Population 2016 and provides job ratio information in relation to the main urban settlements in the county.

As this Plan seeks to foster employment creation and maximise the jobs potential in growth towns throughout the county and achieve greater alignment between population and employment opportunities it is a high level policy objective to work toward a jobs ratio of 0.70 and above for our main urban areas. In these areas it will be important to ensure that there is an adequate supply of zoned land for employment purposes at appropriate locations to accommodate employment growth and cater for the number jobs that would help achieve this balance.

	2016	NPF / RSES Population Target 2026	NPF / RSES Population Target 2031	Increase
Population	179,390	205,500 (+25,500)	219,500 (+39,500)	39,500
Population 15+ yrs	138,747 (77% of total population)	158,235 (77% of total population)	169,015 (77% of total population)	
In Labour Force	85,054 (61.3% of Population 15+ yrs)	93,478 (est. based on 61.3% of Population 15+ yrs)	103,606 (est. based on 61.3% of Population 15+ yrs)	
Persons at Work (no of jobs)	75,116 (54.1% Population 15+ yrs)	82,499 (54.1% Population 15+ yrs)	91,437 (54.1% Population 15+ yrs)	16,321
Jobs Ratio	0.70	Target 0.70	Target 0.70	
Target Resident Workers	52,581.2	57,749	64,005	11,423.8
Total Area of Employment Land Required – based on Low-medium density type employment²	2,103,240 210.32 hectares	2,309,960 m ² 230.99 hectares (based on average 30sqm per employee).	2,560,200 m ² 256.02 hectares	-

Table 5.1 Jobs Forecast for 2026/ 2031

5.5.2 Economic Profile and Jobs Ratio of Settlements

Table 5.2 overleaf provides data on the jobs ratio for urban settlements in the County. Both Ballinasloe and Tuam demonstrate their strong position to support sustainable growth with high jobs ratios. However, the figures also highlight the settlements where the jobs ratio is low. Maigh Cuilinn, Oranmore and Bearnna have a jobs ratio of 0.53, 0.438 and 0.452 respectively which indicates high levels of outbound commuting.

The role and function of Maigh Cuilinn and Bearnna and their close proximity to Galway City clearly influences this trend. In these areas, it may not be viable to align jobs with resident workers as they

will continue to function predominantly residential settlements supporting the economic function of Galway City and their character as urban villages will be protected. The focus in these areas will be on strengthening the availability of sustainable transport options and where appropriate on providing additional support for working from home.

Oranmore and Athenry also have low jobs ratios of 0.438 and 0.767 respectively. In contrast to policies for Maigh Cuillinn and Bearnna, policy objectives for both towns to grow their employment base as part of the Oranmore-Athenry Strategic Economic Corridor is provided through its designation as a location with strategic development potential of a regional scale. Policy objectives to support investment in employment at Oranmore, and Athenry are provided below.

Settlement Hierarchy	Settlement	Population 2016	Resident Workers	Local Jobs	% of Galway County Jobs	Jobs: Resident Workers – Current / Target
Metropolitan Towns	Baile Chláir	1,248	621	344	0.8%	0.55
	Bearnna	859	859	388	0.9%	0.45
	Oranmore	4990	2,591	1,134	2.6%	0.44
Key Towns^[1]	Tuam	8,767	3,270	3,700	8.6%	1.13
	Ballinasloe	6,662	2,205	3,045	7.1%	1.38
Strategic Potential	Athenry	4,445	1,891	1,450	3.4%	0.77
Self Sustaining Towns	Gort	3,037	1,212	1,127	2.6%	0.93
	Loughrea	5,556	2,295	2,225	2.96%	0.969
Small Growth Towns	Clifden	1,597	594	856	2%	1.44
	Maigh Cuilinn	1,704	751	398	0.9%	0.53
	Oughterard	1,318	520	386	0.9%	0.74

^[1] This RSES has targeted the Key Towns to grow their population by at least 30%, relative to Census 2016 (i.e., Ballinasloe and Tuam).

	Portumna	1,450	529	549	1.3%	1.04
	Headford	973	414	425	1%	1.03

Table 5.1 Jobs ratio for urban settlements

A jobs forecast (CSO 2016) for Oranmore and Athenry which form part of the Strategic Economic Corridor is provided in Table 3 below. It again confirms that the quantity of zoned land is sufficient to cater for future development requirements.

Settlement Hierarchy	Settlement	Population 2016	Population 2028-2028	Resident Workers 2016	Resident Workers 2031	Local Jobs 2016	% of Galway County Jobs 2016	Jobs: Resident Workers – Current / Target
Metropolitan Towns	Oranmore ^[1]	4,990	6,690 (4,990 +1,700)	2,591	3,478	1,134	2.6%	0.44
						2,434		0.70
						Target 2,434 jobs by 2031 Total requirement approx. 97,360 m ² / 97 ha		
Strategic Potential	Athenry ^[2]	4,445	5,945	1,891(42% pop)	2,497	1,450	3.4%	0.77
						Target 1,747 job by 2031 Total requirement approx. 70,000 m ² / 70 ha		

Table 5.2 Jobs Forecast for Oranmore-Athenry Strategic Economic Corridor

5.5.3 Economic Benefits and Potential within County Galway

Table 5.4 below illustrates the economic appraisal of the county, highlighting individual settlements and their economic role.

^[1] Total Zoned Land (Ha) 164.73

^[2] Total Zoned Land (Ha) 143.34

Settlement Hierarchy	Settlement	Economic Role	Approach in the CDP
Metropolitan Towns	Baile Chláir Bearna Oranmore Garraun*Framework Briarhill*Framework Former Airport Site	Deliver where possible, sustainable jobs and housing in this area of development pressure.	Identify investment required to align employment and residential development.
Key Towns	Tuam Ballinasloe	Regionally strategic employment centres of significant scale that can act as regional drivers that complement and support the higher-order urban areas within the settlement hierarchy (ie. Regional Growth Centres and Galway Metropolitan Area). They also have the potential to accommodate a significant level of growth in population and employment through appropriate investment in infrastructure, support services and placemaking initiatives.	Facilitated projected jobs growth through adequate quantity and quality of employment zoned land
Strategic Potential	Athenry	A place of strategic potential with the opportunity to provide appropriately zoned land with adequate infrastructural services to accommodate enterprise e.g. Economic Corridor from Oranmore to Athenry. Economic corridors particularly employment corridors such as the Oranmore – Athenry Strategic corridor must be developed/promoted and serviced to high international standards to attract further Foreign Direct Investment and indigenous industries/businesses, building on the existing strategic location and infrastructure. This corridor will be promoted sustainably as a centre for major national and	Meet demand for projected jobs growth through adequate quantity and quality of employment land.

Settlement Hierarchy	Settlement	Economic Role	Approach in the CDP
		international enterprises in a manner that shall be further defined in local planning policies.	
Self Sustaining Towns	Gort Loughrea	Moderate level of jobs and services	Adequate quantity and quality of employment land
Small Growth Towns	Clifden Maigh Cuilinn Oughterard Portumna Headford	High levels of population growth and a weak employment base. / Local service and employment functions in close proximity to higher order urban areas.	Improve employment prospects and sustainable transport options

Table 5.4 Economic appraisal of the county

5.5.4 County Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan

The primary centre identified for growth in the region is Galway City through its designation as a Metropolitan Area in the NPF and RSES. The Galway Metropolitan Area Boundary encompasses both City and County Council areas (Baile Chláir, Bearna and Oranmore) and the MASP sets out the strategic direction the city will grow to achieve compact growth. Both Oranmore and the former Airport Site are identified as key industry and technology sites within the MASP.

The RSES acknowledges that Oranmore forms a significant proportion of the land supply and can accommodate future large scale employment. These lands benefit from being easily accessible due to the improvement of the wider road network in the form of the M6 and M17/M18 motorways. RPO 3.6.5 supports the delivery of lands for employment uses at Parkmore, the former Airport site and Oranmore.

The former Galway Airport Site is also identified as a key opportunity site with significant development potential in the RSES. It is also identified in the NPF as a growth enabler and as such a high level study was carried out by the Council which is appended to this chapter.

The RSES emphasises the delivery of the following infrastructure projects as essential for the development of the metropolitan area. The Council will support their delivery and will prepare and collaborate on the preparation of Implementation Plans as outlined in the RSES. The following infrastructure improvement are prioritised as part of this economic strategy.

- Greater Galway Area Drainage Study
- Galway Drainage Area Plan

5.5.5 Key Towns of Ballinasloe and Tuam

The Key Towns of Ballinasloe and Tuam will act as regionally strategic employment centres of significant scale that can act as regional drivers that complement and support the higher-order urban areas within the settlement hierarchy (i.e. Regional Growth Centres and Galway Metropolitan Area). They also have the potential to accommodate a significant level of growth in population and employment through appropriate investment in infrastructure, support services and placemaking

initiatives. Local area plans which will incorporate Local Transport Plans (LTP) will support key priorities for Ballinasloe and Tuam identified in the RSES.

5.5.6 Place of strategic potential – Athenry

Athenry is identified as a place of strategic potential with the opportunity to provide appropriately zoned land with adequate infrastructural services to accommodate employment and enterprise. It is considered that economic corridors particularly employment corridors such as the Oranmore – Athenry Strategic Economic Corridor must be developed/promoted and serviced to high international standards to attract further Foreign Direct Investment and indigenous industries/ businesses, building on its strategic location and existing infrastructure. This corridor should be promoted sustainably as a centre for major national and international enterprises in a manner.

5.5.7 Zoned Employment Land

A high level assessment of zoned employment lands within the County shows that there is 532.57ha of land zoned for employment uses. Approximately 134.71 ha of these lands have been developed and c. 394.07 ha remains available to support economic development and future jobs growth in the county. As illustrated in Table 1 above indicated that by 2031, approximately 256.02 hectares will be required. As c. 394.07 ha of land remains available to support economic development and future jobs growth, it is considered that there is an adequate supply of land zoned for employment but the location of these zonings will be kept under review.

5.6 Economic Strategy

The approach in this Plan is on significant economic growth within the metropolitan towns, key towns and areas of strategic potential. This is consistent with RPO 3.1 of the RSES which supports the development of urban places of regional scale through:

- Delivering on the population targets for the metropolitan and regional growth centres through compact growth
- Delivering significant compact growth in key towns; and
- Developing derelict and underutilised sites, with an initial focus within town cores.

The preparation of an Economic Development Strategy for the county will commence on completion of the next census.

Policy Objective Economic Strategy

ES1 Economic Strategy

Support the preparation of an Economic Development Strategy for County Galway.

5.7 Spatial Employment Designations in County Galway

Along with the network of towns and villages across the county as outlined above Section 5.5 further areas identified for potential employment and enterprise uses are discussed below.

5.7.1 Strategic Economic Corridor

Galway is identified in the RSES as a City and county that will grow in a globally competitive manner that will be compact, connected and inclusive as a place for people and for businesses to grow. The objective for Galway is to create the right conditions for people to live and work. The delivery of jobs to Galway can only be achieved where there are attractive locations for companies to invest. Central to the development strategy for Galway is the designation of the Strategic Economic Corridor (SEC) between Oranmore and Athenry.

The SEC runs east from Oranmore to Athenry and is part of the long standing economic development strategy for the county which has identified priority areas for economic development. The alignment of the corridor is based around that of the Galway to Dublin railway line and the M6 road corridor.

This is a strategically important area which is highly accessible and has easy access and a high concentration of established and valuable infrastructure. This area has the potential to attract significant levels of investment and stimulate economic development and employment creation, performing a number of economic functions to support both the City, County and broader region.

The extent of the SEC has been approximately defined as being 2 kilometres to the north and the south of the Dublin-Galway railway line between the Attymon Train Station and the R381 level crossing at Oranmore. The RSES makes reference to this Oranmore – Athenry Corridor as an example of an opportunity for economic development that should be promoted and to assist in the identification of suitable sites. This SEC should also be serviced to high international standards to attract further FDI and indigenous industries which would further develop the SEC as a strategic location with readily accessible infrastructure.

5.7.2 Atlantic Economic Corridor

Galway County Council will continue to work with regional development authorities and collaborate with other Local Authorities in order to achieve economic development on a regional scale. The Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC) covers 9 counties and 10 Local Authorities. These include Donegal, Leitrim, Sligo, Roscommon, Mayo, Galway, Clare, Limerick and Kerry.

The AEC concept stems from the need to address regional imbalance in Ireland and provide a viable alternative to the east region for investment and population growth. With this comes the need to build a new regional concept and brand internationally with a unique Quality of Life proposition.

The aim is to build and increase collaboration within the AEC that maximises its assets, attracts investment and creates jobs and prosperity in the region. Partnership operates at every level of the AEC. This involves the collaboration of resources, organisations and networks to deliver common objectives through a wide range of activities and projects. The AEC taskforce comprises Departments and Public Bodies, the Higher Education Sector, Chambers Group & Business Leaders.

The strategic aims of the AEC are as follows:

- Population growth, through retention of talent and inward migration, across the entire AEC – staying in the region to study, work or invest must be an attractive and viable option.
- Local regeneration and rural development will stem from the AEC through regional infrastructural investment and service provision creating viable and thriving communities across the AEC.
- Growth and investment in each of the MASP's and Growth Centres will create sub-regional impact and consequently local and community level impact.

- AEC will build a strong and progressive collaboration system and network of partners that will create competitive advantage and repetitive success.

Stakeholders

Galway County Council has a significant network of stakeholders via their involvement with the AEC as a regional development driver. These include:

- The Western Development Commission
- Chamber of Commerce
- 10 Local Authorities
- The Northern and Western Regional Assembly
- Department of Rural and Community Development

At present the AEC Hubs project is underway which involves multiple elements such as:

- The creation of a regional network of hubs across the AEC.
- Developing and rolling out a booking engine for all hubs in the region.
- A marketing campaign to promote the hubs and their services.

In addition, the WDC are working in collaboration with AEC Officers on a Talent Tool and the 'More to Life' campaign.

5.7.3 (Former Galway Airport Site) Galway Innovation Business and Technology Park

The former Galway Airport site has been identified in the NPF as a Key Growth Enabler. The NPF states that the sustainable development of the former Airport site should provide for employment uses together with supporting facilities and infrastructure. The site is located on the eastern fringes of Galway City and forms part of the metropolitan area as identified in the RSES. The site has an area of 46 HA and includes buildings and a number of potential access points for consideration. This is a brownfield site, the redevelopment of which is supported by both the NPF and the RSES. The vision for the former airport lands is to provide for economic development in this part of the county at a scale which will deliver regional impact. The RSES pledges its support for the delivery of a masterplan for the former airport site which could be prepared on a phased basis where this is deemed appropriate.

The site is located with easy access to the motorway network and has potential connectivity to the existing railway line serving Oranmore. The lands are located in close proximity to the existing large employment areas such as the Parkmore Industrial Estate and the other existing IDA lands at Oranmore and Athenry.

The site is in the sole ownership of Galway City Council and Galway County Council, which provides a degree of autonomy and flexibility in realising the vision for the site as a key employment, research and development site.

A detailed analysis of the former Galway Airport Site has been completed. It examines the potential business and its technological innovation prospects, which includes a vision for the redevelopment of the site that will provide for economic benefit to the wider Galway region. It is considered that the development of these lands represents a unique and paralleled opportunity to deliver sustained economic growth and prosperity.

The purpose of the document is to set out the high level future of the site, including the overall approach and development actions which will give the certainty required to underpin the investment of further time and resources in the further planning and development of the site for employment

uses. The overall approach has been discussed with and is supported by both the IDA and Enterprise Ireland.

This vision document is attached to the end of this chapter. It includes a high-level strategy for the development of this brownfield site for a range of uses. It is intended that development will take place within an overall masterplan which will include provision for emerging sectors as well as support industry to all multinational companies. It is also intended to provide space for the future growth potential of the food industry as a follow on from the Bia Innovator Campus development in Athenry.

Overall, this employment site could generate a considerable amount of jobs which would range from 3,676 employees based on light industry employment types to 10,465 employees which would be based on a combination light industry (40%) and commercial (60%) employment types.

5.7.4 Parkmore Industrial Estate

This site is located to the east of Galway City and straddles both administrative areas. This is a well established industrial estate which hosts a number of multinational corporate occupiers, forming part of the med-tech cluster and managed by the IDA. This site is now well served with public transport, a number of key city bus routes serve this location. It has also seen cycle infrastructure upgrades with the addition of a network of cycle lanes. The site is located within the metropolitan area which is discussed further in Volume 2. The remaining section of undeveloped IDA lands now form part of the Briarhill Urban Framework Plan which is included in the Metropolitan Plan in Volume 2.

Policy Objectives Spatial Employment Designations in County Galway

EL 1 Key Employment Locations

It is an objective of the plan to continue to deliver and enhance key employment locations and supporting infrastructure within the county. Economic development will be promoted within locations listed in Table 5.4 in order to secure the county's continued economic development.

The objectives for these main employment locations include:

- To upgrade, improve and maximise the infrastructural facilities available within the MASP area, key towns and the strategic economic corridor;
- To seek to reserve lands to support nationally and regionally significant activities and to attract specialist enterprise development that is large scale or high value;
- To facilitate opportunities for science and technology based employment;
- To ensure development is compatible with the enhancement, preservation and protection of the environment and recognised cultural resources;
- To identify sites of adequate size and location to accommodate necessary infrastructure or support activities which would not be appropriate in proximity to centres of population or sensitive environments or environmentally sensitive economic activities.

EL 2 Strategic Economic Corridor

In relation to the Strategic Economic Corridor the Council will take steps to:

- Reserve lands to support nationally and regionally significant activities and to attract specialist enterprise development that is large scale of high value;
- Facilitate opportunities for employment and technology-based uses;
- Ensure that development is compatible with the enhancement, preservation and protection of the environment and cultural resources recognised within the corridor;
- Identify sites of adequate size and location to accommodate necessary infrastructure or support activities which would not be appropriate in proximity to centres of population or sensitive environments or environmentally sensitive economic activities;

EL 3 Atlantic Economic Corridor

Galway County Council will support regional development through involvement in AEC projects and will continue to develop and enhance the attractiveness of the AEC in County Galway in particular the delivery of improved accessibility and connectivity within the AEC.

EL 4 Former Galway Airport

Support the development of the lands at the former Galway Airport site as an employment campus for innovation, Business and Technology including emerging areas such as food and the creative industry and green and agri-technology and encourage the development of clusters of complementary businesses at this location. This will also support the location of businesses that are linked to the multi national companies but which cannot be accommodated within the IDA lands.

EL 5 Parkmore Industrial Estate

Support the continued use of Parkmore Industrial Estate as a major employment site in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.

5.8 Sectors, Clusters and Employment Opportunities

The emerging sectors and clusters that are of most importance to the region are:

- Tourism;
- Renewable energy and low carbon future;
- Marine and Blue Economy;
- ICT and Digital Enterprise;
- Life Science (Medtech, Pharma, Biotech, Healthcare);
- Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering;
- Agri-tech and Agri-food;
- Retail.

The economic strategy in this Plan is supportive of each of our priority sectors. Policy objectives to support the tourism economy are set out in *Chapter 8 Tourism and Landscape*, *Chapter 9 Marine and Coastal Management sets out the priorities for the marine sector* and support for renewable energy and low carbon future are set out in *Chapter 14 Climate Change, Energy and Renewable Resource*, A Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy(LARES) also forms part of this chapter. The Council has recently published a Digital Strategy and the roll out of high-speed broadband across the county continues at pace. This is set out in greater detail in *Chapter 7 Infrastructure, Utilities and Environmental Protection*.

5.8.1 Life Science

Galway has long been established as an attractive location where a range of industrial clusters in the medical device's profession have chosen to locate. This sector has made a significant contribution to the county's local economy over the years. The arrival of Boston Scientific and Medtronic to Galway marked the origins of the med-tech cluster in Galway. The clustering of this industry has taken place in partnership with Galway's third level institutions and the various industry specialists. This relationship has helped to create a reliable skilled labour pool, and it has led to an international reputation of success and reliability as supported by certain companies in the industry. This cluster effect has led to a growth in supplier firms to serve the market. A number of companies now specialise in cardiology related devices and the various associated components. This has resulted in Galway being recognised as specialising in the development and manufacture of coronary medical devices.

The success of the medical devices cluster is strongly supported by a range of different bodies such as the IDA, Enterprise Ireland, Údarás na Gaeltachta, NUIG and GMIT. Combined these organisations provide a range of supports to the industry which include business development support, finance, access to markets, new customers, access to a skilled workforce as well as knowledge and research facilities. The founding of the National Centre for Medical Devices at NUIG plays an important role in maintaining and promoting Galway as a front runner in the medical devices sector.

Other industries that make a significant contribution to the local economy include biomed and ICT. Similarly, there is a strong link between the larger employers in this field and the nearby educational institutions in Galway.

5.8.2 Foreign Direct Investment

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) makes a significant contribution to employment creation in Galway. The IDA is the designated state agency responsible for attracting FDI to Ireland. Sources of employment that have been directly created from FDI now include a full range of sectors relating to manufacturing, research, development, innovation, and business services. These industries combined present a significant capital investment and employment base created by FDI companies. The success of ensuring these companies locate in Ireland is hinged on the efforts of a range of public bodies which include local authorities. From a planning perspective, the right environment and conditions will continue to be created in Galway to ensure and support the continued delivery of FDI to the various towns and villages across the County.

There are a number of measures that will ensure the attractiveness of County Galway as a place to locate and do business. This ranges from the delivery of key infrastructure such as the Galway City Ring Road and access to high quality public transport and the creation of high-quality living environment in our main towns and villages.

FDI makes a significant contribution to economic prosperity which in turn is a benefit to the local economy. Other benefits to the provision of FDI include a significant contribution to Ireland's gross domestic product, employment creation and Government revenue. This was confirmed in 2018 when 70% (€172 billion) of Ireland's entire exports were generated from FDI companies. In addition, evidence confirms that in 2018 for every ten jobs that created by FDI a further 8 jobs were created in the wider economy, a trend that is essential to Ireland's employment rates. While the onset of the Covid 19 Pandemic in 2020 has somewhat slowed down economic progress in Galway, it is considered that the established relationship with FDI should continue to prosper into the future to the benefit of the County's economy. A continued effort to provide the appropriate talent via third level institutions,

employment land and a supporting business environment with associated infrastructure will continue to be a priority across the County.

5.8.3 Argi-tech and Agri-food

The agri-food sector is recognised within the RSES as the largest indigenous industry in Ireland. Therefore, it is appropriate to support the industry's continued development in Galway. Nationally this sector accounts for 8.4% of those in full time employment. The NPF states that the development of this sector into the future will be supported through the implementation of *Food Wise 2025*. This organisation has responsibility for the development of agri-food as a sector in the Irish economy. *Food Wise* sets out a series of growth projections pertaining to the development of the agri-food sector and its contribution to the Irish economy. The emergence of this new industry is welcomed in rural Ireland given the various economic challenges that have hindered growth in rural areas across Galway in recent years. Development in rural areas is discussed in greater detail in *Chapter 4 Rural Living and Development*.

NPO 23 of the NPF sets out its support for a sustainable and economically efficient agricultural and food sector. The sustainable growth of the agri-food sector over the next number of years will need to also adhere to its carbon reduction responsibilities. New advancements in technology and an innovative approach to this sector will assist in this regard.

The Bioeconomy is described in the NPF as comprising the production of renewable biological resources. These include produce such as crops along with forests, fish, animals and microorganisms and the conversion of these resources and waste stream residues, by products or municipal solid waste into value added products. The value-added products that can be produced include food, feed, bio based products and bioenergy. The development of this circular bioeconomy industry where bio products are used for a range of purposes reduce waste levels and enable rural Ireland to contribute to a low carbon, climate resilient society as set out in the NPF. This approach makes use of new technologies and requires a new way of thinking. Given the contribution that the circular and bioeconomy can make to Ireland's carbon reduction, it is considered that this sector should be supported where appropriate a sentiment that is supported by the NWRA.

5.8.4 Gastronomy

Gastronomy is recognised as an important contributor to our economy and our cultural heritage. It is also linked with tourism development within the county. The Bia Innovator Campus led by Galway County Council and Teagasc is a new departure in food infrastructure in Ireland, which has the benefit of multi-food sector infrastructure and support in one location. These Athenry based supports will include expertise in meat, dairy, consumer foods and seafoods.

The Bia Innovator Campus is best described as a step change project that will transform the food entrepreneurship landscape in the west of Ireland. The campus will address the requirement for a regional food workspace infrastructure by providing a dynamic food and drink innovation and incubation centre of scale. It will be made up of 2,301sqm with the creation of 360 jobs within 3 years in over 40 businesses which will deliver a significant amount of training, development and support from the founding partners and wider stakeholders.

The facility once opened will provide an additional employment source in this part of the county. The facility is being done in partnership with Teagasc who make a significant contribution to the development of agri-rural enterprises in Ireland.

5.8.5 Remote Working

The onset of the Covid 19 pandemic saw an unprecedented acceleration in the number of employees across Ireland working from home. This type of approach to work is not an entirely new phenomenon. It has been a feature in some industries for a number of years. The roll out of high-speed broadband across Galway enables people in certain types of employment to work in locations other than their main place of employment. The option to work from home remote from the place of employment contributes to a reduction in those commuting to work every day. This has the effect of contributing to our carbon reduction. Working from home also gives employees a greater degree of flexibility in managing their work life balance. There are also benefits to the employer pertaining to the level of office space that is required by an organisation which can be a high cost for employers.

The roll out of working from home changes the necessity to live in easy commuting distance of the workplace. In the case of Galway, it may well be the case that people will now chose to relocate here to avail of the high quality of life that rural County Galway has to offer without the need to commute daily to work. Support where possible will be given to those working from home.

The RSES also advocates the delivery of a 'smarter economy' across the region through the delivery of high-speed broadband in the more remote parts of the County. The addition of remote working hubs in towns and villages across the county will provide further flexibility to those wishing to "log-on" while travelling across the county. Such a facility in some of the more rural parts of the county could have the effect of attracting a significant number of people into town and village centre locations on working days which could contribute to the local economy. This type of use it is considered would be of great benefit from an enterprise and economic perspective.

Policy Objectives Sectors, Clusters and Employment Opportunities

SCO 1 Continued Investment

Support the continued provision of employment investment across County Galway in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.

SCO 2 Foreign Direct Investment

The Plan will seek to retain the relationship created with FDI's in recent years by identifying appropriate sites and conditions for these international companies to locate and develop in Galway.

SCO 3 Agri-food Industry and Rural Diversification

Support the development of the agri-food industry and rural diversification in a sustainable manner across County Galway facilitating research and development where appropriate.

SCO 4 Ag-innovation Clusters

Support the development of ag-innovation clusters in County Galway encouraging improved links between farm, research, technology and commercialisation in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.

SCO 5 Gastronomy Sector

To protect and support the development of the gastronomy sector as part of our cultural heritage in County Galway as a source of sustainable economic development.

SCO 6 Bia Innovator Campus

To support and facilitate the development of the Bia Innovator Campus at Athenry as a centre of expertise in the development of food science, industry and technology.

SCO 7 New Enterprise

Support exploratory research, pioneering projects, new start up businesses/industries and retraining programmes in conjunction with the development agencies and educational/research institutions.

SCO 8 Hubs and Remote Working

Promote the development of Smart Towns and Villages across County Galway to develop and diversify the rural economy and build on local enterprise and infrastructure assets to drive innovations around smart technologies in energy, transport, agri-food, tourism, e-services and remote working including working hubs.

5.9 Retail

The RSES seeks to support the role of smaller and medium sized towns, which demonstrate an important role in terms of service provision and employment for their catchments within the economic function of the county. Galway has a range of towns and villages of varying scales with varying levels of economic activity. Such settlements are identified within the settlement hierarchy and the core strategy of this Plan.

On retail strategy development, the RSES highlights the competition between the conventional town centre shopping experience with that of online shopping highlighting the impact this will have on the vitality and viability of our town centres and village main streets. The onset of the Covid 19 pandemic has accelerated the market share of the online sector placing an increased pressure on a greater number of Irish retailers to develop their online presence to compete. This trend has important policy challenges for the development plan in seeking to maintain its traditional retail centres across the settlement hierarchy.

Retail Planning Guidelines, 2012 specify that the development plan must be:

- Evidence-based through supporting analysis and data to guide decision making;
- Consistent with the approach of these guidelines; and
- Clear and concise with regard to specific objectives and requirements.

5.9.1 Retail Hierarchy/Strategy

The NPF contains strategic policies seeking to ensure the vitality and viability of Ireland's urban and rural places. NPO 6 relates to the role and function of urban places, highlighting the Government's ambition to regenerate and rejuvenate cities, towns and villages as environmental assets to ensure the resiliency and vitality of urban places. NPO 11 sets out a presumption in favour of development that will encourage people, jobs and activity within existing urban places of all sizes.

The Core Strategy is statutorily required to contain information to show that in setting out objectives for retail development, the Planning Authority has had regard to the Retail Planning Guidelines and that the estimates of required future retail development are based on and take account of the specific

population targets. In addressing this requirement, Galway County Council intends to prepare a Retail Strategy in conjunction with Galway City Council. This Retail Strategy shall take account of the above requirements.

The retail hierarchy for the County is set out below and a number of policy objectives regarding retail management are identified. The retail hierarchy aligns with the designation of settlements in the Core Strategy table and associated Settlement Hierarchy, MASP, Key Towns as the main focus for new retail developments. Appropriately scaled new retail development in centrally located sites within the remaining towns and villages shall also be encouraged.

The approach to retail development must align with the provisions of the Settlement Hierarchy, which consists of the following categories:

- Metropolitan County Galway (Baile Chláir, Bearna, Oranmore)
- Key Towns (Ballinasloe, Tuam)
- Location of Strategic Potential (Athenry)
- Small Growth Towns (Clifden, Headford, Maigh Cuilinn, Oughterard, Portumna)
- Small Growth Villages (An Cheathrú Rua, An Spidéal, Ballygar, Dunmore, Glenamaddy, Kinvare, Moylough)

Level / Retail Function	Centre
Level 1	Galway City
Level 2 District Centre	
Level 3 District / Sub County Towns	Ballinasloe, Tuam, Athenry, Gort
Level 4 Neighbourhood Centre	
Level 5 Small Town/village centre/Rural Area	Clifden Maigh Cuilinn Oughterard Portumna Headford

Table 5.5 Retail Hierarchy

Policy Objectives Retail
<p>RET 1 Retail Hierarchy The County Council will actively promote a hierarchy of retail functions in the County that complements the settlement hierarchy of this plan and there will be a general presumption against out of town retail development.</p> <p>RET 2 Retail Strategy Support and promote the retail sector in the County and ensure compliance with the <i>Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities</i> DoECLG (2012), including the need for a sequential approach to retail development, the policies objectives of any future Retail Strategy for Galway and the guidance set out in the <i>Retail Design Manual</i> DoECLG (April 2012).</p> <p>RET 3 Joint Retail Strategy It is an objective of the Planning Authority to work with Galway City Council to prepare a joint retail strategy as per the requirement under Section 3.5 of the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012).</p>

5.10 Core Shopping Areas

The Retail Planning Guidelines place a strong emphasis on the importance of delivering vibrant town and village centres. It is further considered in the RPG's (2012) that this importance on Town Centre vibrancy can be delivered through strict adherence to the provisions of the 'sequential approach', which will safeguard the delivery of vitality and viability in town and village centres. The towns and villages each contain town or village centre zoning designations. These areas provide a mix of convenience shopping and other local services. The scale of retail provision in each town and village varies depending on the size of the town or village, its location and its catchment area as well as its proximity to Galway City.

The towns and villages are an important focal point for rural Galway. Other uses taking place in towns and villages include weekly food markets or the sale of livestock at local marts which attract a considerable number of visitors to an area and create retail diversity. These are interdependent uses which are of benefit to town and village centres. Variety in the services on offer is required in order to achieve and maintain a vibrant town or village centre. A proliferation of one particular use above all others that jeopardise this vibrancy.

5.10.1 Vacancy

The level of vacancy in the town and village centre areas has become a pronounced issue in certain towns and villages in recent years all over Ireland, particularly in more rural structurally weak areas. This has resulted from a variety of factors that pre-date the Covid 19 Pandemic and include not least the advent of online retailing. A concerted effort will be made through various funding mechanisms to ensure that the core shopping areas in the towns and villages of all sizes are attractive, maintained and well serviced with infrastructure to secure their prosperity into the future.

NPO 16 highlights the Government's intention of addressing vacancy rates in small town and village centres to reduce rural decline and encourage the viability and vibrancy of rural areas. The RSES also places particular emphasis on the challenge presented by vacancy rates in our towns and villages. The national vacancy rate stands at 13.5% and the rate for the county stands at 16.6%³. Of the towns and villages in the county both Tuam and to a lesser extent Loughrea have higher vacancy rates of 21.8% and 16.8% respectively. Although the vacancy rate in Loughrea has reduced by 1.4% since the last survey in Q2 2019 the rate in Tuam has increased by 0.5%.

Trends are consistent with trends in the wider province. Of the four provinces, Connacht continued to have the highest vacancy rate at 17.0% in Q2 2020, which equated to a 0.4pp increase versus Q2 2019. The top five counties with the highest vacancy rates were all in Connacht: Sligo (19.3%), Leitrim (17.1%), Galway (16.6%), Roscommon (16.6%) and Mayo (16.6%).

5.10.2 Local Shops and Services

Outside of town and village centres there remains to be demand for local convenience shops, which are often associated with service stations. These facilities offer important day to day goods and services to those in the area. Such facilities are often utilised as part of a multi trip for example during school drop-off and pick-up. These facilities can be located in close proximity to schools, employment lands and residential areas. However, retail in the first instance should be provided in the towns and

villages. The floorspace of out of town local shops and services should not exceed 100sqm in accordance with the RPGs (2012). In cases where the floorspace exceeds 100sqm, the sequential approach will apply.

5.10.3 Evening and Late-Night Uses

The Evening/Night-Time Economy has a growing importance in Ireland as evidenced by the establishment of the Night-Time Economy Taskforce in July 2020. Its purpose is to develop new approaches to supporting and developing this industry further. The night-time and evening economy is not a new concept. It includes a variety of activities ranging from pubs, restaurants, cafes, clubs, takeaways, cinema, theatre and other means of entertainment. The Evening/Night-Time Economy can make a significant contribution to the local economy to the benefit of towns and villages across County Galway. Night-time activities in towns and villages should be supported provided it is without detriment to residential amenity and night-time and evening activities should delivery vitality and viability, creating a safe environment for visitors and residents alike.

5.10.4 Petrol Filling Stations

Petrol filling stations have incorporated convenience shopping for many years and in many rural locations, the petrol station is the only retail service in the area. In these instances, it may be appropriate to facilitate the development to provide a wider range of products across a generous floor area. Conversely a significant number of petrol stations and associated shops have been developed on the outskirts of larger towns. Hence in these cases, it may be necessary to limit the range of products on offer and the customer floor area to safeguard the provision of retail within the town centre. Having regard to the aforementioned, the Council will consider proposals on an application by application basis. Furthermore, the *Retail Planning Guidelines (2012)* state that the floorspace of an associated shop should not exceed 100sqm and that the sequential approach should be applicable to any proposal for floorspace in excess of this threshold.

Policy Objective Core Shopping Areas

CSA 1 Balanced Retail Development

Ensure that in the interest of vitality and viability, development proposals result in a balance of services and outlets, thus avoiding an over-concentration of uses.

CSA 2 Retail and Complimentary Uses

To encourage and support a healthy mix of retail and other appropriate complimentary uses in town and village centres and identify targeted measures to reduce the vacancy rates.

CSA 3 Town Centre Uses

To support where possible planning applications which propose complementary, non-retail uses in town and village centres, where high vacancy levels are evident.

CSA 4 Shop Fronts and Signage

Building facades in town and village centres make a significant contribution to the attractiveness of a place. The development of shop fronts and associated signage should be given careful consideration in town and village centres, particularly in Architectural Conservation Areas.

CSA 5 Shop Front Design

To encourage high quality shop front design in town and village centres particularly in designated ACA's.

CSA 6 Local Centres

To support the provision of local centres serving local catchment populations in new residential areas, commensurate with locally generated needs.

CSA 7 Local Shops and Services

Facilitate the development of small shops and services at peripheral locations within town settlements only where it can be demonstrated that they are of a scale to serve only localised demand and will not impact negatively on the vitality and viability of the existing town centre.

CSA 8 Evening and Late-Night Uses

To support proposals for development involving off-peak evening and late night, commercial, retail or leisure uses within or immediately adjacent to town and village centres, where it can be demonstrated that the development will enhance the character and function of an area and not detract from the residential and general amenity of the area.

CSA 9 Management of Late-Night Uses

Seek to uphold environmental quality standards through the application of good practice principles in the management of late-night uses, in the form of stipulating litter prevention measures and regulating hours of operation.

CSA 10 Retailing and Associated Petrol Stations

Consider development proposals for shop facilities accompanying petrol stations on their individual merits, having regard to the *Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2012) and subject to traffic implications.

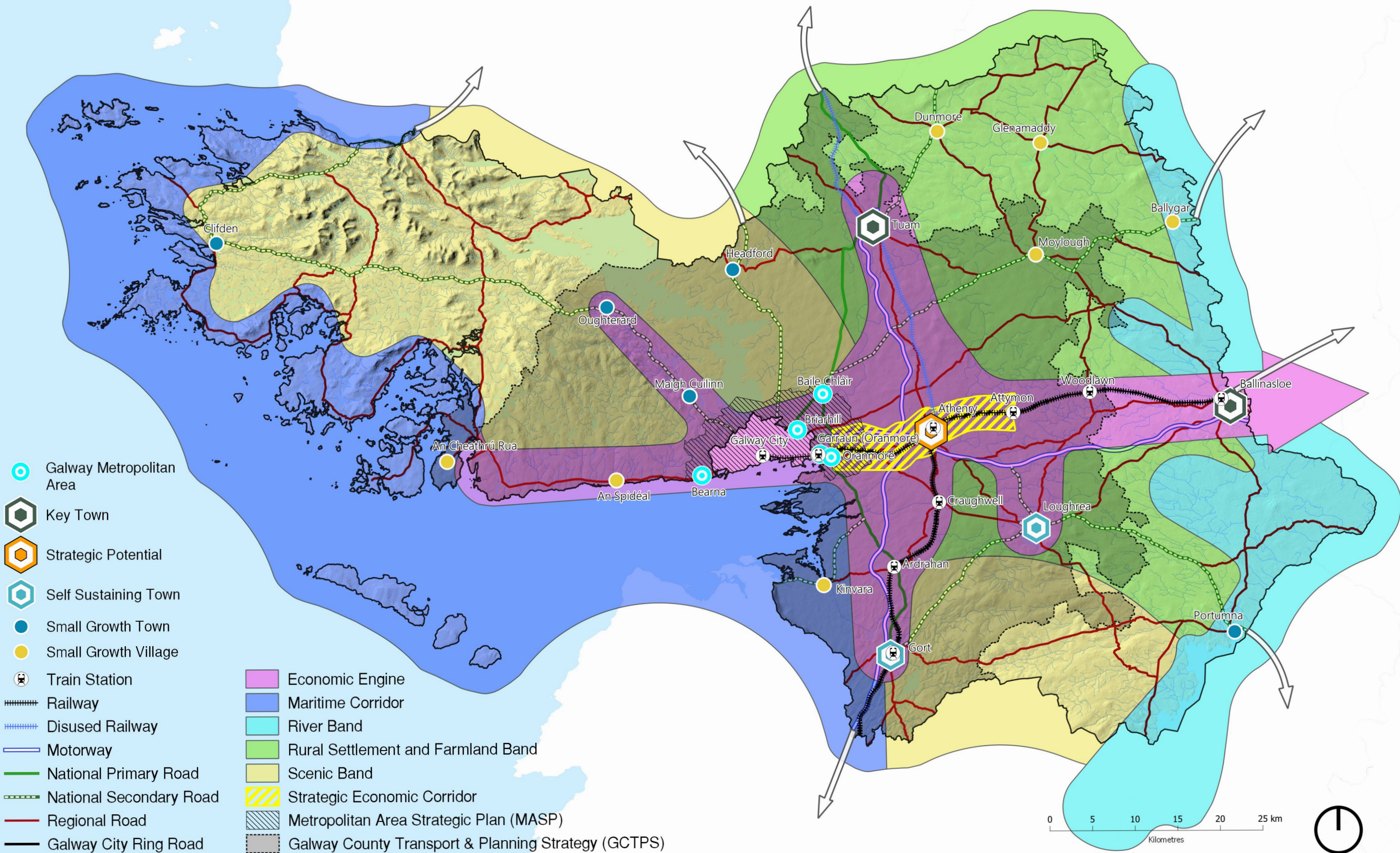
CSA 11 Strategic Town Centre Development

Be supportive of existing marts and co-ops in the County which seek to relocate from prime town centre locations to edge of town locations subject to adherence to normal planning requirements and development management standards, thus allowing for the expansion of a town centre/core area for retail and commercial purposes.

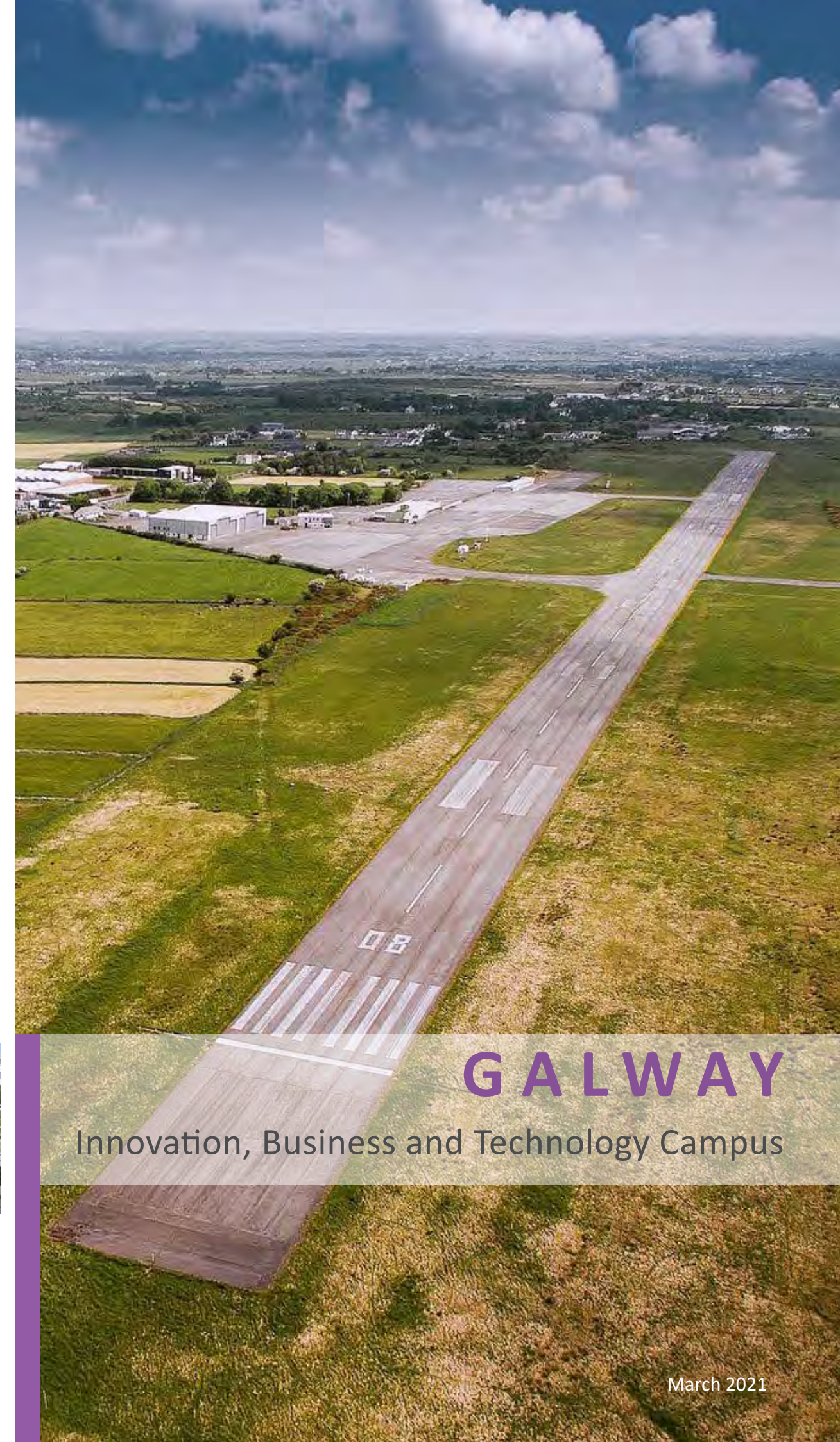
CSA 12 High Quality Retail Environment

Support the development of appropriate types, scales and patterns of retail development in suitable locations within the settlements of the County and with high quality design that:

- Support the vitality and viability of the existing settlement centre and associated main streets and/or do not undermine their vibrancy;
- Protect investment in strategic roads and infrastructure and provide ease of accessibility to retail areas, particularly in terms of public transport;
- Contribute to the creation of a high-quality retail environment.



Map 5.1 Economic Engine

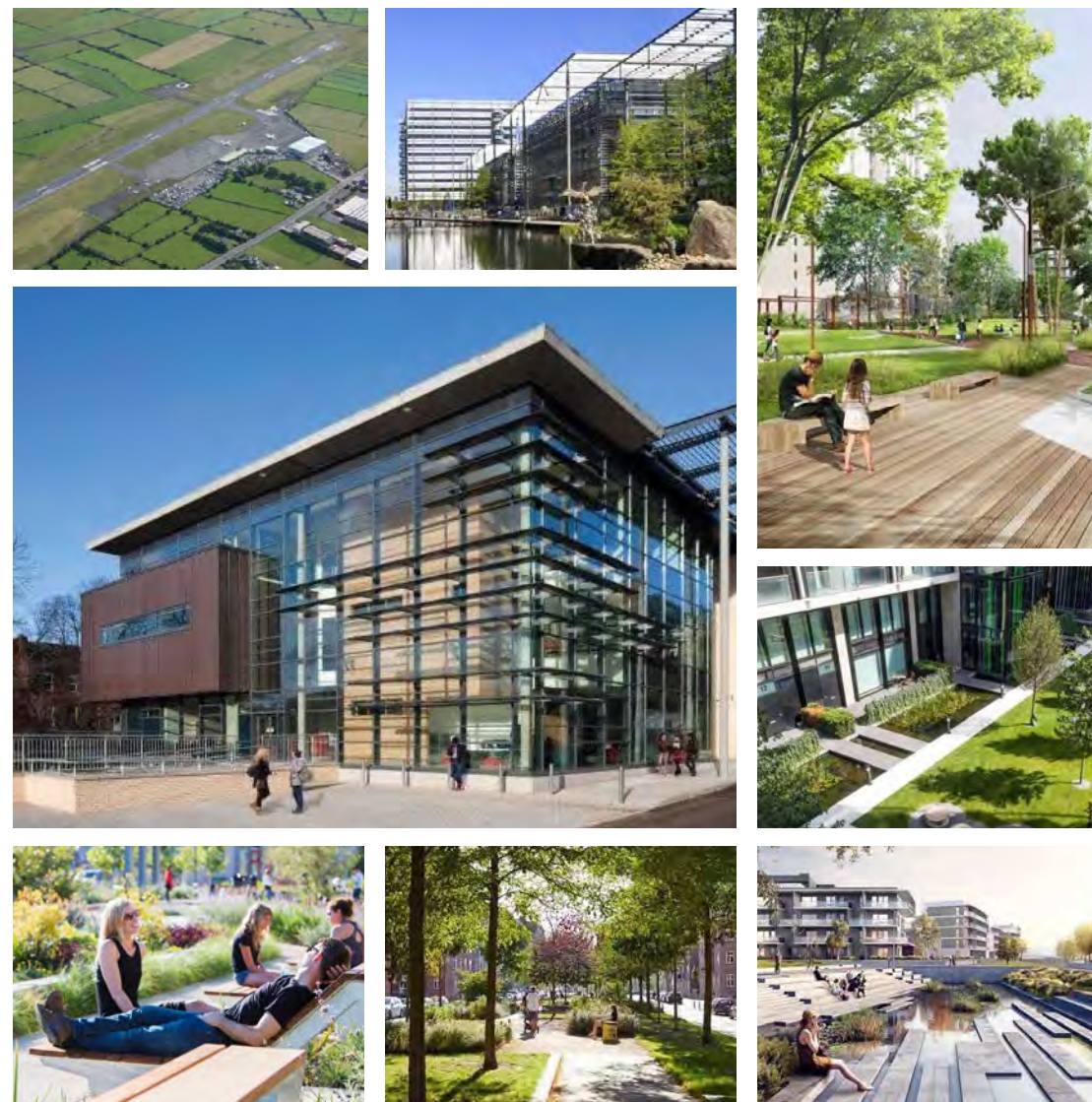


GALWAY

Innovation, Business and Technology Campus

GALWAY

Innovation, Business and Technology Campus



1.0 Introduction

This document presents a site strategy and vision for the redevelopment of the former Galway Airport lands as an Innovation, Business and Technology Campus delivering long term economic and community benefit to Galway and the wider region.

The redevelopment of the former airport site is a major development opportunity that has the potential to deliver long term benefits to Galway the west and its people.

The intention of this document is to set out the broad approach for the site which will be under pinned by the Galway County Development Plan and which in turn provides the foundation for the progression of the necessary work and the development of the required partnerships to fully deliver on the unique opportunity that is presented by this brownfield site.

2.0 Planning Context

The opportunity to redevelop the former airport lands as a strategic economic asset is underpinned by the full hierarchy of National, Regional and Local planning strategies, policies and objectives.

The National Planning Framework (NPF) is the Government’s strategic plan for shaping the future sustainable growth and development of Ireland to the year 2040, and subdivides the country into three regions, including the Northern and Western, Southern, and Eastern and Midland regions. Under the NPF, Galway is designated a Metropolitan Area, and is the primary centre for growth in the Northern and Western region.

The NPF identifies a number of key growth enablers for Galway and uniquely includes specific reference to the former Galway Airport lands.

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Northern and Western region supports the implementation of the NPF. In the RSES, the Growth Framework is underpinned by ‘Placemaking’ as a priority, ensuring synergy between investments and planning for strategic interventions that maximise returns for ‘People and Place’.

‘Compact growth will be pursued to ensure sustainable growth of more compact urban and rural settlements, supported by jobs, houses, services and amenities, rather than continued sprawl and unplanned, uneconomic growth.’

Like the NPF, the RSES also specifically identifies the former Galway Airport lands as an opportunity site with significant development potential.

The Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP), within the RSES, provides a framework for development plans and investment prioritisation. The former airport lands are part of a considerable land bank within the eastern Metropolitan Area of Galway that will be required to meet the overall needs of the population. With immediate access to the national motorway network, as well as convenience to Galway city and its public transport network, the former airport lands are exceptionally well positioned to facilitate a wide range of high quality employment uses, and to simulate and generate economic growth.

The Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 (GCDP) identifies the Strategic Economic Corridor to the east of the city.

Objective EL 2 – Strategic Economic Corridor. *In relation to the Strategic Economic Corridor the Council will take steps to:*

- reserve lands to support nationally and regionally significant activities and to attract specialist enterprise development that is large scale of high value.
- facilitate opportunities for employment and technology-based uses,
- ensure that development is compatible with the enhancement, preservation and protection of the environment and cultural resources recognised within the corridor’
- identity sites of adequate size and location to accommodate necessary infrastructure or support activities which would not be appropriate in proximity to centres of population or sensitive environments or environmentally sensitive economic activities.

Objective EL 4 – Former Galway Airport. *Support the development of the lands at the former Galway Airport site for employment uses including emerging areas such as food, the creative industry, green technology and agri-technology and encourage the development of clusters of complementary businesses at this location. This will also support the location of businesses that are linked to the multi national companies but which cannot be accommodated within the IDA lands.*

Objective SCO 7– New Enterprise. *Support exploratory research, pioneering projects, new start up businesses/industries and retraining programmes in conjunction with the development agencies and educational/research institutions.*

3.0 Strategic Opportunity

A Gateway to Galway and the West of Ireland, building on globally recognised brands, and establishing an internationally recognised centre of excellence for enterprise and growth.

Strengths

Exclusively owned and controlled by Galway City Council and Galway County Council.

Site is brownfield and can be serviced with water supply and waste water.

Options for multiple access points into the lands.

Capacity to accommodate a multiplicity of uses, with flexibility in plot, building and unit scale.

Ease of access to M6/M17/M18 network, enhancing competitiveness.

Potential access to the Galway to Dublin/Limerick railway.

Broadband infrastructure

Located on the Galway Strategic Economic Corridor and the Atlantic Economic Corridor

Direct association with Galway and the West of Ireland.

Opportunity

National, Regional and Local Planning Policy support for a wide degree of scope and flexibility for the future development of these lands.

Local Economic & Community Plan, and Local Enterprise Office.

Established med-tech and ICT cluster in Galway, providing potential for spin off enterprises.

Available skilled and educated workforce.

Existing research and development collaboration driving need for additional facilities.

R&D in third level institutions provides access to a population with entrepreneurial potential.

Food industry development and diversification potential.

Growth of Metropolitan Area will trigger expanded public transport network and facilities.

At the Gateway to Galway City and the Western Region, and only 8km outside Galway City, the former airport facility comprises over 45 hectares (115 acres) of undeveloped brownfield, serviced lands and affords a unique and compelling opportunity for a contemporary campus to stimulate and attract enterprise.

The lands are inside the Galway Metropolitan Area, and are readily accessible from the established and planned population and employment base of the city itself. With access to the M6 motorway, and within 3km of Oranmore railway station, the lands also enjoy Regional and National connectivity. Galway is approximately one hour from Shannon Airport and Ireland West Airport, via the M18 and M17 respectively, offering international connectivity.

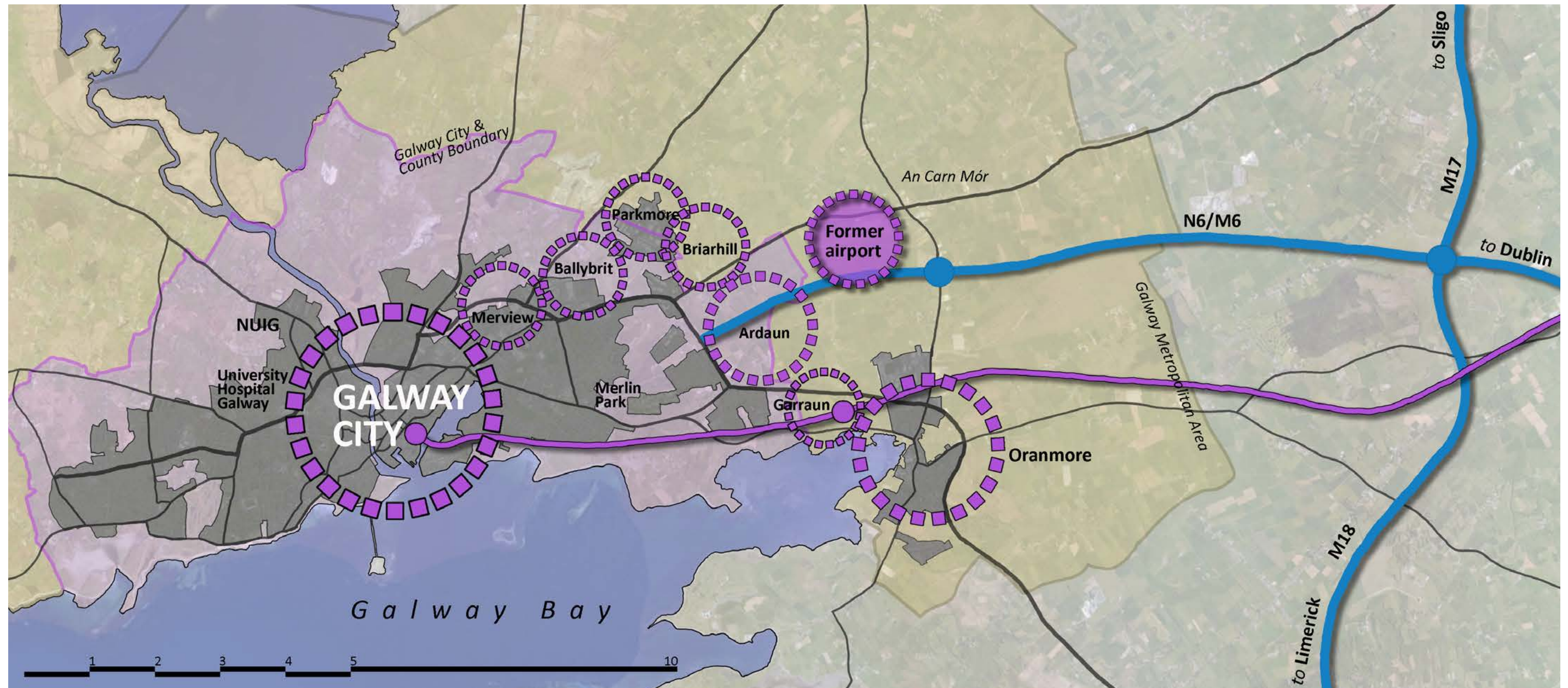
Redevelopment of these lands as an Innovation, Business and Technology Campus, is an opportunity not just to facilitate economic activity in Galway and the Region, but to establish a world class facility at Galway that has both National and International appeal as a place to do business.

Gateway

The Galway Innovation, Business and Technology Campus will be a Gateway to both Galway and the West of Ireland. It will be a strong new 'identifier' and be positioned to be a facility of global appeal attracting the highest quality of enterprise that will sustain long term growth and success.

GALWAY

Innovation, Business and Technology Campus

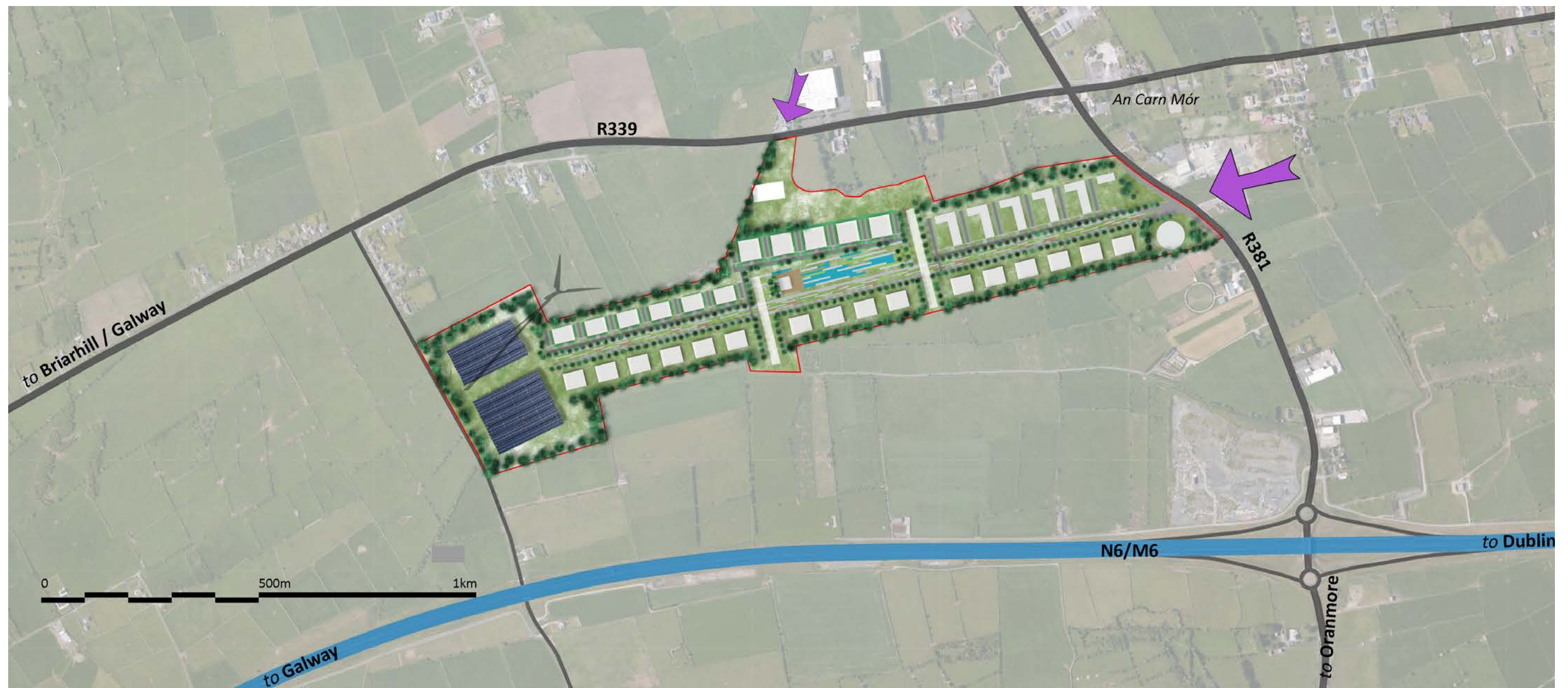


LOCATION and OPPORTUNITY

- Lands jointly owned by Galway City and Galway County Councils to deliver benefit to Galway and the wider region.
- Innovation, Business and Technology Campus as a gateway to Galway and the Western Region.
- Re-purpose the former airport lands, in a manner that brings long term future economic benefit.
- Brownfield serviced site over 45 hectares, only 8km from Galway City, with exceptional capacity for development and growth.
- Access to M6 motorway, with Regional and National connectivity.
- Adjacent to existing and growing population and employment base.
- Convenient to established Business and Technology Parks, National University of Ireland Galway, GMIT and University Hospital Galway.
- Versatility to adapt and accommodate a diverse range of innovation, business and technology uses.

4.0 Vision

A World Class Innovation, Business and Technology Campus that will attract and secure long-term investment in Galway and the Western Region and underpin the development of the Galway Metropolitan Area.



GALWAY

Innovation, Business and Technology Campus

A global facility supporting a wide range of sectors and uses.

Enterprise & Employment	Business
Research & Development	Education
Amenity Area	Science & Technology
Renewable Energy	Food Science
Cultural & Arts	Logistics
Film & Media	Community
Sustainability	Health & Sports
Biodiversity	Creativity
Innovation	

1. Main Access
2. Landmark Building
3. Access Parkway
4. In-bound
5. Out-bound
6. Commercial Units - variable floorplates & sub-divisions
7. Multi-format Units and plots to accomodate all potential uses
8. Park Amenity & Recreation Area - for enterprise & community use
9. Renewable Energy Park
10. Multi-purpose Leisure Facility
11. Alternative Access



- Contemporary development with urban characteristics, but set in a rural landscape.
- Model for a sustainable Innovation, Business and Technology Campus.
- Linear access and amenity park serving new enterprises, employees and community..
- High quality architecture and exemplar sustainable landscape design delivering a world class campus.
- Primary access from Junction 19 on the M6, via the R381.
- Versatile plot and building size to accommodate all potential uses.
- Building designs developed to reinforce the overall identity.
- Potential to accommodate emerging industries with dedicated space for identified sectors.
- Potential employment over time could range between 3,500 and 10,000.

5.0 Design Objectives

World class Innovation, Business and Technology Campus, responding to Climate Change, and bringing quality of life to the working environment.



- Distinctive campus environment, with high quality architectural design.
- Multi-purpose Amenity Park for employees and community.
- Sustainable building technologies aiming for ZERO carbon footprint.
- Potential for Renewable Energy including wind and photovoltaic.
- Strong biodiversity characteristics, supporting habitats and enhancing visual amenity.
- Sustainable water management including storm and grey water harvesting and filtration for re-use.
- Versatile plot and building capacities to cater for a wide range of uses and scales.
- Opportunity to 'cluster' related uses to establish character areas and foster innovation and collaboration.
- Low carbon mobility profile, with walking, cycling and public transport to the fore - supporting a pedestrian oriented campus environment.

6.0 Moving Forward

Delivering the Vision and Concept



KEY STEPS

- Communicate the Opportunity and Vision amongst key stakeholders, and establish consensus.
- Procure a Framework Masterplan for the lands that sets out:
 - Overall site design parameters, including capacity, and flexible plot and building configurations;
 - Campus design guidelines, including buildings and landscape;
 - Sustainability objectives and standards;
 - Phasing and planning, including critical infrastructure
- Develop a 'brand' identity that will underpin the long term objectives and global visibility of the facility.
- Marketing, in collaboration with government and Statutory organisations.

Chapter 6 Transport and Movement

“To encourage investment and improvements across all sectors of transport that will support targeted population, economic growth and more sustainable modes of travel including, walking, cycling and public transport”.

6.1 Introduction

Galway County Council recognises that the delivery of transportation infrastructure in a sustainable manner is critical to the future development of the county. This plan will support the investment for both new and enhanced transport infrastructure to ensure economic growth and investment, the delivery of employment opportunities, reduced commuting times, more sustainable communities and enhanced quality of life through improved connectivity within and between the settlements. To deliver on this integrated transport infrastructure the preparation of the Galway County Transport & Planning Strategy (GCTPS) has been prepared as part of this plan.

The Council recognises the importance of improvements in terms of the provision and maintenance of footpaths, cycleways, road, rail, aviation and marine based infrastructure that promotes a choice of transport modes, which contributes to a sustainable and integrated transport strategy, promotes economic investment and provides a high quality of life with more sustainable communities for the existing and future population of the county.

6.2 Strategic Aims

Galway County Council shall work with the appropriate agencies and state bodies to ensure that transport infrastructure is provided and will accord with the following strategic aims;

- To support the Galway County Transport & Planning Strategy (GCTPS) and the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS);
- To support the sustainable modes of transport and the transition to a low carbon economy;
- To safeguard the strategic transport function, carrying capacity, including planning for future capacity enhancements of the national road network;
- Promote development on serviced lands in towns and villages, particularly those located along public transport corridors in accordance with the *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines* (2009), having regard to existing settlement patterns;
- To promote the upgrade of the capacity of the Athlone – Athenry – to Galway rail line including the provision of a dual track and increased service stops between Galway and Athlone;
- To promote and support the expansion of County-wide and national Cycling infrastructure;

6.3 Strategic Context

This chapter is prepared in the context of the following National and Regional Plans, Policies and Guidelines:

National Planning Framework – Ireland 2040
National Development Plan 2018-2027
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region 2020-2032
Spatial Planning and National Roads, Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012
Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets 2013, as updated in 2019
Local Link Rural Transport Programme Strategic Plan 2018-2022
Climate Action Plan 2019

Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future - A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009 - 2020	-
Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways, 2018	
National Mitigation Plan 2017	
National Policy Framework; Alternative Fuels Infrastructure for Transport in Ireland 2017 - 2030	
Permeability Best Practice Guide by National Transport Authority	
National Cycle Policy Framework 2009-2020	
National Cycle Manual by National Transport Authority 2011	
Age Friendly Strategy for Galway 2014-2019	
Galway Transport Strategy and the Galway County Transport and Planning Strategy	

6.3.1 National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF) places significant emphasis on the importance of the transition towards more sustainable modes of transport and the implementation of planning and transportation strategies. The NPF also places importance on the electrification of public transport, the use of electric vehicles. The design of communities must include the integration of safe and convenient alternatives to the car into the future and the improvement of walking and cycle infrastructure.

6.3.2 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) supports transition from the private car to alternatives and promotes greater efficiency in the use of the transport networks. RPO 3.6.7 of the RSES supports the provision of a new N6 Galway City Ring Road (N6 GCRR) which represents a key priority for the Galway metropolitan area. RPO 6.27 supports the preparation of Local Transport plans for Ballinasloe and Tuam while RPO 3.6.13 supports the delivery of a Greenway Network which includes National Dublin to Galway Cycleway, Oranmore to Bearna Coastal Greenway and the Galway to Clifden Greenway. The following are a list of the key priorities outlined in the RSES:

- Support for maintaining the strategic capacity and safety of the national roads network and planning for future capacity enhancements including the N6 Galway City Ring Road, the N59 Upgrade, the N59 Clifden to Oughterard Scheme and the Maigh Cuilinn Bypass;
- Support for Local Transport plans for Ballinasloe and Tuam;
- Support for the delivery of Greenway Network to include National Dublin to Galway Cycleway, Oranmore to Bearna Coastal Greenway and the Galway to Clifden Greenway;
- Support for an enhanced and more connected provision of public transport service including the rural transport programme;
- Support for the delivery of the rail projects including a dual railway track between Galway and Athlone;
- Support provision of Smarter Travel infrastructure;

6.3.3 Galway County Transport and Planning Strategy and Galway Transport Strategy

The Galway County Transport and Planning Strategy (GCTPS) provides an overview and examination of existing transport networks and services within the County and uses this information to identify the key opportunities and challenges which will arise with regards to transport provision within the period of the County Development Plan and beyond. Current and predicted future patterns of movement have been applied alongside consideration of known and planned growth in housing, employment and other land uses to enable an assessment of how the use and operation of key “corridors” within the County is expected to alter, allowing for a series of options for transport improvements and related

measures to be developed which are capable of responding to these patterns. Further, these options have then been assessed against a series of strategic objectives to develop proposals by mode and location which will address existing transport issues, protect the safety and efficient operation of the transport networks within the County area, and work to guide and support future development and growth within locations which are either identified within this plan, or can be shown to be consistent with its relevant policy objectives. In addition, the GCTPS has been prepared so as to be compatible/compliment the Galway Transport Strategy, in particular in regard to the metropolitan (MASP) areas which border the Galway City administrative area. The GCTPS seeks to actively promote and support improvements to the transport networks which will encourage greater use of sustainable transport by existing populations, reduce car dependency and support new development in locations where sustainable travel choices can be encouraged and facilitated through existing and upgraded infrastructure and other measures.

The Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) promotes the integration of land use and transportation within Galway City and suburbs and environs of Galway County. This plan is a joint Galway City Council and Galway County Council 20-year strategy prepared in partnership with the National Transport Authority. The GTS supports reduced congestion and car dependency through increased capacity of reliable and sustainable public transport and the promotion and facilitation of cycling and walking, which in turn promotes the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

The strategy includes traffic management, giving priority to walking, cycling and bus movements, modifications to the traffic network, management of parking activities and heavy goods vehicles, improvements to the public realm and use of ‘smarter mobility’.

Policy Objectives for Galway County Transport & Planning Strategy and Galway Transport Strategy

GCTPS 1 Galway County Transport & Planning Strategy and Galway Transportation Strategy

It is a policy objective of Galway County Council to support and facilitate the implementation of the Galway County Transport & Planning Strategy and Galway Transport Strategy across all modes of transport.

GCTPS 2 Integrated approach to land use and transportation

Galway County Council will pursue a fully integrated approach to land use and transportation, actively supporting measures which facilitate and attract developments to locations with high levels of sustainable transport provision (or which can achieve such provision as a result of the development in question).

GCTPS 3 Sustainable Transport

The County will seek to support a variety of measures which will reduce car dependency for residents, and will specifically seek to improve access to sustainable transport choices (including responsive and “flexible” modes) for those residents in rural areas of the County.

GCTPS 4 Walking and Cycling

Support for, and enhancement of, existing and new walking and cycling networks as the “first choice” for shorter local journeys and to link settlements within the County and to Galway City.

GCTPS 5 Upgrade to Public Transport Networks

Support any proposed major upgrades to the public transport networks, including the Western Rail

Corridor and the dual tracking between Galway City and Athlone.

GCTPS 6 Road Based Public Transport

The County will seek to maintain and enhance infrastructure for road-based public transport, and to increase access to existing services (through provision of new stops and improved access via the pedestrian and cycle networks).

GCTPS 7 Improvements to Road Network

The County will manage and maintain the efficient and safe operation of the road network under its control, and will work with TII and NTA to identify locations on the national network where targeted improvements may be required to address specific issues.

GCTPS 8 Enhancement of National Networks

The County will co-operate with TII and the NTA with regard to the maintenance and enhancement of national networks for longer-distance and cross-country travel and movement of through-traffic including freight.

GCTPS 9 Collaboration with Galway City

The Council will collaborate with Galway City Council as appropriate to bring forward transport proposals and measures which will enhance travel to and from Galway City in a manner which is compatible with the GTS and GCTPS, and where possible maximises the benefits to both areas from this approach.

6.4 Climate Change

The provision of infrastructure such as high-quality public transport and road infrastructure, must be provided in full consideration of the climate action agenda. The following are key parameters in addressing climate change:

- Sustainable modes of transport;
- Enhanced public transport;
- Reduced emissions;
- The integration of spatial planning with transport planning;
- Measure to support electrical vehicles;
- The promotion of sustainable settlement and transportation strategies in urban and rural areas.

The policy objectives to follow will accord with the National Strategic Outcome (NSO) no.8 of the NPF and will support the county's transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society. In addition, Chapter 14 *Climate Change, Energy and Renewable Resource* will also address in more detail Climate Change and the interrelationship between the policy objectives of this chapter and the transition to a resilient society.

6.5 Transport

6.5.1 Integrated Land Use and Transport Planning

In shaping the pattern of development and influencing the location, scale, density, design and mix of land-uses, the integration of land-use and transportation can help reduce the need to travel and facilitate sustainable urban development. Conversely, the dispersal of land uses results in increased

commuting times, increased reliance on transportation which leads to increased greenhouse gas emissions and a reduced quality of life for our communities which is unsustainable.

The plan therefore promotes an integrated approach to land-use and transportation and supports development in existing towns, settlements and villages within the county in accordance with the Core Strategy, as outlined in Chapter 2 “*Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy & Housing Strategy*” in order to reduce car dependency. The Plan strongly supports the creation of compact urban growth, consolidation of existing settlements and the development of brownfield lands which are all further expanded in *Chapter 3 Placemaking, Regeneration and Urban Living* across the settlement hierarchy. The promotion of brownfield development and consolidation of existing settlements supports a more sustainable modes of transport, namely walking, cycling, and public transport as viable alternatives to the private car.

The plan promotes the creation of transport hubs and enhanced public transport infrastructure to facilitate increased capacity and additional service. At strategic locations along these public transport corridors the plan promotes higher density development which will increase the number of people within the walking catchment of the public transport service, which will increase the numbers of passengers using the service, and leads to an increase in the overall economic viability of the service and consequently reduce greenhouse gas emissions due to the reduced numbers dependent on cars.

This strategy is evident within the plan through the preparation of the Garraun Framework Plan which has identified lands for development around the existing train station in Oranmore. A number of infrastructural works are required to the existing train line which will result in increased frequency and capacity of the train service. The GCTPS also sets out the intention to investigate the provision of new and improved “hub” facilities at the Key Towns of Ballinasloe and Tuam, and enhancement of facilities serving the rail station at Athenry.

Land Use and Transportation Strategies also play a vital role in supporting better coordination and integration of development planning. This plan is accompanied by and has also been informed by the Galway County Transport & Planning Strategy. This chapter also includes policy objectives for the preparation of Local Transport Plans for the Key Towns of Tuam and Ballinasloe as part of the review of the Local Area Plans for these settlements.

Policy Objectives for Integrated Land Use and Transport Planning

ILUTP 1 Sustainable Transportation

Encourage transition towards sustainable and low carbon transport modes, through the promotion of alternative modes of transport, and ‘walkable communities’ together with promotion of compact urban forms close to public transport corridors to encourage more sustainable patterns of movement.

ILUTP 2 Local Transport Plans

To prepare Local Transport Plans in accordance with the Area Based Transport Assessment Guidelines (TII, 2018) and in consultation with national transport agencies and other relevant stakeholders for Key Towns of Tuam and Ballinasloe as part of the preparation of the Local Area Plans for these settlements.

6.5.2 Sustainable Transport

Based on the analysis of the 2016 census, there has been significant dependence within the county on the private car which has become the dominant mode of transport. This chapter in conjunction with both the Galway County Transport and Planning Strategy (GCTPS) and the Galway Transport Strategy aims to support a shift away from the private car to more sustainable transport options. The modal share within the county including Galway City is detailed below within Table 6.2 which is based on the 2016 Census. The transition to more sustainable transport within the county is considered essential in order to meet the requirements under section 10(2)(n) of the Act (Climate.). The following sections set out the various modes of transport within the county from walking and cycling to public transport.

6.5.2.1 Walking and Cycling

There are a number of benefits to the promotion of both walking and cycling including a reduction of congestion in urban areas, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, a healthier population, enhanced quality of life and more sustainable communities. The more people who can actively be encouraged to both walk and cycle will also result in a reduced number of private cars within our urban areas resulting in a lower demand for parking spaces and street space which could result in enhancements of the public realm in our urban areas.

This plan supports the design standards contained within the National Cycle Manual and the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets in terms of the design of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure with all new developments required to demonstrate how their proposals would be in accordance with these documents. The implementation of the principles of good urban design through the arrangement of land uses and the creation of well connected streets and neighbourhoods between residential areas, neighbourhood centres, schools, and places of work, will encourage people to walk and cycle more frequently.

Policy Objectives for Walking and Cycling

WC 1 Pedestrian and Cycling Infrastructure

To require the design of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure to be in accordance with the principles, approaches and standards set out in the National Cycle Manual and the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets.

WC 2 Bicycle Parking

To encourage the provision of secure bicycle parking facilities and associated facilities within the public realm of towns and villages throughout the County.

WC 3 Sustainable Transport Movement

To require sustainable transport movement to be given priority at the earliest design stage of development proposals.

WC 4 Modern Network of Walking and Cycling Infrastructure

To continue to work and engage with the National Transport Authority, the Department of Transport and other agencies in developing a modern network of walking and cycling infrastructure in the County.

WC 5 Traffic Free Cycle Routes

To provide, where possible traffic free pedestrian and cyclist routes particularly where such routes would provide a more direct, safer, and more attractive alternative to the car.

6.5.2.2 Greenways and Blueways

The Council actively supports the provision of greenway infrastructure within the county and acknowledges that benefits from a recreational amenity perspective which encourages an active and healthy lifestyle for our communities. The Council also acknowledges the economic benefits which arise from greenways particularly from a tourism perspective. The Council will continue support and facilitate the provision of greenways where appropriate within the county. Greenways are further examined and detailed in *Chapter 9 Biodiversity, Green Infrastructure and Natural Heritage*.

Policy Objectives for Greenways and Blueways**GBW 1 Greenways**

To support the development of an integrated Strategic Greenway Network of national and regional routes and maximise connectivity to existing greenways through linkages of cycling and walking infrastructure in a manner that is compatible with nature conservation and other environmental policies. This will include but is not limited to the following which are of National and Regional importance;

- National Greenway Dublin to Galway
- Connemara Greenway i.e. (Clifden to Oughterard, Galway to Oughterard)

GBW 2 Future Development of Network of Greenways

To support the delivery of sustainable strategic greenway/blueway projects in the county in accordance with the Strategy for Future Development of National and Regional Greenways.

6.5.2.3 Electric Vehicles

The Council support the provision of electric vehicles including Battery Electric Vehicles (BEV) and Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEV) including electric cars, bikes and scooters as a more sustainable low carbon option to the conventional private motor vehicle. These vehicles are both clean and energy efficient and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and noise pollution particularly in our urban areas. There are currently limited number of electric vehicle charging points located in the county. The plan will therefore support the installation of charging points at appropriate locations throughout the county to enable the transition to electric vehicles become more accessible.

Policy Objectives for Electric Vehicles**EV 1 Electric Vehicles Charging Infrastructure**

To support and facilitate the switch to Electric Vehicles through supporting the roll-out of additional

Electric charging points at appropriate locations within the County in association with relevant agencies and stakeholders.

6.5.2.4 Public Transport

There are a number of modes of public transport within the county including bus, rail, rural transport services, air, boat and taxi services. These services provide a number of connections both between settlements the county, the mainland and our islands, the wider region and various locations throughout the country.

Bus Services

The County is currently served by an extensive network of bus services both public and private operators, connecting rural areas, linking settlements within the county and connecting to Galway City nearby regional airports and other large centres nationally.. The plan in terms of bus services is in accordance with the GCTPS and the GTS and supports the consolidation of future growth, which should in turn reinforce and create expanded markets for bus services in the longer term.

Public Transport in Rural Areas

The provision of rural public transport is essential to ensure rural isolation is minimised. In the county the National Transport Authority provides rural transport services through the Local Link Rural Transport Programme with over 80 services a week including demand responsive and door to door service provided. This service is an important method of addressing rural social exclusion while also assisting in the integration of rural transport services with other public transport services.

Park and Ride Facilities

The Council will investigate the provision park and ride facilities at appropriate locations with the main focus on encouraging commuters to utilise public transport, reducing congestion and assisting in the transition to a low carbon county.

Rail Services

The county is served from the south and from the east via the Athenry/Limerick (Western Rail Corridor) and Galway/Dublin rail lines respectively. The Galway/Limerick line intersects with the Galway/Dublin line in Athenry. The disused rail line between Athenry and Claremorris via Tuam provides the potential for additional rail services to the north of the county and the extension of the Western Rail Corridor to provide rail access to the north west of the country. The council supports the opening of the Western Rail Corridor route from Athenry to Tuam, Claremorris and Collooney as an option for passenger and cargo transportation. In this regard it is acknowledged that the Government has announced an All Ireland Strategic Rail Review.

At present the existing railway line which serves Galway to Athlone is limited in terms of its capacity due to the infrastructural constraints. This plan supports the upgrade of this line including provision of a dual line being provided between Galway and Athlone which would significantly increase both the speed and frequency of service on this line. The Council considers the development of enhanced rail infrastructure to be critical in terms of facilitating balanced regional growth and the development of the Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP). The Council will continue to engage with Iarnród Éireann in seeking to improve rail services and infrastructure at appropriate locations in the County.

Policy Objectives for Public Transport

PT 1 Sustainable Modes of Transport

To encourage a modal shift from use of the private car towards more sustainable modes of transport.

PT 2 Development of Public Transport Infrastructure

To engage and work closely with the National Transport Authority and other relevant transport authorities and both public and private operators, in facilitating and securing improvements to and the expansion of public transport infrastructure in areas such as spaces for parking of local link buses and services in the County.

PT 3 County Bus Services

To support the National Transport Authority (NTA) and other stakeholders and community groups in improving bus services infrastructure.

PT 4 Rural Transport

To continue to support the 'Local Link' rural transport service and to encourage operators to improve the service to meet the social and economic needs of the rural communities in the County.

PT 5 Park and Ride

To work with the National Transport Authority (NTA), Iarnród Éireann, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), Galway City Council and any other stakeholders in identifying suitable locations for and the development of Park and Ride facilities in the County.

PT 6 Galway to Athlone Rail Line

To secure in co-operation with Iarnród Éireann improved rail infrastructure and services between Galway to Athlone which includes a dual railway track and additional improvement works to include an additional platform and a passing loop at Garraun, Oranmore to ensure enhanced capacity and frequency of service.

PT 7 Western Rail Corridor

To support the opening of the Western Rail Corridor route from Athenry, Tuam, Claremorris to Collooney as an option for passenger and cargo transportation.

PT 8 Loughrea Rail Infrastructure

To support the addition of Loughrea to the Western Rail Corridor and to plan for the addition of a commuter route from Loughrea to Galway by linking Loughrea to either Attymon or Athenry train station to create a commuter tributary to Galway.

6.5.3 Roads

The Council recognises the importance of the public road network in the county and the importance of the continued safeguarding and development of this infrastructure to ensure the safety of road users, the transport of goods and services and connectivity between the settlements and the wider region. There are a number of motorways(M6/M17/M18) and national routes which provide excellent access routes into and out of the county which are extremely important in terms of the economic and

social development. At a more local level there are a number of regional and local roads which provide connectivity between towns and villages and their wider rural hinterlands.

Whilst the plan supports the promotion of sustainable transport and a low carbon county the Council recognises that due to the significant number of rural communities within the county and the importance of maintaining movement of goods that roads infrastructure will retain an integral part of the overall transportation network for the county.

Galway County Council will continue to support extensions and improvements to existing roads infrastructure within the County with the priority projects listed with Tables 6.1 and 6.2 as follows:

National Roads
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N6 Galway City Ring Road(N6GCRR); • N59 Clifden to Oughterard (N59 Clifden to Maam Cross and N59 Oughterard to Maam Cross); • N59 Clifden to Leenane (Mayo County Border); • N59 Galway to Oughterard; • N84 Galway to County Boundary; • N67 Kilcolgan to County Boundary; • N17 Tuam to County Boundary; • N63 Annagh Cross to Ballygar; • N83 Tuam to Dunmore and to County Boundary; • N65 Kilmeen to Portumna; • N18 at Carrowmoneash northwards towards the interchange with the M6;
Critical Town Bypasses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N59 Maigh Cuilinn By-pass; • N17 Baile Chláir By-pass;
Other Roads
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R336 Bearnna-Scrib via Ros an Mhil • Athenry Relief Road; • Tuam Inner Relief Road; • Kinvara Inner Relief Road; • Link from the Parkmore Industrial Estate to the R339;
Public Car Parks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gort Car Park; • Headford Car Park; • Kinvara Car Park; • Oranmore Car Park; • Oughterard Bus Parking;

National and Local Cycle Networks	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dublin to Galway • Galway to Clifden 	

Table 6.1 Priority Transportation Infrastructure Projects for County Galway 2022-2028

Routes	Works to be Undertaken
R336, R446, R332, R360, R328, R365	Network improvement works, strengthening overlay and improvements.
Oranhill Link Roads.	To complete link roads.
N6 at Carrowmoneash to link to Oranmore Industrial Area on N18.	Investigate and provide for a pedestrian crossing.
Tuam Road Quality Bus Corridor Consider creation of additional lanes or alteration of existing lanes for Quality Bus Corridors on the R446, N83, N59, N84.	In conjunction with Galway City complete the design of the Tuam Road quality bus corridor and reserve lands accordingly. Complete the design of Quality Bus Corridors and reserve lands accordingly.
Local and regional road networks within the County.	Continue strengthening, improvements and realignment work where necessary, to these networks.

Table 6.2: Regional/Local Projects Proposed for 2022-2028

Policy Objective Priority Roads Projects
<p>PRP 1 Proposed Roads Projects</p> <p>Galway County Council will facilitate the progression of the necessary infrastructure improvements including new roads/projects listed in Table 6.1: Priority Transportation Infrastructure Projects for County Galway 2022-2028 and those listed within Table 6.2: Regional/Local Projects Proposed for 2022-2028 subject to relevant Irish planning and European environmental legislation including Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and/or other environmental assessment, where appropriate.</p> <p>PRP 2 Corridor and Route Selection Process</p> <p>Policy objectives relating to new roads and other transport infrastructure projects that are not already provided for by existing plans/ programmes or are not already permitted, are subject to the undertaking of feasibility assessment, taking into account planning need, environmental sensitivities as identified in the SEA Environmental Report and the policy objectives of the Plan relating to sustainable mobility. Where feasibility is established, a Corridor and Route Selection Process will be undertaken where appropriate, for relevant new road infrastructure in two stages: Stage 1 – Route Corridor Identification, Evaluation and Selection; and Stage 2 – Route Identification, Evaluation and Selection.</p>

6.5.3.1 National Roads

The following national roads schemes are currently developing/progressing within the county in accordance with the National Development Plan:

- N6 Galway City Ring Road(N6GCRR);
- N59 Maigh Cuilinn Bypass;
- N59 Oughterard to Maam Cross.

The delivery of the N6 Galway City Ring Road (N6 GCRR) is of significant importance to ensure the success of the Galway MASP and the wider region. The city and environs will continue to grow and without intervention the current congestion on the approach into the city from the county area will impact on the overall function and success of the Galway City metropolitan area and county. The GCTPS and the GTS have both outlined measures needed to address this problem including the delivery of a new orbital route (ie. N6 GCRR).

The proposed N6 GCRR road development will function as part of the TEN-T network that includes the core transport routes in all EU Member States for transport modes. The N6 GCRR around Galway forms part of the TEN-T comprehensive network in Ireland and is governed by EU regulations associated with such designation. This designation of the N6 GCRR will be a high-quality road with limited access. This is to ensure that the road functions as intended in improving the transport infrastructure of Galway with proper control of access via junctions thus ensuring unhindered flow along the proposed route.

The N6 GCRR is consistent with the priorities as set out in a number of the government's national policy documents including the *National Development Plan 2018-2027*, the *RSES* and *NPF* which include strategic policy objectives to tackle transportation infrastructure deficits.

The construction of the N59 Maigh Cuilinn Bypass is due to commence in 2021 and will provide improved connectivity to the Conamara region. The N59 Oughterard to Maam Cross is under construction at the moment.

The policy objectives within this plan will seek to ensure the protection of the safety, carrying capacity and efficiency of the existing and future national road networks. In addition, future schemes are safeguarded whilst also making provision to encourage sustainable compact forms of development which will have minimal impact on the carrying capacity, efficiency and safety of the national road network.

Policy Objectives for National Roads

NR 1 Protection of Strategic Roads

To protect the strategic transport function of national roads, including motorways through the implementation of the 'Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities' DECLG, (2012) and the Trans-European Networks (TEN-T) Regulations.

NR 2 Key Roads Infrastructure Developments

To support the delivery of the Galway City Ring Road (N6GCRR), N59 Maigh Cuilinn Bypass and the Galway – Clifden (N59) Schemes.

NR 3 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.

6.5.3.2 Non-National Roads

In order to maintain the efficiency and functionality of the regional road network it is important that the number of new accesses and the intensification of existing accesses are restricted. These restrictions minimise risks to road safety as new entrances can result in additional stopping and turning movements, which give rise to the potential for additional traffic accidents. Where a National Road is declassified to Regional Road status during the lifetime of the plan it shall become a Restricted Regional Road.

1	Ballinasloe to City Boundary North of Oranmore	R446
2	Tuam – Bearnaderg – Horseleap	R332
3	Galway – An Spidéal – Ballinahow Cross	R336
4	Galway – Carnmore – Monivea	R339
5	Derrydonnell – Athenry	R348
6	Headford – Tuam	R333
7	Ballinasloe – Portumna	R355
8	Ballinasloe – Mountbellew	R358
9	Gort – Loughrea	R380
10	Lough George – Annagh Hill	R354
11	Kilcolgan – Galway /Clare County Boundary	R458
12	Claregalway – M6 (Junction 19) – Oranmore	R381

Table 6.3 Restricted Regional Roads

Policy Objectives for Non National Roads	
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.	
NNR 2	Safeguard Regional and Local Roads
To safeguard the carrying capacity and safety of the County's regional and local road network.	
NNR 3	Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets
Implement the recommendations of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS 2019) in relation to urban streets and roads within the 50/60 kph zone.	
NNR 4	Traffic Management in Town Centre
Seek where possible the reduction of through-traffic passing through town centres and also to manage the movement of through traffic through town centre giving priority to pedestrian, cycle and public transport vehicles.	
NNR 5	School Travel Plans
Increase the safety of children at schools by assessing safe routes to schools for school children and	

by the installation of traffic management measures. Require School Travel Plans to be submitted with applications by schools or colleges in accordance with actions as set out under Smarter Travel, A Sustainable Transport Future 2009 – 2020.

NNR 6 Transport and Traffic Assessments and Road Safety Audits

To require the preparation of Transport and Traffic Assessments and Road Safety Audits for new developments in accordance with the requirements set out in the TII Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines.

NNR 7 Mobility Management Plans

To require mobility management plans to be submitted with applications for trip intensive developments.

NNR 8 Car Parking

Provide/improve parking facilities in towns and villages in a manner which supports policies relating to promotion of sustainable transport choices and modal shift. The requirements for car parking shall be in accordance with the standards as set out within *Chapter 15 Development Management Standards* of this plan under Guidelines for Transportation, Roads, Parking, Loading and Storage.

6.5.4 Air Transport

The Council supports the continued operation and growth of both Ireland West Airport Knock to the north and Shannon Airport to the south of the county as an important element of transport and communications infrastructure. The Council considers the enhancement of connections particularly by public transport from the county to nearby airports to be of critical importance to ensuring connectivity to international markets which will be of benefit to the local economy.

The Council are also mindful of the Conamara Airport located at Indreabhán which provides an important connection between the mainland and Oileáin Árann. This airport provides a critical link between these islands and the mainland with a significant economic benefit to the islands particularly through access to the tourism market. This issue is further examined within Chapter 12 *The Galway Gaeltacht and Islands*.

Policy Objectives for Air Transport

AT 1 Regional Airports

To support the continued operation and growth of our regional airports, in line with the RSES and measures to enhance connections, particularly by public transport, from the county to these airports and the other airports in the country.

AT 2 Local Airstrips

The Council shall liaise with the Irish Aviation Authority with regard to the effects of any development proposals in the vicinity of local air strips.

AT 3 Helipad Facilities

The Council shall facilitate the provision of helipad facilities in industrial/commercial areas, strategic development sites or in areas in close proximity to hospitals, medical services facilities or emergency facilities where feasible and appropriate.

6.5.5 Ports, Harbours, Piers and Slipways

The Council recognises the importance of our marine infrastructure including Ports, Harbours, Piers and Slipways from an employment, economic, tourism and social perspective to our coastal communities. The Council will support the continued development of the ports and ferry operators which provide an extremely important connection between the mainland and the islands. The foremost of these important pieces of Infrastructure is the port at Ros An Mhíl which is designated as one of the country's six Major Fishery Harbour Centres. Ros An Mhíl Port also provides extremely important connectivity for passengers and goods between the mainland and Oileáin Árann. The Council will also support the development of the port including the road network serving the port to meet the increased traffic generated as the port continues to develop.

The Council will continue to support, enhance and enable investment in the development of the marine infrastructure as appropriate and subject to environmental considerations and as resources permit.

Policy Objectives for Ports, Harbours, Piers and Slipways

PH 1 Sustainable Development of Ros an Mhíl Sea Port and Galway Harbour

Galway County Council shall continue to recognise the strategic importance of Ros an Mhíl and Galway Harbour and shall promote and facilitate their sustainable development.

PH 2 Sustainable Development of Ports, Harbours, Piers and Slipways

a) Support the development of Ros an Mhíl Harbour as a deep water port and support and facilitate improvements and maintenance to other harbours and consider any new marine infrastructure where appropriate;

b) Facilitate the safe and convenient access to the water for the purpose of public transport, industry, commerce, sea rescue, tourism, aquaculture and recreation where appropriate and as resources allow.

PH 3 Smart Ports

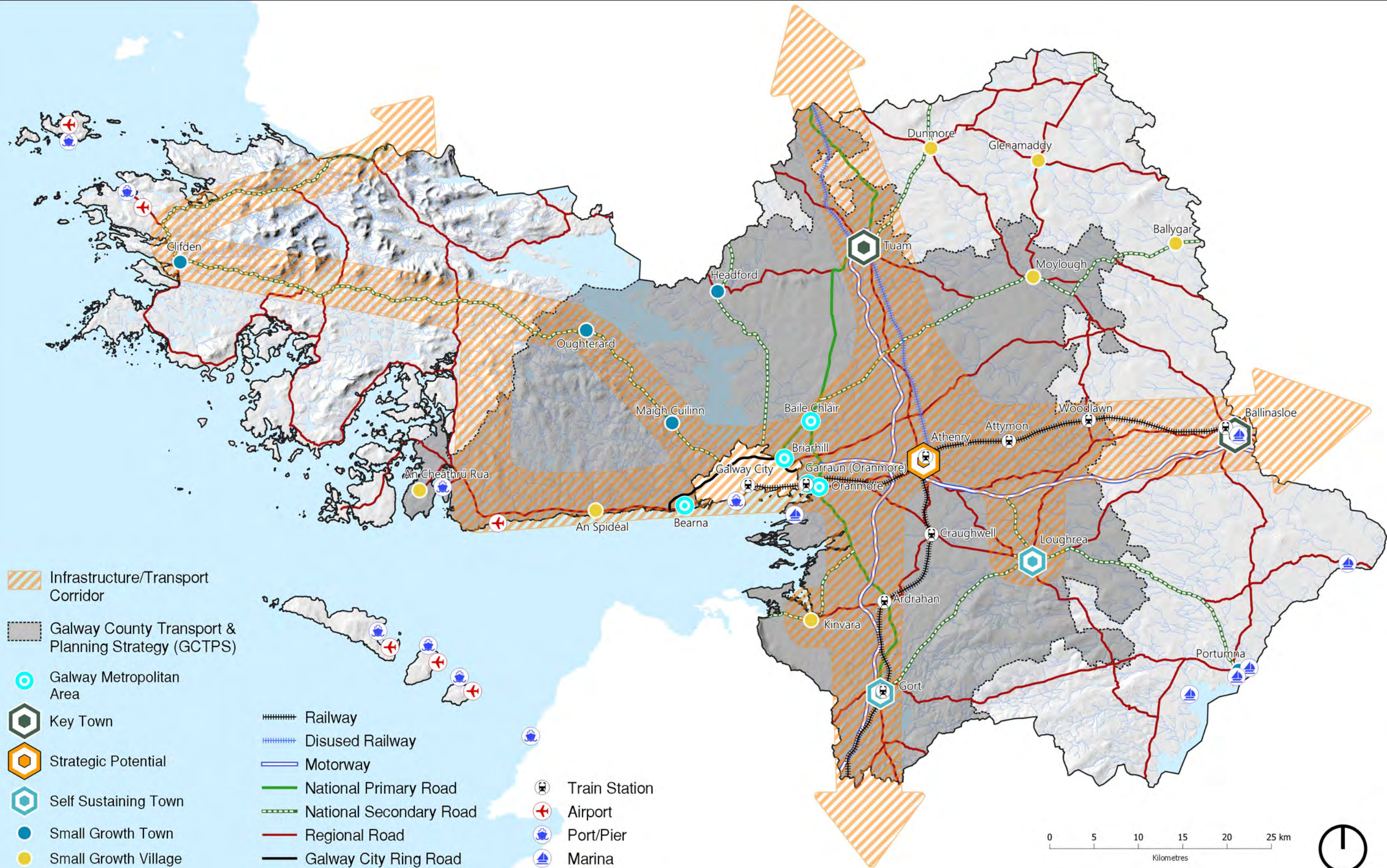
Support the development of technology in our seaports/harbours in their transition towards becoming Smart Ports.

PH 4 Water Bourne Transport

Support the operation of ferry/cargo services between the mainland and the offshore islands within the county and those serving adjoining counties. Land use proposals that would prejudice the sustainable operation of these services will not normally be permitted.

PH 5 Pier Infrastructure on the Islands

Support the enhancement and development of new pier infrastructure to the islands that shall provide for safe access by sea and include but shall not be limited to Improved pier infrastructure on Inis Oír and Inis Meáin in the Aran Islands.



Map 6.1 Strategic Transport Network

Chapter 7 Infrastructure, Utilities & Environmental Protection

“To support and encourage investment and improvement in utilities, water, wastewater, electricity and gas infrastructure and support the development and enhancement of digital infrastructure”

7.1 Introduction

Galway County Council recognises that the delivery of infrastructure and utilities in a sustainable manner are critical to the future development of the county. This plan will support the investment for both new and enhanced infrastructure and utilities particularly from a water and wastewater perspective which are critical to ensuring economic growth and investment, the delivery of employment opportunities, compact growth of our settlements and more sustainable communities.

The Council recognises the importance of waste management and will promote the circular economy principles, prioritising prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery, and to sustainably manage residual waste which will contribute to more sustainable communities for the existing and future population of County Galway. The Council also recognise the importance of the provision of enhancement of digital infrastructure from both a domestic residential perspective and also in terms of supporting the economic growth of the county.

7.2 Strategic Aims

Galway County Council shall work with the appropriate agencies and state bodies to ensure that infrastructure and utilities are provided and will accord with the following strategic aims:

- To protect, preserve and conserve the County’s water resources and comply with the requirements of the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021 and any subsequent revisions or updates to this plan;
- To facilitate in a sustainable manner the provision of necessary water and wastewater infrastructure in all of our towns and villages;
- To support the delivery of the Greater Galway Area Drainage Study;
- To support the implementation of the Waste Plan for Connacht Ulster Region 2015-2021;
- To minimise the amount of waste creation within the County and promote a practice of reuse, recycling and recovery prioritised in that order, over the disposal of waste;
- To ensure that residual waste is disposed of in an appropriate and environmentally friendly fashion;
- To promote and facilitate the provision and continued development of broadband and ICT infrastructure within the County in order to further enhance economic/social development, particularly in the more peripheral and coastal areas of the County.

7.3 Strategic Context

This chapter is prepared in the context of the following National and Regional Plans, Policies and Guidelines:

National Planning Framework – Ireland 2040
National Development Plan 2018-2027
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region 2020-2032
Climate Action Plan 2019
National Mitigation Plan 2017
Water Services Strategic Plan, A Plan for the Future of Water Services

Irish Water's National Water Resources Plan (expected in 2021)
Irish Water's Capital Investment Plan 2020-2024 (awaiting determination by the Commission for Regulation of Utilities)
Connacht and Ulster Waste Management Plan 2015-2021
Delivering a Connected Society – A National Broadband Plan for Ireland (NBP)
Galway County Council Digital Strategy 2020-2023

7.3.1 National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF) is based on 10 national strategic outcomes, which include 1) compact growth, 8) Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society and 9) Sustainable Management of Water, Waste and other Environmental Resources. These national strategic outcomes particularly are of relevance to Infrastructure and Utilities.

The NPF places significant emphasis on the delivery of infrastructure and services in tandem with growth as well as the enhancement of water quality and the sustainably management of waste management. The policy objectives contained in this chapter will accord with the strategic outcomes as outlined in the NPF.

7.3.2 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) supports the enhancement of water quality, waste infrastructure, waste management and improved Information, Communications Technology, which have informed the policy objectives of this Plan, for example;

- Supports local authorities in identifying and prioritising a program for the provision of serviced sites within smaller towns and villages
- Promotion of the development of the Greater Galway Area Drainage Study;
- Support the provision of adequate broadband capacity;
- Support the delivery of the National Broadband Plan;
- Facilitate enhanced international fibre communications links.

7.4 Climate Change

The provision of high-quality infrastructure in appropriate locations such as water and wastewater infrastructure and access to telecommunications infrastructure such as broadband should give consideration to the climate action agenda. The following are key parameters in addressing climate change:

- Enhanced water and wastewater infrastructure within settlements to ensure both compact growth of the communities and to ensure economic opportunities can be accommodated;
- Enhanced ICT infrastructure to facilitate remote working and to facilitate wider economic development with the county at appropriate locations in close proximity to our communities.

The policy objectives to follow will accord with the National Strategic Outcome (NSO) no.8 of the NPF and will support the county's transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society. In addition, Chapter 14 *Climate Change, Energy and Renewable Resource* will also address in more detail Climate Change and the interrelationship between the policy objectives of this chapter and the transition to a resilient society.

7.5 Water and Wastewater

The sustainable growth of the county is dependent on the provision of both water and wastewater infrastructure. Irish Water is responsible for the provision of public water supply, wastewater collection and treatment services. The Council's role is to facilitate the provision of adequate water services, in conjunction with Irish Water, at a local level, through Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and any subsequent arrangements into the future.

The Council will work closely with Irish Water to ensure the timely provision of infrastructure at appropriate locations throughout the county. These infrastructure provisions need to be implemented in a manner that protects public health and are environmentally appropriate and economically effective.

In 2015 Irish Water prepared its *Water Services Strategic Plan (WSSP)* setting out the strategic objectives for the delivery of water services over a 25 year period up to 2040 and sets a context for investment and implementation plans. This plan details the current and future challenges which affect the provision of water services and identifies the priorities to be tackled in the short and medium term.

Irish Water are currently developing the National Water Resource Plan (NWRP) outlining how to move to a sustainable, secure and reliable public drinking water supply over a 25year period while safeguarding the environment. The NWRP will outline how Irish Water intends to maintain the balance between our supply from water sources around the country and demand for drinking water over the short, medium and long-term. This will allow preparation for the future and ensure the provision of sufficient safe, clean drinking water to facilitate the social and economic growth of our country. The National Water Resources Plan will outline the longer-term plan for the Galway area.

7.5.1 Irish Water Investment Plan

The Irish Water Investment Plan 2020 – 2024 sets out Irish Water's budgetary plan from 2020-2024 in line with their strategic objectives as detailed in the Water Services Strategic Plan (WSSP). The Draft Investment Plan has been approved by Irish Water's regulator the Commission of the Regulation of Utilities (CRU) and work has commenced within Irish Water to review and to align it with Irish Water's Strategic Funding Plan and their work plans and programmes. Irish Water will keep the Council informed of this process. It is anticipated that once finalised this will result in the planning and delivery of numerous projects in the county with respect to both water and wastewater. A list of water and sewerage projects that have been completed to date in the county under Irish Water's Investment Plan up to 2020 is listed in table 7.5 below.

Scheme Name	Contract Name	Water(W)/Sewerage(S)
Clifden Sewerage Scheme	New Wastewater Treatment Plant	Sewerage
Baile Chláir & Milltown Sewerage	New Wastewater Treatment Plant	Sewerage
Kinvara Sewerage Scheme	New Wastewater Treatment Plant	Sewerage

Oughterard Sewerage Scheme	New Wastewater Treatment Plant	Sewerage
Lough Mask Ext. to Williamstown	Network	Water
Glenamaddy Sewerage Scheme	New Wastewater Treatment Plants	Sewerage
Athenry Sewerage Scheme	Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade	Sewerage
Dunmore/Glenamaddy Water Supply	Water Treatment Plant Upgrade	Water
Gort Water Supply Scheme	Water Treatment Plant Upgrade	Water
Ballinasloe Water Supply & Main Drainage	Water Treatment Plant Upgrade	Water
Spiddal Water Supply	Water Treatment Plant Upgrade	Water
Tuam Sewerage Scheme	Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade	Sewerage
An Cheathrú Rua Water Supply	Water Treatment Plant Upgrade	Water
Leenane Water Supply	Water Treatment Plant Upgrade	Water
Mid-Galway Water Supply	Water Treatment Plant Upgrade	Water
Portumna Water Supply	Water Treatment Plant Upgrade	Water
Ballinasloe Sewerage Scheme	Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade	Sewerage
Gort Sewerage Scheme	Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade	Sewerage
Ballinasloe Contract 2	Network	Sewerage & Water

Table 7.5: Works Completed in County Galway Under the Irish Water's Investment Plans up to 2020

7.5.2 Water Supply

Drinking water in the County is drawn from a variety of sources. There are 38 no. public water supply schemes dispersed throughout the County and approximately 80% of the treated water supplied

through this infrastructure network is abstracted from surface water sources. Private supplies provide the alternative for those areas that are not served by a public water supply and comprise mainly of wells for single dwellings and certain private group water schemes for rural settlements.

Table 7.6 contains a list of the other public water supply schemes which are included and approved in the Proposed Capital Investment Plan 2020 – 2024 for County Galway. These projects entail improvements/upgrading works and are envisaged to be completed during the lifetime of the *Galway County Development Plan 2022– 2028*. In addition to the standalone infrastructure projects listed below, minor upgrades and improvement works are continually carried out on a nationally prioritised basis through Irish Water’s National Programmes e.g. capital maintenance, mains renewal programmes.

Tuam RWSS Ext to Loughrea	Due for completion early 2021	Tuam RWSS Extension to Loughrea is currently coming to the end of construction. Approx. 21km of watermain, 2 new pumping stations and a 1,000cum reservoir completed. Existing water treatment plants at Lake Road and Knockanimma will be decommissioned. Once complete, source of water for Loughrea, Craughwell and environs will change from Lough Rea to Lough Corrib, (treatment at Luimnagh). Will be substantially complete by June, 2021.
Gort Water Supply	New reservoir	Commencing construction early 2021. Completion due in same year.

Table 7.6: Water Supply Projects Proposed to be Completed in County Galway under the *Proposed Capital Investment Plan 2020 – 2024*, subject to funding and environmental constraints.

7.5.3 Water Quality and Ground Water Protection Scheme

The EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) sets out the approach to the protection and enhancement of the country’s water resources. The Water Framework Directive applies to rivers, lakes, groundwater, estuaries and coastal waters and aims to improve our water quality. The Water Framework Directive required Ireland to produce a River Basin Management Plan (RBMP). The government published the River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 in April 2021. This plan outlines a programme of actions which aim to meet the environmental objectives and requirements of the Water Framework directive.

The Council supports the development of Drinking Water Safety Plans in line with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and the current and future cycles of River Basin Management Plans. The Council is committed to the protection and improvement of all drinking water, surface water and groundwaters in the county in accordance with the WFD and the RBMP.

Policy Objectives for Water Supply

WS 1 Enhancement of Water Supply Infrastructure

Liaise with Irish Water, to maximise the potential of existing capacity and to facilitate the timely delivery of new water services infrastructure, to facilitate existing and future growth.

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 Drinking Water Regulations 2014 (as amended) and compliance of water supplies with the parameters identified in these Regulations.

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.

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.

WS 5 Private Water Supply

Support the provision of a private water supply in instances where there is no public water supply or where the existing supply does not have sufficient capacity to serve the proposed development. This will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that the proposed water supply meets the standards set out in the EU and national legislation and guidance including adherence to *Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive*, and would not be prejudicial to public health or would not significantly impact negatively on the source or yield of an existing supply.

WS 6 Water Framework Directive

Support the preparation of Drinking Water Safety Plans and Source Protection Plans to protect sources of public water supply, in accordance with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.

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.

WS 8 Proliferation of Septic Tanks

Discourage the over-concentration/proliferation of individual septic tanks and treatment plants to minimise the risk of groundwater pollution.

7.5.4 Conservation of Water Supply

Galway County Councils Water Management Strategy is focused around the conservation of water even where adequate supplies exist, to ensure optimal use of this precious commodity. Conservation measures include not only the monitoring of usage of water and early detection of leaks but also an

awareness programme for consumers. Works under the Water Conservation Programme for the County have been progressed and continue to progress under the three stages as outlined in Table 7.6.

Stage 1	The 38 no. public water supply schemes in the County had water management systems installed. These public water supply schemes are sub-divided into 190 district meter areas.
Stage 2	Defects, leaks and enabling works in the water mains network were identified and repaired. Pressure management to reduce leakage have resulted in savings.
Stage 3	Works are constantly ongoing in the rehabilitation of water mains throughout the County. To date 42km of rehabilitation has been completed.

Table 7.7: Details Pertaining to Galway County Council Water Conservation Programme

Policy Objectives Conservation of Water Supply	
CWS 1	Water Conservation with all Developments To ensure all developments incorporate water conservation measures such as rain water harvesting to minimise wastage of water supply.
CWS 2	Water Mains Rehabilitation To assist Irish Water in their commitment to water conservation and support efforts to tackle leakage through find and fix (active leakage control) and water mains rehabilitation.
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.

7.5.5 Wastewater

Irish Water is responsible for the treatment and disposal of wastewater in towns and villages where public wastewater treatment facilities are in place. It is a policy objective of the Council to work in conjunction with Irish Water to protect existing wastewater infrastructure, to maximise the potential of existing capacity and to facilitate the timely delivery of new wastewater services infrastructure to facilitate future growth. The Environmental Protection Agency is the statutory body tasked with ensuring that appropriate standards are put in place in the provision of wastewater infrastructure.

In the case of single house developments, these requirements are set out in the *EPA Code of Practice for Waste Water Treatment Systems and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (2009)*. In the case of larger developments, the *EPA Wastewater Treatment Manuals – Treatment Systems for Small Communities, Business, Leisure Centres and Hotels (1999)* is the relevant document that all developments are required to comply with.

In the case of small cluster type developments (<5 houses) within settlements which do not have the benefit of Irish Water public sewer infrastructure the Council will facilitate proposals which can provide individual wastewater treatment systems to serve each individual house separately. Proposals such as these will need to meet the requirements are set out in the *EPA Code of Practice for Waste Water Treatment Systems and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (2009)*. In instances such as these developers will need to be mindful of Policy Objective WS 8 which ‘Discourage the over-concentration/proliferation of individual septic tanks and treatment plants to minimise the risk of groundwater pollution’.

An Spidéal Sewerage	New WWTP	Due to commence Q3, 2021
Ahascragh Sewerage	New WWTP	Due to commence Q3, 2021
An Cheathrú Rua	New WWTP	Due to commence Q2, 2023 At detailed design stage
Roundstone Sewerage Scheme	New WWTP	Due to commence Q2, 2023 At detailed design stage
Athenry Sewerage Scheme	Network	Commencing construction late 2022/early 2023
Galway City Agglomeration wastewater network	Drainage Area Plan followed by Network upgrades	Network extends into Oranmore and Bearna DAP Stage 3 due for completion Q3, 2022
Greater Galway Area Drainage Strategy	WWTP and Network	This strategy will commence in 2021 and investigate options to provide for the targeted growth in the greater Galway area in the medium and long-term.

Table 7.8: Wastewater Projects included in County Galway Under Irish Water’s *Proposed Capital Investment Plan 2020-2024, subject to funding and environmental constraints*

In addition to the standalone infrastructure projects listed above, minor upgrades and improvement works are continually carried out on a nationally prioritised basis through Irish Water’s National Programmes e.g. capital maintenance, inlet works, sewer renewal programmes.

7.5.6 Types of Wastewater Systems in County Galway

In County Galway there are a number of different types of wastewater systems, from public schemes, individual septic tanks and individual proprietary treatment systems (not septic tanks). There were a total of 62,729 types of sewerage system in the county as per CSO 2016 Census. The actual types of the waste water treatment facilities are detailed in Figure 7.6.

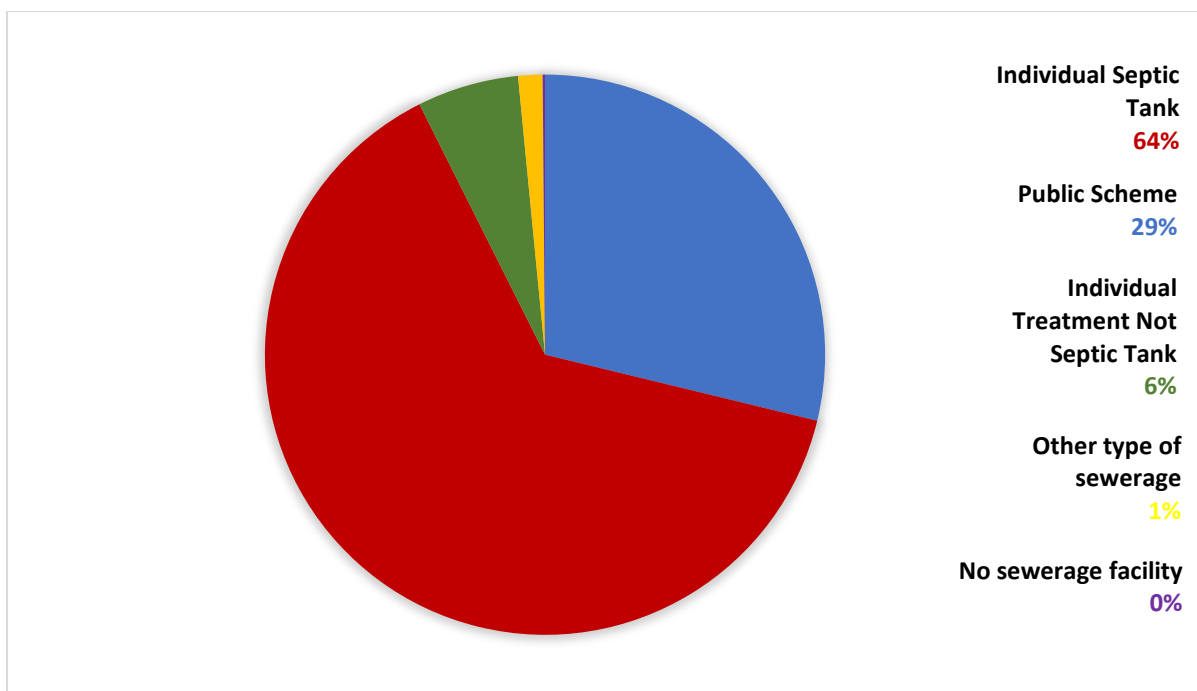


Fig 7.6: Types of Wastewater Systems in County Galway (Source: CSO 2016)

7.5.7 Public Wastewater Schemes in County Galway

Irish Water provides public wastewater schemes in the form of collection, treatment and disposal facilities in many of the settlements throughout the County. Infrastructure of this nature is currently operational in varying capacities in the towns and villages of the County outlined in the Table 7.9:

Tuam	Portumna	An Fhairche	Ballymoe
Ballinasloe	Dunmore	Mountbellew	Williamstown
Loughrea	Headford	Moylough	Woodford
Galway City (Oranmore & Bearna)	Leenane	Glenamaddy	Athenry
Clifden	Ballygar	Eyrecourt	Gort
Killimor	Kilkerrin	Ahascragh	Maigh Cuilinn
Letterfrack	Oughterard	Newbridge	An Spidéal
An Cheathrú Rua	Kinvara	Roundstone	Baile Chláir
Milltown			

Table 7.9: Waste Water Schemes in County Galway

7.5.8 Greater Galway Area Drainage Study

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Northern and Western Regional Assembly has detailed that the delivery of the Galway East Main Drainage Scheme is necessary to deliver the growth model outlined in the RSES. The Galway East Main Drainage Scheme is being progressed by Irish Water as part of the Greater Galway Area Drainage Study. This project is an infrastructural project of strategic importance. The delivery of this infrastructure would be a potential catalyst for the future development and expansion of the settlements (MASP) on the eastern environs of Galway city.

7.5.9 Surface and Storm Water/ Sustainable Drainage Systems

All new development throughout the County will be required to minimise surface water discharge through on-site systems such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs). It will be a requirement that all proposals for development (including extensions to existing developments) will be required to demonstrate the use of SuDs mechanisms. This will also include limiting the extent of unnecessary hard standing surfaces and paving. Proposals shall be accompanied by a comprehensive SuDs assessment to demonstrate run off quantity, quality and an assessment on the potential impacts on habitats and water quality.

7.5.10 Sludge Management

Irish Water is responsible for the treatment and disposal of the sludge that is generated from both its water and wastewater treatment plants. Irish Water has prepared a National Wastewater Sludge Management Plan (NWSMP) which outlines Irish Water's strategy to ensure a nationwide standardised approach for managing wastewater sludge over a 25-year period. It is proposed that the NWSMP will have ongoing five yearly reviews. The current plan covers 2016-2021 and will be revised and updated in 2021 for the period 2022-2027. A separate plan will be prepared in relation to sludge produced at drinking water plants. The NWSMP proposes to develop a Sludge Hub Centre and Satellite Dewatering Site network for wastewater sludge treatment, optimised on a regional rather than county basis.

Policy Objectives Wastewater

WW 1 Enhancement of Wastewater Supply Infrastructure

Work in conjunction with Irish Water to maximise the potential of existing capacity and to facilitate the delivery of new wastewater services infrastructure, to facilitate future growth in the county.

WW 2 Delivery of Wastewater Infrastructure

Liaise and co-operate with Irish Water in the implementation and delivery of the Water Services Strategic Plan (2015) and the Irish Water Investment Plan 2020-2024 and other relevant investment works programmes of Irish Water in the delivery of infrastructure within the county.

WW 3 The Greater Galway Area Drainage Study

To seek to accelerate and support the delivery of the Greater Galway Area Drainage Study and the associated solutions as identified in the RSES as an essential infrastructure requirement in conjunction with the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, Irish Water and Galway City Council.

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 waste water (and water) infrastructure to ensure sufficient capacity is available prior to the submission of a planning application.

WW 5 Serviced Sites

Support the servicing of small towns and villages including initiatives to provide an alternative to one-off housing in the countryside, in accordance with the National Planning Framework.

WW 6 Private Wastewater Treatment Plants

Ensure that private wastewater treatment plants, where permitted, are operated in compliance with EPA's *Code of Practice Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (PE. ≤10)* (EPA 2009), as may be amended.

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.

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.

WW9 Municipal Wastewater Treatment Plants in An Cheathrú Rua

There shall of be a minimum 100m setback for all new wastewater treatment plants in An Cheathrú Rua.

Core Strategy Settlement	Wastewater Capacity	Water Capacity	Water Service Capital Investment Programme 2020-2024
Metropolitan Area			
Baile Chláir	Adequate Capacity	Adequate Capacity	
Bearna	Limited Capacity	Limited Capacity	Drainage Area Plan will identify network issues and needs. Provision for medium and long-term growth will be considered as part of Greater Galway Area Drainage Strategy.

			Water supply options will be assessed in the National Water Resource Plan.
Briarhill	Limited Capacity	Adequate Capacity	
Oranmore/ Garraun	Limited Capacity	Adequate Capacity	A local network reinforcement project in Galway city will improve existing capacity constraints at Oranmore main pumping station. Drainage Area Plan will identify network issues and needs. Provision for medium and long-term growth will be considered as part of Greater Galway Area Drainage Strategy.
Key Towns			
Ballinasloe	Adequate Capacity	Limited Capacity	Water supply options will be assessed in the National Water Resource Plan.
Tuam	Adequate Capacity	Adequate Capacity	
Strategic Potential			
Athenry	Limited Capacity	Adequate Capacity	Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade has been completed. Network contract due to commence construction in 2022.
Self Sustaining Towns			
Gort	Adequate Capacity	Limited Capacity	Provision of storage underway.
Loughrea	Limited Capacity	Limited Capacity	Extension of Tuam RWSS Ext to Loughrea due for completion early 2021. Wastewater network hydraulic study to be undertaken.
Small Growth Towns			
Clifden	Adequate	Limited Capacity	Water supply options will be assessed in the National Water Resource Plan.

	Capacity		
Maigh Cuilinn	Adequate Capacity	Limited Capacity	
Oughterard	Adequate Capacity	Adequate Capacity Short Term	Water supply options will be assessed in the National Water Resource Plan.
Portumna	Limited Capacity	Limited Capacity	Water supply options will be assessed in the National Water Resource Plan.
Headford	Adequate Capacity	Adequate Capacity	
Small Growth Villages			
An Cheathrú Rua	Sea Outfall- No Treatment	Adequate Capacity Short-Term	Project to provide new WWTP at detailed design stage. Water supply options will be assessed in the National Water Resource Plan.
An Spidéal	Sea Outfall- No Treatment	Adequate Capacity	New WWTP scheduled to commence construction 2021.
Ballygar	Limited Capacity	Adequate Capacity	Wastewater Infrastructure Improvements expected.
Dunmore	Adequate Capacity	Adequate Capacity	
Glenamaddy	Adequate Capacity	Adequate Capacity	
Kinvara	Adequate Capacity	Adequate Capacity	
Moylough	Adequate Capacity	Adequate Capacity	

Table 7.10: Indicative Infrastructure Capacity for Core Strategy Settlements

7.6 Waste Management

The management of waste in Ireland is set out on a statutory basis under the Waste Management Act and a specific statutory instrument namely the Waste Management (Planning) Regulations 1997 (as amended). This legislative instruments have divided the country into three regions namely the Connacht-Ulster, Eastern-Midlands and Southern regions. The county of Galway is located within the Connacht-Ulster region which encompasses Galway County, Galway City, Leitrim, Mayo, Sligo, Roscommon, Cavan, Donegal and Monaghan.

The Connacht-Ulster Waste Management Plan 2015-2021 (CUWMP) provides a framework for the prevention and management of waste in a sustainable manner in Galway and the other local authority areas. The Connacht-Ulster Waste Management Plan was adopted in May 2015. This plan contains a comprehensive list of policies to achieve the overarching strategy and targets of the plan. Some of the key measures for local authorities and industry contained in the plan can be summarised as follows:

- Encourage more reuse and repair activities in the region particularly at civic amenity facilities;
- Deliver communication, awareness and on the ground activities which lead to a lasting change in the behaviours of citizens and businesses towards their wastes;
- Increase the level of source-segregated kerbside collections in the region with a strong focus on ensuring that a three bin system becomes commonplace at household and commercial levels;
- Implement and regulate the new national pay-by-weight charging system;
- Enforce the regulations related to household and commercial waste to tackle the problem of unmanaged waste and other issues;
- Plan and develop higher quality waste treatment infrastructure including new reprocessing, biological treatment, thermal recovery and pre-treatment facilities;
- Grow the biological treatment sector, in particular composting and anaerobic digestion, by supporting the development of new facilities;
- Support the development of thermal recovery in the region which meets the needs of the region and the State in reducing the export of residual wastes for treatment abroad;
- Ensure existing and future waste facilities do not impact on environmentally sensitive sites through proper assessments and siting.

Galway County Council will continue to work in tandem with Connacht Ulster Waste Region and the Environmental Protection Agency in the implementation and execution of its waste management responsibilities and duties throughout the duration of the lifetime of the plan.

Policy Objectives Waste Management

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.

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.

WM 3 Waste Recovery and Disposal Facilities

Support and facilitate the provision of adequate waste recovery and disposal facilities for the county.

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.

WM 5 Construction and Environmental Management Plans

Construction Environment Management Plans shall be prepared in advance of the construction of relevant projects and implemented throughout. Such plans shall incorporate relevant mitigation measures which have been integrated into the Plan and any lower tier Environmental Impact Statement or Appropriate Assessment. CEMPs typically provide details of intended construction practice for the proposed development, including:

- (a) location of the sites and materials compound(s) including area(s) identified for the storage of construction refuse;
- (b) location of areas for construction site offices and staff facilities;
- (c) details of site security fencing and hoardings;
- (d) details of on-site car parking facilities for site workers during the course of construction;
- (e) details of the timing and routing of construction traffic to and from the construction site and associated directional signage;
- (f) measures to obviate queuing of construction traffic on the adjoining road network;
- (g) measures to prevent the spillage or deposit of clay, rubble or other debris;
- (h) alternative arrangements to be put in place for pedestrians and vehicles in the case of the closure of any public right of way during the course of site development works;
- (i) details of appropriate mitigation measures for noise, dust and vibration, and monitoring of such levels;
- (j) containment of all construction-related fuel and oil within specially constructed bunds to ensure that fuel spillages are fully contained (such bunds shall be roofed to exclude rainwater);
- (k) disposal of construction/demolition waste and details of how it is proposed to manage excavated soil, including compliance with 2006 Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government;
- (l) a water and sediment management plan, providing for means to ensure that surface water runoff is controlled such that no silt or other pollutants enter local water courses or drains;

WM 6 Waste Management

To continue to meet the duties under the Waste Management (certification of historic unlicensed waste disposal and recovery activity) Regulations 2008, including those in relation to the identification and registration of closed landfills.

WM7 Recycling Infrastructure

To provide for the provision of recycling infrastructure throughout the county where it is considered necessary and support the provision of additional recycling infrastructure throughout the county.

WM 8 Sustainable Waste Management Practices

Promote and facilitate communities to become involved in environmental awareness activities and community based recycling initiatives or environmental management initiatives that will lead to local sustainable waste management practices.

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.

7.7 Electricity

A strong electricity infrastructure and transmission grid is essential for the county in order to attract and retain high-tech industrial investment, to ensure competitive energy supplies, to achieve balanced development, to reduce dependency on fossil fuels, and to achieve climate change targets. Moreover, to attract renewable energy development, it is important for County Galway that the existing grid infrastructure is reinforced where necessary and expanded to areas not adequately serviced. The transmission system within the country plays a vital role in the supply of electricity, providing the means to transport power from generators to demand centres using a system comprising of 400 kV, 220 kV and 110 kV networks (and through ESB networks 38kV medium and low voltage networks to customers). The transmission system generally comprises of overhead lines, except in limited circumstances, for example, in the city centres, where some limited underground cables are used.

The provision safe, secure and reliable transmission of electricity is the responsibility of Eirgrid. It is the policy objective of the Council to work in conjunction with Eirgrid to protect existing electricity infrastructure, and to facilitate the timely delivery of new electricity infrastructure. Eirgrid published Ireland's Grid Development Strategy - Your Grid, Your Tomorrow, which was its second review of Grid 25. This Strategy recognises that the development of the transmission grid is of critical importance to support the economy and society, as well as to realise the transformation of Ireland's energy system to meet climate change and energy obligations.

Eirgrid's *Implementation Plan 2017-2022* is a practical strategic overview of how the stages of Ireland's Grid Development Strategy are intended to be implemented and identify the parts of the transmission system that are likely to need development over the five year period (2017-2022) and the planning and development of the grid that will be undertaken in implementing the Strategy. The Implementation Plan has also had regard to the *Transmission Development Plan 2016*, which is a plan for the development of the Irish transmission network and interconnection over a ten year period.

Where strategic route corridors are identified, the Council will safeguard such corridors from encroachment by inappropriate development and ensure their scope for development is maintained.

Policy Objectives Electricity and Gas

EG 1 Enhancement of Electricity Infrastructure

Support and promote the sustainable improvement and expansion of the electricity transmission and distribution network that supply the County, while taking into consideration landscape, residential, amenity and environmental considerations.

EG 2 Delivery of Electricity and Gas Infrastructure

Support the provision and extension of electricity and gas transmission networks within the county which are critical to the economic development of the County subject to environmental quality, landscape, wildlife, habitats or residential amenity.

EG 3 Power Capacity

To support and liaise with statutory and other energy providers in relation to power generation, in

order to ensure adequate power capacity for the existing and future needs of the County.

EG 4 EirGrid's Grid 25 Investment Programme

Support the implementation of EirGrid's Grid 25 Investment Programme, while taking into account landscape, residential, amenity and environmental considerations.

EG 5 Smart Grids and Smart Cities Action Plan

Support the roll-out of the Smart Grids and Smart Cities Action Plan enabling new connections, grid balancing, energy management and micro grid development.

7.8 Information and Communication Technology

The Council actively supports the provision of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) within the county and consider that development and enhancements in this area to be crucial in both the economic and social development of the County. The Council further recognises that the provision of ICT can contribute to the counties transition to a low carbon county by reducing the need to travel through working from home which results in a higher quality of life with reduced commuting and consequently reduced greenhouse gas emissions. This plan supports the provisions contained within the Galway County Digital Strategy 2020 – 2023 which provides a wider strategy with respect to the development of information and communication technologies within the county.

The Council therefore will support the provision of ICT infrastructure such as broadband, telecommunication infrastructure, mobile phone coverage and future technologies which may arise which will assist in the economic development of the county and assist in smarter working conditions and the wider aim of facilitating the counties transition to a low carbon county.

7.8.1 Broadband

The delivery of high speed broadband is the responsibility of the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources who published 'A National Broadband Plan for Ireland - Delivering a Connected Society' in 2012. The National Broadband Plan (NBP) is a government policy that aims to ensure that every home, school and business in Ireland – regardless of how remote or rural – has access to high-speed broadband. This is being achieved through a combination of commercial investment across the country and state intervention. State intervention will bring service to areas where commercial operators acting alone are unlikely to invest, these are primarily rural areas. In November 2019 the NBP Contract was awarded to NBI (National Broadband Ireland) this contract is projected to deliver High Speed broadband to over 38,000 premises in county Galway over the next seven years. Galway County Council's role in this plan is as the facilitator of the National Broadband Plan rollout and will work with NBI & commercial companies to facilitate the rollout of broadband in County Galway.

This plan recognises that widespread investment in high speed digital and internet services can realise benefits in relation to foreign direct investment by boosting the attractiveness of regional locations outside of the urban centres. Hence as part of this strategic Broadband Plan, there is a commitment to hasten the pace of advancement in terms of the roll out of quality, reliable and fast broadband connections throughout the country. It is also government policy that state entities shall avail of all opportunities to facilitate the deployment of infrastructure to the telecommunications market.

7.8.2 Telecommunications

The provision of telecommunications information is considered to be important in terms of the economic development of the County. To ensure appropriate telecommunications infrastructure are provided within the county the council will have regard to the guidelines issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 'Planning Guidelines for Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures' (1996) and Circular Letter PL 07/12. The assessment of individual proposals will be governed by the guidelines and the controls scheduled in the Development Management Standards chapter of this plan.

Policy Objectives Information and Communications Technology

ICT 1 ICT infrastructure

Support the delivery of high capacity Information Communications Technology Infrastructure, broadband connectivity and digital broadcasting, throughout the County in line with the Galway County Digital Strategy 2020 - 2023, in order to ensure economic competitiveness for the enterprise and commercial sectors and in enabling more flexible work practices i.e. remote working, smart hubs etc.

ICT 2 National Broadband Plan

Support and facilitate delivery of the National Broadband Plan.

ICT 3 Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures

To ensure the orderly development of telecommunications throughout the County in accordance with the requirements of the *Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DECLG, 1996*, except where they conflict with Circular Letter PI07/12 which shall take precedence, and any subsequent revisions or expanded guidelines in this area.

ICT 4 Co-location of antennae

To require co-location of antennae support structures and sites where feasible. Operators shall be required to submit documentary evidence as to the non-feasibility of this option in proposals for new structures.

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.

ICT 6 Visual Impact and Antennae Support Structures

To operate a presumption against the location of antennae support structures where they would have a serious negative impact on the visual amenity of sensitive sites and locations.

ICT 7 Open Access Ducting

To require open access ducting for new developments is made available to all service providers on a non-exclusive lease basis at an economic cost.

ICT 8 Underground Cabling

To co-operate with the relevant agencies to facilitate the undergrounding of all electricity, telephone and television cables in urban areas wherever possible, in the interests of visual amenity.

Where undergrounding of cables is being pursued, proposals should demonstrate that environmental impacts including the following are minimised:

- Habitat loss as a result of removal of field boundaries and hedgerows (right of way preparation) followed by topsoil stripping (to ensure machinery does not destroy soil structure and drainage properties);
- Short to medium term impacts on the landscape where, for example, hedgerows are encountered;
- Impacts on underground archaeology;
- Impacts on soil structure and drainage; and
- Impacts on surface waters as a result of sedimentation.

ICT 9 Digital Hubs

To support the enhancement and delivery of digital hubs and remote working spaces.

7.9 Environmental Protection

7.9.1 Air Quality

Air quality is extremely important in ensuring the health of the general population. Poor air quality can result in significant environmental problems. The most sensitive areas in relation to air quality are built up areas and major transport development. The Environmental Protection Agency is the statutory body responsible for monitoring air quality in Ireland. The Council acknowledges the need to ensure the highest standards of air quality within the County and will collaborate with the Environmental Protection Agency as appropriate to ensure high standards of air quality are maintained and poor standards are addressed as appropriate. The Council shall require proposals for new homes to include radon prevention measures in accordance the Building Regulations (including any updated/superseding regulations that may be published within the lifetime of this Development Plan).

Policy Objectives Air Quality

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).

AQ 2 Assessment of Air Quality

To require developments which would have the potential to have adverse impacts on air quality to carry out assessments of the impact of the development on air quality.

AQ 3 Air Quality Mitigation Measures

To require the use of appropriate mitigation measures such as dust dampeners to minimise the potential impacts of developments on air quality.

AQ 4 Air Purification

The Council shall encourage landscaping and deciduous tree planting in an environmentally sensitive manner within towns and villages as a means of air purification, the filtering of suspended particles and the improvement of their micro-climate.

AQ 5 Radon

The Council shall have regard, to the specific guidance on radon prevention measures for new homes as contained within the existing Building Regulations (including any updated/superseding Regulations that may be published within the lifetime of this Development Plan).

7.9.2 Noise Pollution

Noise can have a significant impact on the quality of life of individuals, or communities, or wildlife and the wider environment. Noise control is governed by the Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992 and the Environmental Protection Agency Act (Noise) Regulations 1994. The Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992, identifies **noise** as a form of **environmental** pollution and contains provisions for dealing with **noise** “which is a **nuisance, or would endanger human health or damage property or harm the environment.**”

Galway County Council being the designated Action Planning Authority under Article 7 of the Environmental Noise Regulations, has completed the Noise Action Plan 2019-2023. This plan relates to environmental noise from major roads which experience a volume of traffic greater than 3 million vehicle passages per year. The action planning area covers sections of the M6, M17 and M18 Motorways N 18 National Primary Roads, N59, N65, N67, N83, N84 National Secondary Roads and R336, R339, R354 R381, R446, R458 and R939 Regional Roads and adjoining lands. The plan excludes noise from domestic activities, noise created by neighbours and noise at workplaces.

Policy Objectives Noise Pollution**NP 1 Galway County Council Noise Action Plan 2019-2023**

To implement the Galway County Council Noise Action Plan 2019-2023 (and any subsequent Plan) in order to avoid, prevent and reduce the harmful effects, including annoyance, due to environmental noise exposure.

NP 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.

NP3 Noise Impact Assessments

To require an assessment of impact of the development on noise levels, having regard to the provisions of the Environmental Protection Agency Acts 1992 and 2003 and the EPA Noise Regulations 1994 when assessing planning application.

NP 4 Noise Pollution and Regulation

Restrict development proposals causing noise pollution in excess of best practice standards and Regulate and control activities likely to give rise to excessive noise, other than those activities which

are regulated by the EPA

NP 5 Noise Mitigation Measures

Require activities likely to give rise to excessive noise to install noise mitigation measures and monitors. The provision of a noise audit may be required where appropriate

7.9.3 Light Pollution

The control of light pollution is extremely important from a number of different perspectives including residential amenity, nature conservation, traffic safety, visual amenity including dark skies and addressing climate change in the form of energy efficiency. The necessity for artificial lighting is acknowledged from a safety and security perspective.

Policy Objectives Light Pollution

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.

LP 2 Lighting and Climate Action

To require the use of low energy LED (or equivalent) lighting in support of Climate Action.

LP 3 Dark Skies

To encourage the maintenance of dark skies in rural areas and to limit light pollution in urban and rural areas.

7.9.4 Soil Quality

There are significant differences in the types of soils at various locations across the county from peatlands to pasture lands. The Council recognises the key role that soils plays in many ways including food production, surface water, flooding management and also in supporting a range of ecosystem habitats and supporting biodiversity. The Council are acutely aware of the threats to our soil quality with regard to land use changes, intensification of agriculture, erosion and overgrazing, afforestation, industry and urbanisation. It is important that development proposals ensure minimal impacts on soil quality and the wider environment.

Policy Objectives Soil Quality

SQ 1 Soil Impact Assessments

Ensure good soil quality throughout the county by requiring developments of a certain nature (as specified in the relevant environmental legislation) to carry out assessments of the impact of the development on soil quality.

SQ 2 Soil Protection Measures

To ensure that adequate soil protection measures are undertaken where appropriate.

SQ 3 Soil Protection, Contamination and Remediation

Adequate and appropriate investigations shall be carried out into the nature and extent of any soil and groundwater contamination and the risks associated with site development work, where brownfield development is proposed.

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

Treatment/management of any contaminated material shall comply as appropriate with the Waste Management Act 1996 (waste licence, waste facility permit), as amended, and under the EPA Act 1992 (Industrial Emissions licensing, in particular the First Schedule, Class 11 Waste), as amended. These measures will ensure that contaminated material will be managed in a manner that removes any risk to human health and ensures that the end use will be compatible with any risk.

7.9.5 Major Accidents and Seveso Sites

The European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2006 transposes the SEVESO II Directive 96/82/EC (relating to the prevention of major accidents involving dangerous substances) into Irish Law. The Directive aims to prevent accident hazards from dangerous substances and to limit the consequence of such accidents through the following measures:

- The siting of new establishments;
- Modification of existing establishments;
- Development in the vicinity of an establishment which by virtue of its type or siting is likely to increase the risk or consequence of a major accident;
- Site specific emergency planning by the local authority and site operator.

The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) provides advice to Planning Authorities, where appropriate, in respect of planning applications for development within a certain distance of the perimeter of these sites. There are two SEVESO sites in County Galway which includes the Chemoran facility at Deerpark Industrial Estate in Oranmore and the Tynagh Energy Ltd. All development proposals involving existing or proposed facilities classified under the Seveso II Directive will be referred to the Health and Safety Authority whose technical advice shall be taken into account in addition to any normal planning considerations.

Seveso	Upper Tier	Chemoran: Manufacture and Storage of Chemicals
Seveso	Lower Tier	Tynagh Energy Ltd.

Table 7.11: List of the Seveso Sites in County Galway

Policy Objectives Major Accidents and Seveso Sites

MAS 1 Separation Distances from SEVESO Sites

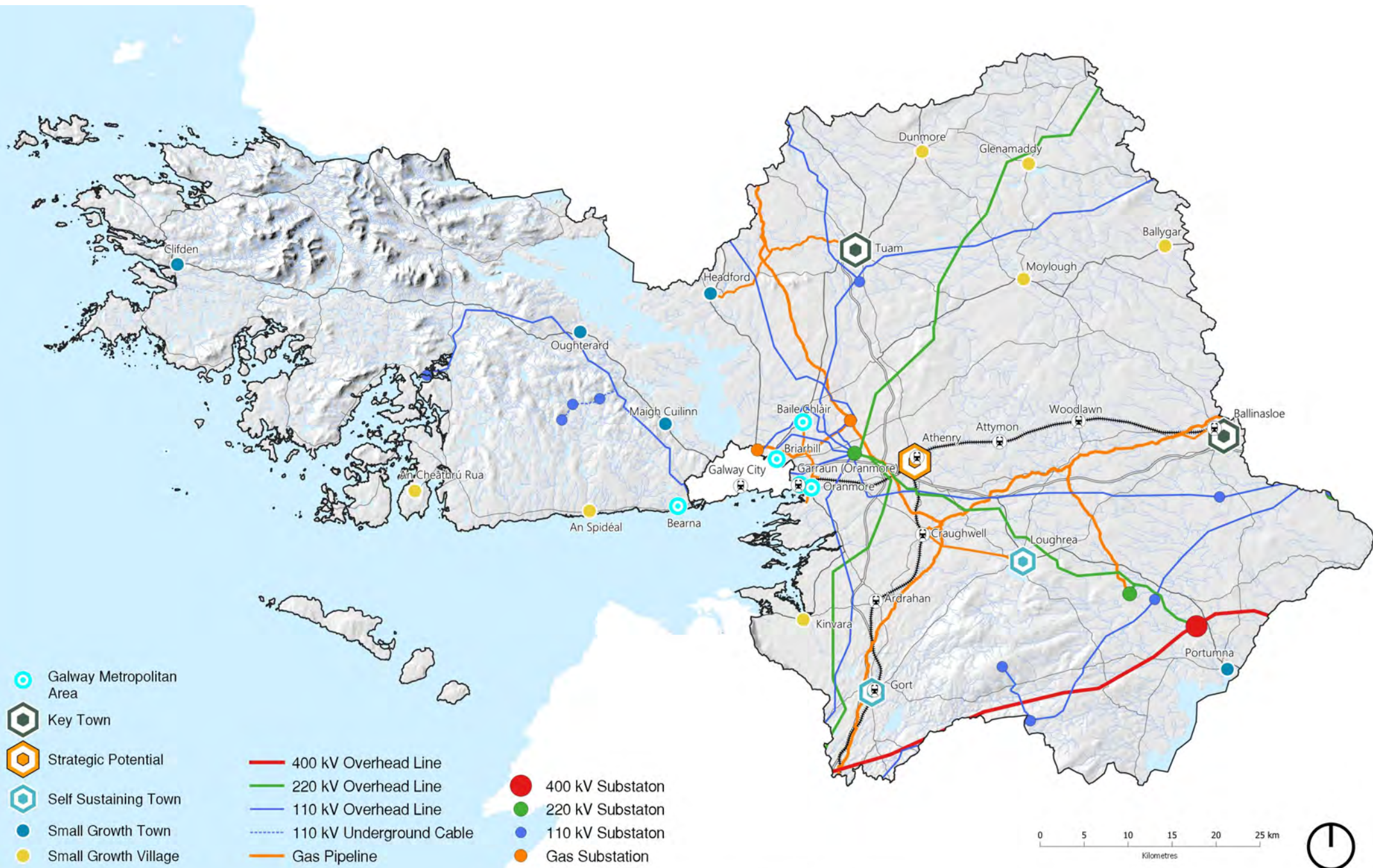
To ensure that appropriate distances are maintained between any proposed development and any existing Seveso II establishment, in the interest of the health and safety of the occupiers of the proposed development.

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.

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 Safety Authority in the assessment of all planning applications located within the consultation distance of such sites.



Chapter 8 Tourism and Landscape

“To encourage the development of the tourism sector as an economic driver for the County whilst ensuring the landscapes which are one of the county’s most important assets are protected”.

8.1 Introduction

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. Galway is one of the most successful counties in the country in terms of the numbers of both domestic and foreign visitors and the economic benefit derived as a result of this tourism activity. The Council aims to integrate sustainable tourism as a core economic activity, by investment in infrastructure, attractions, outdoor activity facilities; festivals and events across the county as well as supporting the development of appropriate visitor infrastructure such as facilities; accommodation; and outdoor recreation and trails; and by enhancing the public realm and increasing attractiveness of urban and rural settings.

The protection of the landscapes is of significant importance to the Council as it is recognised as one of the key attributes within the county. There are a variety of landscapes types in the county ranging from the quartzite mountain ranges and blanket bogs of Connemara to the fertile patchwork of farmland in east Galway and the bare karst pavements of the Oileáin Árann and South Galway. The Council aims to support sustainable development at appropriate locations throughout the county whilst also protecting the landscapes from inappropriate developments.

8.2 Strategic Aims

Galway County Council shall work with the appropriate agencies and state bodies to ensure that the tourism industry is promoted and supported and that our landscapes are suitably protected and will accord with the following strategic aims:

- 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 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.

8.3 Strategic Context

This chapter is prepared in the context of the following National and Regional Plans, Policies and Guidelines:

National Planning Framework – Ireland 2040
National Development Plan 2018-2027
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region 2020-2032
Climate Action Plan 2019
National Mitigation Plan 2017
Tourism Development and Innovation – A Strategy for Investment 2016 – 2022 (Failte Ireland, 2016)
People, Place and Policy – Growing Tourism to 2025
Tourism Recovery Plan 2020 - 2023 Prepared by the Tourism Recovery Taskforce October 2020
Tourism Action Plan 2019-2021
National Action Plan for Rural Development
Food Wise 2025: A 10 Year Vision for the Irish Agri-Food Industry (2015)
Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2022 (Galway County Council)
Údarás na Gaeltachta Strategic Plan 2018 – 2020

8.3.1 National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF) recognises the importance of landscape and tourism. The importance of our landscapes has been emphasised within NPO 14 which highlights that the Irish rural landscapes are important as 'authentic and attractive as places to live, work and visit'. The importance of facilitating tourism development in particular greenways, blueways and peatways is supported within NPO22. The importance of protecting the natural landscapes from a rural tourism perspective has been highlighted within NPO 23. The NPF has also emphasised the importance of co-ordination and promotion of an all-island tourism initiatives through continued co-operation between the relevant tourism agencies and Tourism Ireland within NPO 49.

8.3.2 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) identifies the importance of recreational tourism particularly within our countryside and coastal areas, and trails. The enhancement and development water based leisure sector, greenways, blueways, bridle routes have been emphasised. The Strategy supports the delivery of the National Dublin to Galway Cycleway, Oranmore to Bearna Coastal Greenway and the Galway to Clifden Greenway. The Strategy has also highlighted the established Lough Derg Blueway which includes Portumna. The RSES has also references the importance of existing tourism brands such as the Wild Atlantic Way and Irelands Hidden Heartlands as well as the need to upgrade and improve facilities for the growth of visitors by cars, buses and cyclist. The importance of the preparation and implementation of Visitor Experience Development Plans (VEDPs) has also been highlighted. The strategy further identifies the need to support the provision and/or upgrade of cultural facilities, the importance of tourism to our Gaeltacht and Island communities.

8.4 Climate Change

This plan aims to support and promote the tourism industry within the county whilst protecting the counties landscapes over the life of this plan while also ensuring development proposals can be facilitated in a way to ensure the county's transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society.

The sustainable development of the tourism sector will play a contributing factor in addressing the challenges faced by climate change in the county in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and supporting climate action measure in developments. The tourism sector within the county in many instances is particularly vulnerable to climate change with respect to extreme weather events including flooding, increase in sea level rise, water shortages and loss and damage to natural assets and attractions at destinations. The development of tourism infrastructure such as greenways will encourage the use of more sustainable modes of transports such as walking and cycling which will assist in reducing green house gas emissions.

As the tourism sector develops there will need to be a greater emphasis on addressing climate change particularly in areas such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions in this growing sector, especially from transport.

Chapter 14 *Climate Change, Energy and Renewable Resource* will also address in more detail Climate Change and the interrelationship between the policy objectives of this chapter and the transition to a resilient society.

8.5 Tourism in County Galway

The tourism sector is extremely important to the economic development of the county. There are a number of explanations for the strength of tourism in the county, with its extraordinary natural beauty and cultural assets which includes the largest Gaeltacht in Ireland. The county extends from the Atlantic coastal regions in the west and the dramatic landscape of the Conamara mountains to the callows bordering the River Shannon in the east. At its centre, the County contains the largest inland lake in the Republic of Ireland, Lough Corrib, and to the southeast, Lough Derg. Tourism supports job creation; local enterprise development; increases revenues to the County as well as supporting sustainability of towns and villages, while also contributing to the conservation of built and natural heritage.

The county encompasses some of the key tourism destinations in the country and currently ranks as the most visited County in Ireland; it has traditionally maintained a high ranking among the most visited counties. Galway City and County attracted 1 million domestic visitors in 2018 and generated €175million, with the number of international visitors attracted at 1.729million visitors generating €626 million in revenue.

The Council will support the co-ordination of industry partners across the County, including agencies such as Fáilte Ireland, OPW, Waterways Ireland, Coillte and Údarás na Gaeltachta; as well as the industry that that underpins tourism development. The Council will also continue to lead specific product development projects and supports the development of visitor information services as well as engaging in marketing and public relations to ensure that the County is advantageously positioned in a competitive domestic and international visitor economy. The continued growth and development of the tourism is of utmost importance as it is noted that 12-14% of businesses in Galway are involved in tourism and the sector accounts for 21,000 jobs in Galway (City and County; IHF 2020), while hospitality forms 27.6% of total employment in Clifden, (WDC Insights March 2019) .

Policy Objectives Tourism

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.

8.6 Galway County Tourism Strategy

The Council have identified the requirement for the preparation of a Galway County Tourism Strategy (GCTS) to both support the existing tourism sector whilst also ensuring the county is maximising its tourism potential. The plan will support both the preparation and implementation of this Strategy.

The core objective of the Tourism Strategy will be to capture and reflect the essence of County Galway; in developing strategic priorities for the delivery of compelling and sustainable visitor experiences. The tourism strategy will be focused throughout the county in all locations and will support the creation of opportunities over a wide varieties of tourist experiences.

The marketing element of the Tourism Strategy will set out a roadmap to develop a singular destination brand; aiming to build a suite of assets to be used in promotional material and to inform visitors. This in turn will support the economy and facilitate the revitalisation of inland, coastal, island and rural communities.

Policy Objective Galway County Tourism Strategy

GCTS 1 Galway County Tourism Strategy

To support the preparation and implementation of the Galway County Tourism Strategy.

8.7 Visitor Experience Development Plan Areas

The Council will support the preparation of Visitor Experience Development Plans (VEDP) and other tourism masterplans both within the county and also those which crosses from the county into neighbouring counties. There are four existing VEDP's/tourism masterplans in the county which include The Connemara Coast and Aran Islands VEDP's (2017), Burren & Cliffs of Moher VEDP (2020), Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon 2020-2030 Waterways Ireland (2020) and the Lough Derg VEDP 2020-2024.

- **The Connemara Coast and Aran Islands Visitor Experience Development Plan (2017);**
This VEDP was led by Fáilte Ireland and explores the visitor experience in Connemara by signposting hero products, supporting products and experience development priorities. The Connemara VEDP is implemented by the Connemara and Aran Island Tourism Network.
- **Burren & Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience Development Plan (2020);**
This was initiated by Fáilte Ireland and focuses on Kinvara as part of the Burren; identifying hero and supporting products and gaps.
- **Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon 2020-2030 Waterways Ireland (2020);**

Waterways Ireland in association with Fáilte Ireland and the 10 Local Authorities within the region, commissioned SLR Consulting and partners to develop a Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon. This is the first time a single, holistic and dedicated plan of any type is being undertaken on the Shannon and Shannon Erne and aims to reposition the Shannon as a destination of international scale and singularity at the centre of Ireland's Hidden Heartlands.

- **Lough Derg Visitor Experience Development Plan 2020-2024** (Counties Tipperary, Clare and Galway.)

The Lough Derg Marketing Group delivered its second plan in 2020, focusing on co-ordinating destination development across the lake wide geography and builds a foundation for a new approach to growing the visitor experience at the lake. This approach embeds the plan in the authentic experiences of places that is at the core of the slow travel approach and also acknowledges the varying stages of destination development around the lake.

The Council will support the implementation of these aforementioned plans and also support the preparation of further such plans at appropriate locations throughout the county.

Policy Objective Visitor Experience Development Plans

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.

8.8 Tourist Infrastructure

Research has shown that overseas tourists want to visit a destination with a variety of experiences to offer. While the county is in the fortunate position to possess some of the best destinations and experiences in the country it is important that the support services and high-quality infrastructure are in place to meet the needs of these visitors when they come to the county. The plan will focus on identifying key strategic projects and areas for investment to deliver tourism products of scale with the capacity to ensure the county tourism industry can continue to prosper and grow.

8.8.1 Visitor Information and Interpretation

Galway County Council will continue to liaise with bodies such as Failte Ireland, the tourism industry and other stakeholders to identify visitor services in areas that require enhanced facilities. The Council will ensure that tourism attraction will be supported for expansion projects such as car parking areas, and interpretative centres/signage as appropriate. With the increased visitor numbers, it is important that the provision of the required infrastructure is supported where appropriate. Tourism-related development proposals will be required to demonstrate a high standard of design, potential impact in terms of scale and intensity and the potential for the proposal to add significantly to the quality of the visitor experience.

8.8.2 Accommodation

The county has a significant level of accommodation with a total of 20,119 bedstock available for guest accommodation in 2019 which equates to 7% of the guest bedstock accommodation nationally. This accommodation is provided within 81 hotels, 17 Guesthouses, 114 Bed and Breakfasts, 86 Self Catering Units, 14 hostels, 4 Caravan and Camping Parks and with 20 Fáilte Ireland Irish Welcome Standard businesses. The Council recognises that the provision of accommodation such as those highlighted are essential to enable growth in the tourism sector. The Council shall support the development of tourism in the county by encouraging the provision of a wide range of tourist accommodation types and restricting development that would be likely to reduce the capacity of the resource, or have a detrimental impact on the local environment.

In general such developments shall be encouraged to locate within or in close proximity to existing towns and villages where they can avail of existing public services, commercial and community facilities. The Council will support the development and upgrade of accommodation to meet Fáilte Ireland Quality Standards, subject to development management criteria and will require that such relevant standards are met in development proposals where appropriate.

Policy Objectives for Tourism Infrastructure

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.

8.9 Outdoor Tourism Pursuits

8.9.1 Greenways / Blueways

The Council actively supports the provision of greenway and blueway infrastructure within the county and acknowledges that benefits from tourism and recreational amenity perspective. Pillar 3 of the National Action Plan for Rural Development focuses on '*Maximising our Rural Tourism and Recreational Potential*', with a specific recommendation to promote the development of greenways and blueways, and other recreational opportunities, and to support sustainable rural jobs through targeted tourism initiatives. The Council will continue to support and facilitate the provision of greenways/blueways where appropriate within the county. These are further examined in Chapter 9 *Biodiversity, Green Infrastructure and Natural Heritage*.

Policy Objectives Greenways/ Blueways

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*.

8.9.2 Coastal and Marine Tourism

County Galway has both an extensive coastline and Islands which are a major tourism asset attraction particularly in the summer months. The county has three blue flag beaches which includes Traught in Kinvara, An Trá Mhór in Inverin and Trá an Dóilin in Carraroe. The county's beaches are a popular resource for a number of water sports activities including surfing, kite-surfing, swimming, paddle boarding, kayaking etc. and also for activities such as walking, jogging and general enjoyment of the coastal area. The protection of the coastline as a tourism asset is imperative to ensure long-term benefits from tourism activities.

Policy Objectives Coastal Tourism

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

CT3 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 4 Blue Flags

To continue to work with An Taisce, the local community and other relevant stakeholders to retain and increase the number of Blue Flag awards in the County.

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.

8.9.3 Lakeland and Waterway Tourism

The lakelands and waterways of the county are rich natural resources that attract numerous visitors each year. In Lough Corrib the county contains the largest lake in the Republic of Ireland. In addition to their scenic beauty they offer opportunities for a wide range of activities such as fishing, Kayaking, rowing, sailing, bird-watching and pleasure boating. Ensuring access to the lakes and waterways and the sustainable management of activities taking place on the water, on the lakeshore and in the riparian zone of waterways is essential to ensure a balance between tourism development and conservation of natural heritage in these areas.

Policy Objective Lakeland and Waterway Tourism**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.

8.10 Cultural Tourism**8.10.1 Heritage Tourism**

The Council acknowledges the importance of and wealth of heritage tourism which is located within the county. Galway is home to Ireland's largest 'living' Gaeltacht and a rich mosaic of heritage attractions, arts, traditional music and cultural activities. The arts, culture, heritage and the unique linguistic heritage of Galway form a significant element of the tourism industry in the County. There are a number of examples of the vibrancy of heritage tourism in the county which is apparent from the tourism visitor numbers of 2019 including Kylemore Abbey & Garden at 560,000, Connemara National Park at 238,378, Dún Aonghasa at 131,273 and Leenane Cultural Centre at 92,000.

While it is important to recognise the economic contribution that is made through heritage tourism, there is the potential to further enhance heritage tourism development in the county. The integration of activities, including our heritage assets, our unique culture including linguistic and the local history can further enhance this area. The Council will support the protection and appropriate enhancement of our heritage tourism sites for the advancement of the tourism sector.

Policy Objectives Heritage Tourism

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.

8.10.2 Food and Craft

There is a burgeoning speciality food and craft sector in the County, with many small producers and manufacturers contributing niche foods and crafts to the domestic and international markets. Foreign trade expeditions and promotional initiatives such as the 'Made in Galway' campaign and the food tourism network with 'Discover Galway Food Experiences' are integral components in championing their emergence, as they provide a platform to exhibit an array of indigenous foods and local artisan industries to a wider audience. Domestically, examples of standard bearers for the sector include GMIT Letterfrack, the National Centre for Furniture Design and Technology which has gained international recognition for its excellence and the world renowned Clarinbridge Oyster Festival. Institutions and events such as these and others are an invaluable asset to the local economy and contribute to showcasing some of the finest food and crafts on offer in the County. The enhancement of the traditional farmer's markets and a proliferation in this type of regularised casual trading throughout the County can contribute to augmenting the wider food and craft industry of the County. These markets will contribute to create interest and vibrancy in town centres as well as providing food producers sites to retail food. Markets offer a healthier, safer outdoor retail experience.

Policy Objective for Food and Craft

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.

8.10.3 Events and Festivals

Galway is well renowned for the volume and quality of events and festivals which take place within the county on an annual basis. These events and festivals are an important means of attracting visitors and economic activity into the county at various periods during the year. The county presently hosts numerous events and festivals, which make an important contribution to the tourism and economic development of the County. Such events have included the Clarinbridge Oyster Festival, Clifden Arts Week, Ballinasloe Horse Fair, Loughrea Medieval Festival, Shorelines Arts Festival Portumna, Connemara Pony Show, Clarinbridge Oyster Festival, Autumn Gathering Coole Park.

Policy Objective Events and Festivals

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.

8.10.4 Dark Skies

“Dark Skies” is a movement that has developed over the last 30 years across the world, the largest organisation from which to emerge being the International Dark-Sky Association. The aim of these organisations is to identify and preserve areas which have pristine night time skies. These are night skies which allow for the clear observation of stars and the Milky Way by the naked eye (clouds permitting). The extent of these areas are dwindling due to an increase in areas with light pollution. Light pollution is the process whereby a high density of artificial lighting causes Milky Way, and in more severe cases the stars, to become completely obscured by a light haze.

There is significant potential for the development of dark skies designated areas in the county primarily with the Conamara area due to the low population density and its distance from any major cities means it suffers from minimal light pollution and contains many areas where not a single source of artificial light may be seen. The Council will support the investigation of the development of designated dark skies areas within the most appropriate locations.

Policy Objective Dark Skies

DS 1 Dark Skies

To investigate the potential for dark skies designated areas at appropriate locations throughout the county.

8.11 Additional Tourism Experiences

Galway County Council is supportive of the development of additional tourism experiences or tourism attractions of scale, which would serve to enhance tourism and employment within the county. The Plan supports the sustainable development of facilities such as outdoor activity or leisure parks at suitable locations throughout the County. Development proposals for unique tourism offerings will be

considered on their merits subject to the protection of the integrity of the built and natural heritage of the County.

Policy Objective Additional Tourism Experiences

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.

8.12 Fáilte Ireland Tourism Brands

County Galway encompasses some of Ireland's most beautiful landscapes and seascapes, forming parts of both the Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands brand regions. The Council will support development and investment in both the Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands brand regions.

8.12.1 Wild Atlantic Way

The Wild Atlantic Way has been a transformational tourism initiative led by Fáilte Ireland, for the West of Ireland. It showcases the natural assets and outstanding scenery of the West and has been an important economic driver for the county. The Galway stage of the Wild Atlantic Way is 300km long starting from the village of Kinvara near the county Clare border and finishing at Leenane near the county Mayo border. The route encompasses numerous visitor attractions including Dunguaire Castle, ferry crossings to the Aran Island and Inisbofin, the wider Conamara area including villages such as Roundstone and Ballyconneely, and Kylemore Abbey. The Council recognises the importance of the branding of the Wild Atlantic Way and its positive impact on the tourism sector and the economic growth of the county.

8.12.2 Irelands Hidden Heartlands

Irelands Hidden Heartlands proposition; which includes east Galway; has rebranded the midlands since 2018; as a way of boosting tourism in this area. The River Shannon is central to the proposition, the Shannon Tourism Masterplan' is proposed to focus tourism concentration on and around the river and in surrounding towns. It will focus on the River Shannon, the development of new food networks and trails and the creation of new walking hubs are part of the campaign to attract a larger number of visitors. The plan is to entice visitors with the area's walkways and lakes, and the campaign will promote activities like walking, cycling, fishing and boating. A walkway and trail network, the Beara Breifne Way, will have an extensive reach, with many towns along the route (including Portumna, Tiernascragh, Meelick, Eyrecourt, Clonfert, Ballinasloe, Aughrim, Ahascragh and Ballygar in Co. Galway to be identified as "walking hubs." The Galway section of the Beara Breifne Way is known as the Hymany Way.

8.12.3 Destination Towns

Failte Ireland research confirms that attractive towns are a key motivator for holidaymakers in choosing Ireland as a holiday destination, as is interesting heritage, culture and friendly people.

However, the challenge is to unlock the economic potential of the visitor for local businesses and communities, and deliver high quality destination town experiences for visitors, that still capture local distinctiveness and support thriving local communities.

Clifden has been designated as the first Destination Town in the county under the Fáilte Ireland's Destination Towns Initiative. Funding will be allocated by Fáilte Ireland under this initiative to boost the attractiveness and tourism potential of the town. The Fáilte Ireland scheme is part of the National Tourism Development Authority's work to drive a better regional spread of overseas and domestic visitors and spend. The scheme is funded under the Government's Project Ireland 2040 strategy with the aim of driving sustainable growth in the Irish tourism sector and higher revenue and job creation around Ireland.

Clifden is located in the western coastal area of Connemara in County Galway, approximately 80 kilometres northwest of Galway City and is the main urban settlement serving the Connemara area. The town is synonymous with Irish tourism and hospitality and the funding as secured under the Destination Towns Initiative will assist in strengthening the tourism sector of the town

Policy Objectives County Tourism Brands

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 Fáilte 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.

CTB 4 Shannon Tourism Masterplan

To support the implementation of the Shannon Tourism Masterplan and aid in the securing of adequate investment to achieve this.

CTB 5 Destination Towns

- (a) To support the promotion of Clifden as the First Destination Town and as the principal visitor Services Centre and hub for Fáilte Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way in the County;
- (b) Support the designation of additional "Destination Towns" within the county if opportunities arise.

8.13 Landscape

8.13.1 Landscape Character

Landscape is a precious national asset with a variety of landscape types ranging from the quartzite mountain ranges and blanket bogs of Conamara to the fertile patchwork of farmland in east Galway and the bare karst pavements of the Oileáin Árann and South Galway. The natural diversity of the landscapes of the County coupled with built and cultural heritage features such as the archaeological monuments, stonewalls, hedgerows, woodlands, field patterns, settlements and buildings has given the county its distinctive character.

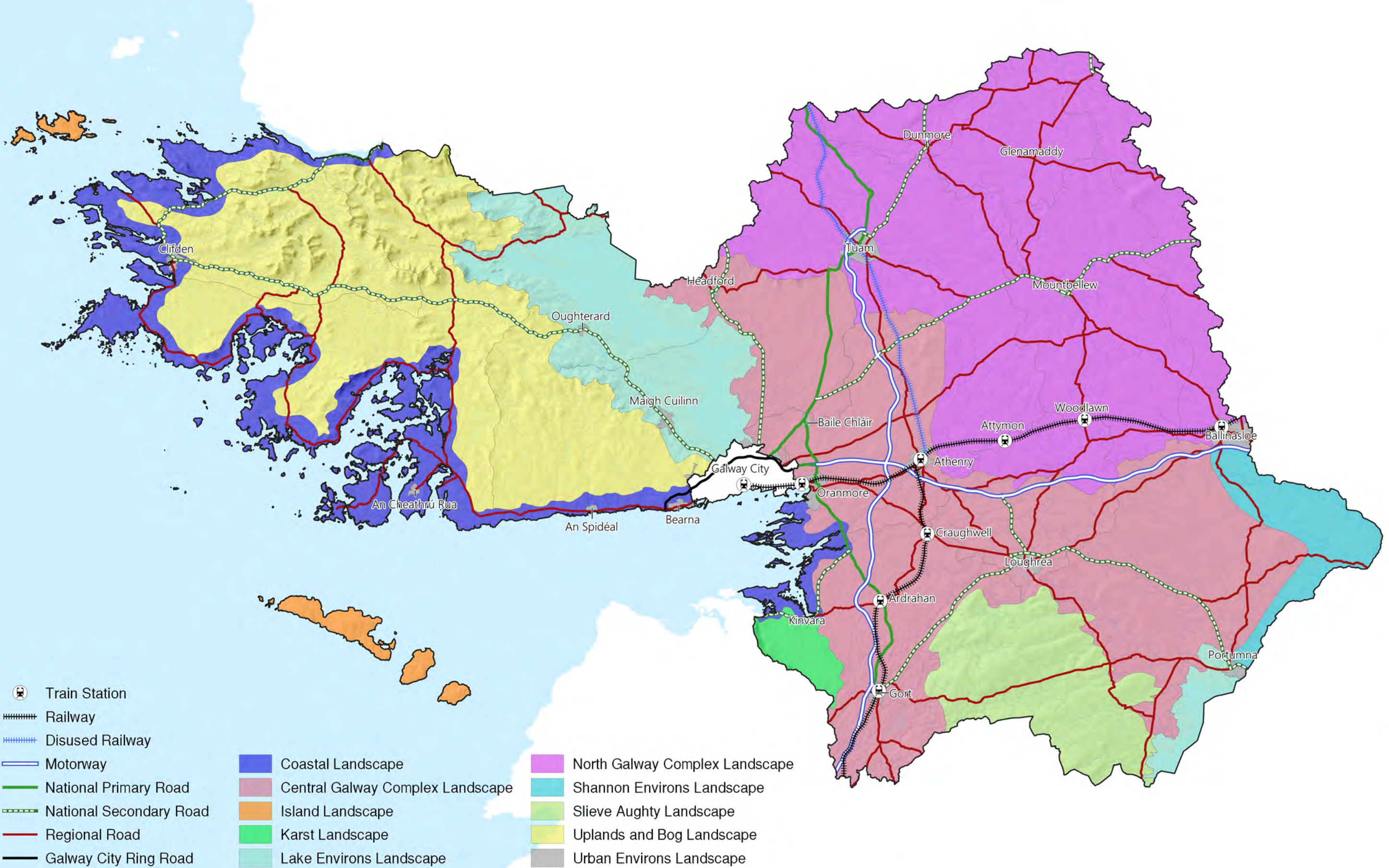
Galway County Council has prepared a Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) for the county. Landscape Character Assessment is a process that describes, maps and classifies landscapes objectively. Defining landscape character enables an understanding to be formed of the inherent value and importance of individual landscape elements and the processes that may alter landscape character into the future. The LCA will assist in the identification of the most appropriate locations for development.

This LCA has subdivided the county Galway into three landscape regions and the coast. These are the foundations of the county's landscape character, that are determined by the underlying geology and glacial drifts that have determined topography, soil, vegetation and patterns of human settlement from prehistory to today. These three regions and the coast are as follows:

- **The West Galway Region** is a zone that is mostly underlain by older harder geology that gives rise to large-scale rugged, complex landscapes of mountains, lakes, bogs, islands and coastal inlets in the western parts of the county;
- **The Eastern Plains Region** is underlain by younger, softer rocks. This gets most of its character from the covering blanket of glacial soils that give rise to extensive, level plains of grasslands, with many areas of bog in the north;
- **The South Galway Region** where the Slieve Aughty Mountain's older, harder rock meet the younger, yielding geology of the Burren in the west and the Shannon basin in the east. The result is a collection of small landscapes which vary considerably as one travels from west to east;
- **The Coast** is a separate region that derives differences in its character areas principally from its proximity and interactions with terrestrial areas.

These landscape regions have been further broken down into ten separate landscape types. The Landscape Character Types for County Galway are as follows and are identified in Map 8.1 below.

- Coastal;
- Islands;
- Uplands and bogs;
- Lake environs;
- North Galway Complex;
- Shannon Environs;
- Central Galway Complex;
- Karst Landscapes;
- Slieve Aughty; and
- Urban Environs.



Map 8.1 Landscape Character Types

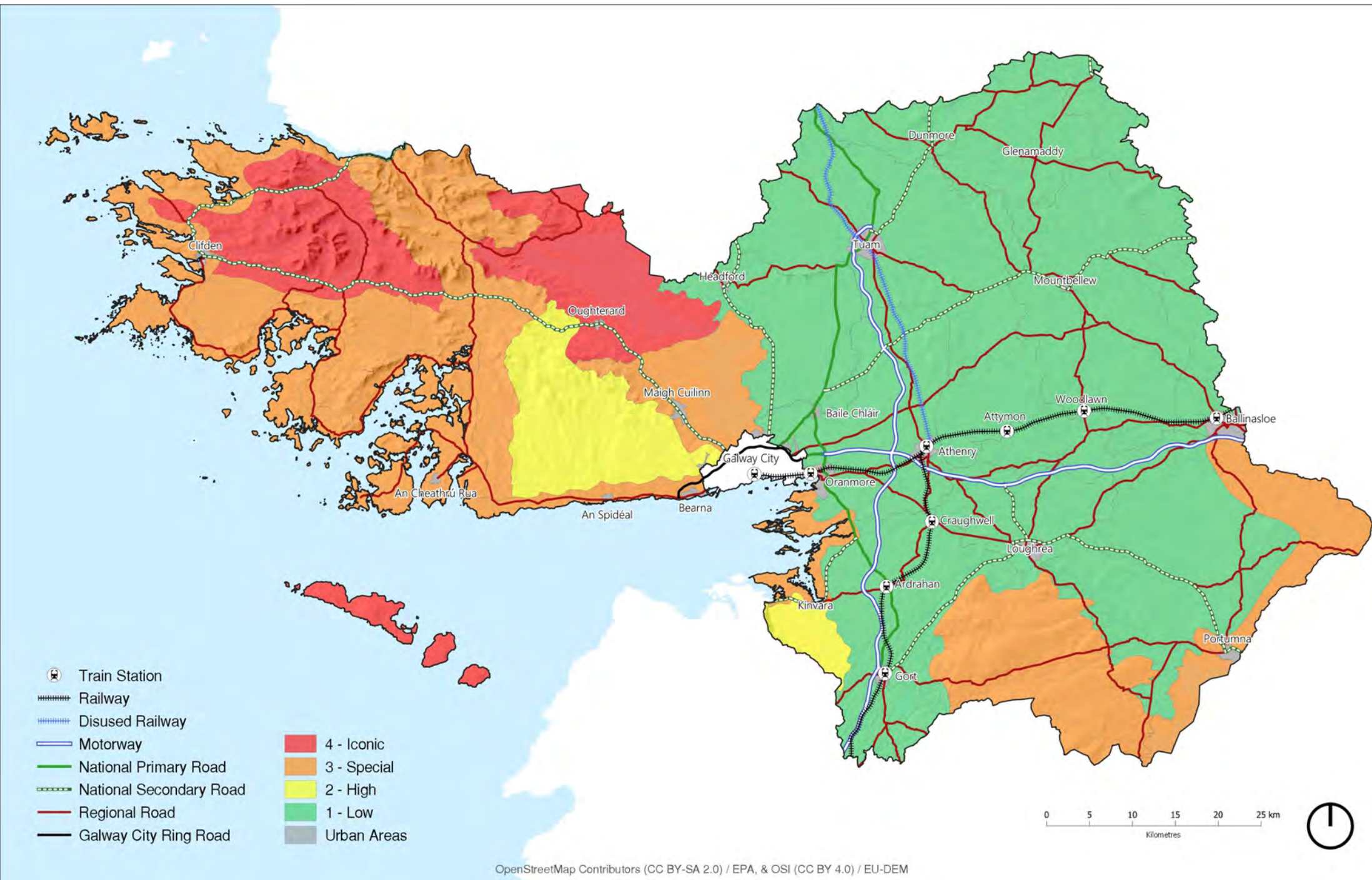
8.13.2 Landscape Sensitivity

A landscape's capacity to absorb new development, without exhibiting a significant alteration of character or change of appearance is referred to as its 'sensitivity'. This depends on factors such as elevation, slope, as well as the types of land-cover and soil. The area is classified as being increasingly sensitive as more of these factors are present in the same place.

The Landscape Character Assessment for the county has outlined four separate Landscape Character Units as follows:

- Class 1 - Low: Unlikely to be adversely affected by change
- Class 2 - High: Elevated sensitivity to change
- Class 3 - Special: High sensitivity to change
- Class 4 - Iconic: Unique Landscape with high sensitivity to change

Subject to the provisions of the plan the control of permissible development shall be in accordance with the policy objectives outlined below as they relate to these four Landscape Character Units. Based on the assessment of the landscape and the establishment of sensitivity ratings for various areas of the County, the Planning Authority shall implement the following policy objectives.



Policy Objectives Landscape Conservation and Management

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.

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.

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.

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.

LCM 5 Prospecting and Mining

It is a policy objective of the Council to give careful consideration in exceptional circumstances for prospecting or mining for gold, silver or base metals in landscapes class 3 or 4.

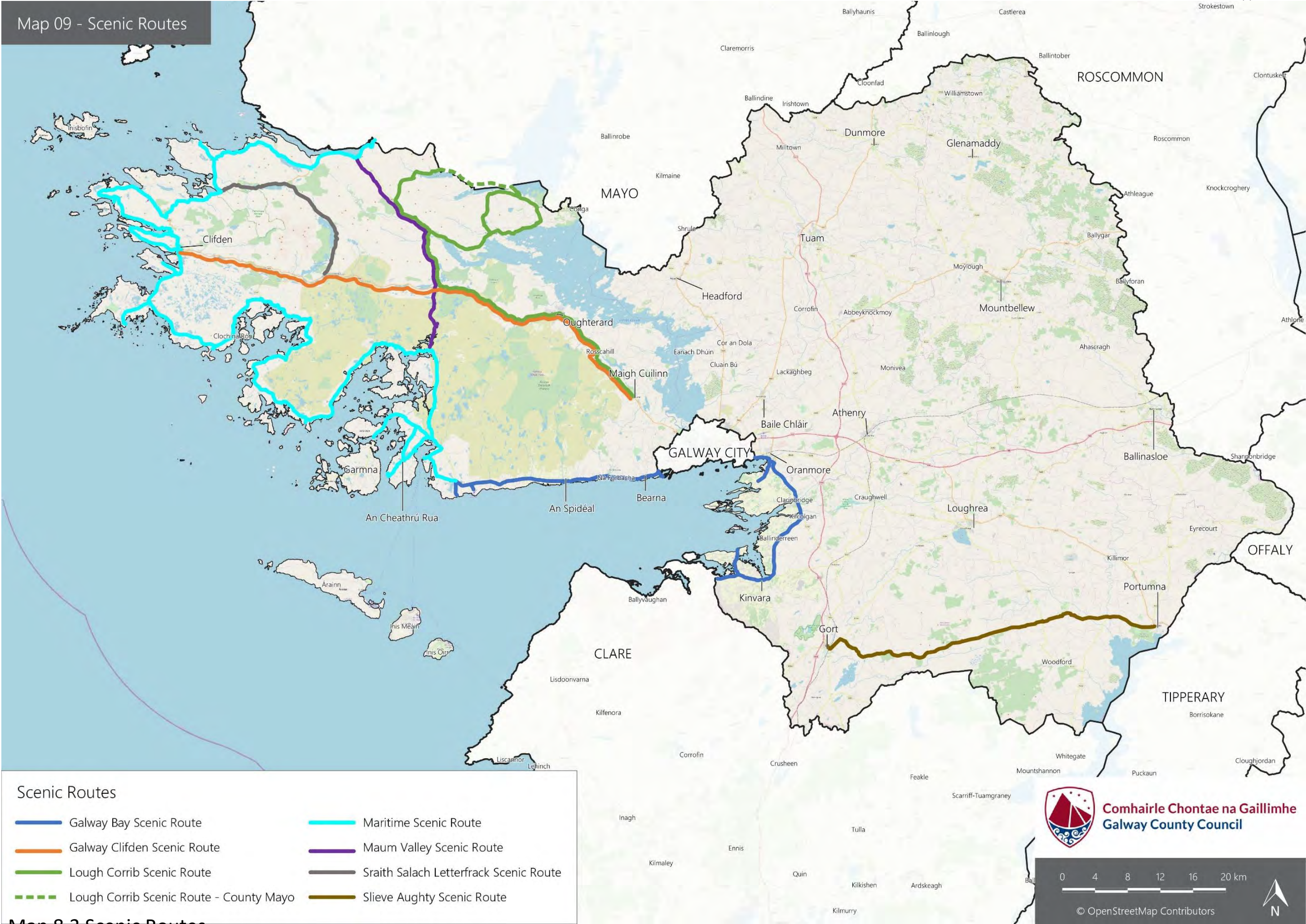
8.13.3 Protected Views and Scenic Routes

This protected views and scenic routes have been identified in the Landscape Character Assessment which is located within Appendix 4 of the plan. The county has many important protected views and scenic routes of great natural beauty located across the county. These protected views and scenic routes have a very important amenity, tourism, economic and cultural value for the county and its people. It is therefore important to protect and conserve these views and development where permitted should not hinder or obstruct these views but should be located and designed in a manner so as not to negatively impact on these protected views and scenic routes.

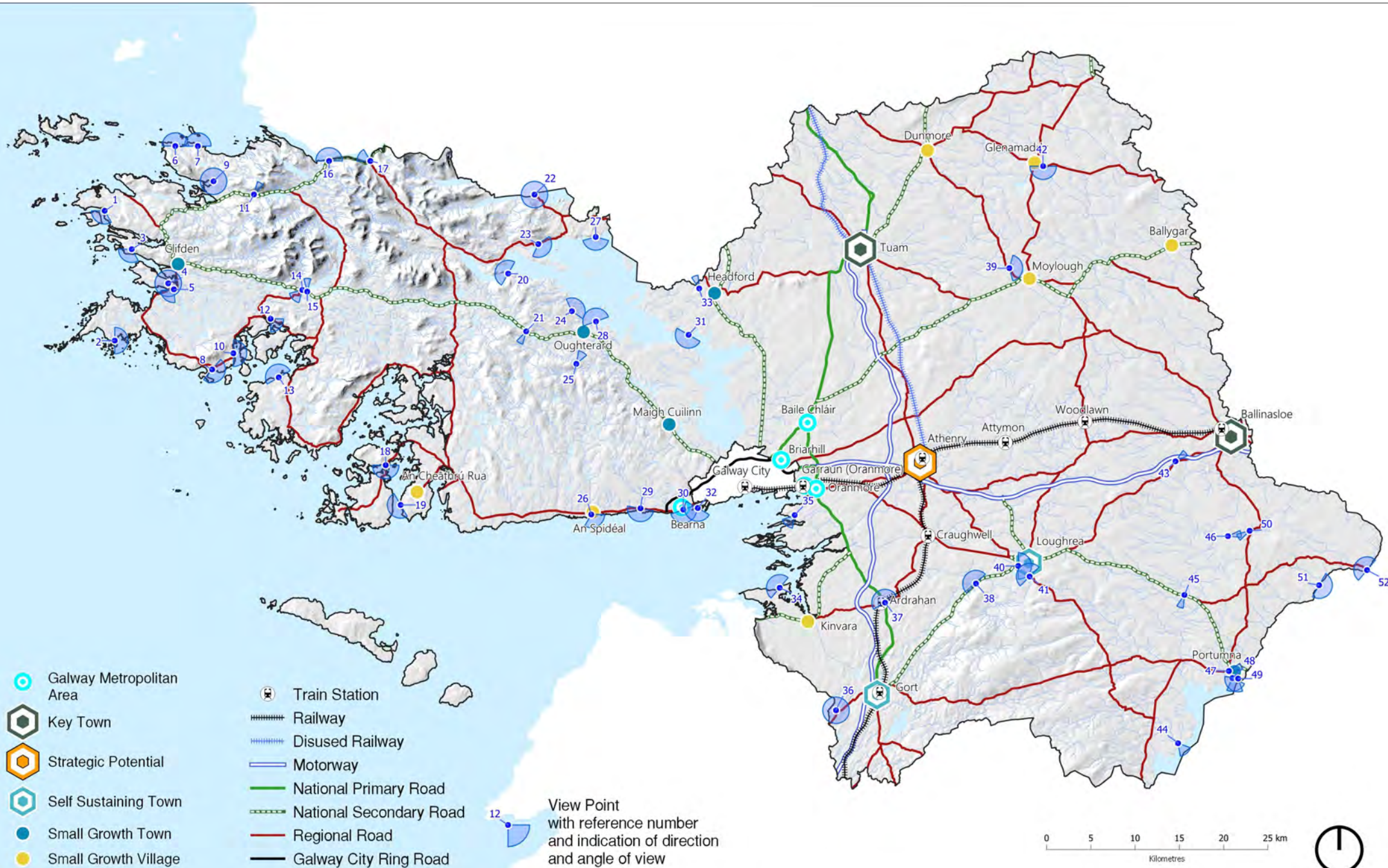
Policy Objective Landscape Conservation and Management

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.



Map 8.3 Scenic Routes



Chapter 9 Marine and Coastal Management

“The marine and coastal environment is a living and active ecosystem that requires care and attention. Harnessing the potential of the marine sector as a national asset is a priority while addressing the potential threat of coastal flooding and the challenges associated with the coastal edge”.

9.1 Introduction

County Galway has an extensive coastline that is home to a variety of natural habitats, rugged coastline and scenic terrain which all contribute to this unique and iconic landscape. The marine economy is a significant contributor, in the area of fisheries, aquaculture and marine tourism. The coastal waters off County Galway provide an important resource supporting and generating employment and recreational activities.

In 2012 the publication of the Integrated Marine Plan by the Inter-Departmental Marine Co-ordination Group set out a clear road map of the Government’s vision for the delivery of a strategic document that gave recognition to Ireland’s marine potential. This policy document emphasises greater co-ordination in relation to policy approaches across a range of marine sectors and associated disciplines.

This Marine and Coastal Management chapter will set out the development priorities for the marine sector in the county. The chapter will identify the key industries that make up the marine sector in the county. There will be policy objectives to support the advancement of new technologies and innovations within the industry in support of Galway’s existing marine industries. Climate Change and the direct relationship with the marine and coastal management sector will also be addressed in section 9.3 and in Chapter 14 *Climate Change, Energy and Renewable Resources*.

9.2 Strategic Aims

Galway County Council shall work with the appropriate stakeholders and agencies in relation to Marine and Coastal Management and will continue to safeguard the delivery of marine related development in a sustainable manner. This will accord with the following strategic aims:

- To promote growth in the marine sector and deliver a thriving maritime economy harnessing; the opportunities that present themselves in a co-ordinated and sustainable manner;
- To facilitate the development and upkeep of marine infrastructure;
- To support the maintenance and protection of the maritime ecosystem;
- To seek to protect the coast from erosion and to combat the issue of coastal flooding.

9.3 Strategic Context

This chapter has been prepared in the context of the following National and Regional Plans, Policies and Guidelines:

National Planning Framework – Ireland 2040
National Development Plan 2018-2027
National Marine Planning Framework – Baseline Report
National Marine Planning Framework – Roadmap
National Marine Planning Framework – Stakeholder Advisory Group
National Marine Planning Framework – National Legislation
National Marine Planning Framework – Marine Data and Decision-making
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region 2020-2032
Climate Action Plan 2019
National Mitigation Plan 2017
Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan
Integrated Marine Plan 2012
Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth An Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland Roadmap
Ireland's Marine Atlas – Marine Institute
Challenges and Opportunities for Ireland's Major Ocean Economy Industries

9.3.1 National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF) highlights the importance of co-ordination between the stakeholders within the industry to achieve balanced marine spatial planning. The marine environment covers a wide range of industries, which include tourism, seafood processing, products of marine biotechnology and bio-discovery, recreation, renewable energy, energy exploration and production.

The NPF was prepared with the acknowledgment that the *European Maritime Spatial Planning Directive* requires the adoption of a national maritime spatial plan by 2021 to harness the resource that exists within the marine sector. These two national strategies would therefore interlink and complement each other, which will ensure there is close correlation between the marine sector and land use-based planning. This chapter seeks to facilitate the effective co-ordination of marine and land use based activities in accordance with the requirements of the of NPO 39 of the NPF.

The NPF also recognises the importance of the maritime economy, NPO 39 supports the sustainable growth and maritime economy with emphasis on remote rural coastal communities and islands.

In relation to Coastal Management, NPO 41a and 41b identifies the requirements to protect the coastline in order to sustain its physical and environmental qualities and the need to address the impacts of climate change in relation to the effects in sea level changes.

9.3.2 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) references the strong maritime culture and tradition that exists within the county, it refers to the potential benefits that could be derived from a sustainable energy and offshore renewable energy sector. The marine sector also hosts an array of valuable heritage conservation and biodiversity attributes. Marine based health, medicine, technology, along with research and development are also emerging sectors that contribute to a potentially buoyant marine economy. The threat of coastal flooding and coastal erosion is now identified as a threat to future generations.

The marine and blue economy is considered an important asset to the country and is referenced in RSES under Growth Ambition 1-Economy and Employment Regional Policy Objective (RPO 4.34) identifies Páirc Na Mara as a potential contributor to the marine industry. The RSES also supports the upgrade of marine infrastructure ports in strategic locations as outlined in RPO 4.31.

9.4 Climate Change

A key target within the Climate Action Plan requires 70% of national electricity to be generated by renewable resources. Climate change targets are in some instances considered to be a challenge. However, for the marine sector, these parameters represent an opportunity for significant renewable energy production which would yield numerous benefits. It is expected that in the years ahead as offshore renewable energy development gains pace that the marine sector has the potential to make a very significant contribution to the climate change agenda on an international scale.

The coastline is one of the most vulnerable areas in relation to the impacts of climate change. The intensity and frequency of winter storms has been rapidly increasing. These storms not only erode the coastline, but cost millions of euro worth of structural damage, flooding, and damage to fishing vessels and operations. Coastal erosion and the loss of natural coastal defences due to changing weather patterns has increased the risk of flooding in coastal areas. *Chapter 14 Climate Change, Energy and Renewable Resources* further addresses these challenges.

9.5 National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF)

The Marine and Blue Economy is contained within the 2012 document *Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth An Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland Roadmap* which is reviewed regularly. The delivery of a planning framework for the Maritime Economy is set as a goal within this document which has subsequently been enshrined in an EU Directive described above. The National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) is a twenty-year national plan for the country's maritime areas and is currently being prepared. The NMPF contains a series of overarching policies over environmental, social and economic themes, and provides sectoral policies for 16 sectors ranging from renewable energy, aquaculture, port, harbours and shipping to tourism and defence. The NMPF gives a commitment to prepare sub-national and/or regional plans.

The NPF supports the alignment of land use spatial planning and marine spatial planning. NPO 39 requires regional and local development plans to take account of and integrate relevant maritime spatial planning areas such as renewable energy, electricity networks, coastal and flood defences, fishing and aquaculture, ports and harbours, public access, tourism and recreation, protected sites and species, seascape and landscape.

The Marine Planning and Development Management Bill 2019 represents a significant change to the consenting process for marine based developments. The Bill will amend the existing Foreshore Act and create a new regulatory area and a new single state consent regime for the entire maritime area.

Policy Objectives National Marine Planning Framework

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.

NMPF 2 Marine Planning and Development Management Bill

To support and accommodate any change to the marine spatial planning system which is proposed under the Marine Planning and Development Management Bill 2019 (or any subsequent Bill) once enacted into law.

9.6 Marine and Coastal Development

Development proposals within coastal areas must take cognisance of the changing and dynamic nature of the coast. It is acknowledged that hard engineering solutions are the most resource intensive and involve the highest level of interference with natural processes along this sensitive environment.

As a general principle, development on greenfield sites will only be considered in exceptional circumstances where it is not possible to utilise existing locations.

Policy Objectives Marine and Coastal Development

MCD 1 Protection of the Coastline

To protect the special character of the coast by preventing inappropriate development, particularly on the seaward side of coastal roads. New development, wherever possible, shall be accommodated within existing developed areas and shall be climate resilient in its location and design.

MCD 2 Pattern of Development along the Coast

To strictly control the nature and pattern of development within coastal areas and ensure that it is designed and landscaped to the highest standards and sited appropriately so as not to detract from the visual amenity of the area.

9.7 Marine and Coastal Economy

The marine sector has provided a source of employment generation within the county. Its importance is therefore recognised and reflected in this chapter. Challenges to this sector include the effects of external shocks to fishing exports such as Brexit and the requirement to transition to a low carbon economy.

Ireland's marine sector employed in the region of 30,000 full time equivalents in 2019. The annual turnover of the marine sector in Ireland was estimated to be approximately €6 billion.

The profile of the ocean economy in Ireland is made up of a range of sectors which include some the following:

- Shipping and Maritime Transport;
- Marine Coastal Tourism;
- Marine Aquaculture;
- Seafood Processing;
- Marine Technology Products;
- Marine Renewable Energy.

The shipping, maritime transport and tourism sectors are a significant contributor to the ocean economy.

Policy Objective Marine and Coastal Economy

MCE 1 Maritime Economy

To support development and growth of the maritime economy and balance the competing demands for available space along the coast by different users and encourage co-location and co-existence of activities and infrastructure while having regard to appropriate environmental considerations.

9.8 Shipping and Maritime Transport

Ports, harbours and associated infrastructure play a significant role in the continued development of the Marine and Coastal economy. Support for their improvements and upkeep will be imperative in the coming years with the renewable energy agenda now focusing on offshore renewable energy.

Ros an Mhíl is the largest and busiest port within the County Galway with a number of key functions that are pivotal to the success of the marine sector. This facility is an established location as a fishing port, which in turns makes it one of the country's top ten ports for fish landings.

It is also the headquarters for the Galway and Árann Deep-Sea fishing fleet and it has been designated as one of the country's six Major Fishery Harbour Centres.

RPO 4.31 of the RSES seeks to protect, upgrade and expand key fisheries ports including Ros an Mhíl to ensure adequate continued investment in facilities to safeguard its continued prosperity.

The port supports the islands and the tourism industry by providing a year-round ferry service to Oileáin Árann for both passengers and goods. Other routes to offshore islands from Ros an Mhíl will be supported as appropriate. The continued improvement of the marine sector is reliant on the delivery of additional port capacity.

Policy Objectives Shipping and Marine Transport

SMT 1 Marine Potential

To support the marine potential of the county's piers and harbours and related infrastructure and other appropriate marine related development and support the sustainable development of this infrastructure to enable the marine economy to develop.

SMT 2 Expansion of Ros an Mhíl

To support within the lifetime of this plan the potential of Ros an Mhíl as a port of significance and to ensure its development potential is fully realised in accordance with environmental considerations.

9.9 Aquaculture and Fishing

Aquaculture relates to the farming of finfish, shellfish, seaweed species and aquatic food types. It is not exclusively related to sea-based fishing, although the marine environment on the foreshore makes up the majority of aquaculture activity. The fisheries industry plays an important role in maintaining the county's strong marine economy. In recent years the national employment figure in the fisheries industry was in excess of 14,000 people either directly or indirectly. Given the extensive coastline, number of existing fishing villages and the employment created from this industry requires recognition and protection in this plan.

The plan will seek to facilitate the development of this industry further in a sustainable manner, without detriment to the natural environment. It is also considered that the enabling infrastructure to facilitate a thriving aquacultural industry is of paramount importance. The development and maintenance of harbours, piers and associated infrastructure will also be required to ensure the continued development of this industry.

Policy Objective Aquaculture and Fishing

AF 1 Marine Aquaculture

To support the sustainable development of marine aquaculture and fishing industries, so as to maximise their contribution to jobs and growth in coastal communities where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment.

9.10 Shellfish

In order to protect existing shellfish waters and to ensure the future protection of these areas, the European Union introduced the Shellfish Waters Directive (2006/113/EC). The purpose of this Directive was to put in place concrete measures to protect waters, including shellfish waters, against pollution and to safeguard certain shellfish populations from various harmful consequences, resulting from the discharge of pollutant substances into the sea. Since 2013, the Shellfish Waters Directive has

been subsumed into the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) which brings a more integrated approach to managing water quality on a river basin (catchment) basis, in order to protect and enhance both ecological and chemical quality of rivers, lakes, groundwater, estuaries and coastal waters, including shellfish waters.

There are 9 areas along the County Galway coastline that are identified as shellfish waters:

- Cuan Chill Chiaráin;
- Clarinbridge/Kinvara Bay;
- Aughinish Bay.
- Outer Galway Bay Indreabhán;
- Mannin Bay;
- Clifden Bay/Ardbear Bay;
- Streamstown Bay;
- Ballinakill Bay.
- Killary Harbour.

A Pollution Prevention Programme is in place regarding these designated areas. Generally, development is required to have regard to the requirements of the Western River Basin Management Plan which make reference to the protected shellfish waters. Developments adjoining, or in the vicinity of, designated Shellfish Waters must have regard to the designation and ensure that development does not have a negative impact on the quality of the water and Natura 2000 sites in the area.

Policy Objectives Shellfish	
SF 1	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.	
SF 2	Protection of Shellfish Waters
To seek to protect the quality of designated shellfish waters off the County Galway coast.	

9.11 Marine and Coastal Tourism

The high amenity value of County Galway's coastline provides an opportunity for a range of uses associated with tourism. The WAW has encouraged visitors to certain rural parts of the County within the Conamara Region which has had a significant positive impact on these communities.

The success of marine tourism depends on the quality and maintenance of supporting infrastructure. Blue Flag status for beaches in the county will continue to be attained. The maintenance of harbours and piers are also recognised as important in ensuring that water-based activities remain safe and attractive to visitors. The roll out of coastal trail as part of the blueway network in recent years has been a valuable attraction.

Policy Objectives Marine and Coastal Tourism

MCT 1 Water Based Sports and Marine Recreation

To encourage proposals that promote sustainable development of water-based sports and marine recreation in coastal areas and on river systems across the County in accordance with environmental considerations.

MCT 2 Coastal Tourism and Recreation

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

MCT 3 Existing Coastal Walkways

To support proposals that improve the existing network of coastal walks within the county in accordance with environmental considerations.

9.12 Marine Renewable Energy

Transitioning to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society is a National Strategic Outcome set out in the NPF which now also forms part of the National Climate Policy Position. NPO 42 of the NPF supports the development of Ireland's offshore renewable energy potential which includes domestic and international grid connectivity enhancements in accordance with the Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan. To reach this target, there is a quest to deliver a quantum of renewable energy both on shore and offshore. A key national resource to Ireland in this regard is the abundance offshore energy that can be reaped off its coast. This would be sourced from wind wave and tidal combined and connected to the major sources of demand as confirmed in the accompanying Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy (LARES).

The County has the benefit of an existing test site in Galway Bay which is known as Marine Renewable ETS.

There have been considerable technical advances in renewable energy generation in recent years which make it an attractive and viable development option. The development of offshore energy sources will be an important contributor in ensuring Ireland meets its climate change reduction responsibilities.

Policy Objective Marine Renewable Energy

MRE 1 Renewable Energy

Support as appropriate, sustainable offshore renewable energy generation off the County Galway coast subject to environmental and amenity considerations.

9.13 Marine and Coastal Heritage

The marine environment forms a significant part of our heritage and identity, which is reflected in the vibrant coastal and island communities. Pier harbours, coastal forts and lighthouses form an intrinsic part of our heritage. As outlined in the RSES under RPO 4.15 requires the protection and preservation of our coastal, archaeological and built heritage and it calls for the restoration of our key coastal assets. numerous biodiversity sites are protected through their designation as SAC and SPA sites under the Habitats Directive, however the range of aquatic biodiversity is not just limited to these designated sites.

Policy Objective Marine and Coastal Heritage

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.

MCH 2 Marine Based Environment

It is a policy objective of the Council to protect and enhance where appropriate marine biodiversity in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.

9.14 Marine Research and Innovation

RPO 4.3.2 of the RSES seeks the expansion of the regional assets in the Blue Economy. e research and innovation. Páirc na Mara is referenced in RPO 4.34 of the RSES, which seeks to enable the development and expansion of a number of regional strategic Marine Resource Innovation Parks.

The port of Ros an Mhíl has the potential to develop as a location for a 'maritime/marine cluster within the County. This would be achieved through close collaboration with other bodies and agencies such as private businesses and educational and research institutes such as the Marine Institute and the Socio-Economic Marine Research Unit at National University of Ireland Galway for example.

Policy Objectives Marine Research and Innovation

MRI 1 Marine Research and Innovation

Support marine development such as research and innovation facilities in the County. This will be subject to detailed environmental considerations and proposals must be carried out in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.

MRI 2 Marine Resource Innovation Park

To support the development and expansion of strategic Marine Resource Innovation Parks including Páirc na Mara at Cill Chiarán and seek to support the increase in aquaculture and seafood sectoral growth in the Marine Economy in accordance with proper planning and environmental considerations.

9.15 Marine and Coastal Challenges

As outlined in the NPF NPO 41b seeks to address the effects of sea level changes and coastal flooding and erosion and to support the implementation of adaptation responses in vulnerable areas. Recent decades have seen a persistent rise in temperature that has not been seen since prior to 1950. During the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty first century a sea level rise of 0.19m was recorded. This is set to increase to 0.91m by the year 2100. Climate change and sea level rise make a significant contribution to the effects of coastal erosion. The two issues are inextricably linked. For example, climate changes increase the frequency and severity of storms which results in exacerbated coastal inundation. This could prevent access to aquaculture facilities offshore and make the port and prohibit the safe use of ports and harbours.

The Local Authority Coastal Erosion Policy and Practice Audit which was issued in 2017 highlights the extent of coastal erosion as perceived by 19 Local Authorities. In County Galway it was estimated that 154km of coast are reported at risk of coastal erosion.

A challenge to the marine and coastal environment relates to changes in sea temperature. This has the potential to impact on the aquaculture sector with incidence of algal blooms of phytoplankton. This would affect shellfish and finfish aquaculture production, reduce the quality of other habitats and effect the functioning of certain species. A number of mitigation measures to counterbalance the change in sea temperature such as offshore renewable energy and the development of an integrated multi-trophic aquaculture where aquaculture sites cultivate multiple species, which could include finfish and seaweed occupying the same site. This would potentially sequester carbon which would be supported as an innovative concept.

Policy Objectives Marine and Coastal Challenges

MCC 1 Environmental Values of the Coast

Protect the amenity, character, visual, recreational, economic potential and environmental values of the coast. Ensure that natural coastal defences including sand dunes, beaches and coastal wetlands are not compromised by inappropriate development.

MCC 2 Protection of Coastal Habitats

To strictly control the nature and pattern of development within coastal areas and ensure that it is designed and landscaped to the highest standards and sited appropriately so as not to detract from the visual amenity of the area.

- (a) Development shall be prohibited where the development poses a significant or potential threat to coastal habitats or features, and/or where the development is likely to result in altered patterns of erosion or deposition elsewhere along the coast;
- (b) To prohibit development along the coast outside existing towns and villages where such development is not adequately safeguarded over the lifetime of the development without the need to construct additional coastal defences.

MCC 3 Protection of Coastal Area

It is a policy objective to protect the Coastal Area through the following measures:

- (a) Ensure that conservation works undertaken in coastal areas are in accordance with best practice and measures to protect the coast, the coastal edge and coastal habitats are supported;
- (b) Seek to prevent the unauthorised removal of sand and related beach material;
- (c) Protect, enhance and conserve beaches in the County from inappropriate development and seek to maintain the current status of the designated Blue Flag beaches and Green Coasts and to increase the number of beaches and coasts holding this status in the future;
- (d) Facilitate an Integrated Coastal Zone Management approach to ensure the conservation, management and protection of man-made and natural resources of the coastal zone;

MCC 4 Integrated Framework Management Plan

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

Chapter 10 Natural Heritage, Biodiversity and Green/Blue Infrastructure

“To contribute towards the protection, conservation and management of biodiversity and natural heritage including sites designated at national and EU Level and protected species and habitats outside of designated sites and to develop a green/blue infrastructure network in the interests of the proper planning and sustainable development of the county”.

10.1 Introduction

The County's rich natural heritage and biodiversity is a very valuable resource that is important to our daily activities and quality of life. This Plan sets out to contribute towards the protection and enhancement of the natural heritage and the biodiversity of designated and non-designated ecological sites within the County and to provide a wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits and services including the provision of attractive towns, villages and countryside for both communities and visitors to enjoy.

Biodiversity forms the basis of our landscapes and amenity areas, provides for food and clean water supplies, opportunities for waste disposal, nutrient recycling, coastal protection, flood storage and attenuation. Biodiversity is the sum of all the species and habitats working together to generate and sustain life. The county has a rich natural heritage and biodiversity including a number of diverse and distinctive habitats which are rare in Ireland and the rest of the world.

Green/Blue Infrastructure is a strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services such as water purification, air quality, space for recreation and climate mitigation and adaptation. This network of green (land) and blue (water) spaces can improve environmental conditions and therefore citizens' health and quality of life. It also supports a green economy, creates job opportunities and enhances biodiversity. The Natura 2000 network constitutes the backbone of the EU green infrastructure. Green Infrastructure planning is a successfully tested tool to provide environmental, economic and social benefits through natural solutions. In many cases, it can reduce dependence on 'grey' infrastructure that can be damaging to the environment and biodiversity and often more expensive to build and maintain.

10.2 Strategic Aims

Galway County Council shall work with the appropriate stakeholders and agencies in increasing awareness, participation, enjoyment, knowledge and understanding of our shared heritage in order to lead to its proper conservation, management and protection and safeguarding it for future generations. This will accord with the following strategic aims:

- Conserve, manage, protect and enhance the special character of the County as defined by its natural heritage, biodiversity and green infrastructure;
- To ensure compliance with the requirements of relevant International, European Directives and National Legislation in relation to Natural Heritage, Biodiversity, Green/Blue Infrastructure and Climate Change;
- Ensure climate change considerations are taken into account in the Natural Heritage, Biodiversity and Green/Blue Infrastructure;
- Continue to implement actions of the National Heritage Plan and the National Biodiversity Plan and the current *Galway County Heritage and Biodiversity Plan 2017-2022* in partnership with all relevant stakeholders and any successor to these documents;

- To promote the creation of an integrated and coherent green infrastructure network throughout County Galway in order to enhance connectivity, social inclusion, sense of place and the creation of wildlife corridors.

10.3 Strategic Context

This chapter has been prepared in the context of the following European, National and Regional Plans, Policies and Guidelines:

EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC)
EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)
EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)
Wildlife Acts 1976-2000
National Planning Framework – Ireland 2040
National Development Plan 2018-2027
Climate Action Plan 2019
Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)
National Heritage Plan (2002) and Draft National Heritage Plan (2019) – Heritage 2030
National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017– Actions for Biodiversity 2017-2021
Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009
Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (DoECLG 2013)
Creating a Green Infrastructure for Ireland – Enhancing Natural Capital for Human Wellbeing (2010)
Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways, 2018
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region 2020-2032
The National Peatlands Strategy 2016
Galway County Heritage and Biodiversity Plan 2017 – 2022
The ‘All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015’
Local Economic and Community Plan 2016 – 2022

10.3.1 National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF) sets out to protect and value our important and vulnerable habitats, landscapes, natural heritage and green spaces. It identifies the importance of the interrelationships between biodiversity, natural heritage, landscape and our green spaces. The NPF states that integrated planning for green infrastructure and ecosystem services will be incorporated into the statutory land use plans. It also refers to the importance of biodiversity, environmental challenges and all relevant environmental legislation. National Strategic Objective 7 relates to enhanced amenity and heritage, the primary aim of this objective is to ensure that our 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 which is linked to and must integrate with our built, cultural and natural heritage.

The natural assets of the county are also valuable for carbon capture, which will assist in meeting climate mitigation and adaptation goals and national biodiversity targets. Therefore, NSO 8 Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society is also of particular relevant to this chapter.

The following relevant National Policy Objectives are noted including NPO 59 which aims to enhance the conservation status and improve the management of protected areas and protected species by implementing relevant EU Directives. NPO 58 stipulates that integrated planning for Green Infrastructure and ecosystem services should be incorporated into the preparation of statutory land use plans. NPO 60 aims to conserve and enhance the rich qualities of natural and cultural heritage of Ireland while NPO 61 aims to facilitate landscape protection, management and change. NPO 22 aims to facilitate tourism development including national and regional connectivity via a National Greenways, Blueways and Peatways Strategy. NPO 23 aims to facilitate rural development, green spaces and parks while protecting the natural landscape and built heritage which are vital to rural tourism.

10.3.2 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) recognises the need to conserve and enhance the biodiversity of our protected habitats and species including landscape and heritage protection, to identify, protect and enhance our green infrastructure, to ensure the sustainable management of our natural resources, to build climate resilience, to support the transition to a low carbon economy and the protection of the healthy natural environment to ensure clean air and water.

The following RPO 5.4, RPO 5.5, RPO 5.7, RPO 5.22 promotes the conservation and protection of designated and non-designated sites for reasons of biodiversity and ecosystem services including environmental assessment. The RPO 4.6 supports investment in facilities that will encourage the sustainable development of our natural and built heritage and RPO 4.12 encourages water-based leisure that is sensitive to the natural and cultural heritage resources. RPO 4.14 promotes the development of integrated walking, cycling and bridle routes throughout the region as an activity for both international visitors and local tourists. The RPO 4.15 aims to protect and preserve our Coastal Heritage, archaeological and built heritage. The RPO 5.23 aims to establish an audit of worked out bogs and peatlands within the region and to identify strategic sites and propositions of regional value such as renewable energy, tourism, biodiversity, climate mitigation, education, recreation and amenity.

The RSES supports the delivery of a strategic Greenway Network for the Galway Transport Strategy to include National Dublin to Galway Cycleway, Oranmore to Bearna Coastal Greenway and the Galway to Clifden Greenway.

10.4 Climate Action

In 2019, Ireland declared a climate and biodiversity emergency. It is acknowledged that Healthy ecosystems and Habitats are key for both climate mitigation and adaptation measures. Sustainable land management will ensure that land use changes do not impact negatively on the ability of the natural environment to absorb climate impacts including flood risk mitigation measures. It will also improve water quality, nature conservation/ biodiversity. The integration of Green/Blue Infrastructure and ecosystems services into the preparation of statutory land use plans will result in many benefits including, but not limited to, combating climate change, protection of water resources, flood management and improvements to water quality, reducing fossil fuels emissions and the development of sustainable transport, active travel corridors and ecological corridors.

10.5 Heritage Ireland 2030

Heritage Ireland 2030 is a new National Heritage Plan which will set out key principles and policies for conserving and managing Ireland's heritage over the next decade and more. Heritage Ireland 2030 will

provide further policy backing for the mitigation of climate-change impacts and the protection of biodiversity.

National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017– Actions for Biodiversity 2017-2021 was developed in line with EU and International Biodiversity strategies and policies. It recognised that locally led action is crucial in protecting biodiversity and ecosystem services and sets out the measures Ireland should take to ensure its conservation. The Plan also identifies the important role of Green Infrastructure in helping to achieve biodiversity targets and developing ecological corridors that allow the movement of species through their entire natural habitat.

Both the *National Heritage Plan (2002)*, the *Draft National Heritage Plan (2019)* identify and recognise that heritage is a communal and mutually shared asset to be protected by the actions of all. The National Heritage Plan (2002) and the National Biodiversity Plan (2011) state national policy and identify national priorities in relation to the protection and management of our national heritage. These plans recognise that heritage is communal, and we all share a responsibility to protect it starting at the local level.

Galway County Heritage and Biodiversity Plan 2017 – 2022

Galway County Heritage and Biodiversity Plan 2017 – 2022 is a strategic 6 year plan that sets out a number of actions which aim to raise awareness and understanding, while at the same time conserving and managing the heritage and biodiversity of the County. It is the policy of the Council to support the implementation of the *Galway County Heritage and Biodiversity Plan 2017 – 2022* and any subsequent plan in partnership with relevant stakeholders subject to available resources.

10.6 Natural Heritage and Biodiversity

10.6.1 Context

The natural heritage and biodiversity of County Galway is a unique resource scattered over the County. 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.

This biodiversity is under pressure from development and human activity. A sustainable approach is needed to protect and conserve the natural heritage. While it is inevitable that our landscape will continue to change in response to the needs of our society, it is essential that a balance is reached between development and ensuring that there are no detrimental impacts to the natural heritage and biodiversity of the County.

Natural capital is the earth's stock of natural assets which include geology, soil, air, water and all living things. It is from this natural capital that people derive a wide range of services often called ecosystem services which make human life possible. Biodiversity is the sum of all the species and habitats working together to generate and sustain life.

The various habitats in the County form part of an “ecological network” that facilitates the movement of species between areas and ensures the effective functioning and survival of the diverse range of habitats and species in the County. Ecological networks provide a spatial, network-based approach to the conservation of biodiversity, which differs from the site-based approach of environmental designations, by using ‘corridors’ or ‘stepping stones’ that support species migration, dispersal and

daily movements between the 'core areas' and thereby contribute to a more integrated and functional ecological system.

Under Section 9 of the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000, a statutory responsibility is outlined to 'promote the conservation of biological diversity'. The primary mechanism for achieving this is the National Biodiversity Plan, of which a key concept is that local authorities (and other agencies) will share responsibility for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service under the auspices of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage is responsible for the designation of the Natural Heritage Areas (NHA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA). The designation of sites is a continuing process as boundaries are revised and adjusted and new sites are added. Galway County Council will take cognisance of any revisions and adjustments as furnished by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

In line with higher national and regional policy and in accordance with policies outlined throughout this document, the protection and enhancement of the Quality of Life of County Galway is an underlying theme of the County Development Plan, of which a high-quality environment is an essential indicator. The maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity is fundamental in the achievement of sustainable development.

10.6.2 Natural Heritage and Legislation

The European Commission has adopted the new EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and associated Action Plan – a comprehensive, ambitious, long-term plan for protecting nature and reversing the degradation of ecosystems.

The Heritage Act, 1995 is 'an act to promote public interest in and knowledge and appreciation and protection of the national heritage'. The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) requires that all development Plans must include mandatory objectives for the conservation of the natural heritage and for the conservation of European sites and any other sites which may be prescribed.

The EU Birds (1979) and Habitats (1992) Directives (The Habitats Directive), Birds and Habitats Regulations 2011 provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. It protects habitats and species of community interest through the establishment and conservation of an EU-wide network of sites, known as Natura 2000; Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). The Habitats Directive sets out decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect European Sites and establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment (AA).

The Wildlife Act 1976, as amended is the principal national legislation providing for the protection of wildlife and the control of some activities which may adversely affect wildlife. The Flora (Protection) Order, 2015 sets out the current list of plant species protected by Section 21 of the Wildlife Act, 1976, as amended. In addition, there are a number of international convention and agreements relating to our heritage which Ireland has ratified.

10.6.3 Designated Sites

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. As such European and national legislation protects the important and valuable heritage

areas within the County. The three main types of designation are: Special Areas of Conservation (SAC); Special Protection Areas (SPA); and Natural Heritage Areas (NHA).

The responsibility for designating sites lies with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; however, the Council also aim to ensure their protection into the future. In addition, there are other measures which may be used to designate sites of importance such as Ramsar sites protected under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance.

10.6.4 Candidate Special Areas of Conservation

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) - these sites are selected for the conservation and protection of plant and animal species (other than birds) and habitats listed in Annex I and Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) respectively.

10.6.5 Special Protection Areas

The Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and proposed Special Protection Areas (pSPAs) – these sites are selected for the conservation and protection of birds of particular species and their habitats designated under the EU Birds Directive 2009 (2009/147/EC) (first adopted in 1979) and transposed into Irish law by the Conservation of Wild Birds Regulations (SI 291 of 1985).

10.6.6 Natural Heritage Areas

Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) are designated under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 and encompass nationally important semi-natural and natural habitats, landforms and geomorphological features.

10.6.7 European Directives, Natura 2000 and Environmental Assessments

At European level, the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) mandate the identification and protection of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), which together create a network of protected wildlife areas, known as the Natura 2000 network, across the European Union. The designation of these sites form part of a range of measures aimed at conserving important or threatened habitats and species. The Water Framework Directive Register of Protected Areas also contains an inventory of protected area sites to include areas designated for the protection of habitats and species.

10.6.8 Statutory Nature Reserve

There are eight Statutory Nature Reserves in County Galway. They are areas of importance to wildlife which is protected under Ministerial order and most are owned by the State.

10.6.9 Wildfowl Sanctuary

Wildfowl Sanctuaries are areas that have been excluded from the 'Open Season Order' so that game birds can rest and feed undisturbed. Shooting of game birds is not allowed in these sanctuaries. There are two wildfowl sanctuaries in the county.

10.6.10 Protected Plant and Animal Species

Certain plant, animal and bird species are protected by law. These includes plant species listed in the Flora Protection Order, 1999 (or other such Orders) and animals and birds listed in the Wildlife Act, 1976 and subsequent statutory instruments, those listed in Annex IV of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), and those listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive.

10.6.11 European Sites and Appropriate Assessment

Additional Guidance for Planning Authorities - Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland 2009 (revised 2010) is guidance intended to assist and guide planning authorities in the application of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive as it relates to their roles, functions and responsibilities in undertaking Appropriate Assessment of plans and projects. It applies to plans and projects for which public authorities receive an application for consent, and to plans or projects which a public authority wishes to undertake or adopt. It sets out the different steps and stages that are needed in establishing whether a plan or project can be implemented without adversely affecting the integrity of a European Site.

10.6.12 Environmental Impact Assessment

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is the process of examining the possible environmental effects of a proposed project through the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIAR). An EIAR is a report or statement of the effects, both environmental and social and cultural, which the proposed project would have on the receiving environment. It is prepared by the developer to inform the EIA process.

The projects which require EIA are listed in Annex I and Annex II of the EIA Directive as amended. Projects listed in Annex 1 of the EIA Directive have mandatory EIA requirements. Thresholds have been set for Annex II projects in Irish Legislation. But even projects which do not meet the threshold may require an EIA if the project is likely to have significant effects on the environment. The Annex I and Annex II projects have been transposed into Section 5 (Parts 1 and 2) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.

10.6.13 Ecological Impact Assessment

The EcIA is a mechanism for the protection of sensitive habitats that lie outside designated sites and any proposed development likely to have a significant impact on rare and threatened species including those species protected by law and their habitats. It is important to ensure appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures are incorporated into development proposals as part of any ecological impact assessment in order to assess the potential impacts on biodiversity.

10.6.14 Biodiversity outside the Protected Sites/Non-Designated Sites

It is important to recognise that nature conservation is not just confined to designated sites and acknowledge the need to protect non-designated habitats and landscapes and to conserve the biological diversity that occurs in the ordinary landscapes of the County. Rare and protected sites cannot survive independently of their surroundings. Features of our landscape can be of high natural value in their own right and often provide the vital links and corridors to allow the movement of plants and animals between protected sites.

Beyond the boundaries of the previously listed designated sites within the County, there are further areas that provide important habitats for our flora and fauna, and in particular vulnerable species. These make up a wide network of linked spaces that contribute to the County's Natural Heritage.

10.6.15 Ecological Networks

Inland waterways, which include lakes, rivers, and streams, are living systems of high local biodiversity value due to the habitats associated with them, and function as ecological corridors that connect related habitats/designated sites, enabling species to move between them. Established trees and hedgerows are also of high local biodiversity value and contribute to ecological connectivity. Features that contribute to the creation of an ecological network should be retained and included in the design plans for development proposals.

10.6.16 Bats and Lighting

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.

Policy Objectives Natural Heritage and Biodiversity

NHB 1 Natural Heritage and Biodiversity of Designated Sites, Habitats and Species

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

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

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

NHB 2 European Sites and Appropriate Assessment

To implement Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and to ensure that Appropriate Assessment is carried out in relation to works, plans and projects likely to impact on European sites (SACs and SPAs), whether directly or indirectly or in combination with any other plan(s) or project(s). All assessments must be in compliance with the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011. All such projects and plans will also be required to comply with statutory Environmental Impact Assessment requirements where relevant.

NHB 3 Protection of European Sites

No plans, programmes, or projects etc. giving rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on European sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource

requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans, programmes, etc. or projects.*

NHB 4 Ecological Appraisal of Biodiversity

Ensure, where appropriate, the protection and conservation of areas, sites, species and ecological/networks of biodiversity value outside designated sites. Where appropriate require an ecological appraisal, for development not directly connected with or necessary to the management of European Sites, or a proposed European Site and which are likely to have significant effects on that site either individually or cumulatively.

NHB 5 Ecological Connectivity and Corridors

Support the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and ecological connectivity in non-designated sites, including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, semi-natural grasslands, rivers, streams, natural springs, wetlands, stonewalls, geological and geo-morphological systems, other landscape features and associated wildlife areas where these form part of the ecological network and/or may be considered as ecological corridors in the context of Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.

NHB 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.

NHB 7 Mitigation Measures

Require mitigating measures in certain cases where it is evident that biodiversity is likely to be affected. These measures may, in association with other specified requirements, include establishment of wildlife areas/corridors/parks, hedgerow, tree planting, wildflower meadows/marshes and other areas. With regard to residential development, in certain cases, these measures may be carried out in conjunction with the provision of open space and/or play areas.

NHB 8 Increased Awareness of the County's Biodiversity and Natural Heritage

Facilitate increased awareness of the County's biodiversity and natural heritage through the provision of information to landowners and the community generally, in cooperation with statutory and other partners.

NHB 9 Protection of Bats and Bats Habitats

Seek to protect bats and their roosts, their feeding areas, flight paths and commuting routes. Ensure that development proposals in areas which are potentially important for bats, including areas of woodland, linear features such as hedgerows, stonewalls, watercourses and associated riparian vegetation which may provide migratory/foraging uses shall be subject to suitable assessment for potential impacts on bats. This will include an assessment of the cumulative loss of habitat or the impact on bat populations and activity in the area and may include a specific bat survey. Assessments shall be carried out by a suitably qualified professional and where development is likely to result in significant adverse effects on bat populations or activity in the area, development will be prohibited or require mitigation and/or compensatory measures, as appropriate. The impact of lighting on bats and their roosts and the lighting up of objects of cultural heritage must be adequately assessed in relation to new developments and the upgrading of existing lighting systems.

NHB 10 NPWS & Integrated Management Plans

Article 6(1) of the Habitats Directive requires that Member States establish the necessary conservation measures for European sites involving, if need be, appropriate management plans specifically designed for the sites or integrated into other development plans. The NPWS's current priority is to identify site specific conservation objectives; management plans may be considered after this is done. Where Integrated Management Plans are being prepared by the NPWS for European sites (or parts thereof), the NPWS shall be engaged with in order to ensure that plans are fully integrated with the Plan and other plans and programmes, with the intention that such plans are practical, achievable and sustainable and have regard to all relevant ecological, cultural, social and economic considerations, including those of local communities.

NHB 11 Increases in Visitor Numbers to Semi-Natural Areas, Visitor and Habitat Management

Seek to manage any increase in visitor numbers in order to avoid significant effects including loss of habitat and disturbance, including ensuring that any new projects, such as greenways, are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities, such as riparian zones.

Where relevant, the Council and those receiving permission for development under the Plan shall seek to manage any increase in visitor numbers and/or any change in visitor behaviour in order to avoid significant effects, including loss of habitat and disturbance. Management measures may include ensuring that new projects and activities are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities. Visitor/Habitat Management Plans will be required for proposed projects as relevant and appropriate.

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

10.7 Water Resources

European directives such as the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the Nitrates Directive will have implications for County Galway and the preservation of water quality. The WFD deals with water quality in relation to water bodies including rivers, lakes, ground waters, coastal and estuarine waters and wetlands.

The *River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021* sets out the actions that Ireland will take to improve water quality and achieve 'good' ecological status in water bodies (rivers, lakes, estuaries and coastal waters) by 2027. Ireland is required to produce a river basin management plan under the WFD. Water quality in Ireland has deteriorated over the past two decades. The Plan identifies the possible sources of pollution and through the mandatory measures of the WFD has identified actions necessary in order to improve the water quality of the region. The Plan provides a more coordinated framework for improving the quality of our waters - to protect public health, the environment, water amenities and to sustain water-intensive industries, including agri-food and tourism, particularly in rural Ireland.

Policy Objective Water Resources

WR 1 Water Resources

Protect the water resources in the plan area, including rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, springs, turloughs, surface water and groundwater quality, as well as surface waters, aquatic and wetland habitats and freshwater and water dependant species in accordance with the requirements and

guidance in the EU Water Framework Directive 2000 (2000/60/EC), the European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (as amended), the River Basin District Management Plan 2018 – 2021 and other relevant EU Directives, including associated national legislation and policy guidance (including any superseding versions of same) and also have regard to the Freshwater Pearl Mussel Sub-Basin Management Plans.

WR 2 River Basin Management Plans

It is a policy objective of the Council 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, Hydro-morphology, Forestry, On site wastewater treatment systems, Municipal and industrial discharges, Urban pressures, Abstractions.

10.8 Wetlands, Turloughs, Watercourses

A wetland is an area of land that is saturated with water either permanently or seasonally, and where the water table is near or at the surface. The 1971 Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance defines wetland as: *“areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six meters”*. While many protected areas include wetlands, most wetland areas occur outside protected sites.

“Wetlands” may vary considerably in visual appearance, owing in part to the setting in which they occur and the vegetation type(s) present. There are special suites of plants adapted to cope with wet conditions and, as these wet conditions vary spatially, a mosaic of habitats comprising different plant communities may occur within a single wetland.

Wetlands include our watercourses and water bodies as well as other habitats types including marshes, fens, reed beds, bogs and wet woodlands. These habitats tend to have high biodiversity value, as well as serving other functions relating to the protection of water quality and protection from flooding. While many protected areas include wetlands, most wetland areas occur outside protected sites. There are 5 major wetland types as follows:

- **marine** (coastal wetlands including coastal lagoons, rocky shores, and coral reefs);
- **estuarine** (including deltas, tidal marshes, and mangrove swamps);
- **lacustrine** (wetlands associated with lakes);
- **riverine** (wetlands along rivers and streams); and
- **palustrine** (meaning “marshy” – wet grassland, marshes, swamps and bogs).

As well as naturally occurring wetlands there are artificial wetlands such as fish ponds, farm ponds, irrigated agriculture land, reservoir, gravel pits, sewerage treatment facilities, and drainage ditches. The wetlands in Galway include a range of wildlife habitats, such as raised and cutover bogs, marshes, swamps, turloughs, wet woodlands, lakes and ponds. In addition, wetlands provide important ecosystem services such as flood prevention, provision of clean water, and carbon storage. Despite the known importance of wetlands, they continue to be threatened and damaged from activities such as drainage and infilling.

It is important to identify turloughs of local conservation importance and to be aware of the hydrological impacts of development on turloughs. Some Turloughs are located within priority habitats and accordingly are listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive.

Policy Objective Wetlands, Turloughs, Watercourses and Fens

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).

10.9 Peatlands

Peatland are wetlands where the substrate is predominantly peat including bogs which are fed by rain and fens which are fed by ground or surface water. Actively growing, intact raised bog is an extremely rare habitat. Irish raised bogs are of international importance representing 50% of all the conservation-worthy raised bogs remaining in Europe. In County Galway, upland blanket bog is found in mountainous regions and lowland/Atlantic blanket bog is found in the Conamara lowlands and coastal areas. Raised bogs are found in the lowlands of north and east County Galway.

Bogs are a unique wetland habitat, rich in wildlife possessing a combination of plants and animals that have evolved particularly to thrive in a bog. Bogs are a living archive as they contain semi fossilised plant remains and artefacts. Archaeologists have discovered many fascinating structures within and below the peat. Peatlands or Bogs are important controllers of water levels in river catchments, providing a source of water in dry conditions and soaking up excess water during wetter periods; they actively capture and hold carbon and are an important natural resource in combatting climate change. Active blanket bogs and active raised bogs are considered to be priority habitats, listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive. However, when bogs are drained and harvested, they cannot perform these functions effectively. The drained and degraded bogs go from being carbon sinks to very large carbon sources. The restoration of peatlands to their natural state will have benefits in terms of nature conservation, climate change and flood prevention and alleviation.

National and Regional Policy identifies the strategic importance and value of Peatlands and includes specific guiding principles to be considered for development on peatlands. Peatlands form unique landscapes which can act as amenity areas for locals and visitors and support a variety of outdoor activities such as hill-walking, wildlife watching and fishing which bring economic benefits in remote areas. The use of the bogs for other purposes such as renewable energy can also be achieved in a compatible manner. Bogs are also valuable agricultural, biodiversity, community, education and tourism resource.

The '*National Peatlands Strategy 2016*' contains a comprehensive list of actions, necessary to ensure that Ireland's peatlands are preserved, nurtured and become living assets within the communities that live beside them. A number of these sites in East Galway lie within Bord na Móna's ownership. Whilst the future uses of these sites can be best determined on a site by site basis, some potential uses for worked out bogland are identified in Bord na Móna's publication '*Strategic Framework for the future use of Peatlands*' as follows: Alternative Energy (Wind, Biomass, Solar), Agriculture, Tourism and Amenity uses, Horticulture, Forestry, Biodiversity, and ecosystem related uses. A key consideration

for our county is to sustainably harness these potential uses to deliver maximum economic, social and environmental benefit to the county and region.

Policy Objectives Peatlands

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.

P 2 Best Practice in Peatland conservation and management

Work in partnership with relevant stakeholders on all suitable peatland sites to demonstrate best practice in sustainable peatland conservation, management and restoration techniques and to promote their heritage and educational value subject to Ecological Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment Screening, as appropriate.

P 3 Framework Plans

Seek to support relevant agencies such as Bord na Mona in advancing rehabilitation works for the peatlands and related infrastructure, to provide for the future sustainable and environmentally sensitive use of peatlands sites including for amenity purposes.

10.10 Invasive Species

Invasive alien species are animals and plants that are introduced accidentally or deliberately into the wild where they are not normally found, which have adverse impacts on the environment. Invasive species can have significant impacts on conservation and economic interests, and may in some cases pose threats, directly or indirectly, to human safety. Non-native invasive species, both invertebrate and plants, can represent a major threat to local, regional, national and global biodiversity. Terrestrial and aquatic habitats can be negatively affected, resulting in significant damage to ecosystems, conservation and economic interests, such as agriculture, forestry and civil infrastructure. Occasionally public, animal and plant health may also be threatened. There is potential for the spread of invasive species from private gardens, boat users, horticulture etc. e.g. Japanese Knotweed, Giant Rhubarb, and the Zebra mussel in our lakes. Excavation and construction works can lead to the further spread of such invasive species.

The measures for prevention and eradication of invasive species will include the dissemination of information to raise public awareness, the adoption of codes of practices/standard biosecurity measures in normal Local Authority activities, consultation with relevant stakeholders, the promotion of the use of native species in amenity planting and landscaping and the recording of invasive/non native species as the need arises and resources permit. The Council will also seek to prevent the spread of invasive non native species through the control of movement of contaminated spoil.

Policy Objectives Invasive Species

IS 1 Control of Invasive and Alien Invasive Species

It is a policy objective of the Council to support measures for the prevention and eradication of invasive species.

IS 2 Invasive Species Management Plan

Ensure that proposals for development do not lead to the spread or introduction of invasive species. If developments are proposed on sites where invasive species are currently or were previously present, an invasive species management plan will be required. A landscaping plan will be required for developments near water bodies and such plans must not include alien invasive species.

10.11 Pollinators

Galway County Council has adopted the All Ireland Pollinator Plan which is an all island-wide attempt to reverse declines in pollinating insects. Pollinators are impacted by the actions of everyone ranging from the local authorities to community groups, farmers, schools, gardeners and businesses. Primary contributors of decline include habitats loss, pollution, poisoning through chemicals and pesticides, pathogens, parasites and climate change.

Policy Objective Pollinators

PO 1 Delivery of All Ireland Pollinator Plan

To facilitate the delivery of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan where possible.

10.12 Trees, Woodlands, Hedgerows and Stone Walls

Trees, woodlands and hedgerows make a valuable contribution to biodiversity and to the landscape and local visual amenity across County Galway. Particular trees, or more often groups of trees, can be important components of the local landscape/townscape, the setting of buildings, or to the successful integration of new development into the landscape. With an increasing need for greener and more sustainable urban communities, there is also a growing awareness of the value of trees in these urban settlements.

Hedgerows are a very important characteristic feature of the County's landscape and provide an important habitat and wildlife corridors for small mammals, birds and bat species. Under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000 the cutting of hedges (and uncultivated vegetation) during the bird-nesting season (March 1st to September 1st) is prohibited, except in certain legally defined circumstances.

Policy Objectives Trees, Woodlands, Hedgerows and Stone Walls

TWHS 1 Trees, Hedgerows, Natural Boundaries and Stone Walls

Protect and seek to retain important trees, tree clusters and tree boundaries, ancient woodland, natural boundaries including stonewalls, existing hedgerows particularly species rich roadside and townland boundary hedgerows, where possible and replace with a boundary type similar to the existing boundary. Ensure that new development proposals take cognisance of significant trees/tree stands and that all planting schemes developed are suitable for the specific site and use suitable native variety of trees of Irish provenance and hedgerows of native species. Seek Tree Management Plans to ensure that trees are adequately protected during development and incorporated into the design of new developments.

TWHS 2 Planting of Trees and Woodlands

Encourage and promote in co-operation with Coillte and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and other organisations, the planting of trees and woodlands, as an important means of contributing to its objective of sustaining, protecting and enhancing the County's biodiversity, natural resources, amenity, landscape and developing tourism product. Encourage community woodlands in urban/urban fringe areas utilising funding available through schemes such as the NeighbourWood and Native Woodland Schemes.

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.

10.13 Geology, Eskers

10.13.1 Geological Sites

County Galway is widely known for its geological heritage, but this is understood or expressed for most people as the landscape or the scenery. Since it is one of the largest of Irish counties, and because bedrock is in many parts generally well exposed, it has an extensive range of geological heritage sites. However, it also has some of the most complex geodiversity in the country leading to many significant geological sites.

The Irish Geological Heritage (IGH) Programme has identified sites of national or local geological heritage importance, which are classed as County Geological Sites (CGS) and have been adopted into the National Heritage Plan. The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) in tandem with the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Dept Housing, Local Government and Heritage has established the Irish Geological Heritage Programme in 1998. The programme aims to identify and select sites of geological heritage within Ireland for future designation as NHAs. To date no geological site has been statutorily designated as an NHA.

Galway County Council recognises the importance of geological heritage and geological features within the County. An audit of Geological Heritage sites in County Galway confirmed 134 no. County Geological Sites (CGS) and the list has been produced in consultation with the Geological Survey of Ireland. Some of the County's oldest rocks are from the Ordovician period and comprise sandstones and shales located in the north of the County. However, most of the bedrock geology of Galway

comprises of Carboniferous Limestone. Galway County Council aims to protect, conserve and enhance important geological and geo-morphological systems in the County and seek to promote access to such sites where possible (see appendix 8).

Policy Objectives Geological Sites

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.

PG 2 Geological Heritage of County Galway

Support the implementation of recommendations made in the *Geological Heritage of County Galway – An Audit of County Geological Sites in County Galway (2019)*. Consult with the Geological Survey of Ireland when undertaking, approving or authorising developments which are likely to impact on County Geological Sites or involve significant ground excavations including sites identified as part of the *Geological Heritage of County Galway – An Audit of County Geological Sites in County Galway (2019)*.

PG 3 Promotion of and Access to Geological Sites

Encourage greater awareness of the geological heritage sites of the county and promote, where appropriate, public access to geological and geomorphological sites and avoid inappropriate development.

10.13.2 Eskers

Eskers are glacial features composed of ridges of sand and gravel deposited at the end of the Ice Age. The Council recognises the unique importance of Galway's esker landscape deriving from its geological, zoological, botanical, scientific and landscape value.

Policy Objective Eskers

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.

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.

10.14 Inland Lakes, Waterways

The County's inland waterways includes lakes, rivers, canals and streams, are living systems that are home to a wide variety of habitats and species. They function as ecological corridors that connect habitats and designated sites which enable species to travel from place to place. Waterways also contribute significantly to the landscape character, the amenity and quality of life of the County while also helping to support our tourism offer and provide recreational facilities.

A 'Riparian Zone' is an integral part of the protection of a watercourse system and should be sufficiently wide to protect the river or water course. The determined width should be tailored to site specific, river reach or lakeshore characteristics. It is important that the buffer zone is large enough to protect the ecological integrity of the river (including emergent vegetation) and the riparian zone (bank side vegetation including trees) takes into account the human history of the area. It is the Council's policy objective to protect this zone from inappropriate development.

Policy Objective Inland Lakes, Waterways

IW 1 Inland Waterways

- (a) Protect and conserve the quality, character and features of inland waterways by controlling developments close to navigable and non-navigable waterways in accordance with best practice guidelines.
- (b) Preserve, protect and enhance Galway's inland lakes and waterways for their amenity and recreational resource amenity.
- (c) Protect the riparian zones of watercourse systems throughout the County, recognising the benefits they provide in relation to flood risk management and their protection of the ecological integrity of watercourse systems and ensure they are considered in the land use zoning in Local Area Plans.
- (d) The Council will support in principle the development and upgrading of the Inland Waterways and their associated facilities in accordance with legislation, best practice and relevant management strategies, key stakeholders and bodies including Waterways Ireland.
- (e) Ensure all abstractions of water will be subject to assessment for compliance with the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.
- (f) Seek to provide additional accesses to lake shores and rivers for public rights of way, parking and layby facilities, where appropriate.
- (g) Developments shall ensure that adequate soil protection measures are undertaken, where appropriate, including investigations into the nature and extent of any soil/groundwater contamination.

10.15 Green and Blue Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure (GI) is a generic term that includes the protection, management and enhancement of urban, peri-urban and rural environmental resources (natural and managed) through the provision of multifunctional and interconnected green spaces. Green and blue infrastructure is essentially the green spaces and the water environment. It is referred to as 'infrastructure' as it is as important as other types of infrastructure such as roads, schools and hospitals to the public. It is taken to mean all green space and water of public and natural value.

Green Infrastructure describes the County's interconnecting network of environmental assets in both urban and rural settings, which can deliver a range of environmental and quality of life benefits for

communities. It includes natural, semi natural and developed environments, including upland habitats, wetlands, bogs, woodlands, gardens, groundwater, rivers and their floodplains, lakes, canals and coastal areas.

Blue Infrastructure (BI) refers to water bodies and waterways such as rivers, lakes, streams, reservoirs, harbour areas, floodplains, river banks, wetlands and ponds. These assets together form Green-Blue Infrastructure and can be both public and private, with or without public accessibility, in urban or rural areas. Green and Blue infrastructure provides environmental, economic, educational, ecological and social benefits through natural based solutions and can halt and reverse biodiversity loss, habitat fragmentation and the degradation of ecosystems.

Green and Blue infrastructure enhances opportunities for recreation and tourism, sustains our food industry and encourages new businesses to invest in the County. It is also increasingly being recognised that green and blue infrastructure is a vital component in building resilient communities capable of adapting to the consequences of climate change.

Within County Galway opportunities exist to expand and strengthen the green infrastructure network and to further explore the integration of green infrastructure into both public and private developments in the future. A key challenge for County Galway is to manage growth so that the County's natural heritage and biodiversity is maintained in a way which protects the County's green infrastructure resources for the future. The aim is to achieve this through the delivery of the policy objectives interwoven throughout this plan and also via the implementation of the Galway Climate Adaptation Strategy, the Galway Heritage and Biodiversity Plan and other key statutory and non-statutory strategies.

Benefits of Green Infrastructure

The key benefits associated with the development of a green infrastructure policy can be summarised as follows:

- Environmental Benefits.
- Social and Economic Benefits.
- Biodiversity Benefits.
- Improves Quality of Life.
- Productive Environments.
- Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Benefits.
- Creates a sense of place in Urban and Rural locations.
- Appreciation of landscapes, architecture, natural heritage and cultural heritage.
- Protects Water Resource, Flood Management and Improves Water Quality
- Integration of basin/catchment management with strategic planning.

Policy Objectives Green and Blue Infrastructure

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.

GBI 2 Green/Blue Infrastructure Network

Facilitate the ongoing development and improvement of a green/blue infrastructure network for urban and rural areas, connecting both natural and semi-natural corridors such as including green spaces, open spaces, green amenities, residual land, rivers and canals. Enhancements along natural features may include the provision of riparian buffers, community food programmes (allotments) and wild areas for pollination thus ensuring the provision of natural areas for the benefit of biodiversity, wildlife and climate adaptation.

10.16 County Galway 's Network of Blueways, Greenways and Peatways

Blueways consist of a network of navigable inland waterways such as lakes, canals and rivers. They provide scenic routes by canoe, bike or on foot and connect Galway County with Galway City and with neighbouring Counties. In County Galway examples include the River Shannon: Linear Park from Banagher, Co. Offaly to Meelick in Co. Galway, River Corrib and Lough Corrib; Great Western Blueway (River Corrib and Lake Blueway), Lough Derg; Lough Derg Blueway from Portumna to Scarriff in Co. Clare. Given the number of rivers and lakes in the county, the Council will endeavour to develop a network of integrated blueways both within the county and to other counties.

Greenways are essentially shared off-road routes designed for cyclists and pedestrians for leisure, recreation, tourism and daily journeys and are reserved exclusively for non-motorised journeys, developed in an integrated manner which enhances both the environment and quality of life of the surrounding area. They provide recreational opportunities for walking, jogging and cycling and can often coincide with river/stream corridors and can promote free passage for wildlife. In County Galway potential opportunities for walking and cycling include the following examples: The National Galway to Dublin Cycleway/ Greenway; Together with proposed greenways from Oranmore to Bearna, Athenry to Tuam, Clifden to Derrygimlagh and Clifden to Letterfrack.

Peatways within the County consists of a number of significant raised peat sites some of which are identified as worthy of protection in East Galway and some identified as having potential to connect with other green/blue infrastructure.

The Council recognises the Blueways, Greenways and Peatways and the contribution that they make to the County's overall Green Infrastructure network, in addition to the many valuable economic, social and environmental benefits they provide. The Council identifies the need to both conserve and protect these assets and look to develop them further, as they provide natural defences against flood risk in both urban and rural areas; contribute and offer valuable economic potential in terms of tourism development and associated spin off's; and provide significant quality of life benefits.

The Council is fully committed to developing a network of Greenways, Blueways and Peatways in accordance with the requirements of national policy, including the Department of Transport, Sport and Tourism '*Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways*' (2018).

Policy Objectives Network of Blueways, Greenways and Peatways**BGP 1 Strategic Greenways/Blueways**

Support the delivery of sustainable strategic Greenway/Blueway projects in the County in accordance with the *Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways*,

enabling legislation, best practice in a manner that is compatible with nature conservation and other environmental policies.

BGP 2 Development of Strategic Greenway Network

Support the development of an integrated Strategic Greenway Network of national and regional routes and maximise connectivity to existing greenways through linkages of cycling and walking infrastructure in a manner that is compatible with nature conservation and other environmental policies. This will include the following;

- National Galway to Dublin Cycleway/ Greenway;
- Connemara Greenway ie. (Clifden to Oughterard, Galway to Oughterard);
- Oranmore to Bearna Coastal Greenway;
- Athenry to Tuam;
- Clifden to Derrygimlagh;
- Clifden to Letterfrack.

BGP 3 Greenways, Blueways, Peatways and Trails

(a) It is a policy objective to support the extension of greenways, blueways, peatways and trails within the county and the integration and linkage of them with other existing / proposed greenways, blueways, peatways and trails both within and outside the county.

(b) It is a policy objective to support where relevant the concept of Greenways to consider local travel infrastructure, and connectivity to local towns and villages in the design of any Greenway route.

10.17 Public Rights of Way

Public rights of way have existed over centuries and served as a means for people to travel around various parts of the County. Public rights of way can form a significant recreation and amenity resource and are also an important economic and tourism asset for the County. The Council recognises the importance of maintaining established rights of way and supporting initiatives for establishing walking routes and general accessibility.

Policy Objective Public Rights of Way

PRW 1 Public Rights of Way

(a) Where requested, give consideration to the need to preserve public rights of way which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other place of natural beauty or recreational utility.

(b) Seek to identify, map and protect verified existing public rights of way as they become available to the Planning Authority over the lifetime of the plan.

10.18 UNESCO Global Geoparks and World Heritage Sites

UNESCO Global Geoparks are single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable economic development. Their bottom-up approach of combining conservation with sustainable development while involving local communities has become increasingly popular. At present, there are 127 UNESCO Global Geoparks in 35 countries.

Joyce County & Western Lakes aspiring geopark is initially a two-year project (2020-2021), its key aim is to develop a geopark in the area surrounding Joyce Country on the Galway-Mayo border, and Loughs Mask, Carra and Corrib, with the intention of applying for full UNESCO Global Geopark status.

The Burren Lowlands is an area of significant cultural and landscape heritage stretching from the Slieve Aughties to the Burren Uplands and from Kinvarra to Crusheen in Co Clare.

The Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark possesses a robust network of eco-businesses living within its iconic landscape of karst limestone, caves and cliffs. It supports sustainable tourism that develops and promotes the area as a special encounter-rich destination, strengthens the local economy and improves the visitor experience. The Geopark also promotes its geology and sensitive hydrogeological system through educational and outreach activities whilst pursuing strong practices in sustainable tourism.

While the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark is located in County Clare, this designation has benefited the communities of the Burren Lowlands area of County Galway.

Policy Objective UNESCO Global Geopark Status

UGG 1 UNESCO Global Geopark Status

To continue to work in partnership with all relevant stakeholders to facilitate and support the ongoing work of the Joyce Country and Western Lakes aspiring Geopark and its application for full UNESCO Global Geopark status. Support initiatives in relation to the Burren Lowlands, The Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark that relate to the county.

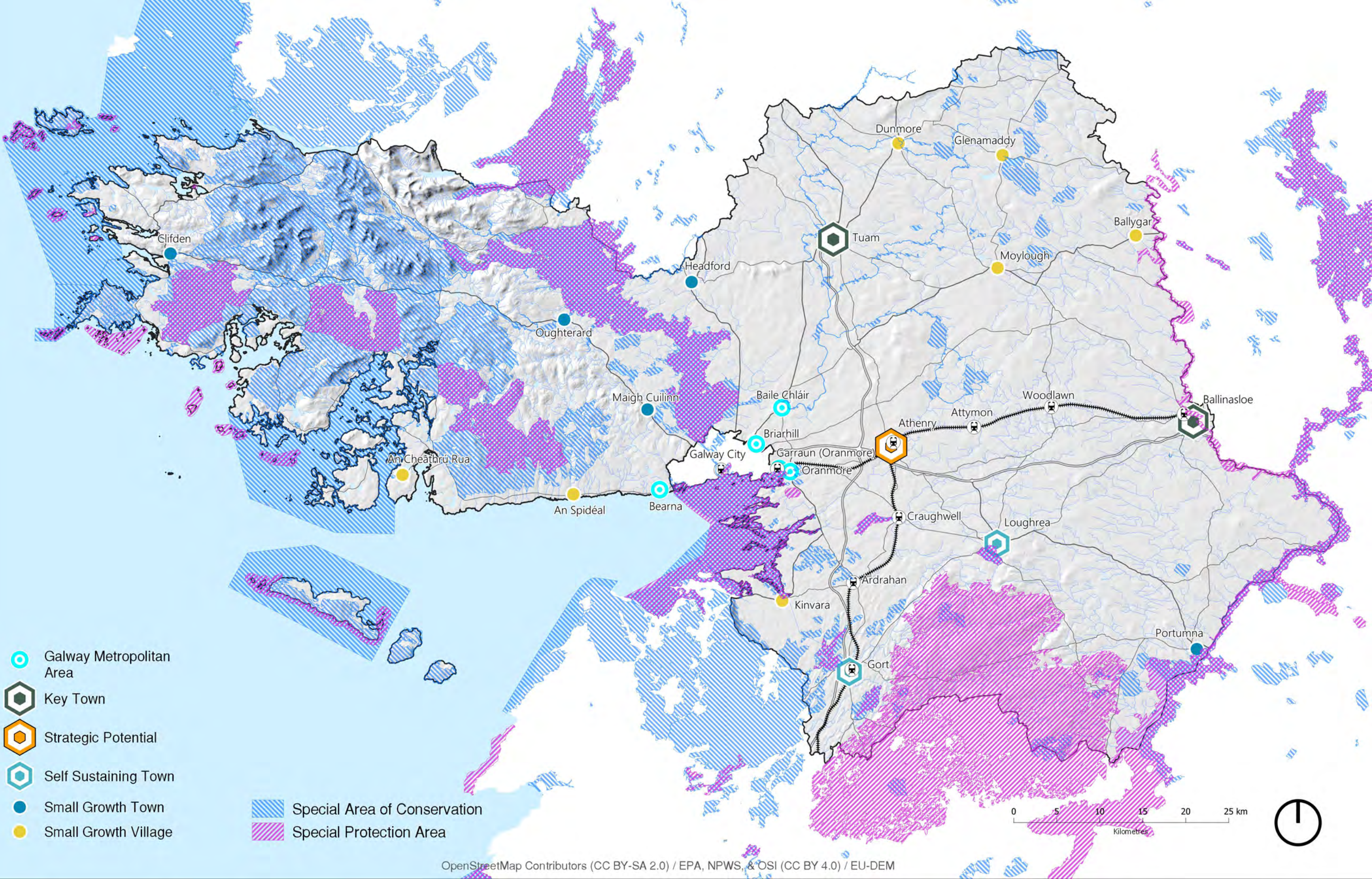
10.19 World Heritage Sites







The protection of the world's cultural and natural heritage is of high importance for present and future generations and, to this end, the State is committed to the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission of its World Heritage Sites (tentative list) to future generations in accordance with Article 4 of the World Heritage Convention.



Policy Objective Tentative World Heritage Sites

TWHS 1 Tentative World Heritage Sites

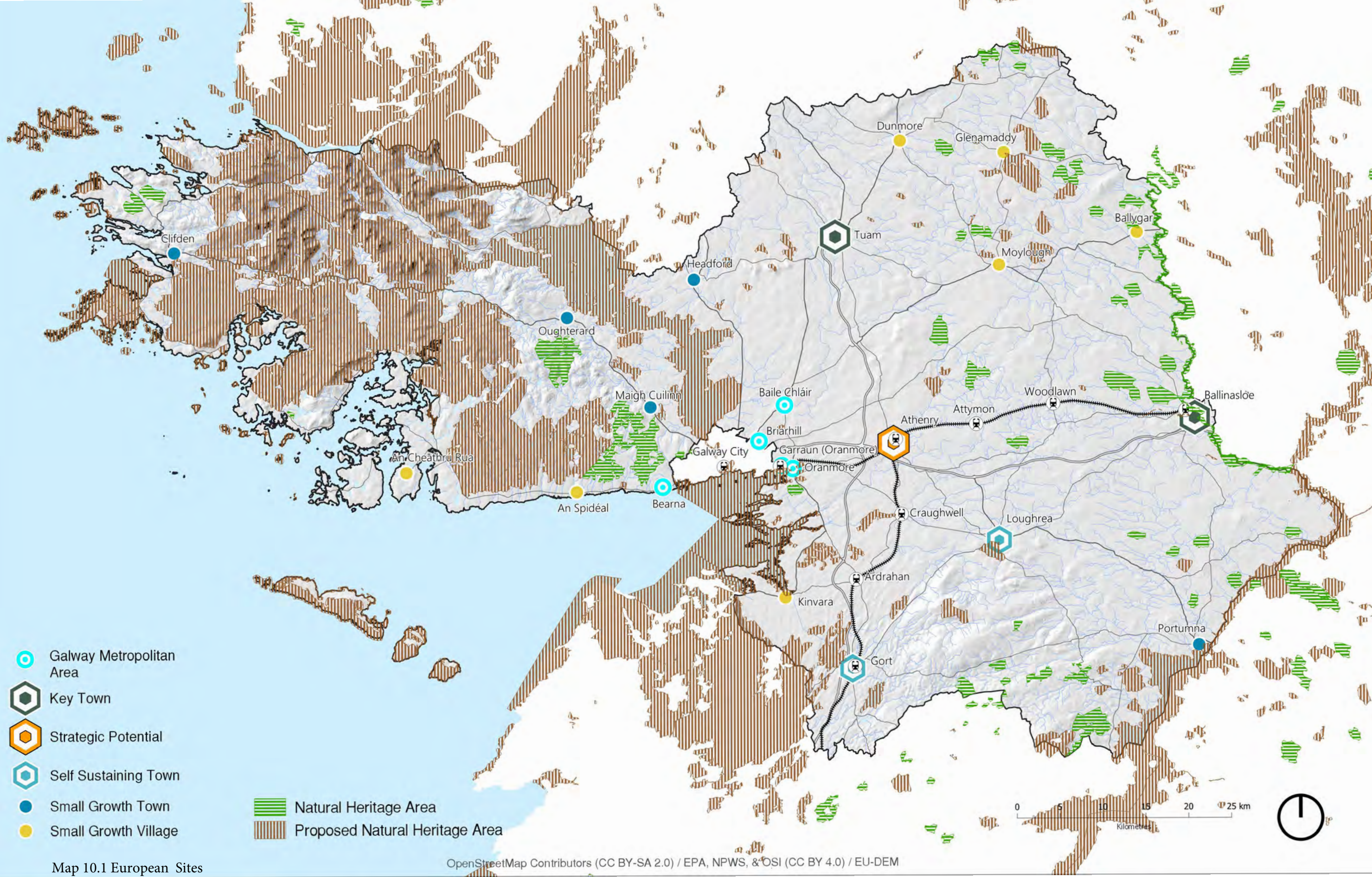
Protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the tentative World Heritage Sites in County Galway namely the Western Stone Forts and the Burren that are included in the UNESCO Tentative List and engage with other national and international initiatives which promote the special built, natural and cultural 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.



-  Galway Metropolitan Area
-  Key Town
-  Strategic Potential
-  Self Sustaining Town
-  Small Growth Town
-  Small Growth Village

-  Special Area of Conservation
-  Special Protection Area





Map 10.1 European Sites

Chapter 11 Community Development and Social Infrastructure

“To promote and develop healthy and sustainable communities, with access to a wide range of good quality social, community, healthcare, educational and cultural facilities that meet both current and future needs and where, through a commitment to equality, participation, accessibility and social inclusion, the County develops as a unique location that improve people’s quality of life”.

11.1 Introduction

The creation of healthy and inclusive communities, developed on the principles of sustainability and accessibility, is a key component to ensuring a high quality of life for all residents in County Galway while also ensuring that the County is an attractive place to visit and in which to do business. Placemaking and the quality of our immediate environment including our ability to access social infrastructure, services and amenities, leisure and social interactions make a real difference to people’s lives while also developing strong and inclusive communities.

Access to social and community infrastructure within the county, is essential to well-being, social inclusion and the creation of sustainable and attractive communities. Social infrastructure should be easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. Communities also require opportunities to meet, interact and form bonds, all essential in creating a sense of place and belonging. Shared use and co-location of facilities should be encouraged, in order to use land more efficiently and facilitate opportunities for further inclusion and community participation.

11.2 Strategic Aims

Galway County Council shall work the appropriate stakeholders and agencies in order to endeavour to achieve an integrated and sustainable approach to the development in the County. This will with the following strategic aims:

- To promote and facilitate sustainable communities through land use planning, by supporting the provision of leisure, recreational, amenity and cultural facilities while also including our ability to access services such as education and healthcare;
- To create a more socially inclusive society by alleviating social exclusion, poverty and deprivation via the provision of good quality affordable housing, community infrastructure and improving access to information and resources throughout the County and across all communities;
- To ensure that the principles of accessible, inclusive and sustainable community development are central in all developments;
- To encourage, promote and facilitate active and inclusive participation in physical and social activities.

11.3 Strategic Context

This chapter is prepared in the context of the following European, National and Regional Plans, Policies and Guidelines

Europe 2020 Strategy
UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
Project Ireland 2040 The National Planning Framework 2018
National Development Plan 2018-2027

Climate Action Plan 2019
Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region 2020-2032
Sustainable Residential Development Guidelines In Urban Areas and The Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide, May 2019.
Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025 – Ambition, Goals and Commitment
National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2018-2021 (2007-2016 and the 2015-2017 Update)
Health - Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan 2019- 2014
Galway County Local Economic and Community Plan 2016 – 2022
Get Ireland Active, National Physical Activity Plan for Ireland, 2016 & Implementation Summary 2018
Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme 2018-2022
Our Communities: A Framework Policy for Local and Community Development in Ireland, 2015
Slaíntecare Action Plan, 2019 & Future of Healthcare, Slaíntecare Report, 2017
Healthy Ireland - A Framework for Improved Health and Well Being, 2013-2025
Healthy Ireland - A Healthy Weight For Ireland, Department of Health
Better Outcomes, Brighter Future: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020
Ready, Steady, Play! A National Play Policy, National Children’s Office, 2019
The Provision of Schools and the Planning System: A Code of Practice for Planning Authorities, DEHLG, 2008
Childcare Facility Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DEHLG, 2001
Healthy and Positive Ageing Initiative Survey, Department of Health, 2016
National Positive Ageing Strategy, Department of Health, 2013
Galway Age Friendly Strategy 2014- 2019
National Strategy for Traveller and Roma Integration 2017-2021
Great Outdoors - A Guide for Accessibility 2018
World Health Organisation, Promoting Physical Activity and Active Living in Urban Areas – The Role of Local Governments 2006
National Anti-Poverty Strategy
Our sustainable future – A Framework for Sustainable Development
National Disability Authorities Strategic Plan 2019-2021
Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach, 2012, National Disability Authority
National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan 2013-2015, National Disability Strategy Implementation Group
National Women’s Strategy 2007-2016, Department of Justice and Equality
The Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide, May 2019
National Cycle Policy Framework
Connecting People, Connecting Places; A Strategy for Walking and Cycling, 2015
Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways, 2018
National Sports Policy 2018-2027
Galway Sports Partnership Strategic Plan 2016-2020
Our Public Libraries 2022 – Inspiring, Connecting and Empowering Communities
Culture 2025 – A Framework Policy to 2025, DAHRRGA, 2016
Galway County Integration and Diversity Strategy 2013-2015
Galway Children and Young People’s Services Committee
County Galway Early Years. Health and Wellbeing Plan (2018 – 2022)
County Galway Playground Guide, ‘Let’s Play!’, 2015

11.3.1 National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF) is built around 10 no. National Strategic Outcomes (NSO's), with NSO 10 Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services of particular relevance. NSO 7 Enhanced Amenity and Heritage, NSO 1 Compact Growth and NSO 3 Strengthening Rural Economies and Communities are also considered of relevance.

NPO 26 supports the objectives of public health policy including Healthy Ireland and the National Physical Activity Plan, though integrating such policies, where appropriate and at the applicable scale, with planning policy. NPO 27 ensures the integration of safe and convenient alternatives to the car into the design of our communities, by prioritising walking and cycling accessibility to both existing and proposed developments and integrating physical activity facilities for all ages. NPO 28 aims to plan for a more diverse and socially inclusive society that targets equality of opportunity and a better quality of life for all citizens, through improved integration and greater accessibility in the delivery of sustainable communities and the provision of associated services.

NPO30 indicates that local planning, housing, transport/ accessibility and leisure policies will be developed with a focus on meeting the needs and opportunities of an ageing population along with the inclusion of specific projections, supported by clear proposals in respect of ageing communities as part of the core strategy of city and county development plans.

Childcare, Education and Life Long Learning is addressed in NPO 31 which is to prioritise the alignment of targeted and planned population and employment growth.

11.3.2 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) considers social inclusion, access to affordable and good quality childcare, education facilities, lifelong learning facilities, health services, accessible amenities and leisure facilities as essential requirements for an equitable society, a thriving economy and sustainable communities via a number of relevant Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs);

Multi-agency approaches for delivering the health, social care, education and community services needed by growing, diverse or isolated communities are encouraged via RPO 7.15.

Social Inclusion and accessibility is promoted via RPO 7.2 and 7.9 which support disadvantaged communities and high-quality accessible public open spaces with good linkages for all.

Education is promoted via RPO 7.3, 7.4 and 7.6 including the promotion of educational programmes through the LCDCs, support for the STEM program in Irish Education and support for the Connacht Ulster Alliance becoming a Technological University serving the west and north-west.

Healthcare is promoted via RPO 7.8 and 7.10 including support for the implementation of the objectives of Sláinte Care (development of a Single Tier Health Service, and the advancement of Primary Care Centres) and also support for the Health Service Executive and other statutory and voluntary agencies and private healthcare providers in the provision of healthcare facilities to all sections of the community. The RSES supports the designation of lands in development plans for nursing homes and sheltered housing via RPO 7.14, whilst ensuring these facilities are integrated within communities. Public Health Policy is promoted via RPO 7.11 which supports the objectives of Healthy Ireland and the National Physical Activity Plan and the National Obesity Plan through integration with planning policy.

The RSES acknowledges the 'Age-Friendly Ireland' Initiative as best placed to respond to change at a local level including the principles of universal design via RPO 7.13 and RPO 7.12 aims to ensure local planning, housing, transport/ accessibility and leisure policies are developed with a focus on meeting the needs and opportunities of an ageing population and people with disabilities and younger persons.

Lifetime adaptable homes are supported via RPO 7.19 so that provision of lifetime adaptable homes can accommodate the changing needs of a household over time.

11.4 Climate Change

The provision of community and social infrastructure within the county are key parameters of this plan. It is a priority that where possible childcare, education, healthcare, specialist residential and community facilities are developed in settlements so as to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by allowing people to travel to these facilities by sustainable transport modes where possible. All such developments will avoid areas at risk of flooding within the county. There will be support where possible with increased education awareness in schools and in community settings on climate resilience.

11.5 Social Inclusion and Community Development

The Local Government Reform Act, 2014 introduced structures that brought about a greater emphasis on community development with the introduction of the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) in each local authority to address the need for creating sustainable communities for each County.

The Galway LECP 2016 – 2022 provides the supporting framework to promote and support economic and local community development of Galway. The Galway Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), which consists of representatives from local government and from local development and community interests, plays an important oversight role in local and community development programmes and in preparing the community element of the Galway Local Economic and Community Plan.

The recently published *Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025 – Ambition, Goals and Commitment* seeks to make Ireland one of the most socially inclusive counties in the EU over the coming years. It outlines specific measures and goals, which can capture progress across many aspects of social inclusion: housing, healthcare, childcare and social integration.

One of the overall aims of the plan is the promotion of social inclusion and in order to facilitate social inclusion at local level, the Social Inclusion Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2022 is overseen by the Galway Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), with the aim of tackling poverty, social exclusion and long term unemployment through engagement and participation between community organisations, public sector agencies and certain sectors of society.

11.5.1 Voluntary and Community Groups

Galway County Council recognises the essential contribution that voluntary groups, community groups and sporting groups make to quality of life in the County. These groups work voluntarily to support and enhance their local communities, from both a physical and social perspective.

The Public Participation Network (PPN) acts as the main link through which the Council facilitates, connects with and seek representations from the local Community/Voluntary, Social Inclusion and Environmental sectors, to progress their work in the areas of arts, sports, community and social inclusion initiatives.

Policy Objectives Social Inclusion and Community Development

SCI 1 Community and Social development in the County.

To support the policy objectives and actions set out in the National Planning Framework, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), Galway Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2022 (and any subsequent LECP) and relevant National Guidance documents to strengthen community and social development in the County.

SCI 2 Galway Local Economic and Community Plan

To support the Local Community Development Committee and all relevant stakeholders to implement the Galway Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2022 and any subsequent plan.

SCI 3 Social Inclusion

Promote social inclusion as outlined in the *'Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020 – 2025'* through equality of access to services and facilities and to assist in the removal of barriers to full participation in society.

SCI 4 Recreation, Amenity, Sports and Social Inclusion

Support the implementation of the Integration and Diversity Strategy 2013-2015 and other appropriate plans and programmes that may be developed during the lifetime of this plan.

SCI 5 Voluntary and Community Groups

To actively engage with the Galway Public Participation Network in the preparation and implementation of local authority policies and programmes to increase support for the community and voluntary sector while responding to the needs of the residents of County Galway.

11.6 Social and Community Facilities

The quality of life in a community depends not only on the provision of housing, employment and infrastructure support but also on access to social, community and cultural facilities. The proper provision of community and social infrastructure of a high standard, in the most appropriate locations and in tandem with housing and other development is important for all ages and abilities in society and is an essential component of building sustainable and properly planned communities.

The Sustainable Residential Development Guidelines in Urban Areas highlight the need to phase development in line with the availability of essential social and community infrastructure such as schools, amenities and other facilities.

Galway County Council facilitates and supports the development of social and community facilities which provide numerous benefits to individuals and communities. Strong and relevant social infrastructure is essential to the creation of healthy, inclusive and sustainable communities. While different elements of social infrastructure are discussed individually below, they should be provided in a coordinated manner in communities across the County, in locations that are accessible to the population that they are intended to serve.

Policy Objectives Social and Community Facilities

SC 1 Social and Community Infrastructure Provision

Support the provision of social and community facilities and services within the County which meet the current and future needs of the entire population.

SC 2 Provision of lands for social and community facilities

Support the provision of lands for social and community facilities and encourage the provision of facilities suitable for all members of the community.

11.7 Multi - Use Community Facilities

Facilities within the community should be located to maximise their efficiency and to facilitate ease of access for users of all ages and abilities. Where appropriate, facilities should also be capable of adapting to changing needs over time.

It is the aim of the Council to encourage the provision of multiuse facilities that community groups can share. New facilities should be designed for multiuse and future sharing. The clustering of facilities at appropriate locations will also be encouraged such as Childcare facilities and Schools sharing the same campus.

Policy Objective Multi – Use Community Facilities

MU 1 Multi - Use Community Facilities

Encourage and support the provision and extension of Multi-Use Community Facilities, where feasible, which encourage sharing and integration of community facilities designed for multi-use activities by community groups.

11.8 Childcare Facilities

The provision of Childcare facilities is a key component of social infrastructure considered an integral requirement to economic and social wellbeing. Childcare facilities generate employment within communities and often serve as a social focal point for the local community while also allowing for a wider participation in the workforce and the economy.

The 2001 Childcare Facility Guidelines for Planning Authorities place an emphasis on the role planning has to play in delivering childcare facilities. In having regard to the Guidelines on Childcare Facilities for Planning Authorities, the Council will take account of existing childcare provision when considering new childcare / crèche facilities provision as part of residential development in order to avoid over provision of these facilities.

Policy Objectives Childcare Facilities

CF 1 Childcare Facilities

Encourage and support the sustainable provision of childcare facilities in appropriate locations and seek their provision concurrent with development, having regard to the distribution of the residential populations and population targets for the area and in accordance with the Guidelines on Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2001), the Childcare (PreSchool Services) Regulations 2006 and any other relevant statutory guidelines which may issue during the period of this Plan.

CF 2 Consultation Childcare Facilities

Promote and encourage the provision of a network of good quality affordable childcare facilities in consultation with the Galway County Childcare Committee, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and Tusla Child and Family Agency throughout the County.

CF 3 Crèche Facilities

Require where appropriate the provision of crèche facilities in mixed use/residential developments in accordance with the ministerial guidelines for Planning Authorities on Childcare Facilities published in 2001. In general, childcare facilities outside of established settlements shall only be permitted adjacent to or in close proximity to existing educational or social facilities.

11.9 Education

Educational and school facilities are critical to achieving the full socio-economic potential of the County and have a crucial role in the development of a skilled workforce that can meet the demands of a modern economy.

The Development Plan seeks to prioritise the alignment of targeted and planned population and employment growth with educational investment, including the provision of new schools on well-located sites within or close to existing built-up areas that meet the diverse needs of local populations. The continued provision and enhancement of facilities and amenities for children and young people, such as childcare, schools, playgrounds, parks and sportsgrounds, is a priority and will continue to be for the foreseeable future. The council recognises that every town in the county should have ASD classes available to students with additional needs in at least one secondary school in each town. Where this does not currently exist, the council will endeavour to work with the DES to ensure the realisation of this provision.

The Council works proactively with the Department of Education and Skills on an ongoing basis to identify educational needs and the spatial and land use implications of same as they arise.

The Planning Authority also supports the concept of multi-campus school arrangements such as primary schools side by side or primary and secondary institutions sharing a site. This approach can lead to more sustainable provision of schools in that it reduces the land take required for such developments.

Increased demands for school places can rise significantly within a settlement with new large residential developments. Therefore, it is important that the planning system keeps pace with the

scale of new residential development by ensuring that adequate school places are available or provided in a timely manner.

The Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas place the emphasis on the need to select school sites which maximise the potential for sustainable mobility patterns, offer the potential to share major public open spaces and can support other community uses outside of school hours subject to normal proper planning and sustainable development considerations.

The RSES outlines the potential of the Higher Education section in the Region which has the potential to develop a Connaught-Ulster Technological University that would deliver a broad range of high-quality education and training in each campus located throughout the Region. The Council also recognises the important role of higher education in providing for the economic and social wellbeing of the County's population. In terms of adult education, the National University of Ireland Galway, the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology, Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board all offer courses including blended learning programmes to the residents of County Galway.

Galway Local Enterprise Office also offers business information and advice, business skills training and mentoring support as well as other skills and training options to support businesses in the County. Other organisation involved in education and training for the citizens of County Galway include the following organisations; LEADER, Local Development Companies, Údarás na Gaeltachta and EQUAL Ireland.

Policy Objectives Educational Facilities

EDU 1 Educational Facilities

Facilitate the provision of primary, second-level, third-level, vocational, outreach, research, adult and further educational facilities, lifelong learning facilities and digital capacity for distance learning to meet the needs of the County. Multiuse facilities which can accommodate both educational and childcare facilities are also encouraged.

EDU 2 Provision of Educational Facilities in Large Residential Developments

- (a) Provide new educational facilities in accordance with the guidance set out in Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas;
- (b) Recognise that new residential communities can generate demand for additional school places and that it is vital to the process of supporting sustainable communities, that the necessary increased capacity in school facilities, either in the form of new schools, or the expansion of existing schools, is supported;
- (c) Work closely with the Department of Education & Skills to ensure that there are sufficient lands identified in zoning plans and cognisance of the existing and future educational requirements, for sites for future school provision in order to ensure that the necessary increased capacity in school provision is provided in a timely manner while also maximise the opportunities for use of walking, cycling and use of public transport.

EDU 3 Future Education Uses

Ensure that existing and new school sites are protected for educational use and lands adjacent to existing schools are protected for future educational use to allow for expansion of these schools, if required, subject to site suitability.

EDU 4 Connaught-Ulster Technological University

Support the development of the Connaught-Ulster Technological University to deliver a broad range of high-quality dedicated Higher Education and training in each associated campus in the Region.

EDU 5 Shared use of educational and community facilities

Promote the shared use of educational and community facilities for community and non-school purposes where possible.

EDU 6 Fast food outlets located close to schools

It is the policy objective of the Council to give careful consideration to the appropriateness and location of fast food outlets in the vicinity of schools and, where considered appropriate, to restrict the opening or expansion of new fast food/takeaway outlets in close proximity to schools so as to protect the health and wellbeing of school-going children.

EDU 7 Active school flag programme

Support the progression of the active school flag programme in schools in the County.

11.10 Healthcare

Healthcare facilities are essential to ensure that the residents of County Galway have access to the care that they need. Healthcare is provided by a range of private, community and charitable service providers. The Health Service Executive (HSE) is the primary organisation responsible for the delivery of health care and personal social services to the people of the County.

The availability and access to health services is central to creating healthier places. In addressing lifestyle induced illness and an aging population, the provision of educative and primary health care can support lifestyle adjustments that help people avoid tertiary care, leading to a more effective and less burdened health-care system.

Galway University Hospital and Merlin Park University Hospital provides a comprehensive range of services to emergency and elective patients on an inpatient, outpatient and day care basis across the two sites and to the residents of Galway City, Galway County and the wider Region.

Portiuncula Hospital in Ballinasloe also provides acute general and maternity care. Private healthcare providers including the Galway Clinic and the Bon Secours Hospital both of which provide additional and important healthcare services for the county and the region.

The Health Service Executive policy reflects a shift away from traditional hospital-based care, towards more community-based care with increased emphasis on meeting people's needs at local level by primary care teams.

Galway County Council will seek to facilitate the provision and expansion of built facilities to ensure accessible healthcare services are integrated into communities throughout the County. The Planning Authority will support the provision of future Primary Healthcare Centres (PHC's) in the County's main settlements. The range and configuration of services may vary from one community or settlement to another.

Policy Objectives Healthcare

H 1 Healthcare Facilities

Support the Health Service Executive and other statutory and voluntary agencies and private healthcare providers in the provision of healthcare facilities to all sections of the community, at appropriate locations, especially where good public transport links and parking facilities are available.

H 2 Health Services

Support the Department of Health in the implementation of the objectives of the Sláinte Care strategy and the provision of health and social care services.

H 3 Provision of Primary Healthcare Centre's

Support the provision of Primary Healthcare Facilities in appropriate locations across the county subject to proper planning and sustainable development requirements.

11.11 Planning for Ageing

The *National Positive Ageing Strategy* and more recently the *Programme for Government* aims to enable people to age with confidence, security, dignity and independence in their own homes and communities for as long as possible. A greater choice of suitable or adaptable housing for the needs of ageing people shall be incorporated into the design, housing mix and location of new housing developments as outlined in *Chapter 3 Placemaking, Regeneration and Urban Living*. By incorporating the principles of 'Universal Design', architects, designers and planners can have a major impact in terms of creating the environment that enables people to remain in their own homes.

A second type of accommodation for older persons relates to the need for more supported group/community housing (sometimes referred to as sheltered housing) which incorporates a household model approach, and which is integrated and not segregated or isolated from the community. To date the majority of this type of accommodation is provided by the Voluntary and Private Housing sector.

Policy Objectives Planning for Ageing

PA 1 Age-Friendly County

Support the concept of an age friendly county and recognise the demographic challenges that face the county and ensure the provision of suitable facilities and services in the future while proactively supporting the implementation of the Galway Age-Friendly County Programme 2014 - 2019 and any subsequent programmes.

PA 2 Services and Infrastructure for Age-Friendly County

To support where appropriate, communities and relevant stakeholders to achieve accessible and age-friendly amenities and facilities in communities across the County.

PA 3 Accommodation for Older Persons

Support the provision of residential care, assisted living, group/community housing and other forms of accommodation for older persons having regard to location and requirements and in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

PA 4 Retirement villages and sheltered housing for older persons

Support and encourage the development of sustainable retirement villages and sheltered housing for older persons in appropriate locations throughout the county.

PA 5 Older Persons Services

Consider favourably projects throughout the County that deliver infrastructure and services for older persons or that integrate services for older persons while improving community safety.

11.12 Young People and Children

The Council recognises the role of Comhairle Na nÓg, and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA), in giving children and young people the opportunity to be involved in the development of local services and policies.

The Council will have regard to the Departments of Health and Children & Youth Affairs' policy document, *"Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: a National Policy Framework for children and young people 2014 – 2020"*. It is recognised that a multi-agency approach is necessary in meeting the needs of the youth within the county. Such needs include recreational opportunities, including both formal and informal activities i.e. 'youth cafes', skate parks, sports facilities and casual areas where young people can socialize with each other. It is Council policy to consider the needs of children and young people, including those with disabilities and additional needs, in the provision of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities.

The Council recognises the need to maximise opportunities for play facilities for children both within the natural and built environment. The Council has adopted a playground guide *'Tar Liom ag Spraoi, 2015'*. There are over fifty playground available in County Galway for residents and visitors catering for different age ranges from pre-school through to teenagers. A number of playgrounds offer inclusive play equipment for children with a range of special needs and there are skateboarding facilities in Tuam and Loughrea.

Policy Objectives Young People

YP 1 Play Facilities

Facilitate the development of children's play areas and playgrounds in proximity to existing and proposed neighbourhoods, where appropriate.

YP 2 Provision of Recreational areas in public playgrounds

Endeavour to improve the provision of public playgrounds to allow for recreational areas for the elderly and the youth in appropriate locations across the county with particular emphasis on those areas with greatest need.

YP 3 Multi-Agency Approach

Facilitate a multi-agency approach to the provision of youth facilities such as Youth Clubs, Youth Café's across the County, and encourage their integration into multi-purpose community facilities.

11.13 People with Disabilities and Universal Design

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

For people with mobility impairments, ensuring level/ramped access to buildings, dished kerbs and the provision of appropriate parking and toilet facilities are important. For people with visual impairments, tactile paving and audible signals at pedestrian crossings are necessary. For persons with mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, it is important to ensure facilities such as quiet rooms and sensory gardens are incorporated into development proposals where appropriate. The Irish Wheelchair Association and Sport Ireland's *'Great Outdoors - A Guide for Accessibility' (2018)* provides guidance on accessible design to make specific outdoor environments more available and accessible for people with a disability.

One of the Strategic Priorities of the *National Disability Authority Strategic Plan 2019-2021* is to continue to build awareness and adoption of the concept of Universal Design, maximizing independence and participation for all. The Council will promote Universal Design and Lifetime Housing in all new developments. This type of housing allows for the future adaption of units as needs present throughout the life cycle of the occupier/owner. It is a proactive step in addressing the housing needs of people with a disability, older people and the diversity of the family unit as well as increasing the value and sustainability of buildings in the long-term.

Policy Objectives People with Disabilities and Universal Design

PDU 1 Universal Design Approach

It is the Council's policy objective to promote Universal Design and ensure that all public buildings, public open spaces, recreational and amenity areas are accessible for people with disabilities.

PDU 2 Recognised Special Needs

It is the Council's policy objective to consider all different levels of ability, in the location, layout and design of housing developments, communal facilities, public spaces and transport services. Proposals could include the appropriate mitigation of the built environment for example, through the selection of building materials; the provision of quiet rooms and sensory gardens where appropriate; and in the design of pedestrian facilities for the visually impaired.

PDU 3 Social Infrastructure Developments and Housing

It is the Council's policy objective to ensure that new social infrastructure developments and housing are accessible and inclusive for a range of users by promoting a universal design approach and provide for an age friendly society in which people of all ages can live full active, valued and healthy lives.

11.14 Sports, Recreation and Amenity

Sporting, leisure and recreational facilities are essential to cater for the demands of an increasing population and in promoting good health, social cohesion, a sense of community and enhancing quality of life and well-being of the communities they serve. Adequate and accessible provision of open space, sport and recreational facilities including swimming pools, playgrounds and public parks are an important consideration in assessing the quality of life in a town or area and have major land use implications. Many of the competitive sports demand ever increasing standards of facilities and accommodation, and participants in the County will require access to such facilities in order to compete equally with fellow competitors at national and international level.

Public Open Space is a key element in defining the overall quality of the residential environment. As well as providing passive and active recreational benefits for residents, open space enhances the aesthetic and environmental quality of a neighbourhood or settlement and promotes social interaction. The County is well served by traditional facilities including sports clubs and leisure centres and the County is developing additional facilities such as greenways, blueways, peatways, cycle routes and walking trails.

Galway Sports Partnership (GSP) is the Partnership representing Galway City and County in the development and delivery of initiatives of sport and physical activities for every resident of Galway city and county. GSP is established by Galway City and Galway County Councils in association with Sport Ireland as the representative body for sports and physical activity in Galway City & County in partnership with community, sporting, local business, educational, statutory, health and voluntary organisations. GSP is core funded by Sport Ireland.

Many of the sports facilities within the County are in private ownership. Galway County Council will continue, where appropriate, to facilitate the provision of further facilities to which public access will be available, where possible. The Planning Authority has a role in protecting existing sport / recreation and open space areas and ensuring that adequate land is zoned for development to accommodate sporting and recreational facilities, both active and passive.

Policy Objectives Sports, Recreation and Amenity

SRA 1 Sport, Amenity and Recreation

Support local sports groups and community groups in the development, improvement and expansion of authorised facilities for sporting and recreational needs of all sectors and ages through the reservation of suitable land where available and appropriate.

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.

SRA 3 High-quality cycle and walking network

Identify and seek to implement a strategic, coherent and high-quality cycle and walking network across the County that is integrated with public transport where possible and interconnected with cultural, recreational, retail, educational and employment destinations and attractions.

SRA 4 Passive and Active Open Space

Seek to develop multifunctional open spaces throughout the County which will support a range of recreational and amenity activities that provides for active and passive needs.

SRA 5 Galway Sports Partnership

Work in co-operation with Galway Sports Partnership in exploring the potential for clustering facilities.

SRA 6 Community Gardening and Allotments

Support the provision of, or permission for, the development of community gardening /allotments in appropriate locations where they are accessible from the built-up area of the County to facilitate lower carbon living education and practice.

SRA 7 Bridleways

Galway County Council will support and promote programmes and initiatives that will help to develop bridleways in County Galway

SRA 8 Swimming Facilities

It is the policy objective of the Council to enhance the provision of swimming facilities throughout the County and ensure the quality of bathing waters is maintained and to contribute towards the achievement of the requirements of the EU Bathing Water Directive and to transposing Bathing Water Quality Regulations (SI No. 79 of 2008) and EU Mandatory Values, as a minimum and EU Guide Values, where possible.

11.15 Emergency Services

The role of Galway County Fire and Rescue Service is to prevent the occurrence of fire and to protect life and property throughout the county. The Fire Service responds to emergency calls in respect of fire, road, traffic and other accidents. The Fire Service headquarters are located at Galway City Fire Station on Fr. Griffin Road. There are a total of ten fire stations located in population centres around the County - Galway City (HQ), which is a whole time station, and 9 other unmanned stations in Athenry, Loughrea, Tuam, Ballinasloe, Mountbellew, Portumna, Gort, Clifden, Cill Rónáin & An Cheathrú Rua. The Council will continue to support the provision of a modern and effective fire service for the county.

The Irish Coast Guard is the national maritime emergency response service and is a division of the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport. They attend emergencies at sea and on inland water, mountains and caves. The range of Coast Guard resources include search and rescue helicopters, Lifeboats and Volunteer Units. It's the fourth blue light service in the State along with An Garda Síochána, the ambulance services and the fire services all of which provide essential services to communities throughout the County.

The fire service also has a responsibility in relation to fire safety standards in the design of new and improved buildings, changes of use and also in relation to the fire safety aspects of the daily use of buildings which are accessed by the public. Under the Building Regulations, separate applications are sent to the Fire Service to obtain a Fire Safety Certificate and this is obtained prior to construction.

Local authorities are also required to have in place Major Emergency Plans under the requirements of 'A Framework for Major Emergency Management.' Such plans are the basis for interagency co-operation and have been prepared to facilitate the response to (and recovery from) major emergencies. Security is a crucial aspect of resident's lives and a key element in promoting Galway as

a place to live, work and invest. Continuing co-operation between agencies and stakeholders will ensure that Galway continues to remain a safe, secure and attractive place.

Policy Objective Emergency Services

EMS 1 Location of Emergency Services

To facilitate and encourage the accommodation of emergency services including fire services and rescue services, in locations that facilitate ease of access, effectiveness and safety.

11.16 Traditional Local Services

Other traditional local services such as local shops, post offices and licensed premises, which in addition to a primary retail function, provide an important role for the smaller settlements and can help maintain and nurture a sense of community in our towns and villages. *See Chapter 5 Enterprise, Economic and Retail.*

Policy Objective Traditional Local Services

TLS 1 Traditional Local Services

Support and encourage traditional local services such as small shops, post offices, and licensed premises, acknowledging their important role in communities and smaller settlements, throughout the county.

11.17 Co-Working Hubs / Remote Working

The Council will support the establishment of co-working hubs as either standalone facilities or ancillary to public buildings, libraries or community facilities in our settlements. The development of digital co-working hubs, creative spaces and also remote working have the potential to stimulate local economies and accommodate more flexible work options while also reducing commuting levels from our towns and villages. *Chapter 4 Rural Living and Development and Chapter 5 Enterprise, Economic and Retail* addresses remote working and co-working hubs further.

Policy Objective Co-Working Hubs

CWH 1 Co-Working Hubs

It is the Council's policy objective to support and facilitate the establishment of co-working/ remote working hubs and creative hubs as either standalone facilities or ancillary to public buildings, libraries and community centres in towns and village centres as appropriate.

11.18 Crime Prevention

Good Quality Urban Design and Placemaking in new developments when co-ordinated with other measures such as embedded protective physical features, can make a significant contribution to tackling crime and reduce feelings of insecurity. Well-designed communities and places allow people feel safe and secure and enjoy a good quality of life. Designing out crime and designing in community safety should be central to the planning and delivery of new development. All new development must consider the principles of designing out crime such as surveillance, access and movement, physical protection, ownership, management and maintenance as outlined in *Chapter 15 Development Management Standards*.

Policy Objectives Crime Prevention

CP 1 Crime Prevention and Joint Policing Committee

Engage and support An Garda Síochána in addressing policing and crime issues via the Joint Policing Committee.

CP 2 Crime Prevention and Older Person Strategy

Co-operate with An Garda Síochána's Older Person Strategy to ensure contact and safety of elderly and rurally isolated citizens.

CP 3 Crime Prevention through Surveillance and Design

All new development must consider the principles of designing out crime such as surveillance, access and movement, physical protection, management and maintenance as outlined in *Chapter 15 Development Management Standards*.

11.19 Places of Worship and Burial Grounds / Crematoriums

The Council recognises the valuable contribution that places of worship have in a community context and will endeavour to accommodate and facilitate their provision including multifaith facilities at appropriate locations, such as town and village centres. Extension can be considered, where appropriate and where the use is ancillary to the place of worship such as a prayer room or a modest parish centre extension.

The Council has a responsibility for the provision of burial grounds including as necessary, the acquisition of lands and the undertaking of any necessary works on these lands. The Planning Authority has a role in ensuring that adequate land is reserved to accommodate burial grounds in accordance with future needs within the county.

The use of crematoriums has increased significantly in recent years but there is currently no such facility serving County Galway. In recognition of the multi-cultural population of the county and the changing trends in end-of-life service, the Council will support the development of crematoriums in the county, subject to proper planning and sustainable development.

Policy Objectives Places of Worship and Burial Grounds / Crematoriums

PWB 1 Places of Worship

Support and facilitate the development of places of worship and multifaith facilities at appropriate locations, such as town and village centres.

PWB 2 Burial Grounds

Facilitate the development and maintenance of new burial grounds and the extension of existing cemeteries at all appropriate locations that meet the required standards.

PWB3 Crematoriums

Facilitate the development of crematoriums at all appropriate locations.

PWB 4 Heritage of Burial Grounds

Protect, preserve and maintain the cultural heritage of archaeological/historical graveyards and historical burial grounds.

Chapter 12 Architectural, Archaeological and Cultural Heritage

“Conserve, enhance, manage and protect the architectural, archaeological and cultural heritage as key social, economic and cultural assets which are an integral part of the county and safeguard these valuable resources through proper management, sensitive enhancement and appropriate development. Recognise the important role that the arts and cultural can play in making a place as attractive area to live, work and enjoy”.

12.1 Introduction

Cultural heritage surrounds us in the buildings of our towns and cities, our landscapes, monuments and archaeological sites. Cultural heritage brings communities together and builds shared understandings of the places we live. The Built and Cultural Heritage, in the form of both tangible and intangible assets form an important part of our heritage, as they provide communities and society with unique opportunities to learn about the past, support a sense of place, and form an intrinsic part of the character and attractiveness of the County.

Architectural heritage represents the built environment of past centuries as well as more recent times. It informs us about the lives of past generations and contributes to the form of town, village and rural landscapes. Architectural heritage has a key role in making successful ‘places for people’ providing recognisable landmarks which help to create pride of place. Placemaking enables communities to play an active role in the development of their towns, villages and local areas. It is inclusive and takes account of different points of view while also helping people assess issues in their area and design solutions. It offers opportunities identified by citizens and offers active cooperation including consideration of their heritage and culture.

Archaeology provides an insight into past societies and cultures through an assessment of the material remains left by them and the evidence of their environment. It investigates their houses, settlements and tombs and everyday implements. It seeks to understand the landscape, vegetation and climate of previous times as they affected, and were affected by, past peoples. It provides a valuable cultural, educational and tourism resource, as well as creating an important sense of place. Every townland and parish in the county of Galway contains monuments ranging from prehistoric burials, ringforts, holy wells, medieval parish churches with graveyards, castles, or monuments from the more recent past. There are over 12,000 recorded monuments alone in the county. Archaeology is also a key element of cultural heritage, which has been defined by UNESCO as *‘the legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations’*.

Cultural heritage is recognised as a key component of the attractiveness and distinctiveness of towns, villages and rural areas. Strategic investment in culture, heritage and the Arts recognises that high quality infrastructure is critical for a vibrant heritage and culture sector and that investment in our cultural heritage underpins social cohesion and supports economic growth. Galway is renowned both nationally and internationally as a centre of cultural heritage and the Arts. This Plan aims to support and enhance appreciation of this cultural heritage to ensure that it can be enjoyed by both local residents and visitors to the County and safeguarded for future generations.

12.2 Strategic Aims

Galway County Council shall work with the appropriate agencies, state bodies, stakeholders and landowners to ensure that the architectural, archaeological and cultural heritage of the County is protected and developed in a sustainable manner that is in accordance with the following strategic aims:

- The Council recognises the importance of identifying, valuing and safeguarding the archaeological and architectural heritage of Galway for future generations which can be achieved through the proper management, sensitive enhancement and/or appropriate development of this resource;
- The Council will conserve, enhance and protect the special character of the architectural heritage of Galway through the identification of Protected Structures, the designation of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs), the safeguarding of designed landscapes and historic gardens, and the recognition of structures and elements that contribute positively to the vernacular, industrial and coastal heritage of the County;
- The Council recognises that planning for the regeneration of a historic town or village needs an integrated approach that balances the protection of the built heritage and the sustainable development of historic urban areas with the needs of modern living and takes account of the concerns and aspirations of the community and key stakeholders;
- Promote and enhance the value of placemaking in present and future town and village environments by conserving and protecting the architectural heritage of the County and integrating new development;
- Protect, support and promote the conservation and appropriate management and enhancement of the County's archaeological heritage within the plan area. *Take cognisance of the "Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage" (1999), and the Convention for the protection of the Archaeological Heritage of Europe (revised) (Valletta, 1992) which sets out policy and broad principles for the protection of the archaeological heritage;*
- The Council will promote best practice and seek to undertake the appropriate maintenance of the historic assets in the care of the local authority where resources permit;
- Support the implementation of *County Galway Heritage and Biodiversity Plan 2017-2022 (and subsequent plans)* in relation to the promotion and protection of its Cultural Heritage;
- Promote and support arts and cultural activities, facilities and services that meets the cultural and artistic needs of communities, supports creative activity and enhances the cultural, economic and social life of communities in County Galway;
- Engage with all relevant stakeholders (and in particular local communities) in matters relating to the protection of the architectural, archaeological, and cultural heritage and The Arts;
- Encourage understanding of the architectural, archaeological and cultural heritage of the County. Shall have regard to the advice series for owners issued by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

12.3 Strategic Context

This chapter is prepared in the context of the following National and Regional Plans, Policies and Guidelines:

National Planning Framework – Ireland 2040
National Development Plan 2018-2027
Climate Action Plan 2019
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region 2020-2032

Built & Archaeological Heritage – Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan 2019
National Heritage Plan (2002) and the New National Heritage Plan 2030 (Draft 2019)
Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)
The National Monuments Acts 1930 – 20014
Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1999
The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH)
Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (1999); Policy and Guidance on Archaeological Excavation (1999)
Government Policy on Architecture 2009- 2015
‘Places for People - National Policy on Architecture’ (November 2019).
The Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines 2011
The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH)
Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (1999); Policy and Guidance on Archaeological Excavation (1999)
‘National Policy on Town Defences (DoELG 2008)’
Culture 2025: A National Cultural Policy Framework (2020)
Galway County Arts Plan 2020-2024
Galway County Heritage & Biodiversity Plan 2017 - 2022
Commemorative Strategy for the County of Galway 2013-2023
Galway County Council’s Culture and Creativity Strategy 2018 - 2022
Public Art Policy 2020 – 2014
Galway Library Development Programme 2016-2021
Galway County Local Economic and Community Plan 2016 – 2022
Everybody Matters: A Cultural Sustainability Strategy Framework for Galway 2016 – 2025
UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage
Making Great Art Work. Leading the Development of the Arts in Ireland. Arts Council Strategy (2016 - 2025).

12.3.1 The National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF) sets out to protect and value our important and valuable built heritage. The NPF is built around 10 no. National Strategic Outcomes (NSO’s), with NSO7 of particular relevance which aims to enhance amenity and heritage of our cities, towns, villages and rural areas so as improve their attractiveness and quality of life. The National Strategic Outcomes of NSO 7 will require investment in well-designed public realm, which includes public spaces, parks and streets, as well as recreational infrastructure. 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 sets out its vision for Ireland as a creative, innovative and culturally attuned society, whose people, businesses and communities are equipped to further our national economic output and creative endeavour. There are three other National Policy Objectives (NPOs) which relate to heritage as follows: NPO 17, NPO 23 and NPO 60. The aim of NPO 17 is to enhance, integrate and protect the special physical, social, economic and cultural value of built heritage assets through appropriate and sensitive use. One of the aims of NPO 23 is to maintain and protect the natural landscape and built heritage which are vital to rural tourism. NPO 60 aims to conserve and enhance the rich qualities of natural and cultural heritage of Ireland.

12.3.2 The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) supports a common approach in managing and protecting the built, natural and cultural heritage of the region. The Strategy makes a strong reference to the heritage value of the region's towns and settlements. The RSES identifies the specific significance of Architectural Heritage, Archaeological Heritage, Cultural Heritage and Heritage Led Regeneration, as set out in the following relevant Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs): RPO 4.15 ,RPO 5.8, RPO 5.11, RPO 5.13, RPO 5.14, RPO 5.15, RPO 5.16, RPO 5.17, RPO 6.41, RPO 7.9. Plans for investment in culture and heritage recognise that high quality infrastructure is critical for a vibrant heritage and culture sector and that investment in our cultural heritage underpins social cohesion and supports strong, sustainable economic growth. In terms of regional policy objectives, specific priorities are to enhance arts and culture centres throughout the country, develop the sustainable tourism potential of our culture and heritage infrastructure and improve Ireland's outdoor recreation infrastructure and natural heritage.

12.4 Climate Change

Support and enhance appreciation of the built heritage, archaeological heritage and cultural heritage to ensure that it can be enjoyed by both local residents and visitors to the County and safeguarded for future generations.

The principles of conservation-led regeneration are adopted in this plan and the plan promotes awareness and the appropriate adaptation of Ireland's built and archaeological heritage to deal with the effects of climate change. The guidance outlined in the Sectoral Adaptation Plan *'Built and Archaeological Heritage'* has been incorporated into the Plan so as to help deal with the effects of climate change on our built and archaeological heritage. It is also important to create awareness of the increased threat climate change presents to the historic built environment and archaeological heritage including appropriate adaptation.

The plan responds to the current energy efficiencies of existing building stock so as to reduce GHG emissions and help achieve the targets set out in the Climate Action Plan, 2019. The existing building stock offers its greatest asset in its ability to be recycled for alternative use and thereby reducing the need for demolition and construction, and subsequently generation of carbon dioxide.

12.5 Architectural Heritage Context

The Architectural Heritage of Galway is a unique and special resource. Our architectural heritage consists not only of great artistic achievements of the past, but also the everyday works of craftsmanship of the past. Architectural heritage relates to monuments, groups of buildings and sites, and includes all relevant man-made structures and features of the landscape in the county; such as houses, bridges, towns, demesnes and stone walls of considered architectural heritage value.

It is important that provision is made to ensure adequate protection for the built environment in its existing form and that consideration is given to the sympathetic re-use of historic buildings to allow the architectural heritage to be enjoyed and used into the future. The proposed new National Policy on Architecture will set out the Government's ambition for better understanding of the character, qualities, potential and benefits of our built environment. It states that Architecture and our built environment are central to our society.

Local authorities, through their city and county development plans and designation through the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs), enable places of architectural value to be protected. Good heritage management should be incorporated into spatial

planning to promote the benefits of heritage led urban regeneration in historic towns, for example through the protection of historic urban fabric, the reuse of historic buildings and the enhancement of places of special cultural or natural interest.

12.5.1 Protected Structures

A protected structure is a structure that the Planning Authority considers to be of special interest from an architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical point of view. Under Part IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, the Council must maintain a Record of Protected Structures (RPS).

A Record of Protected Structures is the record included in a Development Plan, correct at the time of publication. It may be amended by the addition or deletion of entries independently of the Development Plan review process. The inclusion of a structure in the RPS does not preclude appropriate use or development. Protection is defined as including, in relation to a structure, or part of a structure, conservation, preservation and improvement compatible with maintaining the character and interest of the structure. Protection is offered to:

- a) The interior of the structure;
- b) The land lying within the curtilage of the structure;
- c) Any other structures lying within that curtilage and their interiors, and all fixtures and features which form part of the interior or exterior of any structure.

No works, which would adversely affect the character of the structure, or any element of it, which contributes to its special interest, may be carried out to a protected structure without planning permission. An owner or occupier of a protected structure may make a written request to the Planning Authority to issue a Section 57 Declaration as to the type of works, which it considers would or would not materially affect the character of the structure or any element of the structure that contributes to its special interest.

The purpose of the designation of protected structure status is to ensure that any changes or alterations to the building and/or its setting are carried out in such a way that the existing special character is retained and enhanced. The identification of structures for inclusion in the Record is based on criteria set out in the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011). See Appendix 6 Record of Protected Structures.

12.5.2 National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) Survey of County Galway

The purpose of the NIAH is to identify, record, and evaluate a representative sample of the post 1700 architectural heritage of Ireland, as an aid in the protection and conservation of the architectural heritage of County Galway. The survey explores the social and historical context of the structures and facilitates a greater appreciation of the architectural heritage of County Galway. The NIAH provides the basis for the recommendations of the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to the planning authority for the inclusion of particular structures in their Record of Protected Structures. It is important to recognise the contribution that all historic structures, features and landscapes including those which are not included in the Record of Protected Structures, makes to the county's heritage. The Council will seek the enhancement of these elements in recognition of their quality, character and local distinctiveness.

12.5.3 Architectural Conservation Areas

An Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) is a place, area, group of structures or townscape, which is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or contributes to the appreciation of a protected structure. An Architectural Conservation Area may or may not include protected structures. In an ACA, protection is placed on the external appearance of such areas or structures. Planning permission must be obtained before significant works can be carried out to the exterior of a structure within an ACA, which might alter the character of the structure, or of the ACA.

ACA's can be entire streetscapes, designed landscape associated with a country house, medieval towns, industrial complexes, designed open spaces, religious complexes and so forth. The special character of an ACA is made up of its architectural features, setting, spatial qualities and land uses. The commerce and trade of County Galway may be seen in the significant number of original shop fronts in its towns and villages. People have become increasingly aware of the value of high quality shopfronts both historic and contemporary in attracting customers to do business and come to an area. Shopfronts and signage are very important factors in enhancing and contributing positively to the character of an area.

Each commercial business will have specific requirements in terms of shopfronts, signage and advertisement. Careful thought should be given to the design, size and careful placement of such elements, so as not to detract from the character of the area and this will need particular attention within designated Architectural Conservation Areas where appropriate.

The designation of ACAs gives protection to the greater part of the built heritage that may not be suitable for inclusion in the RPS but contributes to or forms the particular character of an area. Recognition is given to the value of high-quality infill buildings and shopfronts, both historic and contemporary, in attracting visitors and local people alike to a vibrant town and village centre.

12.5.4 Vernacular Architecture

Vernacular architecture refers to the traditional building forms and types built using local materials, skills and building techniques which form a vital component of the landscape. Vernacular buildings, through their siting, orientation and materials, display an intimate connection with their landscape. This includes traditional domestic buildings such as thatched cottages but could also include other traditional structures such as shopfronts, farmsteads, outbuildings, aspects of the industrial past, including lime kilns, mills, forges, and their products, such as gates. These structures reflect the unique local history and character of a place. Viable new uses and careful rehabilitation can contribute to sustainable development and encourage social and economic regeneration.

12.5.5 Placemaking

Placemaking relates to the interrelationship and connection between people and the spaces they use. It includes how people move around places, the buildings and structures as well as the open space and landscape of an area and place. It therefore requires a people-centred approach to the planning, design and management of our settlements and the built environment. It promotes balancing the conservation of the historic fabric with the needs of those who live in and use the historic settlement. Ensuring high quality design adds value to our towns, villages and countryside and improves placemaking and our quality of life. The Plan will promote high quality design by encouraging its integration into every aspect of the plan. Placemaking is an essential link between spatial planning and improving people's quality of life through the creation of attractive places to live, work, visit and invest.

12.5.6 Energy Efficiency and Traditionally Built Structures

The careful rehabilitation and retention of historic buildings in our landscapes, whether urban or rural, allows the materials and embedded energy of these structures to be harnessed for present and future generations.

Proposals to improve the thermal performance of historic buildings and to insert renewable energy technologies need to be sensitive to traditional methods of construction to ensure that the proposed works are compatible with the traditionally accepted method of allowing for moisture to be absorbed and released easily. Ventilating the internal spaces performs the important function of allowing the building to breathe. Interventions such as impermeable building products may have unintended harmful consequences for historic traditional buildings.

The location of solar panels, wind turbines or other renewable technologies will be carefully considered in the historic environment. Climate change can bring increased risk from storms, floods and wind that the historic structures were not built to withstand. Disaster Risk Management plans can assist in addressing issues and promoting preparedness.

12.5.7 Designed Landscapes

Historic designed landscapes are gardens, parks or estates that were deliberately laid out to create a particular effect. By using features, such as follies to form vistas, altering river courses to form lakes, building walled gardens to create sheltered areas, an architectural and horticultural composition is created. The designed landscapes of Galway consist primarily of demesnes associated with large country houses and are often the setting for a protected structure.

The Council will promote awareness of the value of designed landscapes and associated features and promoting standards in relation to repair and conservation is important. Development proposals in these designed landscapes shall be accompanied by appraisals and surveying of these sensitive sites including historic gardens, demesnes, estates and their settings so as to evaluate any possible impact on the heritage value.

12.5.8 Industrial, Agricultural and Coastal Heritage

The industrial heritage of mills and canals rail lines, the road network and associated bridges are historic assets that have had a significant influence on the form and character of the County and can be adapted to meet modern needs. Buildings associated with agricultural practise are easily identifiable within our settlements. Piers and harbours on the coast and rivers are evidence of a busy maritime culture.

Policy Objectives Architectural Heritage

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).

AH 2 Protected Structures (Refer to Appendix 6)

- (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.
- (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.
- (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.
- (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.
- (e) Promote and ensure best conservation practice through the use of specialist conservation professionals and craft persons.
- (f) Prohibit development proposals, either in whole or in part, for the demolition of protected structures, save in exceptional circumstances.

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.

AH 4 Architectural Conservation Areas (Refer to Appendix 7)

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 setting. New proposals shall have appropriate regard to scale, plot, form, mass, design, materials, colours and function.

This will be achieved by;

- (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.
- (b) Promote appropriate and sensitive reuse and rehabilitation of buildings and sites within the ACA.
- (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.
- (d) Promote high quality architectural design within ACAs.
- (e) Seek the repair and reuse of traditional shopfronts and where appropriate, encourage new shopfronts of a high quality architectural design.
- (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.
- (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.
- (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) Protect structures in ACAs from non-sympathetic alterations and encourage appropriate infill developments.

(j) Works materially affecting the character of a protected structure or the exterior of a building/structure within an ACA will require planning permission;

(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.

(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.

AH 5 Maintenance and Re-use of existing Building Stock

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.

AH 6 Vernacular Architecture

Recognise the importance of the contribution of vernacular architecture to the character of a place and ensure the protection, retention and appropriate revitalisation and reuse of the vernacular built heritage including structures that contribute to landscape and townscape character and resist the demolition of these structures.

AH 7 Local Place Names

Protect local place names as an important part of the cultural heritage and unique character of an area. Support the use of appropriate names for new developments that reflect the character and heritage of the area and that contribute to the local distinctiveness of a place.

AH 8 Energy Efficiency and Traditionally Built Structures

Ensure that measures to upgrade the energy efficiency of protected structures and traditionally built historic structures are sensitive to traditional construction methods, employ best practice and use appropriate materials and methods that will not have a detrimental impact on the material, functioning or character of the building.

AH 9 Local Landscape and Place Assessment

To support proposals from local communities including Tidy Town Committees, Chambers of Commerce and residents' groups in analysing the character of their place and promoting its regeneration for their own use and enjoyment and that of visitors to the area.

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.

AH 11 Custodianship

Promote an inter-disciplinary approach demonstrating best practice with regard to the custodianship of protected structures, recorded monuments and elements of built heritage.

AH 12 Placemaking for Towns and villages

Promote the value of placemaking in cooperation with communities in their towns, villages and local areas.

AH 13 Traditional Building Skills

Support and promote traditional building skills, training and awareness of the use of appropriate materials and skills within the Local Authority, community groups, owners and occupiers of traditionally built structures.

AH 14 Design and Landscaping in New Buildings

Encourage new buildings that foster an innovative approach to design and acknowledges the diversity of suitable design solutions in appropriate locations while promoting the added economic, amenity and environmental value of good design.

12.6 Archaeological Heritage

The archaeological heritage of County Galway includes structures, constructions, groups of buildings, developed sites, places, caves, sites, feature or portable objects, all recorded monuments as well as their contexts, and moveable objects, situated both on land and underwater or in the inter tidal zones. Archaeological remains provide valuable information about our past and the people who lived here before us. This rich and valuable archaeological heritage provides a valuable cultural, educational and tourism resource creating an important sense of place. Each site and monument have a unique character and contribution to make to the landscape of the County and adds meaning to our understanding of the environment. The appropriate management of archaeological remains is essential to ensure the survival of these invaluable features.

Over time some sites have disappeared, others survive beneath the current ground surface leaving no visible surface trace or have been remodelled within more modern buildings or stand as monuments in their own right.

The Minister of Housing, Local Government and Heritage has specific responsibilities for the identification and protection of our archaeological heritage through the National Monuments Service. The National Monuments Service carries out these duties in regard to sites and monuments and their policies are outlined in the *“Frameworks and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (1999)”* and other policy documents.

12.6.1 Monument Protection

A Monument can be protected in one of five ways:

- a) It is in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP).
- b) It is registered in the Register of Historic Monuments (RHM).
- c) It is a National monument subject to a preservation order (or temporary preservation order).
- d) It is a National monument in the ownership or guardianship of the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht or a Local Authority.
- e) Archaeological structures may, in some situations, be considered as architectural heritage and, therefore, may appear on both the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and the Record of Protected Structures (RPS). These structures are accordingly protected by both the National Monuments Acts and the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended).

Prior written consent from the Minister of Housing, Local Government and Heritage is required for any works at or in relation to all known archaeological monuments and zones of archaeological potential. Archaeology and the historic landscape provides a unique sense of place that benefits the

quality of life and economy of the county. The Council will safeguard archaeological sites, monuments, objects and their settings listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), and any additional newly discovered archaeological remains, and by identifying archaeologically sensitive historic landscapes ensure this rich heritage is maintained into the future.

12.6.2 Record of Monuments and Places

All known archaeological monuments are included in the statutory Record of Monuments and Places. 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 the RMP are known as Recorded Monuments. Any persons proposing to carry out works at or in relation to a recorded monument must give two months written notice to the Minister. RMP maps and manuals are available for consultation (see www.archaeology.ie) or in the County library or the Planning office of Galway County Council.

12.6.3 National Monuments

Under Section 14 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 2004 a National Monument is a monument in the ownership or guardianship of the State and or a Local Authority or monuments that are the subject of a Preservation Order or a Temporary Preservation Order. Prior written consent from the Minister of Housing, Local Government and Heritage is required for any works at or in relation to all known archaeological monuments and zones of archaeological potential. Lists of national monuments in the Minister's ownership or guardianship (by county) and the listing for Preservation Orders can be accessed at (www.archaeology.ie).

12.6.4 Underwater Archaeology

County Galway's coastal waters, tidal estuaries and rivers contain many features and finds associated with its maritime/riverine heritage such as shipwrecks, piers, quay walls, fords, stepping stones and associated archaeological objects and features such as submerged landscapes, harbours, jetties, landing places, fish traps, kelp grids, bridge sites, crannogs and tidal mills. Section 3 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1987 makes specific provisions for the protection of shipwrecks and underwater archaeological objects. Further information can be accessed at (www.archaeology.ie).

12.6.5 Historic Towns/ Irish Walled Towns Network (IWTN)

Galway has a number of important settlements identified in The Urban Archaeological Survey of County Galway which include the towns of Athenry, Loughrea, Portumna and Tuam and the historic settlements of Ardrahan, Báile Chláir, Dunmore, Eyrecourt, Kilcolgan and Meelick. In the case of each of the towns and settlements listed above a Zone of Archaeological Potential is mapped showing the area most likely to contain archaeological remains, both upstanding and subsurface.

The towns of Athenry and Loughrea are fortified towns and are members of the Irish Walled Town Network (IWTN). The Irish Walled Towns Network (IWTN), seeks to ensure that Ireland's unique cultural and archaeological heritage in relation to its walled and fortified towns and cities is protected and managed in a sustainable manner. The '*National Policy on Town Defences (DoELG 2008)*' demonstrates commitment towards the protection, preservation and conservation of historic urban defences in Ireland.

12.6.6 Zones of Archaeological Potential

The physical remains of the archaeological monument today are not necessarily the full extent of the original monument which can remain buried in the ground with no visible surface evidence. This is the Zone of Archaeological Potential (ZAP). This can vary with monument type such as Early Ecclesiastical Sites, ringforts, medieval castles & churches complexes. The SMR database (www.archaeology.ie) identifies Zones of Notification to assist authorities and other agencies.

12.6.7 Medieval Archaeology

Many of Ireland's medieval structures, both rural and urban, were swept away in the 18th/19th century and replaced with buildings that make up the core of our heritage building stock today. Further potential for archaeology lies within these old buildings, as some were remodelled retaining elements of older buildings. Prior to development of these buildings an assessment should be carried out to assess the heritage value of the structure.

12.6.8 Industrial and Post medieval Archaeology

Other important elements of our archaeological heritage are the later remains of structures and features associated with industrial, agricultural, cultural, military, docks and harbours, religious, social activities. These Industrial and post medieval items of built heritage include penal chapels, limekilns, houses, mass paths, stepping stones, mills, bridges, railway features and famine burial grounds. They can make a valuable contribution to the local historic landscape and have potential to add to our understanding of the past. Whilst some of these are Archaeological Monuments and/or Protected Structures, the vast majority have no such protection and are consequently very vulnerable items of our heritage.

12.6.9 Battlefield and Siege Sites

Battlefields have a significant place in our history and development of the nation. They contribute to the local historic environment and are ripe for interpretation and development as an economic resource. The Zone of Archaeological Potential of battlefield and siege sites can be quite extensive and can include associated features such as camp sites, entrenchments, fortifications, siege works, and mass burials. There are significant battle sites in County Galway such as the site of the Battle of Aughrim and the Battle of Knockdoe. Therefore, in assessing any development proposals consideration should be given to the conservation and protection of the significant battlefield sites in County Galway.

12.6.10 Burial Grounds

Burial grounds are an important part of local heritage and often contain the standing remains or sites of earlier structures and also contain a great diversity of natural heritage and biodiversity. Burial grounds, which are included in Records of Monuments and Places, are afforded protection under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994. Consultation with the National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage is necessary prior to undertaking any proposed works in relation to historic graveyards. Galway County Council has an important role in protecting all historical burial grounds in County Galway and to encourage their maintenance and care in accordance with appropriate conservation principles.

12.6.11 Archaeology and Development

The Council requires that a proposed development (due to location, size or nature) which may have archaeological implications for archaeological heritage be subject to an Archaeological Assessment. This includes areas close to archaeological monuments, extensive in area (half hectare or more) or length (1km or more) and development that require an Environmental Impact Statement.

Where archaeological materials are found appropriate mitigation measures shall be put in place. Preservation in situ should generally be the presumed to be the preferred option and only compelling reasons can justify preservation by record.

Development that does not compromise sub surface archaeological remains will be encouraged. This is most effectively achieved by the refurbishment of existing buildings, in situations where it is possible to retain the greater part of the existing structures without the need for new foundations.

Various types of development can have visual or physical impacts on the setting of an archaeological monument. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the heritage asset will be favourably treated.

Previously unidentified archaeological sites may be uncovered during construction works including drainage schemes or road making. Archaeological deposits, which may be damaged by the development, must be investigated and recorded. It important that any development or planning application that has the potential to impact on an archaeological site, monument or structure shall be referred to the relevant Prescribed Bodies.

12.6.12 Raising Archaeological Awareness

Galway County Council has an important role to play in promoting initiatives aimed at raising awareness of archaeological heritage. Given the vast range of archaeological heritage within the County there is considerable potential for interpretation and recreation and contribution to the local economy through tourism.

Policy Objectives Archaeological Heritage

ARC 1 Legislative Context

Support and promote the preservation, conservation and appropriate management and enhancement of the 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.

ARC 2 Archaeological Sites

Seek to encourage and promote awareness of and access to archaeological heritage of the County for all, through the provision of information to landowners and the community generally, in co-operation with statutory and other partners.

ARC 3 Archaeological Landscapes

To facilitate where possible the identification of important archaeological landscapes in the County.

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.

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.

ARC 6 Burial Grounds

Protect the burial grounds, identified in the Record of Monuments and Places, in co-operation with the National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Encourage the local community to manage burial grounds in accordance with best conservation and heritage principles.

ARC 7 Battlefield Sites

Protect the Battle of Aughrim site and other battlefield sites and their settings.

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.

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.

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.

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.

ARC 12 Archaeology and Infrastructure Schemes

Have regard to archaeological concerns when considering proposed service schemes (including electricity, sewerage, telecommunications, water supply) and proposed roadwork's (both realignments and new roads) located in close proximity to Recorded Monuments and Places and their known archaeological monuments.

12.7 Cultural Heritage

County Galway has a rich and diverse cultural heritage which is a significant social and economic asset to the County. Culture plays a very important role in defining the perception of the county and providing its citizens with a sense of identity and continuity. Cultural heritage includes tangible culture

such as buildings, monuments, books, works of art and artefacts and intangible cultural heritage such as folklore, traditions, language, and knowledge.

Arts and cultural facilities not only contribute to the artistic, social and general quality of life of communities, they are also significant contributors to the economy of the County by attracting visitors, investment and job creation. Many people visit the towns, monuments, archaeological and historical sites each year to enjoy this cultural experience. Culture is inherently multi-disciplinary, for example linking policies on economic growth and regeneration with those on environment, heritage and infrastructure provision. This Plan aims to encourage the further development of these cultural assets, increase local awareness of our heritage and cultural identity and promote the cultural tourism industry.

Galway County Council recognises the importance of our folklore and oral cultural heritage to the people of County Galway and to future generations. The Council will aim to work with groups in gathering, recording, preserving and promoting folklore and oral cultural heritage in the County. The County and Branch libraries strategically placed across the County provide a strong role in communities catering for all age groups with an active involvement in a yearly calendar of events. These branches provide a wide range of services that are a valuable resource in terms of culture, heritage and education. Galway County Council Archives service maintain the archives of the Galway County Council local authorities and make available archives that are invaluable cultural and heritage assets.

Investment in culture and heritage can play a very important role in improving amenities and the attractiveness and liveability of different areas, urban areas including small towns and rural areas. Plans for investment in culture and heritage recognise that high quality infrastructure is critical for a vibrant heritage and culture sector and that investment in our cultural heritage underpins social cohesion and supports strong, sustainable economic growth.

Regional priorities aim to enhance arts and culture centres throughout the country, develop the sustainable tourism potential of our culture and heritage infrastructure and improve Ireland's outdoor recreation infrastructure and natural heritage. The Council acknowledges the importance of arts and cultural infrastructure to the county and that the renovation of Community Centres will bring valuable contributions for the people of Galway. The Council also acknowledges the contribution of Theatre and Arts Centre and Arts and will support same, where appropriate. The Council acknowledges the significance of utilising the *Percent for Art Scheme* as a means to create unique and meaningful artistic interventions within towns and communities.

12.7.1 Historical Sites and Initiatives

There are a number of places in the county which are of great public interest as places of historic interest, notably amongst these places, are sites associated with battlegrounds such as the Battle of Aughrim site. Places of social and folklore significance, like the original fairground in which the Fair of Ballinasloe was held, are also of public interest and it is the intention of Galway County Council to acknowledge the importance of these sites and to endeavour to protect and preserve them as places of historical interest.

The events of the decade between 1913 and 1923 were momentous and defining ones. It was the Decade of Centenaries 2013-2023 that influenced relationships for a generation and was a period which saw the achievement of Irish independence and the foundation of our State. The decade was very important in modern Irish history and justifies a comprehensive commemorative programme that

recognises its significance, acknowledges the achievements of its generation and enhances the understanding today of the events that shaped our society.

12.7.2 Placenames

The basic purpose of a placename is to prove identity and to assist communications. Irish placenames are an integral part of the cultural heritage of Ireland. They are a valuable source of knowledge of the past, giving meaning to the landscape and defining the relationship between communities and their physical environment. Much of the folklore, genealogy, religion, daily life and work of those living on and interacting with their landscape can be appreciated through the study of placenames.

12.7.3 The Gaeltacht and Linguistic Heritage

Galway County Council recognises the importance of our linguistic heritage to the people of the County and to the cultural heritage of County Galway. Parts of Galway County lie within the Gaeltacht, mainly in the area from Bearna to Carna and including Oileáin Árann. These areas require special treatment to protect their linguistic and cultural heritage without hindering development and with an appropriate response to opportunities and challenges. The challenge is to promote these areas as a focus for development whilst ensuring that the development, which does occur, supports or complements the linguistic and cultural heritage. Galway County Council will work in partnership with groups who work for the promotion of the Irish language.

12.7.4 Intangible Cultural Heritage

In December 2015 Ireland ratified the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Intangible cultural heritage refers to the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.

12.7.5 County and Branch Libraries & Archives

Galway public library service was established in 1924 and is funded by Galway City and County Councils. Galway has 29 libraries including branches on four islands and a Mobile Library serving rural communities and some house bound readers that do not have access to a library. Island House, Cathedral Square, Galway is the Headquarters of Galway Public Library Service.

Galway Public libraries provide a popular service for everyone, allowing unbiased and unparalleled access to the world's knowledge. The priority of Galway Libraries is to make the local library the Community/Cultural Hub of each town and village in the county. The Public libraries provide public talks on many topics, exhibitions and also provide the nationwide Healthy Ireland at Your Library programme which acknowledges libraries as a valuable source of community health information.

The goal of the Galway County Council Archives service is to maintain the archives of the Galway County Council local authorities and to collect and make available archives that are of local importance. Therefore, Galway County Council shall make arrangements for the proper care, conservation and management of its archives. Galway County Council Archives Service's mandate is therefore to acquire, preserve, manage and make accessible the local authority's archives. It will also,

when resources allow, collect, preserve, manage and make accessible the documentary heritage of the county and its people as these important collection and records are an invaluable cultural and heritage asset.

Policy Objectives Cultural Heritage

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.

CUH 2 Special Places of Historic Interest

To protect and promote where possible special places of historical interest.

CUH 3 Placenames/Naming of New Developments

Promote and preserve local place names, local heritage and the Irish language by ensuring the use of local place names or geographical or cultural names which reflect the history and landscape of their settings in the naming of new residential and other developments. All names will be in the Irish language only. The naming and numbering schemes including associated signage must be submitted to the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of a new development.

CUH 4 The Gaeltacht and Linguistic Heritage

(a) To protect the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht and to promote Irish as a community language. To promote and facilitate the sustainable development of An Ghaeltacht and Island communities in County Galway.

(b) To support organisations involved in the continued promotion and preservation of the Irish language and culture. To work in a positive and encouraging way to create and maintain a bilingual environment in the County, and to ensure the availability of opportunities for the use of spoken and written Irish.

CUH 5 Library and Archives

(a) To facilitate the development and implementation of *Galway Library Development Programme 2016-2021 or subsequent programme* and support the development and promotion of the library network in the county.

(b) Galway County Council shall support the provision of a purpose built repository, meeting international archival standards, to house, and ensure the preservation, of this important heritage resource.

12.8 Creativity and The Arts

The Arts Council is the national agency for funding, developing and promoting the arts in Ireland. *Making Great Art Work, Leading the Development of the Arts in Ireland, Arts Council Strategy (2016 - 2025)* establishes the coordinates by which the Arts Council will lead the development of the arts in Ireland. They work in partnership with artists, arts organisations, local authorities, public policy makers and others to include arts in Irish Life.

Culture 2025 – A Framework Policy to 2025 sets the direction for Government’s policy and aspirations across the cultural sector, including the arts, the Irish language and the creative, heritage and audio visual sectors and how these aspirations can be achieved. It sets out a framework committing to

increasing resources for arts and heritage, supporting Irish culture on the world stage and improving funding structures for investment in national and local services.

Culture 2025 is the main implementation vehicle for the *Creative Ireland Programme* which is an all-of-government initiative with a wellbeing strategy at its core which aims to improve social cohesion and access to cultural and creative activity in every county across the country. It provides for high quality, well managed built and natural environments that contribute to public confidence and quality of life. It places creativity at the centre of public policy, aiming to improve access to cultural and creative activity in every county across the country. The *Creative Ireland Programme from 2017 to 2022* provides a clear mechanism for the delivering on this vision by ensuring creativity is at the heart of public policy and by the implementation of actions under the five pillars:

- Pillar 1: Enabling the Creative Potential of Every Child
- Pillar 2: Enabling Creativity in Every Community
- Pillar 3: Investing in our Creative and Cultural Infrastructure
- Pillar 4: The Creative Industries: Ireland as a Centre of Excellence in Media Production
- Pillar 5: Unifying our Global Reputation.

Participation and access are central to the vision. Local authorities have a crucial role in the overall local delivery of the entire Creative Ireland programme.

The county of Galway has long been associated with the arts and culture, with an exceptional quality of life and natural landscape offering artists and creatives the type of environment to thrive. Supporting creative communities is vital and there is a responsibility to ensure that the landscape is protected, the built and natural heritage is further developed in a sustainable manner and that the elements that are conducive to creativity are safeguarded.

Galway County Council has adopted and published a *Culture and Creative Strategy 2018 to 2022*, which shares the vision of the Creative Ireland programme that every person living in Ireland will have the opportunity to fully realise his or her creative potential. The Strategy also brings coherence and promotes collaboration between the individual culture based strategies; the Heritage & Biodiversity Plan, the Arts Plan and the Libraries Plan, all of which relate to the Local Economic and Community Development Plan, 2016-2021.

The County Strategy provides a framework that assists in the cultural advancement of the county of Galway. Creative Ireland facilitates an enhanced level of coordination, focus and leadership to existing policies and initiatives across national and local government, State agencies, the arts and cultural sector, Gaeltacht and Irish language organisations and provides a link to private business and the creative industries sector.

It supports and enhances the wide range of cultural programmes already in place through the arts office, library and archive service, conservation, heritage, economic development and Irish language provisions in the Council. The collaborative approach of the Culture Team demonstrates how significant leverage of existing projects magnifies the scale and reach of Galway County Creative Ireland initiatives in terms of budget, numbers of participants and positive impact on the quality of life of people living in County Galway.

Creativity is valued as a distinct asset in Galway, with a host of artists, makers, chefs and coders contributing to the county's reputation as a great place to live and work. From international designations, such as European Region of Gastronomy 2018, European Capital of Culture 2020 and the growing creative industries; Galway County Council is committed to supporting the wealth of talent already here and to discovering and inspiring the creators of tomorrow. Participation in all forms of

creative and cultural activity contributes to the health and wellbeing of the citizens of the county. Through the implementation of community based arts, culture, language, wellbeing and heritage programmes Galway County Council aspires to ensuring every citizen regardless of age, gender or ethnicity is aware of, take part in and experience the value and importance of creativity in their lives. *Galway County Arts Plan 2020 -2024* address how to support the growth and continuing development of the arts, not only encompassing Galway County's needs and ambitions but also placing them within the overall context of local, regional and national strategy for the Arts. This plan recognises the social, economic and cultural contribution the Arts can play in the cohesion of communities, the growth of local and regional economies, its benefit to tourism, and the role the arts can play in making a place an attractive area to live, work and enjoy. The County Development Plan will support the implementation of the *Galway County Arts Plan 2020 – 2024*.

The *Galway County Council Public Art Policy 2020 – 2024* priorities include the development of new commissions and public art programmes which will support professional artists and public engagement along with the stewardship and conservation of County Galway's public art collection which is part of the overall arts and culture agenda. This plan recognising the importance of Public Art as cultural landmarks in urban redevelopment, roadways, housing and recreational and amenity developments. It is acknowledged that the arts can make a significant and positive contribution to the development of the social, economic and cultural life of communities and the plan intends to support this role by recognising the arts as part of the fundamental vision and essence of placemaking in Galway County. The plan also acknowledging the employment opportunities of the creative industries by supporting the more traditional art forms while seeking to encourage opportunities for the newer digital creative economy such as film making. The more recent emergence of a stronger cultural tourism sector can be supported by enhanced arts infrastructure, where appropriate.

The current arts, heritage and cultural infrastructure in the county of Galway includes a range of theatres, local museums and heritage centres, music venues, performance, arts and exhibition spaces, galleries and workshops many are in private or community ownership. This arts, heritage and cultural infrastructure is a very valuable community, social and economic resource for the county of Galway. Arts and cultural infrastructure provision needs to be based on the needs of a region or town, its population size and the planned future population targets. It is the intention of this plan to support and facilitate the provision and development of arts, heritage and cultural infrastructure at appropriate locations throughout the County. This plan also encourages the reuse of centrally located vacant buildings for social, cultural and artistic uses. New developments shall also be encouraged to make adequate provision for arts infrastructure for the social and cultural needs of an area.

Policy Objectives Creativity and The Arts

CA 1 Development of Arts and Cultural Infrastructure

Provide for the balanced development of an arts and cultural infrastructure that meets the cultural and artistic needs of communities, supports creative activity and enhances cultural, economic and social life of communities and which are accessible to all members of the community.

CA 2 Development of facilities

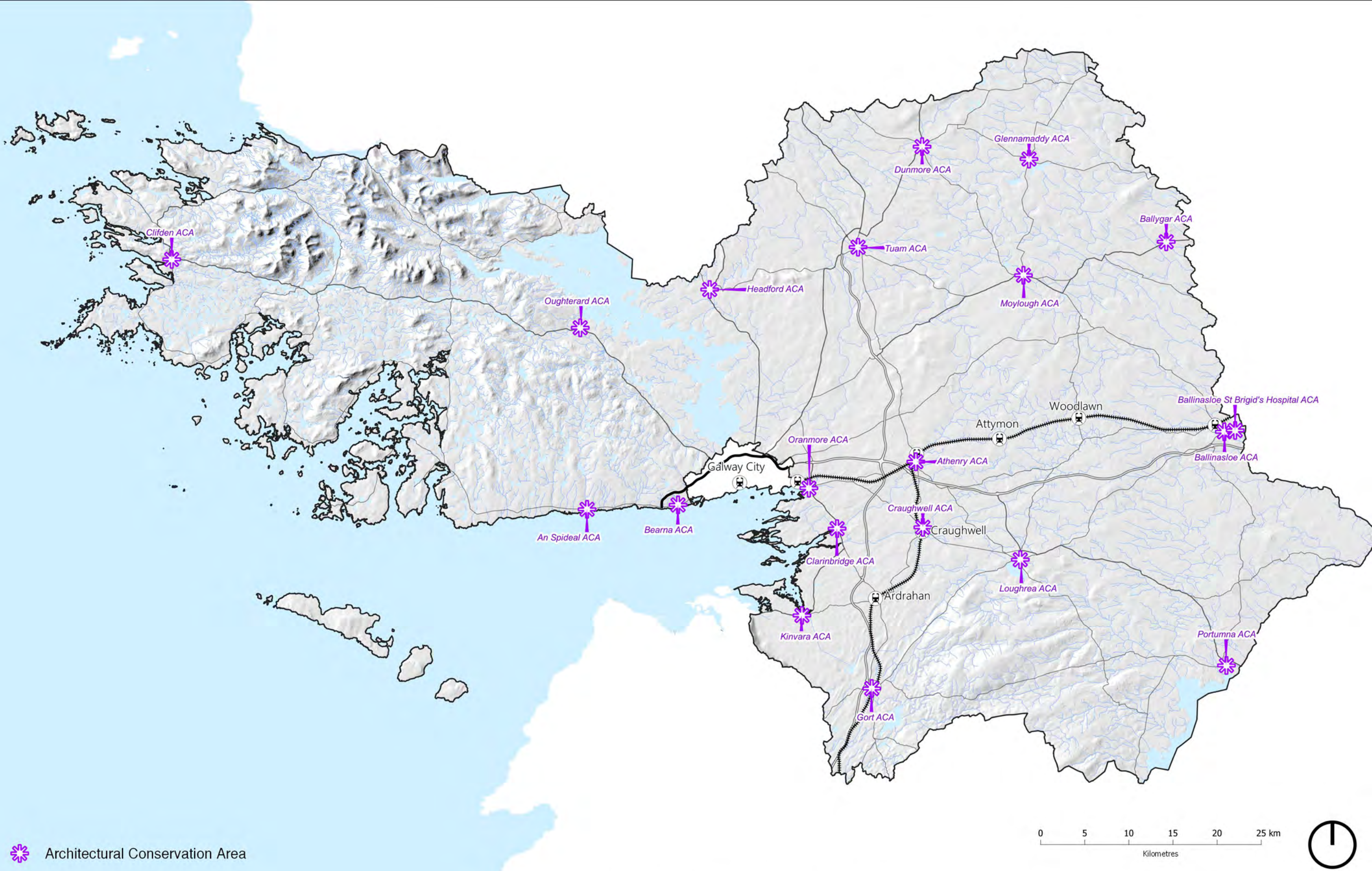
Support and facilitate the provision or development of arts spaces, cultural spaces and entertainment facilities including performance, exhibition, studio and other arts related facilities in appropriate locations, where proposals are in accordance with the other policy objectives of this plan.


CA 3 Public Realm Works of Art

Encourage the commissioning of new works of art for the public realm in association with new development proposals and regeneration proposals, where appropriate.

CA 4 Implementation of plans and programmes

Support the implementation of the Council's Arts Strategy 2020-2024, the Creative Ireland Programme 2017-2022, the Culture and Creative Strategy 2018-2021 and other subsequent and appropriate plans and programmes that may be developed during the lifetime of this plan.



 Architectural Conservation Area

0 5 10 15 20 25 km
Kilometres



Chapter 13 The Galway Gaeltacht and Islands

“The Galway Gaeltacht and Islands are unique and special places, with their distinctive cultural heritage and natural beauty. The needs and aspiration of residents and visitors will be to the forefront of future developments within this unique and vibrant setting”.

13.1 Introduction

The Galway Gaeltacht and Islands covers extensive parts of County Galway. The Gaeltacht stretches from Baile Chláir, to the east of the city to Cloch na Ron in west Connemara, a distance of approx. 100km and from Oileáin Árann northwards to Duiche Sheoigheach which borders County Mayo. The Gaeltacht area also spans townlands that are within Galway City boundary.

The Council recognises the significance the Galway Gaeltacht particularly having regard to the county containing the largest and most populous Gaeltacht in the country. The language and culture of An Ghaeltacht is a unique and precious inheritance, which it is a national aim to preserve and protect. This aim is enshrined in the *Planning and Development Act, 2000* (as amended). In addition to the importance of the Gaeltacht, the islands also play a significant role in the economic and tourism potential and the social and cultural heritage of the county.

There are currently four inhabited islands which includes the three islands of Oileáin Árann and Inishbofin. This plan also aims to support the uninhabited islands as appropriate particularly with regard to the potential for tourism development.

13.2 Strategic Aims

Galway County Council shall work with the appropriate agencies and state bodies to protect and enhance the Galway Gaeltacht and Islands with the following strategic aims:

- To promote and facilitate sustainable development that is appropriate to the character, heritage, amenity and strategic role of the Gaeltacht and Island communities in County Galway;
- Support an appropriate level of services and infrastructure to provide for existing and future growth and sustainable development in a manner that protects and is complementary to the environment, heritage, character and amenities of the Gaeltacht villages and islands;
- Support the implementation of language plans in Gaeltacht Language Planning Areas, Gaeltacht Service Towns, Irish Language Networks and on Oileáin Árann;
- Promote and support the Blue Flag, Green Coast FLAG and other related initiatives;
- To adhere to the aims of the Government’s “20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010 – 2030” including the preservation and promotion of Irish in the Gaeltacht, conserving and protecting the heritage, culture and richness of the language as well as strengthening the position of the Irish Language in the home, workplace and community;
- Promote a strong sense of community spirit, civic pride, local identity and social inclusiveness, and promoting the status of the Irish language in the area and its contribution to the linguistic heritage of An Ghaeltacht;
- Provide for the consolidation and coherent growth of settlements and rural areas within Galway Gaeltacht and Islands;
- Provide for the improvement of community and sporting infrastructure programmes within the Galway Gaeltacht and Islands;

- Support the transport network access to Oileáin Árann and Inishbofin in terms of air and sea routes as appropriate.

13.3 Strategic Context

This chapter is prepared in the context of the following National and Regional Plans, Policies and Guidelines:

National Planning Framework – Ireland 2040
National Development Plan 2018-2027
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region 2020-2032
The Gaeltacht Act 2012
20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010–2030 (Dept of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media)
Islands Policy Consultation Paper (Dept of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht)
Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage, 2018 – 2027

13.3.1 National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF) has highlighted the importance of Gaeltacht regions and inhabited offshore islands which contains much of Ireland’s natural resources, biodiversity, environmental qualities and landscape and contributes in a unique way to Ireland’s culture.

The NPF emphasises the importance of the language planning process, prescribed in the Gaeltacht Act 2012, which represents the primary driver in support of the Government’s commitment to the achievement of the objectives set out in the 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010- 2030. The NPF support the implementation of language plans in Gaeltacht Language Planning Areas, Gaeltacht Service Towns and Irish Language Networks. The importance of the Irish language as the vernacular of the Gaeltacht and for the promotion of the language outside the Gaeltacht has been emphasised. The NPF also details that the ongoing supports be provided for the language planning process and support for the Gaeltacht development authority, Údarás na Gaeltachta, be strengthened.

The NPF has acknowledged the importance of our islands and coastal areas stating they ‘contain some of our most vibrant and culturally distinctive communities’ and ‘are an integral part of the State’s heritage and have a special significance in Irish Culture’. The NPF has specified the importance of tourism, agriculture and fishing to island communities and the requirement to continue to support enhanced access to offshore islands to support the sustainability of island communities.

13.3.2 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) recognises the importance of our Gaeltacht and Islands which contain some of our most vibrant and culturally distinctive communities. The RSES references the importance of the community language as outlined in RPO 3.13 and re-affirms the commitments in the NPF in relation to Irish Language Plans.

The RSES has acknowledged the need to support rural employment within the fishing, agriculture and tourism sectors within our coastal and island communities and the necessity to support for improved transports networks for the islands including improved pier infrastructure on Inis Oír and Inis Meáin in the Aran Islands

13.4 Climate Change

This plan aims to protect and enhance the Galway Gaeltacht and Islands over the life of this plan while also ensuring these communities can be developed in a way to ensure the county's transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society.

In supporting Gaeltacht and Island communities, consideration must be given to the impact of the pattern of development associated with the Gaeltacht and Islands including within settlements and the wider rural areas on the climate and environment. Due to the dispersed nature of settlements within the Gaeltacht and the absence of substantial numbers of serviced area there has been a demand for one off rural housing and rural enterprises which has resulted in an over-dependence on the car, with limited opportunities for people to walk, cycle or utilise public transport due to the distance between homes, schools, work and local services. This plan has included a suite of measures to mitigate the impacts of climate change and to ensure future development patterns reduce our carbon footprint and promotes more sustainable ways of living. It is considered that the settlement hierarchy in Chapter 2 *Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy and Housing Strategy* promotes a sustainable pattern of development where growth is identified in accordance with several key parameters.

Chapter 14 *Climate Change, Energy and Renewable Resource* will also address in more detail Climate Change and the interrelationship between the policy objectives of this chapter and the transition to a resilient society.

13.5 An Gaeltacht

The County contains the largest and most populous Gaeltacht in the country which extends over a significant area of County Galway as detailed in the introduction above. The Gaeltacht consists of a number of different communities and the Council recognises that the Irish language is stronger in some communities than in others. The Council recognises that the Irish language is a living language and also the importance of preserving the language while also creating an environment to enable the language to grow within these communities. The islands of Oileáin Árann are located within An Gaeltacht and is included within the six Galway Gaeltacht districts.

Several towns and villages that are located in the Gaeltacht have their own settlement plans and zoning maps as per the settlement hierarchy contained in *Chapter 2 Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy and Housing Strategy*. Bearna and Baile Chláir are located in the new Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan, Maigh Cuilinn is located in the Small Growth Town category and An Cheathrú Ria and An Spidéal are located in Small Growth Villages. All of these towns and villages are contained in Volume 1 of the plan. The towns in the MASP and the Small Growth Town category have an important role in the services they provide adjacent to Galway city. The settlements identified in the small growth villages are considered predominately rural in nature, they however are an important service to the local community through their existing facilities including schools, shops, pubs and post offices.

There are a number of other small villages in the Gaeltacht and these are categorised under the "Rural Settlement" category.

The following are the six districts of the Galway Gaeltacht:

- Iorras Aithreach/Camas/Ros Muc;
- Dúiche Sheoigheach;

- Ceantar na nOileán/An Crompán;
- Cois Fharraige;
- Oileáin Árann;
- Imeall na Cathrach.

13.5.1 District A: Iorras Aithneach/Camas/Ros Muc

This is the District of South West Conamara from Doire Iorrais westwards through Cill Chiaráin, Carna, Glinsce, Bun na hAbhann, Caiseal and Inis Ní. This district also includes the Electoral Divisions of An Turlach (Ros Muc), Camas and Cill Chuimín with Iorras Aithneach. The combined district is very dispersed in nature.

There are a number of third level outreach education/marine research facilities in operation within this district. In operation since the 1950's, National University of Ireland Galway's Carna Research Station (CRS) is Ireland's leading facility for aquaculture research and development on a diverse range of marine finfish, shellfish and seaweed species. Based in south-west Connemara, CRS is the Ryan Institute's off-campus marine laboratory and specialises in large scale, exploratory aquatic investigations with a tradition of carrying out both applied and basic research on existing and novel species for aquaculture. Within this region there are a diverse range of activities including traditional industries (such as the sea-weed industries), service employment and a number of coláistí samhraidh which bring significant number of young people to the district every summer. In relation to tourist attractions, *Ionad Cultúrtha an Phiarsaigh* is located in Ros Muc; on a site where Patrick Pearse, writer, educator and leader of the 1916 Rising built a cottage on the shores of Loch Oiriúlach in 1909. The development comprises four elements, including a new visitor centre, Cosán Chonamara (which includes 10 acres and a looped walk), Slí na Coille (an interpretive space focussing on Patrick Pearse himself) and Pearse's Cottage.

Ionad Cuimhneacháin na Imirceach Cuideachta faoi Theorainn Ráthaíochta is a new Emigration Interpretative Centre in Carna which is a valuable asset in attracting visitors to this area and to link together the people of this region and their descendants.

13.5.2 District B: Duiche Sheoigheach

This District comprises most of North Conamara, stretching from Cong to Leenane and northwards. It is predominantly a mountainous area dominated by the Maamturk range and includes two of the great wild fishing lakes of Western Europe in Lough Corrib and the southern portion of Lough Mask.

The Electoral Divisions comprising District B are as follows:

- An Chorr;
- An Ros;
- Leitir Breacáin;
- Conga;
- An Fhairce;
- Binn an Choire.

The upper Lough Corrib and Lower Lough Mask as well as Lough na Fooey are precious resources both from an environmental and heritage context and as an income generator. The topography of the area lends itself to outdoor pursuits such as walking and cycling and the lakes are valuable fishing commodity. Cong situated on the Mayo/Galway border is an important tourism attraction with its heritage buildings, the river and its Quiet Man connection.

13.5.3 District C: Ceantar na nOileán/An Cromptán

This district includes the Electoral Divisions of Cromptán, Leitir Móir and Leitir Mealláin and contains the village of An Cheathrú Rua, which the County Development Plan designates as “Other Villages” and is a service hub for southwest Conamara. Five islands make up Ceantar na nOileáin-Annaghvane, Leitir Mor, Gorumna, Leitir Meallain and Funrish. There are also several smaller islands but only accessible by boat.

The description of “Small Growth Villages” as outlined in the County Development Plan is that of villages that have strong settlement structures and have the potential to support additional growth offering an alternative for people to live in these villages rather than the rural countryside. A settlement plan for An Cheathrú Rua is included within this category of small growth villages. The District, apart from the Cromptán peninsula, is composed of an interlinked series of islands which are connected by bridges which were constructed by the Congested Districts Board a century ago. There are numerous other small islands in Ceantar na nOileán which are uninhabited. The land is of poor agricultural quality with extensive outcropping of granite bedrock.

While almost all of the district is free from SAC designation, the surrounding coastal waters of Cill Chiaráin Bay and many of the smaller islands are designated cSAC. The landscape sensitivity ratings are generally 3 in Cromptán and 4 in Leitir Móir and Leitir Mealláin. In relation to community facilities, Sportlann Naomh Anna in Lettermore opened in 2007 which is a premier sports and recreation centre within the Gaeltacht area and provides facilities to a large section of the Gaeltacht community. Hidden along Europe’s last Atlantic frontier is Ceantar na nOileán, the Island region of Connemara. The island of Eanach Mheáin is home to the Connemara Isles Golf Club. Connemara Isles is a 9 hole links golf course and is a renowned golf course. The Colaisti Samhrai, Spleodar in Leitir Moir and Colaiste Na nOilean Tir An Fhia provides a valuable resource for students and teachers in improving their Irish language proficiency. The Muintearas organisation is located in Tír an Fhia, Leitir Móir and provides a supportive role to the Gaeltacht community in order to achieve equal opportunities in terms of education and employment for people in the Gaeltacht; to provide personal development opportunities for men and women; to improve the quality of life for those who experience disadvantage; to facilitate full participation of parents in the education of their children; and to support the use of the Irish language in all aspects of community life in the Gaeltacht.

In addition, Radio na Gaeltachta is located in Casla in the heart of the Gaeltacht community and provides a valuable source of information from a local, national and international perspective and at the same time the use of the Irish language is promoted through the radio station.

There are several tourism and heritage facilities that have been developed in District C. Ionad Oidhreacht Leitir Mealláin & Ghorumna the building exhibits the rich heritage of the area and attracts a significant number of tourists to the area.

13.5.4 District D: Cois Fharraige

The Cois Fharraige district of Conamara stretches from the western fringe of Galway City westwards along the northern coast of Galway Bay to Baile na h-Abhann and Ros an Mhíl

For the purpose of this plan the district is composed of the following Electoral Districts:

- Cill Chuimín;
- Sailearna;
- Cill Aithnín;
- An Spidéal;

- Sliabh an Aonáigh;
- Na Forbacha

The following villages are also located in these settlements:

An Tulaigh/Baile na h-Abhann

Na Forbacha

An Cnoc

Ros an Mhíl

Na Mine

The land in general is undulating with a thin layer of low-fertility soil overlaying granite bedrock.

The Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 designates An Spidéal in the same category as An Cheathrú Rua as “Small Growth Villages” in the settlement hierarchy. Of the districts listed above An Spidéal, has a separate settlement plan contained in Volume 1 of this plan.

The pattern of development in this area is generally orientated towards the sea. There are also a number of local clusters of housing in the area.

The R336 is the major transportation route which serves the South Conamara area. It is fed by a large number of minor local roads which run north/south, linking the housing and lands to the main route and to the sea. The Conamara Regional Airport which is located at Minna 10km eastwards from An Cheathrú Rua gives a rapid connection to Oileáin Árann. In 1996, Telifis Na Gaeilge was established in Baile na Abhainn and has developed as a key resource in the promotion of the Irish language and keeping residents of the Gaeltacht informed of local, national and international news events. Established in 1980, Údarás na Gaeltachta is the regional authority located in Na Forbhaca responsible for the economic, social and cultural development of the Gaeltacht. The overall objective of Údarás na Gaeltachta is to ensure that Irish remains the main communal language of the Gaeltacht and is passed on to future generations. The fishing industries are concentrated along the Gaeltacht coastline and Ros a Mhil Port which is a key part of marine infrastructure is supported in this plan with specific policy objectives in *Chapter 6 Transport & Movement* (Policy Objectives PH1 and PH2) and *Chapter 9 Marine and Coastal Management* (SMT 1 and SMT 2). There are a significant number of beaches in the area with a wealth of marine sporting activity including sailing, fishing, diving and kayaking festivals.

13.5.5 District E: Oileáin Árann:

The main group of islands of the coast of County Galway are referred to as the Oileáin Árann. The largest island is Inis Mór, the middle and second largest is Inis Meáin and the smallest and most eastern is Inis Oírr which is only 25km off the county Clare coastline.

The three islands of Oileáin Árann are formed of limestone. The geology of the islands are mainly karst limestone, an extension of the karstic region of the Burren. The landscape is dominated by Karstified terraces.

They have been inhabited since the Stone Age, as evidenced by the forts and megalithic tombs. Successive millennia has seen the evolution of Christian Settlements of worship and devout study in early medieval times. The remnants of this age lie in the ruins of churches, graveyards and holy wells which are scattered throughout the Islands contributing to the unique heritage and landscapes of Oileáin Árann and attracting visitors from a global tourist market.

This unique heritage of geology, archaeology, biodiversity and agricultural systems , when added to the language and folk culture of these islands on the western outpost of Europe leaves a rare and distinctive living environment which enriches the country.

Transport services have improved access to these Islands for both locals and visitors, the ferry companies and Aer Árann has made access available to mainland facilities, including national and international travel routes, though the service can be restricted in severe weather conditions.

The decline of the traditional occupations of fishing and agriculture, and the rise in year round tourism have been the significant factors influencing the lives of the island communities in recent years.

Inis Mór is the largest of an Oileáin Árann, it has a land mass of 31 km². The main settlement of Cill Ronaín is contains all the main facilities and services for the island. The Island has a bank, supermarkets, medical clinic, bars, restaurants, guesthouses, hotels etc. The island attracts thousands of visitors daily during the peak season, as well as tourism the island economy relies on cottage industry and traditional industries, of agriculture and fishing.

Housing is located primarily along existing roads traversing the island. The island has a rich cultural heritage and maintains a high percentage of the population speaking Irish. Inis Mor has a wealth of pre-Christian and Christian sites including Dun Aongus which can be found at the edge of a 100m high cliff/Na Seacht dTeampaill (The seven churches) and Dun Eochla.

Inis Meáin, is the second largest of An Oileáin Árann, with a land mass 9km², houses are built in linear type development along the main routes which traverse the Island. The island has maintained its distinctive traditional field pattern, giving it a unique visual character.. There are a number of amenities on the island which include, a local shop & post office, bike hire, a pub, Catholic Church, restaurants, B&Bs and a co- operative. The Inis Meain Suites which is located on the island is an award winning restaurant which is included in the Michelin Guide and is a significant tourism attraction on the island. The island also benefits from the presence of both a primary and secondary school. There is also the knitwear factory shop and a craft shop. Culture and heritage are highly valued by the close knit local community and remain a strong focus of the community. There are two very important stone forts on the island. Teach Synge, restored cottage of where the writer John Millington Synge stayed. Dun Chonchuir which date to pre-Christian times and Dun Fearbhai which date to the 4th Century.

Inis Oirr, which is the smallest of Oileáin Árann consists of houses are built in clusters on the north side of the island which is sheltered from elements. There are five villages: Baile Thiar, Baile an Lurgain, Baile an tSéipéil, Baile an Chaisleáin and Baile an Fhormna.. The amenities on the island include an arts and cultural centre, a local shop, post office, campsite, bike hire, health clinic, library, pubs, Catholic Church, cafes and restaurants, a hotel, hostel, B&Bs, two schools and a co- operative. There is also a heritage and craft centre. Culture and heritage are valued by the local community and remain a strong focus of the community, 86% of the Islanders are Irish speaking.

13.5.6 District F: Imeall Na Cathrach

This is the part of the Gaeltacht which borders Galway City, some of it extending inside the City's administrative boundaries. This District is the most significant area that is under the greatest pressure from the growth of the city and must cope not only with the changes to its language and culture but with the constant demand for infrastructure and services.

The District is composed of Ten Electoral Divisions:

- Bearna;
- Eanach Dhúin;
- Maigh Cuilinn;
- Baile Chláir;
- Tulaigh Mhic Aodháin;
- Baile an Teampaill;
- Ceathrú an Bhrúnaigh;
- An Leacach Beag;
- An Carn Mór;
- Lisín an Bhealaigh.

Of the districts listed above Bearna, Baile Chláir and Maigh Cuilinn have separate settlement plans and are contained in Volume 2 of this plan.

13.6 Preserving and Promoting An Gaeltacht in the Planning Process

The Council is mindful that the county contains the largest and most populous Gaeltacht in the country which is of immense importance and requires careful consideration to ensure it is both preserved and promoted at every opportunity to ensure the long term growth and vibrancy of An Gaeltachta. The Council will seek to support An Gaeltacht by considering favourably appropriate development within the Gaeltacht area. Any development proposals, which in the opinion of the Planning Authority would have a significant negative impact on the Irish language and An Gaeltacht, will not be permitted. It is considered that this approach will help to address population decline in certain areas of An Gaeltacht whilst also ensuring the consolidation and strengthening of the Irish language and culture of An Gaeltacht.

The Gaeltacht Districts listed above will complement the Language Planning Areas as outlined in the 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030 and agreed with the relevant statutory agencies.

Galway Gaeltacht is divided in 10 LPAs: Joyce Country and Toormakeady LPA, Central Connemara LPA, Carraroe LPA, Ceantar na nOileán LPA, Aran Islands LPA, Cois Fharraige LPA, Maigh Cuilinn LPA, Bearna LPA and Cnoc na Cathrach LPA, East of Galway City LPA and An Eachréidh LPA.

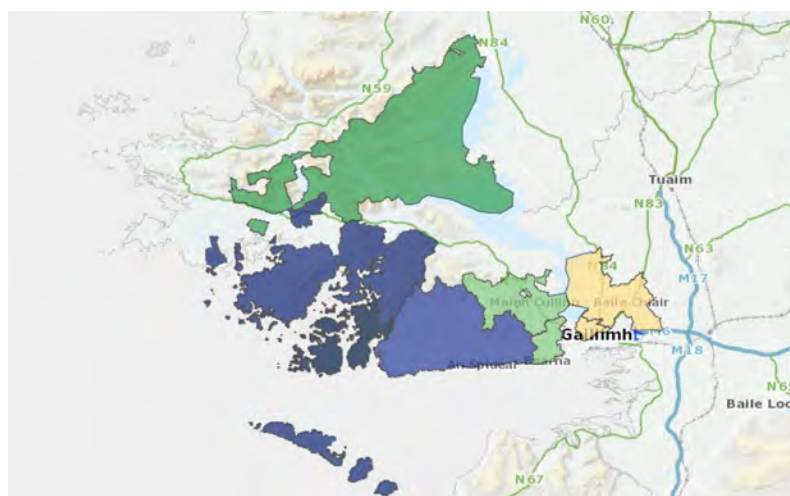


Fig 13.1 – Galway Gaeltacht Language Planning Areas

Policy Objectives An Gaeltacht

GA 1 Linguistic and Cultural Heritage of An Gaeltacht

It shall be a policy objective of the Council to promote, enhance and protect the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht and to promote Irish as the community language.

GA 2 Development of Language Plans

Support the development and implementation of language plans in Gaeltacht Language Planning Areas, Gaeltacht Service Towns and Irish Language Networks.

GA 3 Support the Statutory Development Agencies

Support all of the statutory development agencies, especially Údarás na Gaeltachta, to achieve sustainable development in the Galway Gaeltacht while protecting and promoting the Irish language as the first community language of the area.

GA 4 Language Enurement Clause

(a) A Language Enurement Clause will be applied on a portion of residential units in developments of two or more units in District D Cois Fharraige. The proportion of homes to which a language enurement clause will be a minimum of 80% or to the proportion of persons using Irish Language on a daily basis, in accordance with the latest published Census whichever is greater.

(b) A Language Enurement Clause will be applied on a portion of residential units in developments of two or more units in the remaining Gaeltacht Districts excluding District D Cois Fharraige. The proportion of homes to which a language enurement clause will be a minimum of 20% or to the proportion of persons using Irish Language on a daily basis, in accordance with the latest published Census whichever is greater.

GA 5 Signage within An Gaeltacht

All signs in An Gaeltacht including finger post signs, shop-fronts and roadside signs, business/community signage shall be in Irish. In all instances where new signage on shopfronts in An Gaeltacht are proposed, the profession/type of business shall be in Irish.

GA 6 Rural Housing in the Gaeltacht

All proposals for rural housing in the Gaeltacht countryside shall comply with *Chapter 4 Rural Living and Development*.

13.7 Islands

In the context of this plan islands are defined as islands which are cut off daily by the tide, are not connected to the mainland by a bridge, have permanent populations and are not in private ownership. The unique group of Islands off the coast of County Galway are an important part of the culture, heritage, ecology, economy and tourist appeal of the County.

A number of the islands have European/national designations in the form of SAC's, SPA's and NHA's and are also located with sensitive landscape within the Landscape Character Assessment contained in Appendix 4 of the plan. It is essential that any proposed development would take cognisance of these designations to ensure that development would not have an adverse impact on the islands and their characteristics. A visual impact assessment is normally required due to the environmental and

landscape sensitivities. It is essential that applicants/agents liaise with the Planning Authority in the form of pre-planning prior to submitting a planning application for any form of development on the islands. In addition to these islands, there are several islands which are not permanently inhabited along the Galway coastline, namely Inisturk, Inis Eirc, Turbot Island, Cruagh and Crump Island.

13.7.1 Inishbofin

Inishbofin lies seven miles off the Galway coast. The island is 5.7km by 4km. It is estimated that Inishbofin was inhabited as far back as 8000–4000 B.C. The first documented history of the island dates from early Christian times. The main activities on the island today are tourism, farming and fishing.

The islands of Inishbofin is composed almost entirely of Silurian slates and shales and rise to heights of 89 m. Two- thirds of the island is commonage where the main habitat type is heath, represented by both dry and wet heath communities. There are also several small oligotrophic lakes located on the island. The largest waterbody is Lough Bofin which is classified as a lagoon. On the eastern side of the island a small area sand dune occurs. The remainder of the island is under cultivation, with most of the area under grass for pasture and to a lesser degree hay, a small proportion remains where potatoes, and grain-crops are planted. The amenities on the island include, a local shop, community centre, bike hire, restaurants, hotel, and a primary school. Inishbofin has a number of official looped walks of varying difficulties which provide spectacular views of the islands wild Atlantic scenery. The islands off the Galway coast are an important part of the cultural and unique heritage of the County and are a valuable tourist attraction; therefore, the Council will positively encourage development that complies with the policy objectives of the plan and with the proper planning and development of the area.

Policy Objectives Islands

IS 1 Economic and Tourism Development on the Islands

Support the economic and tourism development of the islands for the benefit of island communities generally and to encourage the development of speciality or niche economic sectors that might be appropriate to different islands.

IS 2 Development Proposals on the Islands

- a) Support sustainable development proposals that contribute to the long term economic and social development of the islands;
- b) Priority shall be given to development that contributes to retention of the year-round population on the islands, that has a clear and identifiable economic and social benefit and that is compatible with the capacity of the local community to accommodate it;
- c) Ensure that new development of any kind is sympathetic to the individual form and character of the islands landscapes and traditional building patterns.

IS 3 Development of Pier Infrastructure

Support the enhancement and development of new pier infrastructure to the islands that shall provide for safe access by sea and include but shall not be limited to improved pier infrastructure on Inis Oír and Inis Meáin on the Oileáin Árann.

IS 4 Rural Housing on the Islands

Support permanent rural housing on the islands for applicants who can demonstrate that they

have permanently lived on the island for a substantial and sustained period of time and can contribute to the long term viability of the islands. An Enurement condition shall apply for a period of 7 years, after the date that the house is first occupied by the person or persons to whom the enurement clause applies.

13.8 Economic Development of Gaeltacht and Islands

The Districts in the Galway Gaeltacht and islands have a number of distinct characteristics that are present in the villages and settlements throughout this expansive Gaeltacht area. The factors that make settlements/villages economically viable and attractive to investors and visitors alike are numerous and sometimes hard to predict. A vibrant economy is necessary so that the indigenous population has adequate opportunity to remain within Gaeltacht areas. This plan endeavours to provide a balance to ensure that this can be achieved by supporting all forms of employment/tourism generation which are appropriate to the Gaeltacht area and the Islands (subject to environmental and other relevant planning considerations) and at the same time protecting the unique cultural tradition of the Irish language.

To ensure the continued vibrancy and life of these areas, the provision of a mix of residential, business and cultural uses will be encouraged subject to the proper planning and development of the area and in accordance with the Core Strategy of the County Development Plan. There are a number of niche businesses in operation in the Gaeltacht area, namely in District D Cois Fharraige where Udaras na Gaeltachta and other state agencies have supported the creation and expansion of industries such as Med Tech in na Forbaha.

The Council acknowledge the significant investment that has been made by Údarás na Gaeltachta in Gaeltacht areas of Galway in recent years from an economic and social perspective. Facilities such as the Gaeltacht digital network (gteic) will be centres of innovation and creativity to inspire new business, especially; to attract high potential start-ups and distance workers back to their native area. The Council will continue to support Údarás na Gaeltachta in fulfilling its role as a Development Agency of this region.

The Council recognises the importance of the “gteic” national network. This infrastructure facilities people in business or working remotely from the Gaeltacht and for developing new businesses. The Council consider these hubs to be essential in aiding the future development of the Gaeltacht communities.

The Council recognises the importance of the marine economy to communities within the Gaeltacht and the Islands in terms of creating employment opportunities. *Chapter 5 Economic, Enterprise and Retail* and *Chapter 9 Marine and Coastal Management* will address these important issues.

Policy Objectives An Gaeltacht and Islands Economic Development

GIED 1 Economic Development in An Gaeltacht and the Islands

To promote and support developments that contribute to the economic development of the Gaeltacht and Islands in a sustainable manner at suitable locations.

GIED 2 Development of Brownfield sites within Gaeltacht settlements

Encourage the redevelopment of existing brownfield sites within established villages in the

Gaeltacht area in order to maximise the sustainable regeneration of underutilised/vacant lands and/or buildings for potential commercial, cultural, retail, community and residential developments.

GIED 3 Development of Infrastructure within An Gaeltacht and Islands

Promote the sustainable development of infrastructure projects and the improvement of the infrastructure network in the Galway Gaeltacht and Islands with close co-operation with the relevant stakeholders;

GIED 4 Development of Marine and Aquaculture within An Gaeltacht and Islands

Promote and facilitate the sustainable development in the marine/aquaculture industry in suitable locations in the Gaeltacht and on the islands.

GIED 5 Development of Digital Hubs within An Gaeltacht and Islands

Support the provision of digital hubs including the expansion of the “gteic” network in the Gaeltacht and the Islands.

GIED 6 Bus Services and Rural Transport Programme within An Gaeltacht and Islands

Support the rural transport programme where appropriate, to provide for enhanced and more connected provision of public transport.

13.9 Culture and Tourism within the Gaeltacht and Islands

The tourism industry plays an extremely important role in Gaeltacht and Islands communities. The area has attracted a large number of visitors due to its unique landscape and facilities in relation to water-based activities, outdoor pursuits and cultural activities. The Wild Atlantic Way has developed over the years with increased signage and facilities along the route to attract and retain visitors to the area. The Colaisti Samhraidh in a number of Gaeltacht Districts have provided a valuable asset in terms of the cultural, economic and social activity which attracts students/teachers from all over the country.

The Council recognises that there are a number of uninhabited islands which are currently engaged in tourism activity in terms of visitors to these islands. The Council supports the continued sustainable development of this sector.

Policy Objectives An Gaeltacht and Islands Culture and Tourism

GICT 1 Development of Creative Industry

Promote and facilitate the sustainable development of creative industry centres and artistic initiatives in suitable locations in the Gaeltacht area and on the islands.

GICT 2 Development of Water-Based Leisure Sector

Support the development of the water-based leisure sector in a sustainable manner making the best use of existing and planned infrastructure and resources, in a manner that is sensitive to the natural and cultural heritage resources.

GICT 3 Tourism Development within An Gaeltacht and Islands

(a) Encourage and facilitate the development of the tourism potential of the Gaeltacht and Islands

in a manner that respects, builds on, protects and enhances the cultural, built and natural heritage and local amenities of the area;

(b) Provide where feasible and support the provision of tourism infrastructure and services including, walking, cycling and water-based infrastructure and short-term guest accommodation facilities throughout the Gaeltacht area in appropriate locations. Such infrastructure and services shall seek to manage any increase in visitor numbers in order to avoid significant effects including loss of habitat and disturbance and ensuring that any new projects, such as greenways are developed at suitable locations.

GICT 4 The Connemara Coast & Aran Islands Visitor Experience Development Plan

To support the implementation of *The Connemara Coast & Aran Islands Visitor Experience Development Plans* which recognises the natural and cultural assets of the area.

GICT 5 Development of the Colaisti Samhraidh

Promote and facilitate the sustainable development the Colaistí Samhraidh in suitable locations in the Gaeltacht area and on the islands.

Chapter 14 Climate Change, Energy and Renewable Resource

“To reduce the carbon footprint by integrating climate action into the planning system in support of national targets, support indigenous renewable sources in order to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and improve security of supply and the move to a competitive low carbon economy”.

14.1 Introduction

Climate Action includes the two approaches necessary to tackle climate change – Mitigation and Adaptation. This plan seeks to protect, mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The Council is committed to addressing climate change in a proactive manner through the careful consideration of growth and development.

Climate action is integrated into every chapter and strategy in the plan. Each chapter includes a sub-section outlining how the spatial strategy and policy objectives for each topic have been climate proofed and/or will contribute to mitigation and adaptation to climate change. To avoid duplication with other strategies and policy documents, including the Council’s Climate Adaptation Strategy, the plan addresses climate change only in so far as it relates to spatial planning. It is an underlying theme and it expressly influenced the formulation of a number of strategies in the plan including settlement, movement, economic development, renewable energy, flood risk management and coastal zone management.

This chapter addresses the effects of climate change including the increasing risks from flooding within County Galway.

This Chapter also outlines the importance of supporting the development of renewable energy resources and related infrastructure in the interests of delivering the renewable energy targets outlined in the Climate Action Plan 2019. To facilitate the sustainable growth of renewable energies a Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy (LARES) has been prepared as part of the County Development Plan and is located within Appendix 1. The LARES outlines the potential for a range of renewable energy resources and developments and acknowledges the significant contribution that they can make to the county in terms of energy security, reduced reliance on traditional fossil fuels, enabling future energy exports, meeting assigned national targets and the transition to a low carbon economy.

14.2 Strategic Aims

The Council shall work with the appropriate stakeholders and agencies in order to achieve an integrated and sustainable approach to the development of the County. This will accord with the following strategic aims:

- To reduce the County’s CO₂ emissions by achieving national, regional and any local targets for achieving a low carbon economy by 2050; and increase energy efficiency in Local Authority activities through its development management functions;
- To promote the sustainable development of the County by ensuring that future development is considered and managed against the risk of flooding; To increase awareness of the potential

impacts of climate change to enable people to adapt and manage future extreme weather events such as flooding within the County;

- To reduce County Galway's dependency on imported fossil fuels and to provide alternative energy sources by harnessing the County's potential for renewable energy sources while strengthening the grid transmission networks;

14.3 Strategic Context

This chapter is prepared in the context of the following International, National and Regional Plans, Policies and Guidelines:

EU Commission European Green Deal 2019
2030 EU Climate and Energy Framework 2014
EU Renewable Energy Directive 2009/28/EU
A Roadmap for Moving to a Competitive Low Carbon Economy in 2050
Draft National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) 2021 – 2030
National Policy Position on Climate Action and Low Carbon Development 2014
The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015
Climate Action Plan 2019; To Tackle Climate Breakdown by Government of Ireland
Energy White Paper Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015 -2030
Programme for Government - Our Shared Future 2020
Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework
National Development Plan 2018-2027
Investing in the Transition to a Low-Carbon and Climate Resilient Society 2018-2027.
Northern and Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032
National Adaptation Framework, Planning for a Climate Resilient Ireland, 2018
Environmental Protection Agency's 2019 guidance note 'Integrating Climatic Factors into the Strategic Environmental Assessment process in Ireland'
Galway County Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019 -2024
EU Directive on the Energy Performance of Buildings (2002/91/EC)
Ireland's Second Energy Efficiency Action Plan to 2020
Grid Development Strategy-Your Grid, Your Tomorrow, Eirgrid, 2017
Tomorrow's Energy Scenarios 2017 – Planning our Energy Future, Eirgrid
Eirgrid's Tomorrow's Energy Scenarios 2019 System Needs Assessment
Government Policy Statement on the Strategic Importance of Transmission and Other Energy Infrastructure
Offshore Renewable Energy Action Plan (OREPD)
Draft National Marine Planning Framework Baseline Report 2018
Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth – An Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland, 2012.
Wind Farm Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2006
Draft Wind Energy Guidelines 2019
The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2009
'Flood Risk Management. Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan. Prepared under the National Adaptation Framework', OPW. September 2019.
EU Floods Directive 2007/60/EC

14.3.1 National Policy Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF) sets out the role of the planning system in facilitating mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change via National Strategic Outcome NSO No. 8 which is

dedicated to achieving transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society and NSO 9 which proposes sustainable management of Water, Waste and other Environmental Resources. The Council will demonstrate compliance with further National Policy Objectives (NPOs) within the theme of climate change and how adaptation and mitigation measures are required in areas such as NPO 3(a), Compact Growth, NPO 21 competitiveness of rural areas and NPO 54 reduction of carbon footprint. In relation to water resource management and flooding NPO 57 aims to enhance water quality and resource management.

The NPF includes a number of NPOs and priorities for policy objectives in the energy and renewable energy sector such as NPO 42, NPO47, NPO 54, NPO 55, NPO 56 . The aim of National Strategic Outcome 8 is to ‘Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society’ and sets out the new requirements and policy emphasis relevant to Energy.

14.3.2 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) identifies a number of key Regional Strategic Objectives RPO’s related to Climate Change, Energy/Renewable energy/Transmission Network and Flooding including the following which are incorporated into the relevant chapters/strategies in the Development Plan: Climate Action RPO 5.1, RPO 6.51, RPO 9.4, Flooding RPO 3.10, RPO 3.11, Key Energy/Renewable Energy/Transmission Network: RPO 4.16, RPO 4.18, RPO 4.19, RPO 4.17, RPO 8.1, RPO 8.2 RPO 8.3 RPO 8.4.

14.3.3 Draft National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) 2021 – 2030

Ireland's first Draft National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) 2021-2030 was submitted to the European Commission in December 2018. This first draft of the NECP takes into account energy and climate policies developed to date. The draft NECP is the first step in the process of putting together our final National Energy and Climate Plan and further iterations of the plan will take into account additional policies and measures committed to under *the Programme for Government, Our Shared Future* and the all-of-Government *Climate Action Plan 2019*.

14.3.4 Climate Action Plan 2019 to Tackle Climate Breakdown

The Government’s Climate Action Plan 2019 reflects the central priority that climate change will have in Ireland’s political and administrative systems. The Climate Action Plan contains 183 actions, together with hundreds of sub-actions and measures which will be implemented by 13 Government Departments and 40 agencies under the remit of those Departments. It identifies how Ireland will achieve its 2030 targets for carbon emissions, and puts us on a trajectory to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Every relevant sector is addressed: electricity, enterprise, housing, heating, transport, agriculture, waste, the public sector and charts a course towards ambitious decarbonisation targets. While this framework of goals and performance monitoring is crucial, it will be equally important that every public body adopts a Mandate for Climate Action and key measures which will help create a framework across the entire public sector outlined in the CAP.

The Government’s Climate Action Plan (2019) is of direct relevance to the County Development Plan. Actions relating to local authorities include signing up to the Climate Action Charter, the development of the Electric Vehicle (EV) charging network, the preparation of local adaptation strategies and in alignment with the NPF the new CDP must deliver compact, connected, sustainable growth that must meet our needs for power, heat, travel, land use and other resources in a greatly more efficient and sustainable way.

14.3.5 County Galway Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019 - 2024

As part of the National Climate Change Action Plan 2019, County Galway produced and adopted its first Climate Adaptation Strategy in August 2019.

The strategy is developed around 4 key themes/goals; 1. Critical Buildings & Infrastructure 2. Natural and Cultural Heritage 3. Water Resources & Flood Risk Management 4. Community Services, most of which have relevance for the Council's planning functions and which aim to increase resilience to climate change by planning and implementing appropriate adaptation measures. There are four high-level goals which are high-level long-term statements, while the Objectives define strategies or implementation steps to attain the identified Goals. The Targeted Specific Objectives outlined in County Galway's Climate Adaptation Strategy are common across all four Goals and set out the steps to implementing the Strategy. Each of these themes/goals is underpinned by a set of objectives and actions which have been incorporated, where relevant, into the County Development Plan.

Climate change adaptation considerations are mainstreamed and integrated successfully into all functions and activities of Galway County Council ensuring operational protocols, procedures and policies implement an appropriate response in addressing the diversity of impacts associated with climate change. This plan actively supports the implementation of these identified objectives and the associated actions identified in the *Galway County Council Climate Adaptation Strategy*.

14.4 Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation

Progressing climate action is a priority for this plan which will be done through a Climate Strategy which incorporates national and regional policy through an approach which includes mitigation and adaptation. The two components of climate action are critical in order to build resilience and adapt to the changing climate in a planned and structured way.

The impacts and risks of climate change can be reduced and managed through mitigation and adaptation actions. The aim of climate adaptation is to reduce the vulnerability of our environment, society and economy and increase resilience.

The policy objectives in this plan seek to mitigate and reduce the severity of future climate change and to manage the risks and impacts associated with existing or anticipated impacts of climate change. The policy objectives have had regard to the Climate Action Plan 2019 which sets out an ambitious course of action over the coming years to address the nature and scale of the challenge. The Plan examines the key sectors including electricity, transport, built environment, industry and agriculture as outlined in the CAP and the ambitious decarbonisation targets and proposed measures that chart County Galway's course in transitioning to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050.

Galway County Council is committed to making the transition to becoming a low carbon and climate resilient County, promoting the economic, social and environmental benefits of low carbon development, with an emphasis on the reduction in energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions. This includes a combination of effective mitigation and adaptation responses to climate change as can be seen in the tables 14.1 and 14.2 below.

Topic	Climate Mitigation Measures, including
Buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support energy-efficient building design • Promote building of energy efficient smaller homes/higher density homes appropriate to demographics and with greatest infrastructure available • Promote renewable and low carbon energy • Create or enhance carbon sinks
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support construction of green routes/cycleways/pedestrian routes • Support car-free developments • Strengthen public transport linkages and encourage their use • Support localisation of jobs/shops/services to minimise the need for most common travel patterns • Support electric vehicle charging points and electrification of the Council fleet
Energy production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote energy-efficient building design • Promote links between developments and renewable energy resources, for instance by sourcing energy on-site renewably or from low-carbon fuel sources
Minerals/Waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate developments strategically (e.g. waste materials) to minimise the need to travel, subject to health aspects/business needs
Agriculture, Land Management and Forestry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish new community woodlands in urban/urban fringe areas • Support production of sustainable biofuels (farm contributions to localised energy supplies – biofuels/wind energy production) • Implement higher level plan recommendations/objectives/policies

Table 14.1 Climate Mitigation Measures

Topic	Climate Adaptation Measures, including
Buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take into account effects of building density and mixed developments on energy consumption when considering applications for development • Promote the repair and reuse of existing buildings particularly of underused upper floors in urban areas • Support green roofs and good ventilation • Support enhancement of flood resilience of buildings, e.g. elevated work surfaces and storage facilities, raised sockets and electrical infrastructure, enhanced flood boards • Assess existing Council infrastructure for “fitness for purpose” under new climatic conditions • Promote the use of permeable surfaces to decrease run-off rates • Support grey-water recycling schemes that seek to decrease abstraction of potable surface water resources, thus reducing water stress during periods of low rainfall • Support efforts to maximise water conservation • Plant drought-resistant plants/ trees in public amenity areas to provide shade and increase green infrastructure linkages
Agriculture, Land Management and Forestry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support diversification of the rural economy to promote crop viability options etc. • Encourage afforestation (where environmentally appropriate) to enhance interception and infiltration of precipitation within river basin catchments • Support restoration of peat bogs when turf cutting has ceased • Take into account relevant recommendations from the National Peatlands Strategy when implementing the Plan

Topic	Climate Adaptation Measures, including
Water management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support increased resilience to flooding through Sustainable Drainage System • Support grey-water recycling schemes that seek to decrease abstraction of potable surface water resources, thus reducing water stress during periods of low rainfall • Ensure adequate/appropriate water supply and drainage provision when considering applications for development • Require Water Conservation Strategies as relevant
Infrastructure, including flood defences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that existing Council critical infrastructure and services (particularly emergency services) are resilient to new climatic conditions • Ensure that applications for new critical infrastructure demonstrate resilience to new climatic conditions
Wildlife and biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the creation/enhancement of ecological linkages and buffer zones from development • Support the creation/protection of ecologically resilient and varied landscapes to help support a wide range of species
Economy and tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support opportunities for increased tourism as a result of warmer summers, within the limits of existing infrastructure • Promote Wetlands Ecosystems Services in developments where relevant and appropriate
Human Health, Risk and Insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide green infrastructure to provide shade in urban areas • Support the provision of building methods and materials to reduce the impacts of heat stress • Support appropriate maintenance of surface water drainage infrastructure to avoid flood risk

Table 14.2 Climate Adaptation Measures

14.5 Integrating Climate Action Into the Plan

The overall vision and strategic aims of the county development plan have been influenced by climate action, a necessary measure that is supported by the legislative and policy framework relating to climate action outlined in section 14.3 above. This chapter seeks to address issues of climate change, energy supply, flooding and sustainability through the adoption and implementation of national policy at a local level.

The climate change mitigation pathways presented in Chapter 4 of the Climate Action Plan 2019 entail a coherent set of abatement measures across the five sectors that contribute most to our greenhouse gas emissions: Agriculture, Transport, Electricity, Built Environment, and Industry/Enterprise. This section of plan identifies each of the policy objectives, which contribute towards achieving each of the targets set for the relevant sectors.

Climate action policy objectives including mitigation and adaption policy objectives are outlined in this chapter and are included in each chapter. Table 14.3 demonstrates how climate action provisions have been incorporated into the County Development Plan with Mitigation and Adaptation Policy Objectives included in each chapter.

Climate Action Plan, 2019 - Sectoral roadmap	Mitigation/Adaptation Policy Objectives - GCDP
<p>A detailed sectoral roadmap has been set out in the Climate Action Plan, 2019 which is designed to deliver a cumulative reduction in emissions, over the period 2021 to 2030, of 58.4 MtCO₂eq. outside the ETS, 17 MtCO₂eq. within the ETS, and 26.8 MtCO₂eq. from land use. The following is a brief account of the main sectoral targets for the relevant sectors;</p> <p>Electricity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce CO₂ eq. emissions from the sector. • Increase reliance on renewables from 30% to 70% adding 12GW of renewable energy capacity from onshore wind, offshore renewable energy, grid scale solar energy (with peat and coal plants closing). • Streamline the consent system, the connection arrangements, and the funding supports for the new technologies on and offshore. • Support scheme for micro-generation with a price for selling power to the grid. • Opportunity for community participation in renewable generation and community gain. <p>Buildings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce fossil fuel use, given the current heavy reliance on gas, oil, coal and peat in the sector. • Reduce CO₂ eq. emissions from the sector. • Introduce stricter requirements for new buildings and substantial refurbishments of existing homes to upgrade to B2 Building Energy Rating (BER). • Group together home retrofits to be funded and delivered. • Promote the install of heat pumps in existing and new buildings. • Implement a roadmap for delivering District Heating potential. • Increase the number of Sustainable Energy Communities. <p>Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce CO₂ eq. emissions from the sector. • Accelerate the take up of EV cars and vans so that we reach 100% of all new cars and vans being EVs by 2030. • Make growth less transport intensive through better planning, remote and home-working and modal shift to public transport. <p>Agriculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver greenhouse gas abatement through adoption of improvements in farming practice in line with recommendations from Teagasc. • Deliver expansion of forestry planting and soil management to ensure carbon abatement from land-use. • Support diversification within Agriculture and land use to develop sustainable and circular value chains and business models for lower carbon intensity farming. <p>Enterprise and Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce Ireland's ETS industry emissions. • Embed energy efficiency, replacement of fossil fuels, careful management of materials and waste, and carbon abatement across all enterprises and public service bodies • Mobilise clusters regionally and sectorally to become centres of excellence for the adoption of low carbon technologies. • Plan for the delivery of quality employment and enterprise in the new areas of opportunity being opened up. <p>Waste and the Circular Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop reduction strategies for plastics, food waste and resource use. • Increase the level and the quality of recycling. • Eliminate non-recyclable plastic. • Reduce the reliance on landfill with sharp reductions in plastics and compostables entering landfill. <p>Public Sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce CO₂ eq. from the sector. • Improve the energy efficiency of public sector buildings. 	<p>Volume 1: Written Statement Chapter 2 Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy & Housing Strategy CS1-5, MM1, SS1-SS8, HS1-HS4, SH4</p> <p>Chapter 3 Placemaking, Regeneration & Urban Living PM1-6, PM7, CGR1-4, CGR6-9, CGR11, CGR12, UL1-3, UL5.</p> <p>Chapter 4 Rural Living & Development RCI-3, RC5-7, RH6, RH7, RD2, RD4, AD1, AD3, H2,F2-F5</p> <p>Chapter 5 Economic Development & Retail Development ES1, EL1, EL4, SC03, SC04, SC08, RD1, CS3, CS12.</p> <p>Chapter 6 Transport & Movement GCTS1-4, ILUTP1, ILUTP2, WC1-5, GW1, EV1, PT1, PT2, PT5-7, NNR6, NNR8, PH3.</p> <p>Chapter 7 Infrastructure, Utilities & Environmental Protection WS1-4, WS6, WS7, CWS1-3, WW5, WW7, WW8, WM1, WM2, WM7, WM9, EG2, EG5, ICT1, ICT2, ICT9, AQ1-AQ3,</p> <p>Chapter 8 Tourism and Landscape VEPP1, TI3, GBW1, GBW2, HT3, LCM1.</p> <p>Chapter 9 Marine and Coastal Management NMPF1, MCD1, MCE1, SMT1, AF1, SF2, MCT2, RE1, MCH2, MCC1-4.</p> <p>Chapter 10 Natural Heritage, Biodiversity & Green/Blue Infrastructure NHB 1-6, WR1,WR2,WTWF1, P1-P3, P01,TWHS1-3, PG1-3, IW1,P01-3.</p> <p>Chapter 11 Community Development & Social Infrastructure SC1, SC1, MU1, CF1, CF3, EDU1, EDU5, EDU7, H1-H3, PA1, SPR2-4, SPR6, CWH1, PWB1-PWB3.</p> <p>Chapter 12 Architecture, Archaeology & Cultural Heritage Ah1-AH6, AH8,ARC1,CA2.</p> <p>Chapter 13 The Galway Gaeltacht and Islands GA3, IS2, GIED2, GIED5, GICT4.</p> <p>Chapter 14 Climate Change, Energy & Renewable Resource CC1-CC10, FL1-FL15, RE1-RE7.</p> <p>Volume 2-Settlement Plan Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) GCMA 1 – 6, GCMA 12- 21. Small Growth Towns SGT 1-4, SGT 8, SGT 15, SGT 16-18 Small Growth Villages SGV1-4, SGV 8, SGV 15-18</p>

Table 14.3 Climate Action Policy Objectives incorporated into the County Development Plan.

Policy Objectives Climate Change

CC 1 Climate Change

Support and facilitate the implementation of European, national and regional objectives for climate adaptation and mitigation taking into account other provisions of the Plan (including those relating to land use planning, energy, sustainable mobility, flood risk management and drainage) and having regard to the Climate mitigation and adaptation measures.

CC 2 Transition to a low carbon, climate-resilient society

It is the Council's policy objective to support the transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050, by way of reducing greenhouse gases, increasing renewable energy, and improving energy efficiency.

CC 3 County Galway Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024

To implement the County Galway Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 as appropriate

CC 4 Local Authority Climate Action Plan

Support the preparation of a Climate Action Plan for County Galway.

CC 5 Climate Adaptation and Mitigation

To promote, support and direct effective climate action policies and objectives that seek to improve climate outcomes across County Galway through the encouragement and integration of appropriate mitigation and adaptation considerations and measures into all development and decision-making processes.

CC 6 Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy (LARES)

To support the implementation of the Renewable Energy Strategy contained in Appendix 1 of the Galway County Development Plan to facilitate the transition to a low carbon county.

CC 7 Climate Action Fund

Support the delivery of sustainable development projects under the European Green Deal and utilise the Climate Action Fund/ Just Transition Fund established under the National Development Plan to encourage public and private climate mitigation and adaptation projects in line with criteria set out by the Fund at that time.

CC 8 Climate Action and Development Location

To implement, through the plan and future local areas plans, policies that support and encourage sustainable compact growth and settlement patterns, integrate land use and transportation, and maximise opportunities through development location, form, layout and design to secure climate resilience and reduce carbon dioxide and greenhouse emissions.

CC 9 Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation

Galway County Council shall incorporate climate change adaptation into land use planning, building layouts, energy, transport, natural resource management, forestry, agriculture and marine waters.

CC 10 Green Infrastructure

Galway County Council shall promote the benefit of open spaces and implement the integration of green infrastructure/networks (e.g. interconnected network of green spaces (including aquatic ecosystems) and other physical features on land) into new development and regeneration proposals in order to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

14.6 Flooding

Flooding is an environmental phenomenon that can pose a risk to human health as well as causing economic and social effects. It is expected that climate change will impact on flood risk in Galway into the future from an increase in the number of heavy rainfall days per year leading to an increase in frequency, pattern and severity of fluvial (river) and pluvial (surface water drainage) flooding. Sea level rise will exacerbate coastal flooding. Accordingly, it is more important than ever to take account of flood risk in spatial planning. This section sets out the Council's approach to address the effects of climate change including the risks from flooding within County Galway.

Flooding cannot be completely eliminated, but its impacts can be minimised with proactive and careful management of catchments and identified flood risk areas and by ensuring that development does not individually or cumulatively give rise to new flood risks. In order to minimise the impact of increased future flood risk, there are various steps that Local Authorities can take. These include flood protection works, stormwater attenuation and more significantly, avoidance of development in floodplains, except in very limited circumstances.

14.6.1 CFRAM Programme

The Office of Public Works (OPW) is the lead organisation for flood risk management in Ireland. The OPW is implementing the national Catchment and Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) programme which commenced in 2011 and it is intended to deliver on the main elements of the National Flood Policy 2004 and on the requirements of the EU Floods Directive [2007/60/EC], in co-operation with local authorities and other public bodies. CFRAM studies are being undertaken for each of the six river basin districts in Ireland. County Galway is located within both the Shannon International and the Western River Basin Districts. Galway County Council will be required to take account of the CFRAMs Flood Risk Management Plans.

The OPW produced and has made available various historical and predictive flood risk indicator mapping, including that relating to fluvial, coastal, pluvial and groundwater flooding, for the entire country. The Stage 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for County Galway accompanies this plan and has been informed by this mapping.

The national guidelines 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2009) introduced mechanisms for the incorporation of flood risk identification, assessment and management into the planning process. Planning Authorities are required to have regard to the guidelines when carrying out their functions under the Planning Acts.

The core objectives of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines are to:

- Avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding;
- Avoid new developments increasing flood elsewhere, including that which may arise from surface water run-off;
- Ensure effective management of residual risk for development permitted in floodplains;
- Avoid unnecessary restrictions of national, regional or local economic and social growth;
- Improve the understanding of flood risk among relevant stakeholders; and

- Ensure that the requirements of EU and national law in relation to the natural environment and nature conservation are complied with at all stages of flood risk management. The key principles set out in the Flood Risk Management Guidelines are to:
- Avoid flood risk where possible;
- Substitute less vulnerable uses when avoidance is not possible;
- Mitigate and manage the risk where avoidance and substitution are not possible.

The guidelines follow the principle that development should not be permitted in flood risk areas, particularly flood plains, except where there are no alternative and appropriate sites available in lower risk areas that are consistent with the objectives of proper planning and sustainable development.

14.6.2 The County Development Plan and Flood Risk Considerations

The County Development Plan is required to undergo an appropriate level of Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and in this regard a Stage 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment is being carried out as part of the plan preparation process. The findings of this assessment are available as a support document to the plan. The SFRA process is also integrated into the Strategic Environmental Assessment process which is also being undertaken alongside the preparation of the County Development Plan. Lower tier plans, such as the Local Area Plans, will also be subjected to their own SFRA requirements.

The SFRA has been undertaken and prepared in accordance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009). The purpose of the SFRA is to identify flooding or surface water management issues related to the County that may warrant further investigation at the appropriate plan level, or at planning application level, and also to suggest measures to be integrated into the County Development Plan that will contribute towards both flood risk management in the County and compliance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines.

Areas of County Galway are vulnerable to flooding and this vulnerability can be exacerbated by changes associated with global warming such as increased occurrences of severe rainfall events, sea level rise, increased storm frequency and associated flooding. Local conditions such as low-lying lands and slow surface water drainage increase the risk of flooding. This risk can also be increased by human actions including clearing of natural vegetation to make way for agriculture, draining/rehabilitation of bog and wetland areas and the development of settlements in the flood plains of rivers and low lying or eroding coastlines as well as by changing weather patterns. Inadequately planned infrastructural development, forestry operations and urban development in the floodplain, for example, can also give rise to flooding hazards, coastal erosion/flooding and loss of habitats.

The County Galway SFRA contained within the supporting documents of this Development Plan, provides information on flood risk within the County.

14.6.3 Flood Zones and the Sequential Approach

The Planning System Flood Risk Management Guidelines (2009) prescribe the use of a sequential approach to ensure development is directed towards land that is at a low risk of flooding. The sequential approach makes use of flood risk assessment and of prior identification of flood zones for river (fluvial) and coastal flooding. It is essential that the risk potentially arising from other sources of flooding (e.g. groundwater and pluvial) should also be taken into account in all areas and stages of the planning process.

There are three types or levels of flood zones defined for the purposes of implementing the Planning System Flood Risk Management Guidelines:

- 1. Flood Zone A** – where the probability of flooding from rivers and the sea is highest (greater than 1% or 1 in 100 for river flooding or 0.5% or 1 in 200 for coastal flooding);
- 2. Flood Zone B** – where the probability of flooding from rivers and the sea is moderate (between 0.1% or 1 in 1000 and 1% or 1 in 100 for river flooding and between 0.1% or 1 in 1000 year and 0.5% or 1 in 200 for coastal flooding); and
- 3. Flood Zone C** – where the probability of flooding from rivers and the sea is low (less than 0.1% or 1 in 1000 for both river and coastal flooding). Flood Zone C covers all areas which are not in zones A or B.

Table 14.4 indicates the types of land uses that are appropriate in each of the Flood Zones identified within the County, in accordance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines (2009). Where developments/land uses are proposed that are considered inappropriate to the Flood Zone, then a Development Management Justification Test and Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment will be required in accordance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines (2009).

Land Uses	Flood Zone A	Flood Zone B	Flood Zone C
HVD - Highly Vulnerable Development	Inappropriate (if proposed then Justification Test & detailed FRA required)	Inappropriate (if proposed then Justification Test & detailed FRA required)	Appropriate (screen for flood risk)
LVD – Less Vulnerable Development	Inappropriate (if proposed then Justification Test & detailed FRA required)	Inappropriate due to climate change (if proposed then Justification Test & detailed FRA required)	Appropriate (screen for flood risk)
WCD Water Compatible Development	Appropriate (detailed FRA may be required)	Appropriate (detailed FRA may be required)	Appropriate (screen for flood risk)

Table 14.4: Flood Zones and Appropriate Land Uses

Note: Refer to Flood Risk Management Guidelines for additional detail.

- 1. HVD** – Houses, schools, hospitals, residential institutions, emergency services, essential infrastructure, etc.
 - 2. LVD** – Economic uses (retail, leisure, warehousing, commercial, industrial, non-residential institutions, etc.), land and buildings used for agriculture or forestry, local transport infrastructure, etc.
 - 3. WCD** – Docks, marinas, wharves, water-based recreation and tourism (excluding sleeping accommodation), amenity open space, sports and recreation, flood control infrastructure, etc.
- In general, flood vulnerable development in flood plains should be restricted. Development should also be restricted on lands identified as “benefiting lands” as there may be legacy flood risk issues in these areas.

Advice Note:

Flood hazard and flood risk information is an emerging dataset of information. The flood hazard maps used by the Council may be altered in light of future data and analysis, in particular the CFRAMS. Therefore, all landowners and developers are advised that Galway County Council accept no responsibility for losses or damages arising due to assessments of vulnerability to flooding of lands, uses and developments. Owners, users and developers are advised to take all reasonable measures to assess the vulnerability to flooding in a particular area, prior to submitting a planning application.

Policy Objectives Flood Risk Management

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.

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:

- (a) Avoid, reduce and/or mitigate, as appropriate in accordance with the Guidelines;
- (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;
- (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;
- (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.

FL 3 Principles of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines

The Council shall implement the key principles of flood risk management set out in the Flood Risk Management Guidelines as follows:

- (a) Avoid development that will be at risk of flooding or that will increase the flooding risk elsewhere, where possible;
- (b) Substitute less vulnerable uses, where avoidance is not possible; and
- (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 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.

FL 4 Flood Relief Schemes

The Council shall support and co-operate with the Office of Public Works (OPW) in the delivery of Flood Relief Schemes.

FL 5 Catchment Planning

The Council will support the OPW'S CFRAM Programme and catchment-based Flood Planning Groups, especially where catchments go beyond the Council's administrative boundary, in the

development and implementation of catchment-based strategies for the management of flood risk - including those relating to storage and conveyance.

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 pre-development levels and planning applications for new developments will be required to provide details of surface water drainage and sustainable drainage systems proposals.

FL 7 Protection of Waterbodies and Watercourses

Protect waterbodies and watercourses within the County from inappropriate development, including rivers, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains. This will include protection buffers in riverine, wetland and coastal areas as appropriate.

FL 8 Flood Risk Assessment for Planning Applications and CFRAMS

Protect Flood Zone A and Flood Zone B from inappropriate development and direct developments/land uses into the appropriate Flood Zone in accordance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009 (or any superseding document) and the guidance contained in Development Management Standard 69.

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

Where a development/land use is proposed that is inappropriate within the Flood Zone, then the development proposal will need to be accompanied by a Development Management Justification Test in addition to the site-specific Flood Risk Assessment.

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.

FL 9 SFRA of Lower Tier Plans

Lower tier plans shall undertake SFRA (Strategic Flood Risk Assessment) in compliance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines.

FL 10 SFRA/FRA and Climate Change

SFRAs and site-specific FRAs shall provide information on the implications of climate change with regard to flood risk in relevant locations. The 2009 OPW Draft Guidance on Assessment of Potential Future Scenarios for Flood Risk Management (or any superseding document) shall be consulted with to this effect.

FL 11 FRA and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

Flood risk may constitute a significant environmental effect of a development proposal that in certain circumstances may trigger a sub-threshold EIA. FRA should therefore be an integral part of any EIA undertaken for projects within the County.

FL 12 Inland Fisheries

It is the Council policy objective to consult, where necessary, with Inland Fisheries Ireland, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and other relevant agencies in the construction of flood alleviation measures in County Galway.

FL 13 CFRAM

It is Council policy objective to take account of and incorporate into local planning policy and decision making, including possible future variations to this plan, CFRAM measures that may be published in the future, including planned investment measures for managing and reducing flood risk.

FL 14 Flood Vulnerable Zones

It is Council policy objective to ensure that applications pertaining to existing developments in flood vulnerable zones provide details of structural and non-structural risk management measures to include, but not be limited to specifications of the following - floor levels, internal layout, flood resilient construction, flood resistant construction, emergency response planning, access and egress during flood events.

FL 15 Flood Risk Management

Ensure each flood risk management activity is examined to determine actions required to embed and provide for effective climate change adaptation as set out in the OPW Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan for Flood Risk Management applicable at the time.

FL 16 Benefitting Land

Applications for development on land identified as benefitting land may be prone to flooding, and as such site-specific flood risk assessments may be required in these areas.

14.7 Energy and Renewable Resource

14.7.1 Overview of Ireland's Energy Situation

Ireland remains heavily dependent on fossil fuels and there is currently a need to import two thirds of the country's energy needs at a significant financial cost to the economy and the environment. The main trends in the national energy fuel share for Ireland in 2019 were outlined by SEAI as follows;

- Fossil fuels accounted for (87%) of primary energy used in 2019 which included Oil accounting for 49% of the total primary energy requirement, Natural Gas 31%, Coal 2.6% Peat 4.3%.
- Renewables are disaggregated into wind, hydro, biomass and other renewables which in total accounted for 11% of primary energy.
- Non-renewable wastes and electricity imports accounted for the remaining energy in 2019. Ireland became a net importer of electricity in 2019 for the first time since 2015. Net electricity imports made up 2.1% of electricity generated by just 0.4% of total primary energy.
- Transport continues to be the largest of the end-use sectors. It accounted for 42% of total final energy consumption.
- Energy consumption in Ireland (approximately 33.5% required for heating, 35.4% transport and 31.2% electricity). (Source: SEAI - *Energy in Ireland, 2020*)

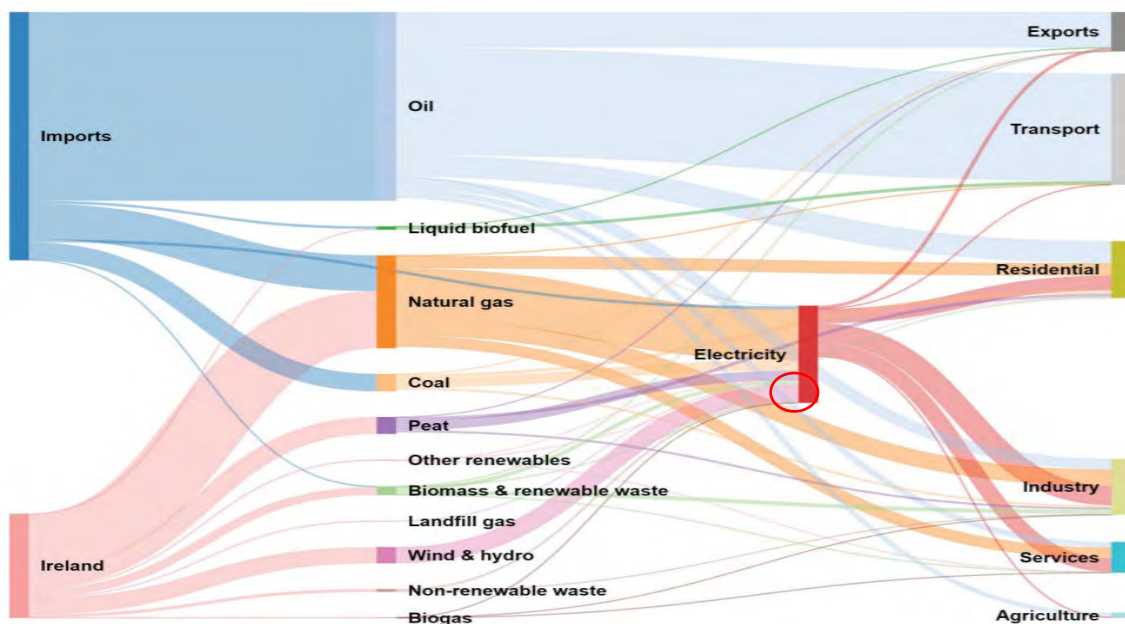


Figure 1 Energy Flows in Ireland 2018. Source: SEAI (*Energy Security in Ireland, 2020 Report*)

Figure 1 shows the split between Ireland's indigenous and imported energy as a flow diagram with an overview of the energy security illustrating each fuel type and end use segment. This shows that 67% of Ireland's energy was imported in 2018, mostly as oil, which is mainly used for transport. Another important features to note include that most electricity is currently generated by natural gas.

14.7.2 Energy Strategy

An efficient and secure energy supply is essential to the future growth and sustainable development of County Galway. Reliable and low-cost energy is essential for a high quality of life for the residents of County Galway and also to ensure that the County is an attractive place in which to do business. However, it is essential to ensure that energy demands are met without compromising environmental quality. Energy efficiency, renewable energy development and progression towards a low carbon economy are therefore central themes of this Plan.

Energy Expectation for Galway to 2028 is as follows:

- A reduction in demand for non-renewable energy sources, such as coal and oil, as well as an increased demand for electricity from all sectors, leading to more sustainable energy usage across the county.
- A significant increase in the demand for electricity is predicted resulting in a decrease in utilisation of fossil fuels. A large factor in this will be the Transport sector, as electric vehicles are developed and become more widespread, the oil usage by the sector is projected to decrease.
- A significant reduction in the use of coal and peat for home heating is anticipated due to advances in home heating technology, improvements in home insulation and new laws restricting the burning of fossil fuels for home heating due to environmental and climate change obligations.
- Natural gas will continue to have a role to play in the transition to a low carbon economy.

- In the longer-term fossil fuels will be replaced by renewable energy sources in County Galway in line with the *Strategy for Renewable Energy 2012 – 2020* which is aimed at decoupling energy from reliance on fossil fuels.
- The implementation of the targets and policy objectives outlined in the Renewable Energy Strategy which has been prepared for County Galway as part of the County Development Plan is contained within Appendix 1.

14.7.3 Electricity and Gas Network

The de-carbonisation of the economy will require a significant increase in the provision of a secure and adequate electricity infrastructure to meet the growth in demand and to ensure that an efficient and reliable electricity supply is available to households, business and industry. A strong transmission grid is essential to attract and retain industrial investment, to ensure competitive energy supplies, to achieve balanced development, to reduce dependency on fossil fuels, and to achieve climate change targets.

Eirgrid published a Transmission Development Plan (TDP) 2018-2027 for the development of the Irish transmission network and interconnection over a ten-year period and includes projects that are needed for the operation of the transmission network and future potential projects that could help to drive future needs and reinforce the National Grid. In the TDP, County Galway lies within the West Planning Area and the TDP identifies several new projects as being required in Galway between 2020 and 2032.

The Council welcomes and supports the inclusion of the Regional Solution Project relating to 400Kv transmission grid infrastructure in the RSES, in light of the identified lack of high-capacity transmission infrastructure needed to capitalise on the high renewable energy potential in the region.

The Gas network plays a key role as part of the supporting infrastructure for renewable energy developments. Gas will play an important part of Ireland's energy economy for the foreseeable future. Even with a clear move towards renewable energy in the growing electricity sector, Ireland is likely to rely on natural gas for about one-third of electricity generation in 2030 to support the transition to a low carbon economy. By this date, Ireland will be reliant on imported gas or gas generated from innovations in indigenous gas manufacturing.

The Gas Transmission Network in Ireland is operated by Gas Networks Ireland and their Network Development Plan (NDP) 2018-2027 indicates how the network will be delivered over a ten-year period and also assesses the future demand and supply position of the network. The NDP identifies existing gas pipeline connections serving Galway City, Craughwell, Tuam, Gort, Tynagh, Loughrea, Ballinasloe and Headford. This demonstrates that there is an established gas transmission network in County Galway capable of supporting renewable energy development across various parts of the County. Ireland owns and operates the gas transmission pipeline running from north to south through County Galway and the adjoining wayleaves.

Policy Objectives Electricity and Gas Network

EG 1 Gas Network and Generating Capacity

To support the development of the gas network and associated generating capacity in order to sustainably support and augment renewable electrical energy generated in County Galway.

EG 2 Electricity Transmission Networks

(a) To support the development of the transmission grid network in order to sustainably accommodate both consistent and variable flows of renewable energy generated in County Galway.

(b) Proposed renewable energy generation projects shall fully consider the capacity of the existing transmission grid network in determining the optimal grid connection for the project, in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

(c) In respect of proposed renewable energy developments, transmission grid capacity should be considered as a constraint where the Transmission Development Plan, or any other equivalent plan of the TSO, does not identify infrastructure reinforcement measures unless transmission grid capacity can be demonstrated.

(d) Notwithstanding ecological and environmental considerations, grid connection routing for development proposals should show all alternative routes that were considered, and should avoid materially impacting the road network, where possible. Undergrounding should be considered where it will significantly negate any identified impacts.

(e) It is important that the necessary transmission and distribution infrastructure is facilitated and put in place in order to maximise the renewable energy potential of County Galway. Liaison with Eirgrid, as a TSO, and alignment with their transmission plans and strategies will be of vital importance in this respect.

EG3 Natural Gas and Synthetic Networks

To facilitate the delivery and expansion of the Natural Gas and Synthetic Gas infrastructure for storage, transmission and energy generation throughout the County for both domestic and business/industry use and to have regard to the location of existing gas infrastructure pipeline in the assessment of planning applications.

14.8 Renewable Energy Generation

With projected increases in population and economic growth, the demand for energy is set to increase in the coming years. A secure and resilient supply of energy is critical to a well-functioning economy, being relied upon for heating, cooling, and to fuel transport, power industry, and generate electricity.

Renewable energy comes from natural sources that are continuously replenished by nature and is, therefore, a more sustainable alternative to our dependency on fossil fuels. The main sources are wind energy, solar energy, water energy (hydro, wave and tidal energy), geothermal energy (from heat below the surface of the earth) and biomass (wood, biodegradable waste and energy crops).

14.8.1 Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy

To facilitate the sustainable growth of renewable energies a Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy (LARES) have been prepared for the county as part the plan and is included in Appendix 1. The LARES' outlines the renewable energy resource potential in the county and it is a strategic aim to ensure that such developments are suitably located, economical and sustainable in the long term. The Strategy has been prepared taking account of relevant European, national, regional and local planning frameworks and guidelines.

The LARES replaces the Wind Energy Strategy of the Galway County Development Plan 2015 (as varied).

The LARES outlines the potential for a range of renewable resources, including bioenergy, micro renewables, wind, solar, geothermal, hydro, energy storage and marine renewables (offshore, wave and tidal energy). It acknowledges the significant contribution they can deliver to make to the county more energy secure, less reliant on traditional fossil fuels, enabling future energy export and meeting assigned climate change targets. The LARES recognises the importance of infrastructure within the county including road, electricity, gas and rail networks, and ports. The Strategy also sets out renewable energy resource targets for the county which will contribute to both national renewable energy targets and the transition to a low carbon economy.

Policy Objectives Renewable Energy

RE1 Renewable Energy Generation and ancillary facilities

To facilitate and support appropriate levels of renewable energy generation and ancillary facilities in the county to meet national, regional and county renewable energy targets, to facilitate a reduction in CO2 emissions and the promotion of a low carbon economy;

RE 2 Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy

The policy objectives and Development Management Standards set out in the Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy for County Galway shall be deemed the policy objectives and development management standards for the purpose of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028

RE 3 Wind Energy Developments

Promote and facilitate wind farm developments in suitable locations, having regard to areas of the County designated for this purpose in the Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy. The Planning Authority will assess any planning application proposals for wind energy production in accordance with the Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy, *the DoEHLG Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Wind Energy Development, 2006* (or any updated/superseded documents), having due regard to the Habitats Directive and to the detailed policy objectives and Development Standards set out in the Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy.

RE 4 Solar Energy Developments

Promote and facilitate solar farm developments in suitable locations, having regard to areas of the County designated for this purpose in the Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy. The Planning Authority will assess any planning application proposals for solar energy production having due regard to the Habitats Directive and to the detailed policy objectives and Development Standards set out in the Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy.

RE 5 Renewable Energy Strategy

Support and facilitate the sustainable development and the use of appropriate renewable energy resources and associated infrastructure within the County having due regard to the Habitats Directive and to the detailed policy objectives and Development Standards set out in the Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy as follows:

- Renewable Energy Transmission
- Renewable Energy Generation
- 'Strategic Areas' for renewable energy development
- Onshore Wind Energy
- Solar Energy
- Bioenergy/Anaerobic Digestion

- Micro-renewables
- Marine Renewables
- Hydro Energy
- Geothermal Energy
- Alternative Technologies
- Energy Efficiency & Conservation
- Sustainable Transport
- Auto production
- Battery Storage
- Repowering/Renewing Wind Energy Developments
- Community Ownership

RE 6 Oileáin Árann an Energy Transition Community

The Council shall continue to support Comharchumann Fuinnimh Oileáin Árann (Aran Islands Energy Cooperative), SEAI and Údarás na Gaeltachta in their objective to develop the Islands as being energy independent and becoming Ireland's first energy transition community.

RE 7 Renewable Energy Generation -Transition to a Low Carbon Economy

To facilitate and support appropriate levels of renewable energy generation in County Galway, considering the need to transition to a low carbon economy and to reduce dependency on fossil fuels.

Chapter 15 Development Management Standards

15.1 Introduction – Aims

This part of the plan is concerned with the standards, which will be applied to development proposals.

The aim of this chapter is to:

- Promote, guide and enforce high standards of development quality in urban and rural areas throughout the County having regard to quality of life, the environment, community, the economy and surrounding areas in a manner that supports the sustainable development for all of the people within the County in an equitable manner.

It is envisaged that the standards as set out in this plan would be applied in a flexible manner, in particular circumstances where proposed development is otherwise consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and achieves high design quality. The achievement of the policy objectives of the plan and the encouragement of good design, rather than the mechanistic application of development standards, will be the aim of development management.

The Council is required to manage development to ensure that permissions granted under the *Planning and Development Act, 2000* (as amended) are consistent with the policy objectives of the Development Plan. In making a decision on any individual planning application, the Planning Authority is restricted to considering the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, having regard to the matters provided for under Section 34 of the *Planning and Development Act, 2000* (as amended). This section of the Act sets out in detail the considerations which the Planning Authority must take account of, including the provisions of the *Development Plan, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2007)* issued by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage & Local Government, other relevant Ministerial or Government policies and any submission or observations made in accordance with the Planning Regulations.

The Department produces a range of guidelines designed to help Planning Authorities, An Bord Pleanála, developers and the general public, details of which can be viewed on the DECLG's website at <http://www.housing.old.gov.ie/planning/planning>.

Guidelines produced under Section 28 of the *Planning and Development Act, 2000* (as amended) are relevant to and applicable to development proposals in County Galway.

15.1.1 Proper Planning and Sustainable Development

When making a Development Plan, the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) requires Planning Authorities to consider proper planning and sustainable development of the area. There are 3 dimensions to sustainable development; economic, social and environmental and these dimensions should not be undertaken in isolation, because they are mutually dependent. The Government's Sustainable Development Strategy titled *Our Sustainable Future, A Sustainable Future for Ireland 2012* - states that 'economic growth, social cohesion and environmental sustainability must move forward in a mutually supportive manner'.

Therefore to achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system and in the implementation of this plan.

The DM Standards that follow apply to the entire administrative area of the County including Local Area Plan (LAP) areas.

15.1.2 Development Management Standards

The following sections set out the key standards and guidance for different development types as follows:

- Placemaking, Regeneration and Urban Living
- Rural Living and Development
- Economic Enterprise and Retail
- Transport and Movement
- Infrastructure, Utilities and Environmental Protection
- Tourism and Landscape
- Marine and Coastal Management
- Natural Heritage, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure
- Community Development and Social Infrastructure
- Architecture, Archaeology and Culture
- Climate Change, Energy and Renewable Energy

15.2 Placemaking, Regeneration and Urban Living

15.2.1 Introduction

Planning, designing and managing change to create places that enhance the quality of life are at the heart of the Plan. To succeed in achieving this requires all the interrelated social, environmental and economic themes to be considered together and find ways to make solutions be planned and designed to respond to many themes and opportunities as possible at the same time.

The Policy Objectives and supporting narrative for placemaking in *Chapter 3 Placemaking, Regeneration and Urban Living* promote this way of thinking from the earliest stages of development planning, design and management of proposed development and regeneration. Developers, homeowners, designers, land and asset managers should ensure they consider the Strategic Aims from the outset and how their proposals can contribute to the delivery of them as appropriate.

15.2.2 Applicable to All Development

DM Standard 1: Qualitative Assessment-Design Quality, Guidelines and Statements

The main requirement for a qualitative assessment regarding development in towns and villages shall have regard to the following:

Placemaking

The placemaking process will be delivered through the universal application of best practice urban design principles to all new developments. This requires all development proposals to contribute to well serviced integrated residential, commercial and employment development that is accessible to a range of community facilities, public transport infrastructure and other local services. Development must enhance sustainability, sustainable modes of transport and contribute to the attractiveness of a town or village. Residential development proposals must have regard to the 12 urban design criteria.

Note that these criteria should also be considered for other development types such as employment, commercial or mixed use developments as appropriate.

Masterplanning

Achieving good placemaking requires an holistic approach to understanding, planning, designing and managing complex interrelated issues and demands that shape places. Masterplans should be prepared in accordance with industry best practice to ensure that the:

- Key social, environmental and economic issues and opportunities are identified
- Priorities to be addressed are agreed and represent a well balanced response to needs
- Voices of all the key stakeholders are fairly represented and reflected in proposed development
- Proposed development will meet the aims of Policy Objectives set out within the plan
- Proposals are viable, deliverable and sustainable for the long term.

Planning applications for development as deemed appropriate by the planning authority shall follow a best practice masterplan approach to enable an appropriate Design Statement to be submitted with the planning application. Masterplans shall also be developed to as appropriate to guide potential regeneration of towns and villages.

The Council will endeavour to work closely and collaboratively with all the key stakeholders including landowners, developers and appropriate agencies from the earliest stages in the planning and design of masterplans.

Design Statements

Significant development proposals will be required to submit Design Statements which will be determined by scale and impact the latter of which will vary depending on the development location and the pertinent sensitivities. The design statement must demonstrate the suitability of the proposed design solution to the site context in accordance with the relevant urban design criteria. They should include a detailed explanation with illustrations where necessary the design principles and design concept. This should refer to the development layout, landscape, scale and mix, details of materials should also be included. The statement should show how the development will contribute to the process of placemaking. Particular reference should also include:

- A site analysis;
- A concept plan or masterplan as deemed appropriate;
- A statement demonstrating how the 12 urban design criteria set out in the Sustainable Residential Guidelines for Planning Authorities;
- Quality audit addressing street design as outlined within the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets;
- Reference to the contribution of the development to the quality of public realm surrounding the development;
- Demonstrate compliance with the Policy Objectives set out within the plan;

A degree of flexibility will apply to the requirements of Design Statements and other DM standards. Each town or village has its own set of circumstances which require flexible tailored design solutions where a proposal accords with specific planning standards and requirements.

Universal Access

Universal design is the design of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability. Circulation within housing layouts, including access to individual buildings, open spaces and facilities, should have regard to the varying needs of occupants over their lifetimes, including needs associated with impaired

mobility. Innovative dwelling design shall be encouraged in order to facilitate the potential future provision of adaptable and accessible accommodation.

Proposed development should ensure that inequalities of access to open space and other facilities specific to the local context are understood and influence the proposed provision and design to respond to them.

Crime Prevention through Design

A reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour can be achieved through the careful consideration of the building layout and the environmental design of a development. Consideration of how a proposed scheme may work and the early identification of areas of potential concern should be undertaken at the outset to identify any potential problems.

Context

A thorough understanding of context is necessary to ensure well considered, context responsive and integrated outcomes are delivered.

The context relates to all the key social, environmental and economic characteristics and drivers specific to the application site and its location. Well planned, designed, and managed development should set out the process undertaken to understand the baseline context, what the key drivers are from analysis of the baseline condition and the specific actions that will be taken to ensure sustainable development is delivered that meets the requirements of the Policy Objectives in *Chapter 3*.

The following principles to understand the context should be considered:

Identify Needs: Well planned and designed places respond to the needs of people and the environment, which are highly context specific. Key areas to identify needs that should be considered include the following:

- Housing and Employment
- Social and Economic
- Services, Infrastructure and Transport
- Nature and Biodiversity
- Quality, Quantity and Location of Open Space
- Health and Wellbeing
- Cultural Heritage
- Environment
- Education
- Community infrastructure

This is not an exhaustive list of topic areas and pre-application discussions will agree the scope of technical assessment and investigation appropriate to the proposed development and its context.

Carry out the appropriate baseline environmental and technical appraisal and assessment in accordance with best practice regulations and guidelines. This should include understanding of national and regional planning strategies and policy objective requirements and how this relates to the project.

Identify Priorities: Establish the priorities that proposed development should address. Some priorities will need to be addressed on site to comply with planning and to ensure good placemaking is delivered for occupants and end users. Other priorities will be identified off site, which deliver the widest benefits for people. Close collaboration with key stakeholders to agree the priorities for action and a

well coordinated strategy for responding to them should be summarised and documented to transparently show how:

- All planning issues have been taken into account in the development of the proposal;
- Specific actions that seek win-win outcomes where possible have been agreed and explaining trade-offs and balances made.

Design Quality

The Policy Objectives relating to design within *Chapter 3* emphasise the importance of a thoughtful approach to planning and design as an essential part of ensuring attractive, efficient, sustainable and deliverable outcomes. The following guidance is included as indicators to assist those involved in the planning application process to develop and evaluate proposals to be more successful at delivering the aims and policy objectives plan. This guidance should be considered together with published national policy, standards and guidance as appropriate.

- The physical characteristics of a site, particularly the constraints, should influence the design response as a basic pre-requisite to achieving good quality design that is deliverable and viable.
- Proposals should aim to turn constraints into opportunities and protect site features as assets.
- The proposed layout of development should make efficient use of land. This includes all elements of built form, landscape and infrastructure.
- The principles of multifunctional planning and design should be applied and clearly demonstrated.
- All the constituent parts of the development should have a readily identifiable purpose and functions. There should be no 'left-over' space. External space should either be placed within private plots or be in purposeful and multifunctional public open space.
- Consideration should be given to the potential effects of change in the future when developing the layout of proposed development, such as advances in transport technology and how our external space layout and design can be future proofed to adapt easily.
- Access and movement should ensure that the site is divided into regular shaped land parcels to deliver flexibility of development options in response to market demand.
- The routing of proposed infrastructure should respect important site features and avoid causing damage to valuable green and blue infrastructure assets.
- Proposed infrastructure such as services and utilities should be coordinated with the proposed access and movement network and service runs should be consolidated for ease of access without compromising amenity.

Built Form

The following points should also guide the approach to planning and design of built form together with published industry best practice guidance:

- The primary building line should be set back a consistent distance from the edge of the street/space. There should be a consistent eave height and design on built elevations. Both of these principles are essential if design measures are to be introduced to create variation that does not create a visually confusing street.
- Scope for variation in the street is supported, but this should be designed to be orderly.
- Use rhythm in the design is important to achieve this. Elements that should be used to create rhythm include:
 - In the public realm: The consistent location of street trees, street furniture, light columns and the arrangement and treatment of on street car parking.
 - In the built form: Orderly variation can be achieved through rhythm in the design and arrangement of windows, the articulation of built elevation including features like

recesses, doorways, stair and lift cores and arrangement of accent features or finishes.

- The design of the boundary defining the public and private space along the street should be consistent in height and finish.
- There should be consistent application of a refined palette of architectural design styles, materials, colours, tones and finishes in the open space and built form.
- Variation in plot width should be arranged in an orderly way and not randomly along the street.
- Where different design styles of built form is proposed, these should not be located randomly along the street, but grouped together in blocks. The consistent design of the public street and plot boundaries is particularly important to unify the street scene in such instances.

In residential areas where garages are proposed, these should be set back at a consistent distance from the boundary and be located to the same side of properties.

Permeability

Convenient access needs to be provided between and within areas, particularly to larger community and commercial facilities and to places of work. Routes within the area should be accessible for everyone and as direct as possible. The design process should consider what levels of permeability are appropriate for different street users, with permeability for pedestrians and cyclists taking precedence over permeability for vehicles.

River paths for walkers and cyclists can provide attractive connections within and between areas. In the interests of security, it is necessary that all pedestrian and cycle links be designed in such a way so as to be overlooked.

15.2.3 Guidelines for Residential in Towns and Villages

DM Standard 2: Multiple Housing Schemes (Urban Areas)

Town and Village Centre Infill Sites

Development of infill and brownfield sites for residential or mixed use will be supported in suitable town and village centre locations. Such development must respect the character and appearance of the settlement and contribute to the delivery of good placemaking.

Ideally centrally located brownfield developments should include a level of ground floor activity such as retail, office or commercial to increase footfall in the surrounding area. Where this is not possible a clear justification is required with supporting documentation to have flexible approach.

Infill proposals should consider other site circumstances relating to:

- The existing pattern of development, density, plot size, building height;
- Impact on residential amenity, daylight, loss of privacy, overlooking;
- The provision of private open space for existing and proposed properties;
- Car parking standards;
- Building orientation.

A degree of flexibility may apply to infill sites who cannot facilitate certain standards, particularly if it contributes to sustainable compact development.

Opportunity Sites

Opportunity sites identified in the towns and villages are centrally brownfield sites that could make a positive contribution to the town or village. A mix of uses will be supported on brownfield sites to make an area more attractive. The character of the town or village shall be preserved along with residential amenity of neighbouring properties.

Opportunity site proposals should consider other site circumstances relating to:

- The existing pattern of development, density, plot size, building height;
- Impact on residential amenity, daylight, loss of privacy, overlooking;
- The provision of private open space for existing and proposed properties;
- Car parking standards;
- Building orientation.

A degree of flexibility may apply to opportunity sites who cannot facilitate certain standards, particularly if it contributes to sustainable compact development.

Density and Typology

Guidance relating to density is set out within the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Developments in Urban Areas. It is calculated simply by dividing the site area by the number of residential units proposed. *Chapter 2 Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy and Housing Strategy* sets the standard density at 35 Dwellings Per Hectare. However, to achieve the aspirations of the NPF a higher density level may be applied at strategic locations with good access to public transport services. Higher density development will only be applied where appropriate and where a good standard of development is proposed.

Building Height

Landmark buildings of significant height may be appropriate in certain urban locations with good access to local services and public transport. This is supported in the Urban Development and Building Height Guidelines 2018 which provide comprehensive detail in relation to the assessment and considerations of a planning application of a tall building. SPPR 1 of the guidelines outlines Government's increasing support for building height and density in locations with good public transport, particularly in town cores. The impact of a tall building must be thoroughly assessed. Applications should include a Design Statement in accordance with DM Standard 1 above. As well as impact on character and amenity the implications of a tall building in terms of microclimate, daylight, shadow study should also be considered.

Public Open Space

The provision of high quality accessible public open space should be set out as an integral part of the design process for proposed development. Deficiency of open space can vary in complexity and are highly context specific. For example, there may not be enough open space for the number of people living in an area. In other instances, there may be enough open space, but the mix of uses including provision for outdoor sport, play, relaxation or local food growing does not meet the needs of the community.

The proximity of open space to where people live, and work is an important factor underpinning the creation of the successful walkable neighbourhood. The closer people are to good open space, the more likely they are to use it and derive all the benefits that come from this. Co-location of open space uses, particularly in larger open spaces, should be considered and well-integrated to maximise the benefits to people, nature and the environment.

It is acknowledged that meeting the open space standard for quantity and location will be difficult or impossible in some circumstances. The planning authority will take a flexible approach in the interests of delivering good quality development and the wider Policy Objectives for placemaking. The barriers to delivery of the open space standard should be made clear by the applicant and collaborate with the council and stakeholders to overcome them in the first instance. This will involve working with developers, landowners, businesses, communities and stakeholders to ensure that the approach to identification of open space identifies creative solutions that delivers the maximum benefits overall.

The maintenance of public open space will be considered as appropriate as part of the application assessment. Open space calculations must be derived from accessible open space that is of a good standard for members of the public.

Natural Features

The layout of the development should be designed around the retention of existing natural features and features that form part of our built and cultural heritage. This would include any existing trees, hedgerows, watercourses and landform features, as well as buildings and places of interest for instance.

Design Innovation

Innovation in layout is of key importance. New types of layout, for example the creation of home-zones, will be encouraged.

Landscaping

A high standard of landscaping is an essential part of high quality new developments. Plans for landscaping, including hard and soft landscaping, should be submitted at planning application stage. In general, indigenous planting suitable to the local site and soil conditions should be used.

Safety and Security

The layout and design of new developments should consider appropriate Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to ensure the safety and security of residents and other users. This is set out in *Chapter 11 Community Development and Social Infrastructure*. Opportunities for vandalism and anti-social behaviour should be reduced to the greatest possible extent by ensuring that: areas used by the public (such as open spaces, footpaths, roads and parking areas) are overlooked by housing; there is adequate accessibility, visibility and lighting, particularly for pedestrians; a clear demarcation of public, semi-public and private areas is created; etc.

Traffic Safety and Management

The quality of the layout of developments and the manner in which it addresses traffic management and safety is vital to the creation of successful walkable neighbourhoods. Access and movement planning and design should seek to minimise conflict between pedestrians/cyclists and vehicular traffic wherever possible. Creative approaches to the design of multifunctional streets and roads which reduce the speed and perceived dominance of vehicles is encouraged, such as the arrangement of on street parking, street trees, narrowing of carriageways at pedestrian crossings etc. Streets and road design should not impede the ease of pedestrians/cyclists movement to key destinations within or beyond the development. These standards must be complied with in accordance with the Policy Objectives of *Chapter 6 Transport and Movement*.

Cycling Facilities

Ensuring there is adequate infrastructure provided in new development to support people in making the choice to adopt active travel is important to achieve the aspirations of the policy objectives set out in *Chapters 3 and 6*.

Phasing of Development

All applications for large/medium residential development shall include a phasing plan. Phasing proposals shall ensure that open space and infrastructure to serve dwellings in a given phase e.g. public lighting, footpaths, and community facilities such as crèches and playgrounds are completed to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority prior to the initiation of the succeeding phase.

Additional Standards for Residential Development

Side Boundaries

In general, it is desirable that all new houses shall have a minimum clear distance of 2 meters to the side boundaries of the site and shall not have first floor side window living room oriented in such a manner so as to cause overlooking and loss of privacy to other residential properties. Both the front and rear boundaries of each site in addition to the overall site must be suitably delineated with the use of block walls either, plastered/not plastered and capped/uncapped being the normal requirement.

Private Open Space

Private Open Space shall be designed for maximum privacy and oriented for maximum sunshine and shelter. In general, a minimum back to back distance between dwellings of 22 meters shall apply in order to protect privacy, sunlight and avoid undue overlooking. Reductions will be considered in the case of single storey developments and/or innovative schemes where it can be demonstrated that adequate levels of privacy, natural lighting and sunlight can be achieved.

Estate Names and Numbering

Residences in housing estates shall be numbered in accordance with a naming and numbering scheme to be agreed with the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development. The estate name shall be prominently and clearly displayed at the entrance to the estate and the naming and numbering of individual cul-de-sacs shall also have appropriate signage. New developments shall be required to consult with Coiste Logainmneacha Chontae na Gaillimhe, the Galway County Council Placename Committee, and to identify an appropriate name for new development shall reflect the local heritage and character of the area.

Housing Layout Assessment

Where land is being developed for housing, the following considerations will be taken into account in the assessment of the proposal:

- The need for land and public services to be used economically;
- Appropriate density;
- The adequacy of present and future community facilities;
- Adequate privacy for individual dwelling units;
- The safety of proposed layouts and the capacity of existing roads to absorb future development;
- Adequate provision for car parking, EV charging points, open space, landscaping and planting;
- Integration with existing development and the preservation of features on site.

Taking in Charge

Developers intending on having residential developments “Taken in Charge” by the Local Authority shall engage with the relevant personnel in the Planning Authority with regard to the requirements of same to ensure compliance with appropriate standards and the Grant of Permission and ensure an orderly handover of services, roads, etc on completion of the development. Individual wastewater treatment plants serving housing developments will not be taken in charge.

Unfinished Estates

Emphasis will continue to be placed on successfully completing and consolidating these estates in line with any in place Site Resolution Plans. Appropriate density controls, phasing and high design standards will be required in all settlements for future residential developments.

Overshadowing

The Council will require daylight and shadow projection diagrams to be submitted in all proposals where buildings of a significant height are involved or where new buildings are located very close to adjoining buildings. This will provide an element of control in situations where overlooking occurs. In general, there should be a distance of 22 metres between opposing first floor windows. This separation distance will be increased for developments over two storeys in height.

Bin Storage

Each residential unit shall have adequate storage for three wheeled bins. Residential units with no rear access shall provide adequate storage for the bins to the front of the development, in appropriately designed contained units. For residential units without suitable private open space a set of three x 240 litre bins shall be provided for a block of 10 apartments. All external storage including bin storage, oil tanks etc. shall be visually screened from the public areas with adequate screening by fencing or walls of appropriate height.

Dwelling Mix

All residential schemes should ensure an appropriate mix of housing typologies and unit sizes to support the provision of a variety of household types and tenures that accord with the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas.

The changing nature of the age profile of the County requires greater consideration of the housing needs of an ageing population. For those who wish to continue to live independently in their community but wish to downsize, it is imperative to offer a range of attractive and appropriately located accommodation choices which will in turn will enable the underutilisation of larger houses, particularly in more established areas, to be addressed. Design of accommodation needs to take account of the needs of persons with a disability.

Housing with long term adaptability and potential for flexibility allows for change as circumstances alter or families grow. Adaptability that allows for the alteration of the fabric of a building and flexibility which allows for spaces to accommodate a range of uses are key considerations in the design of a home.

Residential Density	Dwelling Units/Ha	Dwelling Units/Acre	Possible Appropriate Locations
Medium to High	35-50	14-20	Town centre or immediately adjacent to public transport hubs.
Low to Medium	15-35	6-14	Neighbourhood centres (typically within 400m walking distance of centre point), inner urban suburbs.

Low	5-12	2-6	Urban periphery, outlying lands, areas with capacity/environmental constraints
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Table 15.1: Residential Density

DM Standard 3: Apartment Developments (Urban Areas)

The design of apartment type development should be guided by the Design Standards for New Apartments - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2018) (or as updated/superseded) in relation to all issues in relation to apartment development. In general apartments are only considered appropriate in town centres.

Multiple Housing Schemes in Towns and Villages

All applications for new residential developments in urban areas will be assessed having regard to the standards set out in this section of the Development Plan.

Proposals for significant housing schemes must include a design brief or design statement in accordance with the *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas-Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009*.

To achieve good urban design in residential developments, (including apartment developments), the 12 Urban Design Principles set out in the *Urban Design Manual-A Best Practice Guide 2009* (including any updated/superseding document) should be taken into account in designing schemes.

Quality of Proposed Layout and Elevations

The quality of the residential environment will be paramount in the acceptability of planning applications for multiple housing schemes. Layouts, elevations and design must be designed to create a strong sense of identity, place and community. The Council will seek to achieve a high standard of design through the provisions of the statutory plans and the development management process. However, as set out in the *DoEHLG Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines 2009*, including its accompanying document *Urban Design Manual-Best Practice Guide 2009* – where the design is of such poor quality as to result in a sub-standard housing environment, permission will be refused.

15.2.4 Other Residential Development (Rural and Urban)

DM Standard 4 – House Extensions (Urban and Rural)

Proposed extensions shall:

- In general, be subordinate to the existing dwelling in its size, unless in exceptional cases, a larger extension compliments the existing dwelling in its design and massing;
- reflect the window proportions, detailing and finishes, texture, materials and colour unless a high quality contemporary and innovatively designed extension is proposed;
- not have an adverse impact on the amenities of adjoining properties through undue overlooking, undue overshadowing and/or an over dominant visual impact; and
- carefully consider site coverage to avoid unacceptable loss of private open space.

DM Standard 5 - Dependent Relative Accommodation/Granny Flats (Urban and Rural)

Proposals for this accommodation should demonstrate:

- A bona-fide need for such a unit;
- A physical connection to the main house with direct access to the main dwelling;
- That the proposal does not impact adversely on either the residential amenities of the existing property or the residential amenities of the area;

That the accommodation can revert back to being part of the original house when no longer occupied by a member of the family.

All applications for family flat development shall comply with the following criteria:

- The flat shall form an integral part of the structure of the main house with provision for direct internal access to the remainder of the house i.e. not detached;
- The flat shall be modest in size and shall not have more than one bedroom (2 bedrooms in exceptional circumstances). The unit shall not exceed a gross floor area of 50 square metres;
- The flat shall not have a separate access provided to the front elevation of the dwelling;
- There shall be no permanent subdivision of the garden/private amenity space;
- The flat shall remain in the same ownership as that of the existing dwelling on site. In this regard, the flat shall not be let, sold or otherwise transferred, other than as part of the overall property;
- The design proposed shall enable the flat to easily fully revert to being part of the original house when no longer occupied by the family member(s);
- If the site is not connected to public mains, the existing wastewater treatment system on site must be capable for any additional loading from the flat, and if not proposals should be submitted to accommodate the additional loading.

DM Standard 6 – Domestic Garages (Urban and Rural)

- The design, form and materials should be ancillary to, and consistent with the main dwelling on site;
- Structures should generally be detached and sited to the rear of the dwelling house and be visually subservient in terms of size, scale and bulk;
- Storage facilities should be used solely for purposes incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling and not for any commercial, manufacturing, industrial use or habitable space in the absence of prior planning consent for such use

15.3 Rural Living and Development

15.3.1 Rural Housing

DM Standard 7: Rural Housing

In order to substantiate a rural housing need the following documentation will be required:

- Justification for location as proposed;
- Land registry maps and associated documentation;
- Proof of local connection to an area;
- Any other details that may be deemed necessary at time of application by the Planning Authority.

DM Standard 8 – Site Selection and Design

Apply the following guidance in assessing planning applications for rural housing:

Site Selection and Design

- The scale, form, design and siting of the development should be sensitive to its surroundings and visually integrate with the receiving landscape.
- Simple design forms and materials reflective of traditional vernacular should be used.
- Have regard to the scale of surrounding buildings. A large house requires a large site to ensure effective integration into its surroundings (either immediately or in the future, through planned screening)
- A visual impact assessment may be required where the proposal is located in an area identified as “Protected Views/Scenic Routes” in the Landscape Character Assessment of the County or in Class 3 and 4 designated landscape sensitivity areas.
- The design, siting and orientation of a new dwelling should be site specific responding to the natural features and topography of the site to best integrate development with the landscape and to optimise solar gain to maximise energy efficiency.
- The siting of new development shall visually integrate with the landscape, utilising natural features including existing contours and established field boundaries and shall not visually dominates the landscape. (Cutting and filling of sites is not desirable).
- New buildings should respect the landscape context and not impinge scenic views or skylines as seen from vantage points or public roads.
- Larger houses (e.g. in excess of 200sqm) should incorporate design solutions to minimise visual mass and scale e.g. sub-divided into smaller elements of traditional form to avoid bulky structures.
- Use a simple plan form to give a clean roof shape – a long plan in preference to a deep plan. This will avoid the creation of a bulky shape.
- Where existing vernacular structures exist on site, consideration should be given to their re-use, adaptation and extension in preference to new build.
- Clustering with existing rural buildings is generally preferable to stand-alone locations.

DM Standard 9 – Site Sizes for Single Houses Using Individual On-Site Wastewater Treatment Systems

A minimum site size of 2000m² is generally required for a single house so as to provide for adequate effluent treatment, parking, landscaping, open space and maintenance of rural amenity. For house sizes greater than 200m² the site size shall be increased by 10m² for each 1m² of house area above 200m². Special consideration will be given to existing houses and to proposed developments who can demonstrate Rural Housing Need and comply with EPA guidelines where the minimum size is not totally achievable.

DM Standard 10 – Linear Development

Linear development is a prevalent issue in the County that is having a detrimental impact on the character of the rural landscape. *The Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines* define linear development as five or more houses on any one side of a given 250 metres of road frontage. Linear development does not necessarily have to be served by individual accesses nor have a continuous or uniform building line. Buildings sited back, staggered, or at angles and with gaps between them can still represent ribbon development, if they have a common frontage or they are visually linked.

In cases where a development would create or extend linear form of development, the proposal will not be considered favourably.

Applicants will be considered favourably if this is the only family owned site available (5 or more in 250m does not apply in this case).

DM Standard 11 – Log Cabins/Pods

Log Cabins and Pods or similarly designed structures are not vernacular typologies of the Galway countryside and are only permitted in limited cases where a unique siting and landscape situation allows (ie. Log cabins may have potential in a woodland setting).

DM Standard 12: Landscaping

‘Landscaping proposals should be submitted with all planning applications for development and shall include a schedule of indigenous native plant species and implementation timeline’.

DM Standard 13 – Rural Clustering on un-serviced lands in Villages

The development of rural clusters of five dwelling or less within the footprint of existing unserviced villages, within the 60km speed limits and serviced by public footpaths shall be considered to provide an alternative to one off rural housing (ie. No public sewer) subject to the following:

- a) Site size shall be reflective of both the site context and the surrounding built environment. The proposed layout shall ensure setbacks appropriate to the site and surrounding context are met while also ensuring minimum separation distances for waste water infrastructure can be achieved in accordance with the EPA Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems serving single house.
- b) A design statement shall accompany the application and will be required to demonstrate how the proposal will integrate appropriately with the village.
- c) A single access point shall be provided from the public road which shall be designed in accordance with the principles and standards set out in the ‘Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets’ (2013).
- d) Each dwelling house shall be served by their own on site individual waste water treatment system which shall be will be required to be designed, constructed and maintained in accordance with the ‘EPA Code of Practice Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems for Single Houses’ in place at the time of the application.

15.3.2 Agriculture

DM Standard 14: Agricultural Buildings

In dealing with planning applications for such buildings the Planning Authority will have regard to:

a) Design and Layout

The quality of design and layout of the farm complex. Where possible new buildings, shall be located within or adjoining the existing farmyard complex. Buildings shall be of minimum scale and use of muted coloured materials shall be encouraged.

b) Residential Amenity

The proximity of any existing dwelling house.

c) Public Road Access

The safe access to public roads.

d) Rural Landscape

The assimilation of the buildings into the rural landscape by means of appropriate siting, external colouring, screening and shelter belting.

DM Standard 15: Agricultural Effluent

The European Union (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2014 set out the requirements for storage of farm effluents and the minimum holding periods for storage of farm wastes. All soiled liquid waste shall be collected before being further treated or spread on land in suitable weather conditions.

The following will be a requirement of planning permission:

- Design calculations;
- Design calculations supporting the selection of a particular volume of storage and details of the spread area.

DM Standard 16: Horticulture

In dealing with planning applications for such allotment the Planning Authority will have regard to:

- (i) The location of lands which shall be required to be situated within or immediately adjacent to the edge of towns/villages or are easily accessible to the residents of a particular town or village; and
- (ii) Adequate water supply and adequate parking facilities can be provided.

15.3.3 Forestry

DM Standard 17 Forestry Development

The provision and maintenance of the trees shall comply with the requirements of Forestry Standards and Procedures Manual 2015 (including any updated/superseding document). Any proposals for forestry development should have regard to the following guidelines published by the Forest Service:

- Forestry and Landscape Guidelines;
- Forestry and Water Quality Guidelines;
- Forestry and Archaeology Guidelines;
- Forestry Biodiversity Guidelines;
- Forestry Harvesting and Environmental Guidelines.

15.3.4 Rural Enterprise

DM Standard 18: Rural Enterprise

The Council will consider rural enterprises, and resource development (such as agriculture, agri-food sector, agri-tourism, commercial fishing, aquaculture, marine tourism, forestry, bio-energy, the extractive industry, recreation, cultural heritage, marine enterprise sector, research and analysis) and renewable energy resources (such as wind/ocean energy) in rural and coastal areas within the County subject to considerations of proper planning and sustainable development and shall include the following:

a) Existing Buildings

The conversion of existing farm buildings in rural areas for small scale employment purposes will be considered subject to policy.

b) Agriculturally Related Industry

Agriculturally related industry, involving processing of farm produce where it is unsuited to an urban situation and is environmentally sustainable.

c) Farm-Related Business

Business directly related to farming, such as the servicing and repair of farm machinery, land reclamation, drainage work, agricultural contracting etc., where it will not give rise to adverse environmental effects, have safe access and not be prejudicial to residential amenity.

The following information shall accompany any application:

- The type of business proposed;
- The nature and extent of the work;
- Reason for its location (e.g. justification on why it is not proposed within settlement centre, etc.);
- Anticipated levels of traffic generated by the proposal, accessibility, and car-parking;
- The effects on the amenities of the adjoining occupiers particularly in relation to hours of work, noise and general disturbance;
- Whether the proposal requires delivery/shipment of goods and details of same;
- Arrangements for storage and collection of waste. (Materials used or goods manufactured, serviced or repaired in the home-based business must be stored within a building).
- No goods manufactured, serviced or repaired should be displayed so that they are visible from outside the site.
- Should not have any adverse impacts on the amenities of neighbouring dwellings.

15.3.5 Extractive Development

DM Standard 19: Extractive Development

The following details shall be considered central to the determination of any application for planning permission for extractive development:

a) Guidelines

Compliance with the provisions and guidance, as appropriate, contained within Section 261 of the *Planning and Development Act, 2000* (as amended), by Section 74 and Section 75 of the *Planning and*

Development (Amendment) Act 2010, the *DoEHLG Quarries and Ancillary Facilities Guidelines 2004* and the *EPA Guidelines for Environmental Management in the Extractive Sector 2006*. Where extractive developments may impact on archaeological or architectural heritage, regard shall be had to the *DAHG Architectural Conservation Guidelines 2011* and the *Archaeological Code of Practice 2009* (including any updated/superseding documents) in the assessment of planning applications. Reference should also be made to the *Geological Heritage Guidelines for the Extractive Industry 2008* (including any updated/superseding documents) and the *Guidance on Biodiversity in the Extractive Industry (NPWS)*.

b) Land Ownership

The extent of land ownership. Details should be submitted showing the proposed site in relation to all lands in the vicinity in which the applicant has an interest.

c) Deposits

The nature of all deposits. Details to be submitted to include: depths of topsoil, subsoil, over burden and material, at various points on the site; an indication of the type of minerals, which it is intended to extract; a statement as to whether the parent rock from which the mineral is extracted is suitable for other uses; and the estimated total quantity of rock and mineral, which can be extracted commercially on the site.

d) Methods

The methods of excavation and machinery to be used. Details to be submitted to include all proposed site development works, including; the proposed method of working; any existing or proposed areas of excavation; stages of work proposed; locations of any settling ponds, waste material and/or stockpiling of materials; methods for removing and storing topsoil, subsoil and overburden; etc.

e) Production

The quantification of production in a given time. Details to be submitted to include the proposed production process to be employed, all requirements for water, electricity and/or other inputs to the production process and any proposals for chemical or other treatments.

f) Mitigation

Methods to reduce environmental impact. Details to be submitted to include an assessment of potential impacts on water resources, residential and visual amenity (including noise, dust and vibration impacts), biodiversity and any other relevant considerations together with appropriate proposals for their mitigation.

Proposals for development, where appropriate should be accompanied by:

- A Surface Water Baseline Study of water courses in the vicinity of the site;
- A Hydro-Geological Assessment of the impact of groundwater flows in the area and the impact of well waters supplies in the area.

g) Access

Vehicle routes from site to major traffic routes and the impact on the adjoining road networks. Details should be included on the mode, number and weight of trucks or other vehicles being used to transport materials and any truck sheeting or washing proposals.

The Council may require a Traffic Impact Assessment and Road Safety Audit (to be prepared by an approved assessor) for all new development. The Council may require a Special Contribution in accordance with Section 48 of the *Planning and Development Act, 2000*, as amended, for

upgrade/improvement works along the route corridor of the quarry, to facilitate the proposed development.

h) Rehabilitation

A scheme of rehabilitation and after care. Details to be submitted should include a report with plans and sections detailing: the anticipated finished landform and surface/landscape treatments, both of each phase and the whole excavation; quality and condition of topsoil and overburden; rehabilitation works proposed; the type and location of any vegetation proposed; proposed method of funding and delivery of restoration/ reinstatement works; etc.

The Council will require that all proposals for development are accompanied by a detailed restoration plan and aftercare proposals which shall be progressed on a phased basis. The restoration plan shall ensure the landscape is restored with regard to its original character and with reference to the Landscape Character Assessment for County Galway and as incorporated within Appendix 4 of this plan. The restoration plan shall be accompanied by a detailed costing of the work by a qualified quantity surveyor.

The Council will apply a bond, as appropriate for the satisfactory completion of the restoration works. The site may be adapted for a variety of uses depending on the level of extraction and shall be in agreement with the Planning Authority and consideration of the local community.

i) Environmental Impact Study (EIS)

Any Environmental Impact Study including any remedial EIS required by statute. An EIS should ensure that all impacts in relation to heritage, environment, biodiversity, groundwater protection, etc are clearly addressed and appropriate mitigation measures are included.

j) Proximity

Proximity to other developments. Details to be submitted to include location of all existing developments in the vicinity of the site that might be affected by site development works, extractive operations and/or traffic movements generated.

k) Landscaping and Screening

Landscaping and screening proposals. Details to be submitted to include an indication of existing trees or other screening to be retained or removed and any proposed screening, grassing or planting of trees or shrubs and proposals for their maintenance.

l) Heritage and Biodiversity

Proposals in relation to heritage and biodiversity would include any recommendations for the site to be considered as part of the geological heritage of the County and any proposed measures with regard to the protection and promotion of the environment and biodiversity, including any proposals for rehabilitation. The Council will require an Ecological Impact Assessment for all proposals within or in the vicinity of an SPA, SAC or NHA. Where a quarry development falls within a conservation designation, the developer is advised to consult with the DECLG prior to making an application. Evidence of such consultation should be submitted to the Planning Authority at application stage. It shall also be a requirement that all new proposals that are likely to have an impact on SAC or SPA shall be screened for the need to undertake a Habitats Directive. The Council will require that the operator of the quarry shall put in place an Environmental Monitoring System, to monitor all environmental standards (noise, dust, blasting etc.) on an on-going basis.

m) Security of the Site

Security boundary/fence. Full details regarding securing the perimeter boundary of quarries shall be

submitted and agreed by the Planning Authority as part of the planning process.

15.4 Economic Enterprise and Retail

Chapter 5 Employment, Enterprise and Retail Development sets out the Policy Objectives for such developments with additional standards to be complied with as set out below.

DM Standard 20: Industrial/Commercial

Industrial, commercial enterprise and retail development will be required to satisfy minimum requirements for placemaking, public realm, design, layout, access, landscaping, tree planting, boundary treatment, water supply, surface water disposal, wastewater disposal, solid waste, screened storage areas, fire safety, odour control, emissions control, lighting, parking, manoeuvring space, loading and unloading space, energy efficiency and biodiversity. Care should be taken in the laying out of parking areas to avoid conflict between the movements of customer's vehicles, goods vehicles and pedestrians.

Commercial Developments

Commercial developments shall be subject to the proper planning and development of the area, specifically the following requirements:

- *Advertising Signs* - Advertising signs shall be confined to the name of the establishment being painted on or affixed to the façade of the building and illuminated, if required, from an external light source so arranged as not to cause glare to road users or intrusion to adjacent property owners;
- *Operating Times* - In the case of permitted hot food "take aways" closing time shall be 12.30am;
- *Security Shutters* - Roll down shutters placed externally on the front façade shall not be permitted. Any necessary security screens shall be inside the shop windows;
- *Site Coverage*: -For single storey or 6m high, shall not normally exceed 75%;
-For two storey or 9m high, shall not normally exceed 60%;
-For three storey or 12m high, shall not normally exceed 50%.

Industrial Development

There shall be a presumption that only industrial processes of appropriate size and whose nature will not cause nuisance or injury to the predominant residential environment of towns and villages, shall be permitted. Industrial development shall be subject to the proper planning and development of the area, specifically the following requirements:

- *Hours of Operation* - The hours of industrial operation will be controlled where they are likely to result in harm to environmental amenities including residential amenity;
- *Noise Levels* - Noise levels shall not exceed 55 dB (a) Leq when measured at the boundary of the site;
- *Waste Management/Storage* - Provision shall be made on site in a screened compound for short-term waste and segregation storage pending collection and disposal. There must be adequate provision for storage of segregated waste (bio-waste/dry recyclables/residual waste) pending collection;
- *Advertising Signs* - Advertising signs shall be confined to the name of the establishment being painted on or affixed to the façade of the building and illuminated, if required, from an external light source so as not to cause glare to road users or intrusion to adjacent property owners;
- *Density* - Site coverage shall not normally exceed 75% nor shall plot ratio exceed 1:2;

- *Landscaping* - A comprehensive professionally prepared planting scheme for the site shall be necessary.

The Planning Authority shall also consult relevant Local Area Plans where appropriate that may relate to industrial/commercial/enterprise and retail sites including the site coverage, plot area ratio and public open space requirements.

Home Based Economic Activities

Home based economic activity may be considered. The use must be ancillary in scale and nature to the residential unit, there can be no associated visitors and no impact on neighbouring residential amenity.

DM Standard 21: Shopfronts

Require that new shopfront design is of a quality design standard that respects the character and architectural heritage of the existing streetscape.

Historic shopfronts should be retained and refurbished, where feasible. Such features as existing arches, stringcourses, plaster detailing or existing fascias and brackets should be considered in the new design and new internal alterations or proposed advertising should generally not interfere with such details. Wholesale removal of rendering along a streetscape is generally not encouraged.

Contemporary shop front design will be encouraged, where appropriate. Design cues of modern shop fronts should include the basic shopfront elements of fascia, pilasters and stallriser/base and should employ high quality architectural detailing and quality materials appropriate to the size of window openings.

Proposals for new/amended shop fronts shall be required to comply with the following criteria:

- Generally restrict the use of film, adhesive stickers and any other screening that obscures the glazed area of a shopfront window where it negatively impacts upon the streetscape.
- Require that security shutters on new shopfronts (where required) are transparent and placed behind the shopfront window glazing,
- Illumination of fascia signage, shopfronts or distinctive architectural features should be discreet and limited to spotlighting, uplighting or disguised minimalist strip lighting. In this regard, internally illuminated fascias and internally illuminated signs are generally not permitted.
- Ensure that corporate logos (or other similar logos), lighting designs and colours are not used where it would detract from the character and architectural heritage of the streetscape.

DM Standard 22: Petrol Filling Stations

In assessing planning applications for service stations, the following considerations will be taken into account:

- The preferred location for petrol filling stations is within the 50-60kph speed limit of all settlements.
- Forecourt Store/Retail unit associated with a petrol filling station should generally not exceed 100sqm net floor area. Where an increase in this standard is sought, the Sequential Approach to retail development shall apply i.e. the retail element shall be assessed similar to an application for a standalone retail development in the same location.
- Forecourt shops should be designed and sited to facilitate safe pedestrian and bicycle access, with unimpeded access for delivery vehicles. The safety aspects of circulation and

parking within the station forecourt should be demonstrated fully (ie. Autotrack Analysis, TTA and Safety Audit).

- A low wall of an approximate height of 0.6 metres shall be constructed along the frontage with allowance for two access points each 8 metres wide;
- Design and layout of service stations and forecourts should be of high-quality and integrate with the surrounding built environment. In urban centres, where the development would be likely to have a significant impact on the historic or architectural character of the area, the use of standard corporate designs and signage may not be acceptable.
- Forecourt lighting, including canopy lighting, should be contained within the site and should not interfere with the amenities of the area.
- Ancillary services such as car wash services should be sited so as not to result in queueing onto the public road network or negatively impact on neighbouring residential amenities.
- Rapid EV charging point(s) should be provided and clearly demarcated with appropriate signage, in collaboration with ESB networks.
- Service stations and associated truck parking facilities in locations at or near national roads will be assessed having regard to the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012).

15.5 Transport and Movement

This Section sets out the transportation standards for development in the County. As part of the strategy of supporting the integration of land use and transportation and promoting a modal shift away from a dependence on the private car, new developments shall, as far as possible, include provision for sustainable modes of transport such as walking, cycling, and public transport.

These standards should be read in conjunction with existing national guidance, which includes the following publications:

- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS);
- Roads Traffic Act, 1994 (as amended);
- Traffic Signs Manual, Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport;
- Road Traffic Regulations, 1997-2012;
- DN-GEO-03030 - Guidance on Minor Improvements to National Roads;
- Traffic Management Guidelines;
- Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas: Guidelines for Planning Authorities;
- National Cycle Manual;
- Smarter Travel;
- TII Publications / Design Manual for Roads and Bridges;
- Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas;
- Spatial Planning and National Roads: Guidelines for Planning Authorities;
- TII Publication PE-DDV-02046 Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) Guidance Notes;
- TII Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) Guidelines (2014);
- Road Safety Impact Assessment (RSIA), TII Publication PE-PMG-02001 Road Safety Impact Assessment;
- Road Safety Audit: TII Publications GE-STY-01024 Road Safety Audit ;
- DN-GEO-03084 Treatment of Transition Zones to Towns and Villages on Urban Roads;
- Achieving Effective Workplace Travel Plans Guidance for Local Authorities;
- Workplace Travel Plans A Guide for Implementers and
- Permeability Best Practice Guide.

15.5.1 Integration of Land Use and Transportation

DM Standard 23: Walking and Cycling

The provision of quality and attractive walking and cycling facilities that are accessible, safe, and well connected to surrounding streets and neighbourhoods can lead to an increase in the number of people choosing to use these facilities. These facilities shall be a central element of the design of any new roads.

Footpaths shall be designed to allow pedestrians pass each other in comfort, shall have a minimum width of 2metres, and shall accommodate people with mobility issues and those who are visually impaired.

Cycle paths shall be designed in accordance with the *Traffic Management Guidelines and the National Cycle Manual* and shall be provided on all new arterial/distributor roads and link roads unless a suitable alternative route is available. Local roads shall be designed to reduce the speed, vehicles, and making the road safer for other road users including cyclists. This provides opportunities to create a shared space for cyclists and motor vehicles. Street lighting shall be provided along footpaths and cycle paths in accordance with the recommendations made in *'Site Development Works for Housing Areas' (DoEHLG)* and any subsequent publication or successor to this document.

DM Standard 24: Bus Network

Any new or upgrades to existing roads or the development of large scale residential and employment areas, shall include provision for bus infrastructure including bus stops, shelters, and lay-bys that would improve public transport provision.

The provision of these facilities shall be agreed in consultation with the Council and the National Transport Authority. The location of bus shelters shall meet the needs of the users but shall also strive to integrate into the local streetscape and shall not unduly interfere with pedestrian and cyclist movement along the footpath.

DM Standard 25: Park and Ride Facilities

Any development in the vicinity of existing rail lines shall comply with the setbacks and construction requirements of Iarnród Éireann, the National Transport Authority, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, and any other relevant stakeholders.

DM Standard 26: Rail Network

In addition to providing parking facilities, the design and layout of Park and Ride facilities shall include provision for a set down area for buses, a sheltered waiting area for customers, appropriate pedestrian and cycle connectivity within the facility and from the surrounding neighbourhoods, and bicycle parking. The facility shall also be suitably lit to provide a degree of security and public safety.

15.5.2 Guidelines for Roads & Parking

DM Standard 27: Access to National and Other Restricted Roads for Residential Developments

The provision of residential access to National and other Restricted Roads will have regard to the following:

- Chapter 6: Transport and Movement of the GCDP 2022-2028 (and any other applicable policy objectives, standards or guidelines in the plan) and to any specific policy objectives as contained within each of the Settlement Plans;
- Part 4, Article 28(j)(i) of the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001*;
- DECLG *Spatial Planning and National Road Guidelines for Planning Authorities* 2012;
- TII publication – ‘*Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (PE-PDV-02045)*’ 2014;
- TII publication – ‘*Rural Road Link Design (DN-GEO-03031)*’ June 2017;
- TII publication – ‘*Geometric Design of Junctions (priority junctions, direct accesses, roundabouts, grade separated and compact grade separated junctions)* (DN-GEO-03060) June 2017;
- TII publication – ‘*Guidance on Minor Improvements to the National Roads (including Erratum No.1, dated April 2013 and Erratum No.2, date June 2013)* (DN-GEO-03030)’ March 2013;
- TII publication – ‘*Road Safety Audit (GE-STY-01024)*’ December 2017;
- TII publication – ‘*Road Safety Impact Assessment (TII PE-PMG-02001)*’ October 2016;
- DTTaS/DoECLG publication – ‘*Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets*’ 2019;
- *Metric Handbook Planning & Design Data* (3rd Edition). Including any updated/superseding versions of the above listed documents that may be published during the lifetime of the plan.

Road construction and other services will generally be required to comply with the current edition of *Recommendations for Site Development Works in Housing Areas* published by DoEHLG and TII design standards as appropriate.

The following requirements shall apply to the provision of residential access to National and other Restricted Roads:

Housing Need Eligibility

a) Residential development along National Roads will be restricted outside the 60kmp speed zones in accordance with the *DoECLG Spatial Planning and National Road Guidelines (2012)*.

Consideration shall be given to the need of farm families to live on the family holding on a limited basis and a functional need to live at this location must be demonstrated. Where there is an existing access, the combined use of same must be considered and shown to be technically unsuitable before any new access can be considered. Access via local roads shall always be the preferred access.

b) Proposed access onto any restricted Regional Road outside the 60kmp kph speed zones shall be restricted to members of the farm family on the family holding and on a limited basis only. Where there is an existing access, the combined use of same must be considered and shown to be technically unsuitable before any new access can be considered. This may require the upgrading and/or relocation of the existing entrance to serve the combined development. Access via local roads shall always be the preferred access. Any new access and must be accompanied by a justification for the proposed access.

c) An Enurement condition will be attached to grants of planning permission for the above.

DM Standard 28: Access to National and Other Restricted Roads for Commercial & Other Developments

Commercial development along National Roads and Other Restricted Roads will be restricted outside the defined settlement centres or the Local Area Plan boundaries as follows:

a) Class I Control Roads (National Road)

In general, commercial and industrial development shall be prohibited outside the 60kph speed limits of National Routes. Consideration will be given to substantiated cases for extension and intensification of existing establishments and to the provision of park and ride facilities. All existing and proposed National Roads are included under the Class 1 Control Roads designation.

b) Class II Control Roads (Regional Road)

Commercial, industrial and community facilities development and land use shall be restricted to essential needs, in the particular locality, of agriculture, tourism infrastructure, fisheries, forestry, park and ride facilities or existing extractive industries, and where these cannot be in the opinion of the Planning Authority, be reasonably located along other non-listed regional or local roads. All restricted regional roads are included under the Class 2 Control Roads designation. Restricted Regional Roads are listed hereunder:

1	Ballinasloe to City Boundary North of Oranmore	R446
2	Tuam – Bearnaderg – Horseleap	R332
3	Galway – An Spidéal – Ballinahow Cross	R336
4	Galway – Carnmore – Monivea	R339
5	Derrydonnell – Athenry	R348
6	Headford – Tuam	R333
7	Ballinasloe – Portumna	R355
8	Ballinasloe – Mountbellew	R358
9	Gort – Loughrea	R380
10	Lough George – Annagh Hill	R354
11	Kilcolgan – Galway /Clare County Boundary	R458
12	Claregalway – M6 (Junction 19) – Oranmore	R381

Table 15.2 Restricted Regional Roads

DM Standard 29: Sight Distances Required for Access onto National, Regional, Local and Private Roads

Vehicular entrances and exit points must be designed by the developer as part of a planning application with adequate provision for visibility so that drivers emerging from the access can enjoy good visibility of oncoming vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians. Where a new entrance is proposed, the Planning Authority must consider traffic conditions and available sight lines. Road junction visibility requirements shall comply with *Geometric Design of Junctions (priority junctions, direct accesses, roundabouts, grade separated and compact grade separated junctions)* (DN-GEO-03060) for rural roads and *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets* for urban roads (including any updated/superseding document). Where substantial works are required in order to facilitate the provision of adequate sight distances lands within the sight distance triangles shall be within the control of the applicant and shall be subject of a formal agreement with the adjacent landowner which ensures certainty that the applicant is in a position to comply with the relevant condition and or standard.

Exit Visibility Check

Visibility splays shall be measured a minimum distance of 2.4m from the edge of the carriageway ('x' distance) or as determined by Galway County Council. In limited instances this may be reduced to 2.4m and to 2.0m in difficult circumstances on urban roads.

Site visibility requirements shall be provided within the development boundary of the site or on lands in the control of the applicant or lands in public ownership.

Letter of consent from adjoining property owners will be required in order to achieve sightlines, and these works to be carried out in advance of commencement of construction.

Entry Visibility Check

A vehicle turning into the proposed development shall be visible to an approaching vehicle for a distance of Y in order to avoid a rear end collision.

A vehicle turning right into the proposed development shall have a forward visibility to the centre of the opposite lane for a distance of Y to ensure they can safely cross the path of an on-coming vehicle.

The Sight Distances required for Access onto National Regional and Local Roads are set out below:

Design Speed and Sight Distances	Sight Distance required for the following Design Speed on The Major Road in kph						
Design Speed	100	85	70	60	50	42	30
Y Distance on Major Road	215	160	120	90	70	50	35

Table 15.3: Sight Distances required for Access onto National, Regional and Local Roads

On narrow Local Roads with poor horizontal and vertical alignment and where the 80 km/h speed limit applies, the design speed applied for access visibility requirements should be the speed (km/h) that one can drive the road in a safe manner. This can be assessed as the 85th percentile speed drivers travel on the road. The visibility will then be assessed on the 85th percentile speed for that road.

In general, where the capacity, width, surface condition or alignment of the road is deemed inadequate, development will not be favoured.

DM Standard 30: Building Lines

A setback of buildings is required in the interests of residential amenity, rural amenity, public safety and to allow for any future road widening or realignment. In general, the following minimum building lines are necessary for the various routes:

a) Motorways/Interchanges

90 metres from the existing or proposed realigned carriageway surface edge.

b) National Primary and Secondary Routes

35 metres from the existing or proposed realigned carriageway surface edge and former national routes which are now classified as regional routes.

c) Regional Routes

25 metres from the existing or proposed realigned carriageway surface edge.

d) Local Roads

15 metres from the existing or proposed realigned carriageway surface edge.

e) Urban Roads and Streets

Building lines will be related to the location of the building in the town or village, i.e. village streets, housing estate, cluster development.

DM Standard 31: Developments on Private Roads

The following shall apply to development on a private road:

- a) Where development is proposed on a private road, the safety and capacity of the junction of the private road with the public road shall be a consideration by the planning authority. The applicant should demonstrate that the sightlines are in compliance with DM Standard 31 of the GCDP 2022-2028 at the junction of the private road and local road, in their planning application.
- b) Where an applicant proposes development on a private road, they shall satisfactorily demonstrate to the Planning Authority comprehensive evidence by way of legal documentation and associated maps of a right of way agreement and the requisite consent of the relevant parties to utilise the existing infrastructure and/or to indicate works along the proposed access route for the purpose of installing, repairing and/or upgrading infrastructure so as to render the development site adequately equipped to serve the proposed development.
- c) In general, where the capacity, width, surface condition or alignment of the private road is deemed inadequate development will not be favoured.

DM Standard 32: Parking Standards

Whilst this Plan promotes a modal shift away from the private car to more sustainable modes of transport, the car will continue to be an important mode of transport, and therefore there will normally be a requirement to provide car parking as part of a development. Car parking should be located to the rear of building lines where possible. Large areas of car parking should be accompanied by a landscaping plan to mitigate the visual impact of same. In assessing applications for change of use or for replacement buildings within towns and villages, an allowance will be given for former site use in calculating the car parking requirements generated by the new development. In relation to infill sites and sites adjacent to public transport corridors or civic parking facility, a flexible application of standards will be considered. In addition to car parking, sufficient space will be required within a development site for all service vehicles necessary for the operation of the business or building, including drop-off areas, loading/unloading areas etc. In relation to Car Parking Design Standard Dimensions refer to Section 16 of the DoEHLG/DoT/DTO Traffic Management Guidelines and to the Metric Handbook Planning and Design Data (3rd Edition) and to the Design Manual of Roads and Streets DMURS (as amended).

Dimensions of Parking Spaces

The dimensions of parking and loading spaces shall be as follows:

Parking Space	Dimensions
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Parking Space - perpendicular to kerb	5.0m x 2.5m
Parking Space - adjacent to a wall or other obstruction	5.0m x 2.75m
Parking Space - parallel to the kerb	6.0m x 2.5m
Accessible Parking Bay	5.0m x 2.5m plus 1.2m to the side and rear of each space
Loading Bay	6.0m x 3.0m
Circulation areas	6.0m in width

Table 15.4: Parking Space Dimensions

The following parking requirements will be applied for different types of development:

a) Dual Use Parking and Mixed Use Developments

The Council will encourage the provision of dual use parking areas where peak times of users do not coincide. In mixed use developments it may therefore not be necessary to meet full parking standards where it can be shown that shared parking is viable.

b) School Parking

All applications for new schools and where possible extensions to schools will be required to prioritise access safety and will indicate safe access and egress to the school for pupils, parents and students. A Road Safety Audit which should cover the public-private interface will be required in some cases. Drop off facilities will be required in accordance with Department of Education & Skills Guidelines. Off road parking for teachers and bus/car collection will be indicated in all cases as well as secure bicycle parking facilities.

c) Parking in Residential Areas

In general, residential layouts should not be dominated by car parking along access roads. New residential development should take account of the following criteria:

- The design standards and guidance set out in the Design Manual of Roads and Streets DMURS (as amended).
- Car parking for detached and semi-detached housing should generally be within the curtilage of the individual house site.
- Car parking for apartments and terraced housing where appropriate, should generally be at basement level. Where this is not possible, parking for apartments and terraced housing should be in small scale informal groups overlooked by residential units;

d) Car Parking Standards

The Table 15.5 illustrates the car parking standards for different types of development: (It should be noted that a flexible approach to these standards may be applied where such a case is substantiated, there is no traffic safety issue, and it is clearly demonstrated to the Planning Authority in the interest of proper planning and development, that the standard should be adjusted to facilitate the site specific context).

Development	Car Parking Standard
Dwellings/Apartments (1-3 bedrooms)	1.5 Spaces Per Dwelling
Dwellings/Apartments (4+ bedrooms)	2 Spaces Per Unit
Shops (<250 sq.m gross)	1 car space per 24m ² of gross floorspace
Shops (250 -1000 sq m gross)	1 car space per 18m ² of gross floorspace

Large Stores (>1000 sq m gross)	1 car space per 12m2 of gross floorspace
Banks, Financial Institutions	1 car space per 14m2 of gross floorspace
Offices (Town Centre)	1 car space per 25m2 of gross floorspace
Office Park	1 car space per 20m2 of gross floorspace
Industry/Manufacturing/Light Industry	1 car space per 33m2 of gross floorspace
Data Centre 1 per 100m2 gross floor area	1 space per 100m2 gross floor area
Warehousing	1 car space per 100m2 of gross floorspace
Garages	1 car space per 50m2 of gross floorspace
Petrol Station	4 spaces per fuel pump
Retail outlets within petrol stations	1 space per 10m2 of net floor area & 1 HGV space per 30sqm2 net floor area is required where food is served on the premises.
Car Show Rooms	1 car space per 50m2 of gross floorspace
Cash & Carry	1 car space per 100m2
Theatre/Cinema/Church/Stadium	1 car space per 3 seats
Hotels/Guest Houses (Excluding Function Rooms)	1 car space per bedroom
Hostel/Motel	1 car space per bedroom or 1 car spaced per 10 bed dormitory.
Temporary Accommodation (Caravans/Yurts/Glamping/Mobile Homes)	1 space per unit
Lounge/Bar	1 car space per 10m2 or public floorspace
Restaurants	1 car space per 10m2 or public floorspace
Leisure Centre	1 car space per 50m2 of gross floor area
Cafe	1 space per 10m2 dining area+
Takeaways	1 car space per 18m2 gross floor area
Conference Centres	1 car space per 25m2
Function Room/Dance Halls/Clubs	1 car space per 3m2
Playing Fields/Sports Clubs	20 car spaces per pitch/2 spaces per court
Swimming Pool	5 car spaces per 100m2
Gym	1 car space per 10m2
Community Centre	1 car space per 10m2
*Primary Schools	1 car space per classroom
*Secondary Schools	2 car spaces per classroom
Nursing Homes	1 car space per 2 bedrooms
Hospitals	To be agreed with the Council
Funeral Home	1 space per 6m2
*Childcare Facilities	1 car parking space per staff member + 1 car parking space per 4 children
Clinics and Group Medical Practices	2 car spaces per consultant
Churches/Religious Buildings	1 space per 6 seats
Allotments	1 space per plot

Table 15.5: Car Parking Standards

*A setdown area may be appropriate in certain circumstances.

e) Accessible Car Parking

Car parking provision shall be provided for the disabled and mobility impaired in all car-parking developments and should be located in the most convenient locations for ease of uses. The minimum criteria for such parking provisions are detailed in the National Disability Authority Guidelines Building for Everyone published in 2012 (including any updated/superseding document).

Provision of four spaces in every 100, and one space for every 100 after for buildings not normally visited by the public. For buildings that the public are likely to visit the following standards should apply:

- 1 space within 5 – 25 spaces
- 3 spaces within 25 – 50 spaces
- 4 spaces within 50- 75 spaces
- 5 spaces within 75 – 100 spaces
- 3 spaces per 100 thereafter

Age Friendly car parking spaces should generally be provided, where possible, in all developments and in main towns, near strategic areas e.g. Post office, credit union, doctors' surgery, civic buildings, etc.

f) Bicycle Parking Standards

In compliance with Smarter Travel Policies, secure cycle parking facilities shall be provided in new office, residential, retail and employment generating development. Larger developments should provide a broad range of facilities for cyclists to encourage increased cycle usage, including cycle parking facilities and associated facilities such as air pump to reflate flat tyres, lockers, changing rooms and shower facilities.

Bicycle parking shall be located in a prominent position within 30m of the facility served. A bicycle parking bay shall be 0.8m wide and 1.8m long. The bicycle park should have a shelter and be signposted. Provision must be made in the development for bicycle parking spaces in accordance with the standards outlined within *The National Cycle Manual, by the National Transport Authority*, in particular Section 5.5.7 which deals with the allocation of cycle parking for developments and shall include the following:

- Housing Developments: 1 private secure bicycle space per bed space (note - design should not require bicycle access via living area), minimum 2 spaces 1 visitor bicycle space per two housing units
- Offices: 10% of employee numbers, (subject to minimum of 10 bicycle storage places or one bike space for every car space, whichever is the greater)
- Schools: 10% of pupil registration numbers, minimum 10 places.
- Other Developments: 1 bike storage space for every car space
- Shops 1 storage space per 100 sq. m.
- Public Transport pick-up points (Rail, tram, taxi ranks and QBCs) 2.5% of number of daily boarders at that point/ station, subject to minimum of 10 bicycle storage places.

g) Electric Charge Points Spaces

- All developments should provide facilities for the charging of battery operated cars at a rate of up to 20% of the total car parking spaces. The remainder of the parking spaces should be constructed so as to be capable of accommodating future charging points, as required.
- New residential development should accommodate at least one car parking space equipped with an EV charging points for every five car parking spaces being provided for the associated development.

- Electric car charging spaces should be clearly demarcated with appropriate signage.
- Rapid Charge Points: Should be provided within centres of commercial activity and clearly demarcated with appropriate signage, in collaboration with ESB networks.

h) Taxi Parking

- Planning applications for significant commercial, industrial or other development shall be required to demonstrate satisfactory provision of drop-off and set down areas for taxi services.
- Taxi facilities shall be provided in supermarket and neighbourhood development proposals.

i) Visual impact of car parking.

Large areas of extensive parking in public view should be avoided. Carparking should be located to the rear of buildings and services. The visual impact of large areas of parking should be reduced by the use of screen planting, low walls and the use of different textures or coloured paving for car parking bays.

A reduction in the car-parking requirement may be acceptable where the Planning Authority is satisfied that:

- There is sufficient parking available in the vicinity of the development to cater for any shortfall.
- The nature of the development is such that existing parking spaces in the vicinity could facilitate the dual use of parking spaces, particularly if the development operated at off-peak times. Supporting documentation will be required demonstrating how the dual use will work.
- The public transport links available would reduce the demand for car parking.
- The central location of the development is such that the customers/residents/users of the development would be likely to walk or cycle.

A Transport Mobility Management Plan supporting any reduction in car parking shall be included with any application where the quantum of parking is significantly below that set out in the Car Parking Standards. Parking demand calculations shall be provided detailing the demand throughout the day from a database of similar types of development in similar circumstances.

DM Standard 33: Controls for Signage along Public Roads

The following requirements will be applied in respect of signage along public roads:

a) Licensing System

The Planning Authority will operate a licensing system for all signs and structures on public roads.

b) Rural Areas

Advertising signs will not be permitted along roads in rural areas outside the boundaries of towns and villages save for a limited number, which relate to heritage or tourist attractions and which are of national interest.

c) Towns, Villages & Settlements Areas

Within towns, villages and settlement areas, no signage will be permitted where it may constitute a hazard or obstacle for pedestrians or road users or where the location of such signage may obscure sight distances at junctions or cause undue or necessary distraction to road users. The proliferation of non-road traffic signage on and adjacent to all roads outside of the 50-60kmh speed limit area shall

be avoided in the interest of traffic safety and visual amenity, in accordance with the *Spatial Planning and National Road Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012* (or any updated/superseding document). Signs should not impair the setting of any archaeological or historical site or any proposed or protected building or structures within an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA).

d) Fingerpost Signs

The system for fingerpost signs, which relate to premises, and are located away from major routes will operate on the basis of any future policy document prepared by Galway County Council in relation to finger post signs. Signage in the Gaeltacht shall be in the Irish Language only.

DM Standard 34: Traffic Impact Assessment, Traffic & Transport Assessment, Road Safety Audit & Noise Assessment

All new road layouts should be designed in accordance with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) and the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). Development proposals should also include provision for a sustainable modal split, with pedestrian and cycling facilities recognised as an important aspect of new design proposals.

All significant development proposals, or those that the Planning Authority consider would pose a safety risk or traffic impact shall be accompanied by road safety audits, road safety impact assessments and transport and traffic assessments. These shall include a consideration of the cumulative impact of development on the road network. This shall be guided by the following:

a) Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA), Road Safety Audit (RSA) & Road Safety Impact Assessments (RSIA)

Require all planning applications for significant development proposals to be accompanied by a TTA, RSA and RSIA to be carried out by a suitably competent consultant, which are assessed in association with their cumulative impact with neighbouring developments on the road network.

Guidelines in relation to the TTA are provided in the *Traffic Management Guidelines* as published by the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government (DoEHLG) Dublin Transportation Office (DTO) and the Department of Transport (DoT). Guidance as provided in the TII publication – '*Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (PE-PDV-02045)*' (and any updated/superseding documents).

In relation to a Road Safety Audit guidance is provided in the TII's - '*Road Safety Audit (GE-STY-01024)*'. The Guidelines also include recommendations on the requirement for sub-threshold traffic and transport assessments. (Refer to the Transport Infrastructure Ireland website www.tii.ie).

Road Safety Impact Assessment is described in the EU Directive on Road Infrastructure Safety Management (EU RISM) 2008/96/EC as a strategic comparative analysis of the impact of a new road, or of substantial modifications to an existing road, on the safety performance of the road network. Guidance is provided on RSIA's in TII publication – '*Road Safety Impact Assessment (TII PE-PMG-02001)*'.

b) Noise Assessment

Require all new proposed developments, within 300m of roadways with traffic volumes greater than 8,220 AADT to include noise assessment and mitigation measures if necessary with their planning application documentation.

DM Standard 35: Mobility Management Plans

All new developments and proposed extensions to existing developments should give consideration to limiting traffic generation as far as possible. Where medium to large scale residential, commercial, mixed use, business/enterprise or industrial developments are proposed a Mobility Management Plan will be required and should incorporate proposals for use of public transport, cycling, walking, car sharing, car pooling etc. as appropriate.

Mobility Management Plans should include achievable measures to reduce dependency on private car use for daily commutes and incorporate where possible; - Measures to promote use of public transport, cycling and walking; - Car sharing/carpooling; - Charges for parking; - Staggered working/business hours. Guidance is provided on Mobility Management Plans in NTA publication – *‘Workplace Travel Plans: A Guide for Implementers’*.

The following information should be provided with any Mobility Management Plans:

- Details of the parking vehicular and cyclist parking provision;
- Links between the development and public transport;
- Cyclist and pedestrian facilities;
- How the needs of people with impaired mobility will be met; and
- How people will be encouraged to use sustainable modes of transport.

DM Standard 36: Pavement Finish of a Surface Abutting a Public Road

To prevent damage to the structure of a public road, Galway County Council require a developer to provide adequate road base with bitumen finish where the private access joins the public road surface. These works may require a road opening licence.

15.6 Infrastructure, Utilities and Environmental Protection

15.6.1 Water and Wastewater

DM Standard 37: Public Water Supply and Wastewater Collection

All new developments will be required to utilise and connect to the public water and wastewater network, where practicable. Applicants who need to get a new or modified connection to public water supply or wastewater collection infrastructure must liaise with Irish Water.

Where the applicant has concerns about the feasibility of connecting to the public network, they should make a pre-connection enquiry to Irish Water in order to establish the feasibility of a connection in advance of seeking planning permission.

DM Standard 38: Group Water Scheme and Private Wells

The provision of a safe and reliable water supply is a requirement of development. If the water is supplied by a group water scheme, any planning application must be accompanied by a letter of consent to connection from the secretary of the scheme and in certain circumstances; the developer

may be required to extend the main to the site. Where a bored well is necessary or more feasible, details of separation distances from treatment systems shall be in compliance with the standards in the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), *Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment Systems for Single Dwellings*.

Private Bore Holes should comply with the Guidelines from The Institute of Geologist of Ireland publication 'Water Well Construction' www.igi.ie

The following should be submitted to the Planning Authority:

- A record of an appropriate test of the sustainable yield of the well;
- Documentation of the well construction, its yield and its water quality including a list of tested chemical and bacteriological parameters;
- A detailed account of the water treatment system that will be installed if necessary.

DM Standard 39: Effluent Treatment Plants

The suitability of a site for the treatment of wastewater shall be determined, in accordance with the criteria set down in the EPA Wastewater Treatment Manuals (1999, 2009) or any revision or replacement of these manuals or any guidelines issued by the EPA concerning the content of these manuals.

- For single houses the EPA Wastewater Treatment Manuals-Treatment Systems for Single Houses 2009 (including any updated or superseding document) shall apply;
- For larger developments (where appropriate) the EPA Wastewater Treatment Manuals-Treatment Systems for Small Communities, Business, Leisure Centres and Hotels shall apply.

The following requirements shall apply with respect to effluent treatment facilities:

a) Single Houses

Each dwelling house shall be serviced by its own septic tank or treatment plant and shall not share this facility with any other dwelling other than in exceptional circumstances.

b) Clustered Housing

In the case of clustered housing schemes, public (Irish Water) wastewater connection is encouraged. In the case of unserviced villages, private wastewater treatment plants for each dwelling shall be permitted where the treatment systems are in compliance with the standards in the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), *Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment Systems for Single Dwellings*

c) Certification

Certification will be required that septic tanks have been de-sludged in accordance with EPA Guidelines. The following will be a requirement of Planning Permission:

- Design Details - Design calculations supporting the selection of a particular type and size of system;
- Maintenance - A maintenance agreement specifying associated terms and conditions;
- Certification - Certification that septic tanks have been de-sludged in accordance with EPA Guidelines.

15.6.2 Waste Management

DM Standard 40: Construction and Demolition Waste

Where significant construction and demolition waste is envisaged arising from a proposed development, the Council will seek the submission of a waste management plan for the construction phase of the development for the written agreement of the Council, which shall be in compliance with the *Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction & Demolition Projects*, by the DRHLG. All waste materials generated during both the construction and operational phases of development must only be collected by appropriately licensed waste contractors and disposed of in licensed waste facilities.

Construction and Demolition Waste Management Plans shall be required as part of any planning application in excess of the following thresholds;

- New residential development of 10 houses or more;
- Developments including institutional, educational, health and other public facilities, with an aggregate floor area in excess of 1,250 m²;
- Demolition/renovation/refurbishment projects generating in excess of 100 m³ in volume, of Construction and Demolition waste;
- Civil engineering projects producing in excess of 500 m³ of waste, excluding waste materials used for development works on the site.

DM Standard 41: Waste Recovery/Disposition Sites

Planning applications for waste related facilities shall:

- Ensure that the proposed development does not impact significantly upon Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), sensitive landscape areas, visual amenity, geology, heritage or cultural value, or areas at risk of flooding;
- Detail the type, source and volume of waste material to be processed and its method of processing, including hours of operation and duration of permission sought;
- Phasing programme showing the development in layout drawings and site sectional drawings for each phase of development including the restoration of the site;
- Show by the submission of a Traffic and Transport Assessment indicating details of road access, sightlines / visibility, vehicle turning manoeuvres, parking areas, pull-in areas, the number and types of vehicles which will frequent the site, the carrying loads of vehicles, and haul routes and that the roads infrastructure in the area can accommodate the proposed development;
- Submit evidence that the proposed development is in accordance with the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive and associated River Basin Management Plans;
- Ensure that environmental emissions such as noise, fumes, odours, dust, grit, vibration and lighting, along with controls and monitoring of same are adequately mitigated and do not impact significantly upon residences in close proximity to the proposed development;
- Provide for adequate screening of the proposed development through the submission of detailed landscaping plans and boundary treatment proposals; and
- Ensure that sufficient detail is submitted in relation to restoration and remediation measures following cessation of the proposed development, including a timeframe for implementation and anticipated finished landform.

15.6.3 Electricity and Information and Communications Technology

DM Standard 42: Electricity Transmissions lines

Electricity transmission lines are an essential and inevitable element in providing the necessary energy for economic and social progress. The development of electricity transmission lines shall be subject to the following:

a) Landscape Sensitivity

Seek to locate electricity transmission lines in non scenic amenity areas where possible, having regard to the Landscape Sensitivity Rating Assessment of the County. In instances where their location in a Class 3(Special) or 4 (Iconic) landscape category areas or in proximity to a National Monument, Protected Structure, Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) or within a scenic route/protected view is essential, it shall be necessary to minimise their obstructiveness in as far as is practically possible. A Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) shall be required to be submitted with planning applications for these locations.

b) Amenity Impacts

New transmission lines should have regard to existing residential amenity and environmental designations and should mitigate against any significant diminution of views of special amenity value.

c) Applications

Applications for new transmission lines shall be accompanied by a justification statement of the regional importance of, and demonstrated need for, the proposed development in strengthening the electricity network in the region.

DM Standard 43: Telecommunications Masts

In order to facilitate the evaluation of development proposals for the erection of antennae and support structure with regard to the DoEHLG, Planning Guidelines for Telecommunications Antennae and Support (1996 including any updated/superseding document) and DECLG Circular PI 07/12 regarding the 1996 Planning Guidelines. While the current state of technology requires the construction of masts and antennae in the countryside the following standards will apply:

a) Landscape Sensitivity

In instances where telecommunications masts are essentially required in landscape sensitivity Class 3(Special) or Class 4 (Iconic), a Visual Impact Assessment shall be required with all planning applications for these locations.

b) Amenity Impacts

Masts and associated base station facilities should be located away from existing residences and schools.

c) Landscape Impacts

Masts should be designed and located so as to cause minimum impact on the landscape. If possible, sites should be located within forest plantations. Access roads shall be permitted only where essential. Where provided, they should not scar the landscape on which they are located. Roads should follow the natural contours of the site in order to minimise their visual intrusion, and should be bordered with shrubs after construction. Masts should be sited to avoid the location of such structures in sensitive landscapes, in nature conservation areas, in highly sensitive landscapes and where views are to be preserved.

d) Co-Location

Licensees shall be required to co-locate their services by sharing a single mast or, if necessary, locating additional masts in cluster form. Co-location agreements to be provided where possible. Where new facilities are proposed applicants will be required to satisfy the Council that they have made a reasonable effort to share facilities or to locate facilities in clusters.

e) Security

Mast compounds should have security fencing and anti-climbing devices designed to local aesthetic and safety requirements.

f) Redundancy

In the event of the discontinuance of any mast installation the mast and its equipment shall be removed from the site and the land shall be reinstated.

All planning applications shall be required to furnish a statement of compliance with the International Radiation Protection Association (IRPA) Guidelines or the equivalent European Pre-Standard 50166-2 in the interest of health and safety.

15.7 Tourism and Landscape

15.7.1 Tourism Related Developments

DM Standard 44: Tourism Infrastructure and Holiday Orientated Developments

While seeking to ensure that most tourism development locate in or close to towns and villages, the Council recognises that by its nature, some tourism development may require other locations. Developments that may be open to consideration outside settlement centres include: indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, golf courses, swimming, angling, sailing/boating, pier/marina development, equestrian and pony trekking routes, adventure/interpretative centres and associated ancillary uses, tourist related leisure facilities including walking and cycling.

In these circumstances the Council shall promote the reuse of existing buildings outside of settlements for holiday homes/guest accommodation where it can be demonstrated that the redevelopment work is bona fide (replicates and/or is similar in scale and design to the existing building) and will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment.

a) Tourism Infrastructure Development

The Council recognises that golf courses and certain other tourism infrastructure facilities may require ancillary facilities (e.g. club houses, hotel, holiday or short term letting residential accommodation/development and other associated tourism related facilities) to ensure long term viability. Where the provision of such facilities complies with the other requirements of the County Development Plan as set out and the requirements of proper planning and sustainable development, the Council will consider the provision of same subject to the submission of the following:

- Comprehensive justification of need for the facility;
- Overall master plan of the facility;
- Documentary evidence of compliance with the other requirements of the Development Plan.

b) Holiday Orientated Developments

Holiday villages shall have regard to the following:

- The scale of the development should be of modest proportions and should relate to the size of the settlement;
- The design of the scheme should be to a high standard and should include the preservation of boundary characteristics and significant site features as well as car parking provision, segregated waste storage area, public lighting;
- In general, stand alone holiday orientated development schemes or new tourism facilities which cannot demonstrate connectivity to existing settlements shall not be permitted in the open countryside. In exceptional cases, where it can be demonstrated that facility is dependent on physical or locational constraints which are site specific, consideration may be given to such facilities;
- All new developments must have regard to the *Galway Design Guidelines for the Single Rural House*.

DM Standard 45: Camping and Caravan Sites

Caravan, glamping and camping developments shall address the following;

- A high standard integrated design and layout linking pitches to well-located communal areas and on site facilities and amenities;
- Compliance with the Regulations for Caravan and Camping Parks (Bord Fáilte 2009);
- A detailed hard and soft landscaping plan for the overall site;
- Mitigation plans for noise and litter; and
- Details of wastewater disposal for the site.

DM Standard 46: Self-Catering Developments

Self-Catering developments shall address the following

- The layout of the development shall be of a high standard, incorporating well laid out communal open spaces, significant and appropriate landscaping maintaining existing site features such as hedgerow and trees, car parking provision, segregated waste storage and public lighting.
- The design of units should be high quality and respect the character of the area in which they are located. Suburban type developments will not be favoured. Courtyard type developments will be particularly encouraged.

15.7.2 Landscape Sensitivity

DM Standard 47: Compliance with Landscape Sensitivity Designations

Subject to the provisions of the plan but in particular the settlement policies of Chapters 2, 3 & 4 and the consequent restriction on development in rural areas, the control of permissible development shall be in accordance with the policies as they relate to the four sensitivity classes of landscape in Section 8.13.2 of this plan. It will deem the following types of development generally to be acceptable in the various areas of sensitivity as follows:

Class 1 – Low Sensitivity	All developments which are of appropriate scale and design and are consistent with settlement policies.
Class 2 – High Sensitivity	Few developments, including those with substantiated cases for such a specific location and which are in compliance with settlement policies.
Class 3 – Special	Restricted to essential residential needs of local households, family farm business and locally resourced enterprises.
Class 4 – Iconic	Negligible alterations will be allowed only in exceptional circumstances.

Table 15.6: Landscape Sensitivity Designations

The Council shall provide for the consideration of strategic infrastructure in all Classes.

It is accepted that the Islands around our coastline are special and require protection while at the same time accommodating local needs. Currently the landscape sensitivity rating for the Aran Islands is Class 4 – Iconic. However, consideration will be given to accommodating local housing needs, where the development would be in conformity with the provisions of the plan.

DM Standard 48: Field Patterns, Stone Walls, Trees and Hedgerows

Field patterns and associated stone walls, trees and hedgerows are an important part of the visual and environmental quality of rural areas and their removal and replacement with block walls and fencing leads to urban features in a rural environment. It can also have an effect on wildlife and lead to the removal of valuable hedgerows upon which wildlife depends. New developments will accordingly be subject to the following requirements in this regard:

a) Existing Features

Retain and incorporate existing field patterns and associated stone walls, trees and hedgerows into new development layouts wherever feasible.

b) Intervention

In general, only the minimum interference with existing field patterns, stone walls, trees and hedges shall be permitted.

c) Planting

The Council will also encourage the planting of native trees and hedgerows along all boundaries.

d) Hedgerows

Include consideration of native hedgerow with post and rail fencing along roadside frontages where existing hedgerow is being removed. Employ the appropriate management methods for the maintenance of roadside habitats to minimise damage (in particular to hedges) and observe the hedge cutting closed season.

15.8 Marine and Coastal Management

DM Standard 49: Coastal Management and Protection

The following requirements shall be considered and applied where appropriate with respect to coastal management and protection:

a) Natural Processes

Where possible, developments shall ensure that the landward migration of coastal features, such as dunes and marshes, shall be facilitated as these features form an integral part of the coastal system – both physically and ecologically - and provide protection against wave energy through dissipation.

b) Sea Level Change and Flooding

New developments shall generally comply with the following approach to coastal management for sea level change:

- No new building or new development within 100m of 'soft' shoreline;
- No further reclamation of estuary land;
- No removal of sand dunes, beach sand or gravel;
- All coastal defence measures to be assessed for environmental impact.

c) Coastal Edge

In addition to the above, a general minimum horizontal setback of 30m from the foreshore field boundary line, for new development, or along the 3m natural contour line, whichever is the greatest, is to be created. Any planning applications within this setback must demonstrate that any development would not be subject to potential rising sea levels as a result of climate change including global warming, and must address any issues with regard to rising sea levels, with regard to the siting of any development. New developments should not restrict opportunities for providing public access to the foreshore. The coastal edge and coastal habitats shall be protected from destruction and degradation to ensure their roles as ecological corridors, coastal flooding and storm surge buffers are retained and enhanced, and developers proposing developments in the vicinity of this area will be requested to carry out an ecological plan that incorporates the natural vegetation and topography of the area.

All plans and projects shall have regard to and be in accordance with the provisions of the National Marine Planning Framework.

DM Standard 50: Mariculture

The following details shall be required as part of a planning application where appropriate with respect to coastal management and protection;

- The capacity of the shoreline to absorb its onshore facilities;
- Access roads;
- Car parking;
- Scale of traffic and size of vehicle using facility;
- Turning space required;
- Impact of traffic on public road;
- Waste disposal i.e. reject produce;
- Slipways;
- Moorings;
- Lighting;
- Cranes;
- Amenities in the area; and
- Any visual aids necessary to measure the impact.

Development effecting the coast must comply with the Policy Objectives set out in *Chapter 9 Marine and Coastal Management*.

15.9 Natural Heritage, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

DM Standard 51: Environmental Assessments

The following measures shall be applied in respect of designated environmental sites:

a) Appropriate Assessment

Screening for Appropriate Assessment and/or Appropriate Assessment will be required with all applications where it is considered that the proposed development may impact (directly and indirectly), or in combination with other projects, on a Natura 2000 designated site i.e. a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or a Special Protection Area (SPA), to inform decision making. The appropriate assessment shall be carried out in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended)*, as relevant.

b) Ecological Assessment

An Ecological Assessment may be required for small scale projects in other areas e.g. (proposed) Natural Heritage Areas, Ramsar Sites, Nature Reserves, National Parks) that may be considered environmentally sensitive and may have direct/indirect impacts on the natural heritage value of the area. The need for an ecological assessment should be discussed with the Planning Section prior to the submission of an application. The assessment should include consideration of impacts in relation to biodiversity, ecological linkages, water quality and drainage.

c) Environmental Impact Statement/Assessment

Under the EIA Directive the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment is required. The thresholds for such an assessment are listed in the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001* (as amended). An EIS may also be required for development proposals below the statutory thresholds; *EIA Guidance for Consent Authorities on Sub Threshold Development (2003)* is available in this regard. The Planning Authority may require the submission of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in accordance with the provisions of Part 10 of *Assessment the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)*.

DM Standard 52: Green Infrastructure

Existing Green Infrastructure (including green corridors) and ecosystems services should be identified at the initial stages of the planning process for a proposed development and should guide the design of an appropriate site layout. These may comprise linear open spaces along paths, water courses, planting or other natural features, and provide opportunities for walking and cycling, informal recreation, and biodiversity and wildlife migration. The landscaping plan submitted with an application should clearly illustrate how existing green infrastructure, and opportunities to create more linkages outside the site, have informed and been incorporated into the development layout. Green corridors are not considered to form part of the public open space provision of a development. The Planning Authority will encourage the protection of all mature trees and hedgerows, which occur on development sites and roads. Where possible, all trees, hedgerow and landscape features to be retained shall be identified in planning applications.

15.10 Community Development and Social Infrastructure

The Council shall seek to ensure that community facilities are provided in tandem with housing developments as well as ensuring there is an adequate proximity to all essential services such as shops.

DM Standard 53: Schools

Applications for educational provision shall comply with the requirements of technical guidance documents published by the Department of Education and Skills (see www.education.ie) and the Local Authority including *'Provision of Schools and the Planning System: A code of Practice for Planning Authorities (DES, DEHLG, 2008)*.

In the design of education facilities consideration should be given to provision of multi-campus and multi-use element with a flexible approach demonstrated to allow for different users at different times of the day and throughout the calendar year.

This list is not exhaustive and the Council may consider other requirements contained in the chapter on a case by case basis with planning applications should the need arise.

Existing Educational Sites

Lands adjacent to existing schools should where possible be protected for possible future educational use to allow for expansion of these schools, if required, subject to site suitability and agreement of the various stakeholders.

DM Standard 54: Community Facilities

In assessing planning applications for example leisure facilities, sports grounds, playing fields, play areas, community halls, organisational meeting facilities, medical facilities, childcare facilities and other community orientated developments, regard will be taken of considerations such as:

- Overall need in terms of existing infrastructural deficit and opportunity for community gain;
- Practicalities of site location in terms of relating to uses, impact on local amenities, desirability and accessibility;
- The potential multifunctional use of community facilities;
- Conformity with the requirements of appropriate legislative guidelines e.g. childcare facilities;
- The Planning Authority supports the retention of existing school sites for community use once the existing school has been relocated to an appropriate site. The existing site could be redeveloped as a multi-purpose community centre providing a range of facilities for the local community, including community meeting rooms, youth facilities, games rooms, senior citizens facilities, sports and cultural facilities. The facility should have safe access for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. Safe public parking/bus stop should be provided in close proximity as appropriate.

DM Standard 55: Nursing Home/Care Facilities & Specialist Housing

In general, nursing home and care facilities should be integrated wherever possible into the established residential areas, where there is adequate wastewater capacity and where residents can expect reasonable access to local services.

In determining planning applications nursing home developments and for change of use of a residential dwelling or other buildings to nursing/elder care home, a range of factors will be considered including:

- Alignment with appropriately serviced and zoned lands and/or connectivity to existing public infrastructure and amenities;
- Compliance with the National Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People in Ireland (2016)
- The effect on the amenities of adjoining properties;
- Adequate off street parking;
- Suitable and sufficient provision of private open space;
- Proximity to local services and facilities;
- The size and scale of the facility proposed – the scale must be appropriate to the area;

DM Standard 56: Places of Worship

Planning applications shall contain details in relation to the seating capacity of the facility, hours of operation and a traffic assessment (including details of proposed parking provision).

New or enlarged places of worship shall be located in places where they do not (i) create unacceptable traffic congestion, (ii) create car parking difficulties, (iii) cause a nuisance or detract from the amenities of existing residents or businesses.

DM Standard 57: Health Centres/Services, Primary Health Centres, Medical Consultants and Veterinary Surgeries

Planning applications should include details of proposed professional medical activities, proposed number of practitioners and support staff, parking provision and intended hours of operation.

The location of New Health Centres/services, Primary Health Centres, Medical Consultants and Veterinary Surgeries is favoured in towns, villages and local centres, with good accessibility, however new facilities in other locations or a change of use from residential to health facilities will be considered where the privacy and amenity of adjacent occupiers is preserved and the proposal does not have a detrimental effect on local amenity by way of traffic congestion or noise. Full justification will be required for proposals outside of towns and villages. Adequate car parking/set down areas must be identified in such proposals.

DM Standard 58: Burial Grounds and Crematoriums

Proposals will be required to demonstrate a need for the development and that the proposal will not (i) create unacceptable traffic congestion, (ii) create car parking difficulties, (iii) cause a nuisance or detract from the amenities of existing residents or businesses.

All proposals pertaining to crematoriums and/or crematoria should demonstrate compliance with appropriate legislative guidelines and provide details in relation to landscaping, storage, waste and groundwater.

Hydrogeological surveys and monitoring of the groundwater may be required for cemeteries.

15.11 Architecture, Archaeology and Culture

DM Standard 59: Protected or Proposed Protected Structures

As a minimum requirement, the Planning Authority will require planning applications for works to protected structures or proposed protected structures to have regard to the following:

- Galway County Council's *Architectural Survey & Assessment Best Practice Guide*;
- *DAHG Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2011*;

The inclusion of a structure in the Record of Protected Structures does not preclude appropriate use or development. However, no works which would affect the character of the structure, or any element of it, which contributes to its special architectural heritage interest may be carried out to a protected structure without planning permission.

The following requirements shall be applied with respect to protected or proposed protected structures, as appropriate:

a) Conservation Measures

Proposals for development, which include a protected structure, will be required to incorporate measures to protect, conserve and enhance the character and appearance of the structure.

b) Development Works

Proposals for development involving material alteration or additions to a protected structure require planning permission and will be required to show that:

- It is compatible with and will not detract from the special character of the structure and its setting;
- It complements and reflects the design and character of surrounding buildings and area;
- Features of architectural or historic interest and the historic form and structural integrity of the structure are retained;
- Architectural features shall match those or be in keeping with the traditional detailing of the structure;
- Proposals for development that compromise the setting of protected structures or which will result in material alteration or demolition of structures will only be permitted where:
- The structure is not capable of repair.
- There is no compatible or viable alternative use for the structure.

c) Adjoining Development

Development on sites adjoining a protected structure will be required to demonstrate that:

- It will have no adverse impacts on the character or integrity of the protected structure or views to and from it;
- Owners and prospective owners of protected structures or proposed protected structures or structures located in Architectural Conservation Areas should consult with the Planning Authority in good time as to the appropriateness of proposed works or other developments, and seek competent advice on best practice for carrying out such works.

DM Standard 60: Architectural Heritage Assessment report

Where deemed necessary, the Planning Authority may require an Architectural Heritage Assessment report, prepared by a qualified and experienced conservation architect as described in Appendix B of the DEHLG Architectural Heritage Protection, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2004 reissued by DAHG, 2011) which shall accompany planning applications for works to protected structures. This report shall:

- Outline the significance of the building;
- Include a detailed survey of the building, including a photographic survey;
- Detail the proposed works it is intended to carry out; and
- Contain a full assessment on the materials and method proposed to carry out these works, their impact on the character of the structure and the reversibility of the proposed works.

The details required to be submitted will be dependent on the significance of the building and the nature of works proposed. All works to protected structures shall be carried out in accordance with best conservation practice.

DM Standard 61: Architectural Conservation Areas

Owners and prospective owners and occupiers of protected structures or proposed protected structures or structures located in Architectural Conservation Areas should consult with the Planning Authority in good time as to the appropriateness of proposed works or other developments, and seek competent advice on best practice for carrying out such works.

The following requirements shall apply with respect to Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs):

a) Development Works

Proposals for development in an ACA that involves a new building, reuse or change of use and extensions will be required to:

- Conserve and enhance the character and appearance of the ACA;
- Respect the scale, massing, proportions, design and materials of existing structures;
- Retain important exterior architectural features that contribute to the character and appearance of the ACA.

b) Demolition

The demolition of a building within an ACA will be restricted unless the Council is satisfied that the structure or building does not contribute positively to the character or appearance of the ACA, or building or structure is beyond viable repair or reuse.

c) Historic shopfronts

Historic shopfronts should be retained and refurbished, where feasible. Such features as existing arches, stringcourses, plaster detailing or existing fascias and brackets should be considered in the new design and new internal alterations or proposed advertising should generally not interfere with such details. Wholesale removal of rendering along a streetscape is generally not encouraged.

DM Standard 62: Archaeological Conservation and Preservation (Urban & Rural Areas)

The *National Monuments Acts 1930-2004* provide for the protection of archaeological heritage, including the establishment of a Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), which is a national inventory of archaeological sites and monuments. Some archaeological sites and monuments may also be of significant architectural heritage value and afforded dual protection as a Recorded/National Monument under the National Monuments Acts and as a protected structure under the *Planning and Development Acts*.

The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's full database of archaeological monuments can be accessed at www.archaeology.ie

In considering proposals for development, applicants are advised to consult the Archaeological Constraints Maps (available for viewing in the Planning Department) in order to ascertain whether their development is located in an area of archaeological potential. Developers are strongly advised to have pre-application discussions if their site is located in such an area. 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 (Ardrahan, Athenry, Dunmore, Eyrecourt, Loughrea and Tuam) will take account of the archaeological heritage of the area and the need for archaeological mitigation. Any persons proposing to carry out works at or in relation to a recorded monument must give 2 months written notice to the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht (DAHG).

Developers should give due consideration to the following:

- *Archaeology & Development: Guidelines for Good Practice for Developers;*
- Framework and Principles for the Protection of Archaeological Heritage, DAHG (1999).

15.12 Climate Change, Energy and Renewable Energy

15.12.1 Climate Change

DM Standard 63: Energy Efficiency in Buildings

Proposals for residential and commercial development to specify at planning application stage, proposals for a target percentage of electricity usage in new developments to be derived from renewable energy resources.

Require a performance based Building Energy Rating (BER) target for all new building developments greater than 10 dwellings or greater than 1,000m² floor area for non-residential and mixed developments.

Accordingly, it will be a requirement that all planning applications submitted to the Planning Authority shall include a statement from a competent and qualified person certifying that the proposed development conforms to the energy rating outlined above.

DM Standard 64: Sustainable Design and Climate Action

Layout and building design must conform to the highest possible standards of energy efficiency. Buildings should be designed to minimise resource consumption, reducing waste, water and energy use. Design shall optimise natural ventilation and minimise glare and excess solar gain, avoiding large areas of glazing and providing an appropriate balance between solid and void elements.

Roof top solar panels, geothermal energy and in certain instances, wall mounted solar panels, shall be incorporated at the design stage of developments where possible. Sustainably sourced materials and existing re-used/recycled materials shall also be used where possible. Measures which will allow occupants to adapt to the impacts of climate change are promoted within developments and include natural ventilation, summer shading, openable windows, the incorporation of living green roofs and walls, planting and trees, as well as the inclusion of sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) and permeable surfaces in adjoining spaces. Measures to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change shall be appropriate to the landscape and architectural character of an area.

DM Standard 65: Residential Energy Efficiency and Climate Change Adaptation Design Statement.

Development proposals for medium to large scale residential in excess of 10 residential units should be accompanied by an Energy Efficiency and Climate Change Adaptation Design Statement.

The statement should detail how any on-site demolition, construction and long-term management of the development will be catered for and how energy and climate change adaptation considerations have been inherently addressed in the design and planning of the scheme. Residential developments shall have regard to;

- the requirements of the current Building Regulations Part L – Conservation of Fuel and Energy (2008 and 2011), and any other supplementary or superseding guidance documents.
- the DECLG guidance document 'Towards nearly Zero Energy Buildings in Ireland - Planning for 2020 and Beyond', which promotes the increase of near Zero Energy Buildings (nZEB);
- Criteria 5 and 9 of the DEHLG Urban Design – A Best Practice Guide (2009) which relate to efficiency and adaptability,

or any subsequent revisions to these Guidelines or Regulations thereafter.

Developers shall ensure that measures to up-grade the energy efficiency of Protected Structures and historic buildings are sensitive to traditional construction methods and materials and do not have a detrimental physical, aesthetic or visual impact on the structure. They should follow the principles and direction given in the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's publication Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings.

The author of an Energy Efficiency and Climate Change Adaptation Design Statement should be appropriately qualified or competent and shall provide details of their qualifications and experience along with the statement.

DM Standard 66: Large Retail - Energy Efficiency and Climate Change Adaptation Design Statement.

Development proposals for all retail developments in excess of 1,000 m² of commercial floor space should be accompanied by an Energy Efficiency and Climate Change Adaptation Design Statement. The statement should detail how any on-site demolition, construction and long-term management of the development will be catered for and how energy and climate change adaptation considerations have been inherently addressed in the design and planning of the scheme. Such developments shall have regard to;

- the requirements of the current Building Regulations Part L – Conservation of Fuel and Energy (2008 and 2011), and any other supplementary or superseding Regulations or guidance documents.
- the DECLG guidance document ‘Towards nearly Zero Energy Buildings in Ireland - Planning for 2020 and Beyond’, which promotes the increase of near Zero Energy Buildings (nZEB).

New development proposals shall show energy efficiency is achieved through siting, layout, design and incorporate best practice in energy technologies, conservation and smart technology.

The author of an Energy Efficiency and Climate Change Adaptation Design Statement should be appropriately qualified or competent and shall provide details of their qualifications and experience along with the statement.

DM Standard 67: Deposit/temporary storage units, clothes banks and commercial washing machines

All applications of this nature will be assessed on a case by case basis having regard to the following;

- Proximity to residential areas;
- The provision of an area of at least 10 metres by 4 metres;
- Truck access and clearance heights;
- A hard standing area and safe pedestrian walkway;
- A vehicle set down area only with no permanent parking provision;
- Suitable lighting and CCTV monitoring; and
- Noise mitigation, screening and/or landscaping as considered necessary by the council.

15.13.2 Surface Water Drainage and Flooding

DM Standard 68: Sustainable Drainage Systems’ (SuDS)

All new developments (including amendments / extensions to existing developments) will be required to incorporate ‘Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems’ (SuDS) as part of the development/design proposals. SuDS are effective technologies, which aim to reduce flood risk, improve water quality and enhance biodiversity and amenity. The systems should aim to mimic the natural drainage of the application site to minimise the effect of a development on flooding and pollution of existing waterways.

SuDS include devices such as swales, permeable pavements, filter drains, storage ponds, constructed wetlands, soakways and green roofs. In some exceptional cases, and at the discretion of the Council, where it is demonstrated that SuDS devices are not feasible, approval may be given to install underground attenuation tanks or enlarged pipes in conjunction with other devices to achieve the required water quality. Such alternative measures will only be considered as a last resort. Proposals for surface water attenuation systems should include maintenance proposals and procedures.

Development proposals will be required to be accompanied by a comprehensive SuDS assessment that addresses run-off rate, run-off quality and its impact on the existing habitat and water quality. This approach using SuDS offers a total solution to rainwater management and is applicable in both

urban and rural situations. Current best practice guidance on SuDS is available from the Guidance Documents produced by the *Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study* (GDSDS).

DM Standard 69: Flooding

Flood Zones and Appropriate Uses

The table below indicates the types of land uses that are appropriate in each of the Flood Zones identified within the Plan area, in accordance with the 2009 Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities and Departmental Circular PL2/2014 (or any updated/superseding legislation or policy guidance).

Where developments/land uses are proposed that are considered inappropriate to the Flood Zone, then a Development Management Justification Test and site-specific Flood Risk Assessment will be required in accordance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009 (and as updated).

Flood Zones	Overall probability	Planning implications for land uses		
		Highly Vulnerable Development	Less Vulnerable Development	Water Compatible Development
Flood Zone A	Highest	Inappropriate – if proposed then Justification Test and detailed Flood Risk Assessment is required	Inappropriate – if proposed then Justification Test and detailed Flood Risk Assessment is required	Appropriate – screen for flood risk
Flood zone B	Moderate	Inappropriate – if proposed then Justification Test and detailed Flood Risk Assessment is required	Inappropriate due to climate change – if proposed then Justification Test and detailed Flood Risk Assessment is required	Appropriate – screen for flood risk
Flood Zone C	Lowest	Appropriate - detailed Flood Risk Assessment may be required	Appropriate - detailed Flood Risk Assessment may be required	Appropriate – screen for flood risk

Table 15.7: Flood Zones Planning Implications

Note (refer to Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009 and 'SFRA for the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028' for additional detail):

- Highly Vulnerable Development - Houses, schools, hospitals, residential institutions, emergency services, essential infrastructure, etc.
- Less Vulnerable Development - Economic uses (retail, leisure, warehousing, commercial, industrial, non-residential institutions, etc.), land and buildings used for agriculture or forestry, local transport infrastructure, etc.

- Water Compatible Development - Docks, marinas, wharves, water-based recreation and tourism (excluding sleeping accommodation), amenity open space, sports and recreation, flood control infrastructure, etc.

Structural and Non-Structural Risk Management Measures in Flood Vulnerable Zones

Applications for development in flood vulnerable zones shall provide details of structural and non-structural risk management measures to include, but not be limited to specifications of the following:

Floor Levels

In areas of limited flood depth, the specification of the threshold and floor levels of new structures shall be raised above expected flood levels to reduce the risk of flood losses to a building, by raising floor heights within the building structure using a suspended floor arrangement or raised internal concrete platforms.

When designing an extension or modification to an existing building, an appropriate flood risk reduction measure shall be specified to ensure the threshold levels into the building are above the design flood level. However, care must also be taken to ensure access for all is provided in compliance with Part M of the Building Regulations.

Where threshold levels cannot be raised to the street for streetscape, conservation or other reasons, the design shall specify a mixing of uses vertically in buildings - with less vulnerable uses located at ground floor level, along with other measures for dealing with residual flood risk.

Internal Layout

Internal layout of internal space shall be designed and specified to reduce the impact of flooding [for example, living accommodation, essential services, storage space for provisions and equipment shall be designed to be located above the predicted flood level]. In addition, designs and specifications shall ensure that, wherever reasonably practicable, the siting of living accommodation (particularly sleeping areas) shall be above flood level.

With the exception of single storey extensions to existing properties, new single storey accommodation shall not be deemed appropriate where predicted flood levels are above design floor levels. In all cases, specifications for safe access, refuge and evacuation shall be incorporated into the design of the development.

Flood-Resistant Construction

Developments in flood vulnerable zones shall specify the use of flood-resistant construction aimed at preventing water from entering buildings - to mitigate the damage floodwater caused to buildings.

Developments shall specify the use of flood resistant construction prepared using specialist technical input to the design and specification of the external building envelope – with measures to resist hydrostatic pressure (commonly referred to as “tanking”) specified for the outside of the building fabric.

The design of the flood resistant construction shall specify the need to protect the main entry points for floodwater into buildings - including doors and windows (including gaps in sealant around frames), vents, air-bricks and gaps around conduits or pipes passing through external building fabric.

The design of the flood resistant construction shall also specify the need to protect against flood water entry through sanitary appliances as a result of backflow through the drainage system.

Flood-Resilient Construction

Developments in flood vulnerable zones that are at risk of occasional inundation shall incorporate design and specification for flood resilient construction which accepts that floodwater will enter buildings and provides for this in the design and specification of internal building services and finishes. These measures limit damage caused by floodwater and allow relatively quick recovery.

This can be achieved by specifying wall and floor materials such as ceramic tiling that can be cleaned and dried relatively easily, provided that the substrate materials (e.g. blockwork) are also resilient. Electrics, appliances and kitchen fittings shall also be specified to be raised above floor level, and one-way valves shall be incorporated into drainage pipes.

Emergency Response Planning

In addition to considering physical design issues for developments in flood vulnerable zones, the developer shall specify that the planning of new development also takes account of the need for effective emergency response planning for flood events in areas of new development.

Applications for developments in flood vulnerable zones shall provide details that the following measures will be put in place and maintained:

- Provision of flood warnings, evacuation plans and ensuring public awareness of flood risks to people where they live and work;
- Coordination of responses and discussion with relevant emergency services i.e. Local Authorities, Fire and Rescue, Civil Defence and An Garda Síochána through the SFRA; and
- Awareness of risks and evacuation procedures and the need for family flood plans.

Access and Egress During Flood Events

Applications for developments in flood vulnerable zones shall include details of arrangements for access and egress during flood events. Such details shall specify that: • flood escape routes have been kept to publicly accessible land; • such routes will have signage and other flood awareness measures in place, to inform local communities what to do in case of flooding; and this information will be provided in a welcome pack to new occupants.

Further Information

Further and more detailed guidance and advice can be found at <http://www.flooding.ie> and in the Building Regulations.

15.13.3 Renewable Energy Proposals

DM Standard 70: Wind Energy

When assessing planning applications for wind energy developments the Council will have regard to;

- the Wind Energy Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DoEHLG, (2006) and any amendments to the Guidelines which may be made; and
- the Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy;

In addition to the above, the following local considerations will be taken into account by the Council in relation to any planning application;

- Impact on the visual amenities of the area;

- Impact on the residential amenities of the area;
- Scale and layout of the project, any cumulative effects due to other projects and the extent to which the impacts are visible across the local landscape;
- Visual impact of the proposal with respect to protected views, scenic routes and sensitive landscapes (Class 2, 3 and 4);
- Impact on nature conservation, ecology, soil, hydrology, groundwater, archaeology, built heritage and public rights of way;
- Impact on ground conditions and geology;
- Consideration of falling distance plus an additional flashover distance from wind turbines to overhead transmission lines;
- Impact of development on the road network in the area; and
- Impact on human health in relation to noise disturbance (including consistency with the World Health Organisations 2018 Environmental Noise Guidelines for the European Region), shadow flicker and air quality.

This list is not exhaustive and the Council may consider other requirements contained in the chapter on a case by case basis with planning applications should the need arise.

DM Standard 71: Solar Energy

The Council will consider the following factors in assessing a planning application for a solar farm;

- The reuse of previously developed land such as brownfield land, contaminated land or industrial land and non-productive agricultural land in preference to productive agricultural land;
- The proximity of the proposal to the electricity infrastructure such as substations and indicative proposals to connect to existing or proposed grid connections;
- The effect of glint and glare on landscapes, traffic and aircraft safety;
- The extent to which there may be additional impacts if solar arrays follow the daily movement of the sun;
- The need for, and impact of, security measures such as lights and fencing;
- The visual impact of a proposal on heritage assets, designated sites and sensitive landscapes;
- The potential impact on the ecological characteristics and features of the site and its sensitivity to the proposed changes arising from the construction, operation and decommissioning stages of a development. On a proposed site where a significant level of ecological impact is predicted an Ecological Management Plan may be used to mitigate against the predicted impact and/or a Natura Impact Statement if applicable;
- The potential to mitigate landscape and visual impacts through appropriate siting, design and screening with native hedges;
- The cumulative impact of the proposal with other ground mounted solar panels and wind turbines in the area;
- An appraisal of the existing roads infrastructure and the potential impact of the proposed development, including traffic numbers and movements during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the proposal should be carried out. Evidence of appropriate sight lines at the entrance to the development from public roads shall also be provided;
- Adequate drainage, surface water run-off and flooding mitigation. Where access tracks need to be provided, permeable tracks should be used, and localised SUDs, such as swales and infiltration trenches should be used to control any run off. Sites should be selected and configured to avoid the need to impact on existing drainage systems and watercourses. Culverting existing watercourses/drainage ditches should be avoided unless it is

demonstrated that no reasonable alternatives exist and where necessary only temporarily for the construction period. The preparation of an outline Construction Environmental Management Plan setting out key environmental management controls for all phases of the development minimising impacts on existing drainage systems and watercourses may be required.