

Screening for Appropriate Assessment Determination and Screening Report for Variations 5 and 6 to the Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023



Planning Department

Galway City Council



Comhairle Cathrach na Gaillimhe
Galway City Council

SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT DETERMINATION UNDER ARTICLE 6(3) OF THE HABITATS DIRECTIVE AND PART XAB OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000 (AS AMENDED) FOR VARIATIONS NO. 5 AND NO. 6 TO THE GALWAY CITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2017-2023

Variation No. 5 to the Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 is to align the Development Plan with the National Planning Framework (NPF), Regional Spatial Economic Strategy (RSES) and Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) and to incorporate the Galway City Council Climate Adaptation Strategy.

Variation No. 6 to the Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 is to insert the following Specific Objective in Chapter 11 Section 11.2.2 Natural Heritage, Recreation and Amenity RA Land Use Zoning Objectives: RA lands at Cappagh Park. The Council will consider the development of an Aquatic Sports and Fitness Centre adjoining and linked with the existing community centre.

Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) is carried out to determine whether or not a Variation would be likely to adversely affect the integrity of any European site and whether or not an AA is required. As part of the process, a Determination is made in accordance with Article 6(3) of the EC Habitats Directive and Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

The *Appropriate Assessment Screening Report for Proposed Variations 5 and 6 to the Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 (July 2020)* concluded that the Variations do not have the potential to give rise to significant effects upon European sites, alone and or in-combination with other plans and projects.

Galway City Council having examined the *Appropriate Assessment Screening Report for Proposed Variations 5 and 6 to the Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 (July 2020)* along with submissions and observations received and having regard to Article 6(3) of the EC Habitats Directive and Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) are in agreement with its conclusion. It is determined that Variation No. 5 and Variation No. 6 do not have the potential to give rise to significant effects on European sites, alone and or in-combination with other plans and projects.

Planning Department

September 2020

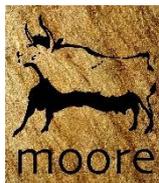
Report for the purposes of
Appropriate Assessment Screening

as required under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive
(Council Directive 92/43/EEC)

Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023
Proposed Variations 5 and 6

July 2020

Prepared by: Moore Group – Environmental Services



Comhairle Cathrach na Gaillimhe
Galway City Council

On behalf of
Galway City Council

Plan Proponent	Galway City Council
Plan	Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 Proposed Variations 5 and 6
Title	Report for the purposes of Appropriate Assessment Screening Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 Proposed Variations 5 and 6

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1. Introduction

1.1. General Introduction

This Appropriate Assessment screening report has been prepared by Moore Group to provide the information necessary to allow the competent authority to undertake screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) of proposed variations 5 and 6 to the Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023.

Screening determines whether appropriate assessment is necessary by examining:

- i) whether a plan or project can be excluded from AA requirements because it is directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site, and
- ii) the potential effects of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, on a Natura 2000 site in view of its conservation objectives and considering whether these effects will be significant.

Any plan or project that is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a site must be subject to AA of its implications for the Natura 2000 site in view of the site's conservation objectives *"if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that it will have a significant effect on that site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects"* (EC, 2006)..

The proposed variations to the Plan are not directly connected with, or necessary for, the management of any European Site, consequently the proposed variations to the Plan are subject to the Appropriate Assessment Screening process.

This desktop report has been prepared by Moore Group - Environmental Services for Galway City Council and assesses the potential for the variations to the Plan to impact on sites of European-scale ecological importance in accordance with Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive. The report was compiled by Ger O'Donohoe (B.Sc. Applied Aquatic Sciences (GMIT, 1993) & M.Sc. Environmental Sciences (TCD, 1999)) who has over 25 years' experience in environmental impact assessment and has completed numerous Appropriate Assessment Screening Reports and Natura Impact Statements on terrestrial and aquatic habitats.

1.2. Legislative Background

1.2.1. Screening for Appropriate Assessment

Screening is the process of determining whether an Appropriate Assessment is required for a plan or project. Under Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, screening must be carried out by the Competent Authority to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if a land-use plan or proposed development, individually or in combination with another plan or project, is likely to have a significant effect on a European

site. The Competent Authority's determination as to whether an Appropriate Assessment is required must be made on the basis of objective information and should be recorded. The Competent Authority may request information to be supplied to enable it to carry out screening.

The Competent Authority may seek consultants with expertise in the area of Appropriate Assessment to undertake a form of screening to establish if an Appropriate Assessment is required and provide advice or may submit the information necessary to allow the Competent Authority to conduct a screening with an application for consent. Where it cannot be excluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt, that a proposed plan or project, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, would have a significant effect on the conservation objectives of a European site, an Appropriate Assessment (Natura Impact Report (NIR)) of the plan or project is required.

1.2.2. Appropriate Assessment (Natura Impact Report)

The term Natura Impact Report (NIR) as defined in legislation¹, where required, should present the data, information and analysis necessary to reach a definitive determination as to:

- 1) the implications of the plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, for a European site in view of its conservation objectives, and
- 2) whether there will be adverse effects on the integrity of a European site. The NIR should be underpinned by best scientific knowledge, objective information and by the precautionary principle.

1.3. Guidance

This report has been compiled in accordance with guidance contained in the following documents:

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities. (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010 rev.).
- Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities. Circular NPWS 1/10 & PSSP 2/10.
- Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission Environment Directorate-General, 2001); hereafter referred to as the EC Article Guidance Document.

¹ Section 177T of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 as amended, an NIR means a statement, for the purposes of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, of the implications of a land use plan, on its own and in combination with other plans and projects, for a European site in view of its conservation objectives. It is required to include a report of a scientific examination of evidence and data, carried out by competent persons to identify and classify any implications for the European site in view of its conservation objectives

- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitat's Directive 92/43/EEC (EC Environment Directorate-General, 2000); hereafter referred to as MN2000.

1.4. Data Sources

Primary sources of information that were used to collect data on the Natura 2000 network of sites, and the environment within which they are located, are listed below:

- The following mapping and GIS data sources, as required:
 - National Parks & Wildlife (NPWS) protected site boundary data;
 - Ordnance Survey of Ireland (OSI) mapping and aerial photography;
 - OSI/ Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rivers and streams, and catchments;
 - Open Street Maps;
 - Digital Elevation Model over Europe (EU-DEM);
 - Google Earth and Bing aerial photography 1995-2020;
- Online data available on Natura 2000 sites as held by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) from www.npws.ie including:
 - Natura 2000 - Standard Data Form;
 - Conservation Objectives;
 - Site Synopses;
- National Biodiversity Data Centre records;
 - Online database of rare, threatened and protected species;
 - Publicly accessible biodiversity datasets.
- Status of EU Protected Habitats in Ireland. (National Parks & Wildlife Service, 2019); and
- Relevant Plans:
 - Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 and associated environmental reports
 - Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021 and associated environmental reports
 - Other plans relevant to the wider surrounding area outlined in Section 7

2. Description of the proposed Variations

Proposed Variation No. 5 (PV5): To align the Development Plan with the National Planning Framework (NPF), Regional Spatial Economic Strategy (RSES) and Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) and to incorporate the Galway City Council Climate Adaptation Strategy.

Introduction

Following the publication of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the making of the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES) which includes the Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) by the Northern

and Western Regional Assembly (NWRA), Galway City Council is required under Section 11 (1) (b) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, to vary the City Development Plan to align with these policy documents. This legislation requires that this must take place within 26 weeks of the approval of the RSES by the Members of the NWRA (24th January 2020). This timescale was further extended by eight weeks in accordance with Section 251A (inserted by Section 9 of the Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (Covid-19) Act 2020 (No. 2 of 2020)) of the Planning and Development Act 2000.

Notwithstanding this variation process, the planning authority is statutorily obliged to commence a full review of the City Development Plan 2017-2023 in January 2021. It is considered appropriate, given the imminent review process to commence in 6 months, that this variation will embody the main principles of the NPF, RSES and MASP. The review of the City Development Plan will allow a process to include for a more detailed comprehensive review. The key elements which are considered immediately necessary and legally required are proposed at this interim stage. It also takes account of the fact that the development plan already supports many of the policies of the NPF, RSES and MASP.

The main changes proposed under this variation are as follows:

- Incorporate the NPF and RSES into the plan recognising these as the primary national, and regional planning frameworks which the development plan must align with.
- Replace all National Spatial Strategy (NSS) references in the plan to the National Planning Framework and all Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) in the plan to the Regional Spatial Economic Strategy (RSES).
- Incorporate the Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) into the Core Strategy.
- Update the population targets in the Core Strategy and the related housing targets to reflect what is set out for the City by the RSES and MASP. It is noted that these targets do not require changes to land uses in the city and can be accommodated in the existing core strategy.
- Include an objective to carry out a Density and Building Height Study in accordance with MASP objectives and in conjunction with SPPR1 of the Urban Development and Building Heights, Guidelines for Planning Authorities', (2018).
- Include an objective to prepare a Housing Need Demand Assessment in accordance with the NPF to inform land use and housing policy.
- Incorporate the Galway City Council *Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 "Climate Resilient Galway City"* and the National Climate Adaptation Plan.

Proposed Changes to the Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023

This section should be read in conjunction with the Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023.

Amend Development Plan Text

Replace references to the National Spatial Strategy (2002–2020) (NSS), to **Project Ireland 2040 including the National Planning Framework 2040 (NPF)**.

Replace references to the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs), to **the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES) including the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP)**.

Insert in Preface – Strategic Policy Framework

This variation shall be read in conjunction with the existing Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 and shall prevail in case of any conflict between it and existing policies and specific objectives.

The National Development Plan and the National Spatial Strategy (2002–2020) (NSS) has been superseded by Project Ireland 2040 including the National Planning Framework 2040 (NPF). The Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) have been superseded by the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy 2020-2032 (RSES). The RSES includes

a Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) 2020-2032 for Galway City and Metropolitan area. The NPF/RSES/MASP is the statutory framework for planning at national and regional level and the city development plan reflects and aligns with this hierarchy.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Core Strategy

Amend Strategic Goal

Enable the city to fulfil its role as a ~~National Gateway~~ **an NPF designated Regional City**, a regional centre and contribute to the economic recovery through the provision of balanced and sustainable economic opportunities for growth, innovation and investment across all employment sectors and allow the role of the ~~Gateway City and Metropolitan Area~~ **Gateway City and Metropolitan Area** to harness the strengths and maximise the economic development for the whole West Region.

Amend Section 1.4 Core Strategy – Galway City

~~National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 (NSS)~~

~~The NSS sets out a planning framework for the future sustainable development of Ireland. It proposes a more balanced pattern of population, employment and physical development between regions. It advocates the continued support of development in the Greater Dublin Region but with a focused development in the nine Gateway Cities and nine Hub Towns. Galway has been identified as a Gateway having the characteristics and critical mass that can facilitate the national objectives and sustain and drive the wider regional economy of the west. This approach was reaffirmed in the *Update and Outlook NSS* (October 2010) but owing to recent economic, societal and demographic changes, the DECLG in 2013 advised that a comprehensive review of the NSS was intended. This review is still awaited, in the interim the NSS still remains the national policy on spatial planning.~~

Project Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework 2040 (NPF)

Published in February 2018, the NPF is the strategic planning framework for the future sustainable development of the country to 2040. It proposes the focussed development of the four Regional Cities as viable urban centres of scale which can act as alternatives and a counterbalance to the continued growth of Dublin and its surrounding region and act as drivers of growth for their respective wider regions. Galway has been designated as a Regional City and together with the Metropolitan Area has the characteristics and capacity to deliver the national strategic outcomes of the NPF which include sustainable city living, a strong economy, enhanced quality of life and reduced carbon footprint. The NPF envisages the population of Galway City and Suburbs to grow by between 40,000 - 45,000 people by 2040 which is an increase of almost 55%. It also targets half of the homes to accommodate this population increase to be located within the existing built footprint.

The NPF is supported by the *Implementation Roadmap for the National Planning Framework (July 2018)*. It sets out a programme for the implementation of the NPF and includes transitional population projections at Regional and County level to inform development plans.

The NPF is underpinned by the National Development Plan (NDP) which sets the framework for national capital investment to 2027. Additionally an Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) has been put in place to support the objectives of the National Planning Framework for the Regional Cities and their Metropolitan Areas and for a number of large towns.

~~Regional Planning Guidelines West Region (RPGs) 2010-2022~~

~~The NSS has been implemented at regional level through the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs). The RPGs provide a broad planning framework at regional level and reflect the objectives of the NSS. With respect to Galway City this means that the guidelines support the role of the Gateway and acknowledge the role of the city~~

~~as a key economic driver for the West Region. The RPGs, based on the NSS regional population projections, aim to concentrate population in the Galway Gateway and have included for a targeted population of 98,700 for the city by the year 2022.~~

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032 (RSES)

This RSES provides a high-level development framework for the Northern and Western Region to support the implementation of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the relevant economic policies and objectives of Government. It sets out a settlement hierarchy for the region, including key target locations for population and employment growth. It includes a range of Regional Policy Objectives which supports future investment in infrastructure and services and which align with the spatial framework of the NPF.

It establishes Galway as the largest regional urban centre. It recognises the primacy of the city in the settlement hierarchy of the Northern and Western Regional Assembly (NWRA) area. It also acknowledges the significant influence that the city exerts on much of the western part of the region in developing the economy and in improving competitiveness. Reflecting this influence and as required by the NPF, the RSES includes a Metropolitan Area Strategic plan for Galway. A key sustainability element of the RSES and MASP is to deliver growth in a compact form with an objective to locate at least half of all new homes that are targeted within the city footprint of the MASP.

Insert in Section 1.4 Core Strategy – Galway City

Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP)

There is a requirement under the National Planning Framework for a Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) for Galway to be developed and implemented as part of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. The MASP area includes Galway City and its environs and the county settlements of Bearna, Oranmore and Baile Chláir (see map). The MASP is a strategic planning framework which identifies Strategic Growth Areas and opportunities for regeneration. It identifies key infrastructure, services and facilities that will be required to support sustainable city growth and regeneration. It sets out how the NPF population targets can be met in accordance with the principles of sustainable development with the aim to deliver compact growth.



Extract from the Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan.

For the city and suburbs, the population targets set out in the MASP are to accommodate 23,000 persons to 2026 and a further 12,000 persons to 2031, to be substantially delivered within the existing built-up footprint.

The MASP, on review of relevant city, county and local area plans, affirms that the NPF population targets can be adequately provided for on the current zoned lands within existing local level plans in the MASP area. It identifies Strategic Growth Areas which are part of the settlement and development strategy for the city and also includes county settlements within the metropolitan boundary.

Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan- Strategic Growth Areas
-Ardaun LAP Area
-Regeneration Lands at Ceannt Station Quarter, Inner Harbour and Headford Road
-Consolidation of the existing neighbourhoods of Knocknacarra, Ragoon, Castlegar and Roscam
- Murrough LAP Area
Within the Galway County Council Administrative area of the MASP, Baile Chláir, Bearna, Oranmore and Briarhill are identified to accommodate a portion of the MASP population growth targets.

Section 1.5 Population, Households and Housing Targets

Amend Table 1.1 as follows:

Table 1.1 CSO Records and ~~NSS~~ **NPF/RSES Population Targets and Household Projections**

Av	Year	Population	Average Household Size	No. of Households
CSO Census	2011	75,529	2.72	27,776
RPGs Targets	2016	88,500	2.72	32,536
RPGs Targets	2022	98,700	2.72	36,286
CSO (City & Suburbs)	2016	79,900	2.72	29,388
RSES/MASP (+23,000)	2026	102,900	2.72	37,831
RSES/MASP (+12,000)	2031	114,900	-	-

Insert in Section 1.5 Population, Households and Housing Targets:

The National Planning Framework sets out a targeted pattern of growth for Galway City and Suburbs to 2040 of between 40,000 - 45,000 people. Specific population targets for Galway City are set out in the RSES and MASP. 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.

It is estimated based on the RSES/MASP population targets, that the increase in the number of households in Galway City from 2016 to 2026 would be in the order of 8,443 (See Table). This is taking the census records of 2011 households as the baseline and adopting the average size of city households then at 2.72 to be constant from 2011 to 2026. The current Development Plan estimates a potential housing yield to 2023 of 9093 units based on residential land availability. These estimates indicate sufficient capacity for the Development Plan period 2017–2023. It is therefore considered that the Core Strategy and policies and objectives of the Plan is consistent with the National Planning Framework Policy the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan.

As part of the review of the Development Plan which will commence in January 2021, a ‘Housing Need Demand Assessment’ (HNDA) will be undertaken in order to correlate and accurately align future housing requirements. It will consider current household sizes and demand for a range of suitable housing types. The HNDA will inform land use and housing policies. In addition a Density and Building Height study for the city will also be carried out in accordance with the requirements of SPRR1 of the Urban Development and Building Heights, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2018)², which will support sustainable densities within the city and inform the development and settlement strategy for the city.

Chapter 2 Housing and Sustainable Neighbourhoods

² SPRR 1 states that in accordance with Government policy to support increased building height and density in locations with good public transport accessibility, particularly town/ city cores, planning authorities shall explicitly identify, through their statutory plans, areas where increased building height will be actively pursued for both redevelopment, regeneration and infill development to secure the objectives of the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and shall not provide for blanket numerical limitations on building height.

Amend Policy 2.2 Housing Strategy

~~Secure the implementation of the Housing Strategy 2017-2023, which has been informed by the Core Strategy, by ensuring~~ **Ensure** that sufficient suitable lands are zoned to meet the extent of housing needs identified in the Strategy in accordance with the ~~NSS and Regional Planning Guidelines~~ **National Planning Framework 2040 (NPF), the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) and the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP)** targeted population for Galway City.

Insert in Policy 2.2 Housing Strategy

-Undertake a 'Housing Need Demand Assessment' (HNDA) in order to correlate and accurately align future housing requirements. The HNDA will inform land use and housing policy.

-Undertake a Density and Building Height study for the city which will support sustainable densities within the city. The study will be undertaken in accordance with SPRR1 of the Urban Development and Building Heights, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2018).

Chapter 3 Transportation

Amend Policy 3.5 Public Transport

Support the long term plans for the re-development of Ceannt Station as a multi-modal transportation interchange in the context of Galway as ~~a Gateway and a Regional Centre.~~ **an NPF designated Regional City and Metropolitan Area within the Northern and Western Regional Assembly area**

Chapter 5: Economic Activity

Amend Strategy

Support and facilitate the sustainable economic development of Galway as **an NPF designated Regional City and Metropolitan Area within the Northern and Western Regional Assembly area** ~~Gateway for the West Region.~~

Chapter 8 Built Heritage and Urban Design

Insert in section 8.8 Specific Objectives

Undertake a Density and Building Height study for the city. The study will be undertaken in accordance with SPRR1 of the Urban Development and Building Heights, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2018).

Chapter 9 Environment and Infrastructure

Amend Section 9.2 – Climate Change Resilience

~~In the future and subsequent to the publication of national guidelines, it is anticipated that a climate change adaptation strategy will be prepared for the city having regard to the EPA Local Authority Adaptation Guidelines, (2016), for climate change.~~

Galway City Council adopted its Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 on the 9th September 2019. This Strategy is a requirement under the National Adaptation Framework 2018. It sets out strategic priorities, measures and responses for adaptation as required by the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015. The strategy is based on four main themes including (i) critical infrastructure and buildings, (ii) natural and cultural capital, (iii) water resources and flood risk management and (iv) community services. It includes a range of actions under each theme, to be implemented over the period of the Strategy in partnership with the Climate Action Regional Office (CARO) and key stakeholders.

Policy 9.2 –Climate Change Resilience

~~Support the implementation of the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework, 2012.~~

Support the implementation of the Galway City Council Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024.

Proposed Variation No. 6 (PV6): Insert the following Specific Objective in Chapter 11 Section 11.2.2 Natural Heritage, Recreation and Amenity RA Land Use Zoning Objectives:

RA lands at Cappagh Park. The Council will consider the development of an Aquatic Sports and Fitness Centre adjoining and linked with the existing community centre.

The purpose of this variation is to allow for consideration of an Aquatic Sports and Fitness Centre on Recreation and Amenity Lands at Cappagh Park. Government funding has been awarded under the Large Scale Sports Infrastructure Fund to advance the design and implementation of a facility for Swimming, Water Polo and associated fitness facilities at this location. Elected Members recently considered a feasibility study of options for delivery of a facility. The study was an agenda item at the June Council meeting and Members voted to give support to the project.

The inclusion of this specific objective will enable detailed plans for the large scale sports facility to advance to the planning process stage.

4. Identification of relevant European Sites

4.1. European Sites Background

The Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) (together with the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC)) forms the cornerstone of Europe's nature conservation policy. It is built around two pillars: the Natura 2000 network of protected sites and the strict system of species protection. All in all, the Directive protects over 1,000 animal and plant species and over 200 "habitat types" (e.g. special types of forests, meadows, wetlands, etc.), which are of European importance.

With the introduction of the EU Habitats Directive and Birds Directive which were transposed into Irish law as S.I. No. 94/1997 *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997*, the European Union

formally recognised the significance of protecting rare and endangered species of flora and fauna, and also, more importantly, their habitats. The 1997 Regulations and their amendments were subsequently revised and consolidated in S.I. No. 477/2011- *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011*. This legislation requires the establishment and conservation of a network of sites of particular conservation value that are to be termed 'European Sites'.

Habitats Directive/Special Areas of Conservation

The Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora) is the main legislative instrument for the protection and conservation of biodiversity in the European Union (EU). Under the Directive, Member States are obliged to designate Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) which contain habitats or species considered important for protection and conservation in a EU context.

Birds Directive/Special Protection Areas

The Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC and Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds), is concerned with the long-term protection and management of all wild bird species and their habitats in the EU. Among other things, the Directive requires that Special Protection Areas (SPAs) be established to protect migratory species and species which are rare, vulnerable, in danger of extinction, or otherwise require special attention.

SACs designated under the Habitats Directive and SPAs designated under the Birds Directive, form a pan-European network of protected sites known as Natura 2000. The Habitats Directive sets out a unified system for the protection and management of SACs and SPAs. These sites are also referred to as European sites.

4.1. European Sites within the Likely Zone of Impact of the Proposed Variations

Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009) Guidance on Appropriate Assessment recommends an assessment of European sites within a likely zone of impact of 15 km. This distance is a guidance only and the zone of impact has been identified taking consideration of the nature and location of the proposed Project to ensure all European sites with connectivity to it are considered in terms of a catchment-based assessment.

The guidance provides that, at the screening stage, it is necessary to identify the relevant European sites and compile information on their qualifying interests and conservation objectives. In preparation for this, the potential for source – pathway – receptor connectivity is firstly identified and detailed information is then provided on sites with connectivity.

The most up to date GIS spatial datasets for European designated sites were downloaded from the NPWS website (www.npws.ie) on the 22/07/2020. European sites within the likely zone of impact of the project were

identified using QGIS software. In addition, using the precautionary principle, European Sites located outside the 15km buffer zone were also taken into account.

European sites that are located within the likely zone of impact of the proposed variations are presented in Figure 4.1 and listed in Table 4.1 below.

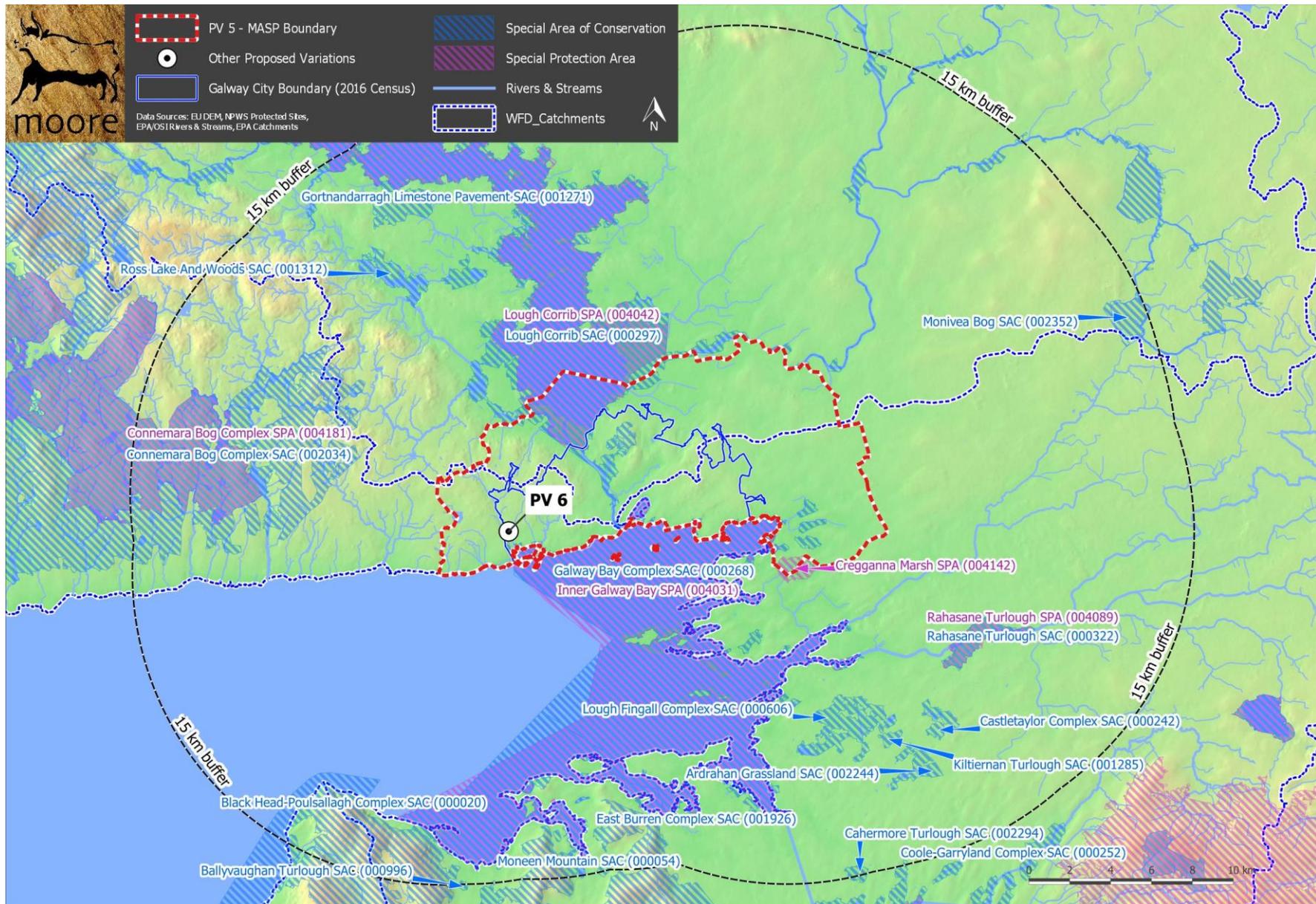


Figure 4.1. Showing European sites in the vicinity of the proposed outer variations boundary.

Table 4.1 European Sites located within the likely zone of impact³ of the Project.

Site Code	Site name	Distance (km) ⁴	Qualifying Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European Site has been designated (www.npws.ie, 22/07/2020)	Conservation Objectives
000020	Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex SAC	10.38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reefs [1170] ▪ Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] ▪ Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130] ▪ Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculus fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260] ▪ Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060] ▪ <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130] ▪ Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210] ▪ Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) [6510] ▪ Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) [7220] ▪ Limestone pavements [8240] ▪ Submerged or partially submerged sea caves [8330] ▪ <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i> (Petalwort) [1395] 	Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, 21 May 2014) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie
000054	Moneen Mountain SAC	12.41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Turloughs [3180] ▪ Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060] ▪ <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130] ▪ Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210] ▪ Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) [7220] ▪ Limestone pavements [8240] ▪ <i>Euphydryas aurinia</i> (Marsh Fritillary) [1065] ▪ <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303] 	Generic conservation objectives are available for this site (NPWS Generic version 7.0, 07 April 2020): 'To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected'.
000242	Castletaylor Complex SAC	7.70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Turloughs [3180] ▪ Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060] ▪ <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130] ▪ Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210] ▪ Limestone pavements [8240] 	Generic conservation objectives are available for this site (NPWS Generic version 7.0, 07 April 2020): 'To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the

³ All European sites potentially connected irrespective of the nature or scale of the proposed variation.

⁴ Distances indicated are the closest geographical distance between the proposed variation boundary (taken as the Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) Boundary as other variation boundaries exist within this MASP boundary) and the European site boundary, as made available by the NPWS. Connectivity along hydrological pathways may be significantly greater.

				Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected'.
000252	Coole-Garryland Complex SAC	14.71	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Natural eutrophic lakes with <i>Magnopotamion</i> or <i>Hydrocharition</i> - type vegetation [3150] ▪ Turloughs [3180] ▪ Rivers with muddy banks with <i>Chenopodium rubri</i> p.p. and <i>Bidention</i> p.p. vegetation [3270] ▪ <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130] ▪ Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210] ▪ Limestone pavements [8240] ▪ <i>Taxus baccata</i> woods of the British Isles [91J0] 	Generic conservation objectives are available for this site (NPWS Generic version 7.0, 07 April 2020): 'To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected'.
000268	Galway Bay Complex SAC	0.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] ▪ Coastal lagoons [1150] ▪ Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] ▪ Reefs [1170] ▪ Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] ▪ Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] ▪ Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] ▪ Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) [1330] ▪ Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410] ▪ Turloughs [3180] ▪ <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130] ▪ Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210] ▪ Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> [7210] ▪ Alkaline fens [7230] ▪ Limestone pavements [8240] ▪ <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355] ▪ <i>Phoca vitulina</i> (Harbour Seal) [1365] 	Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, 16 April 2013) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie
000297	Lough Corrib SAC	0.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) [3110] ▪ Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and/or <i>Isoeto-Nanojuncetea</i> [3130] ▪ Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp. [3140] ▪ Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260] ▪ Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210] ▪ <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) [6410] 	Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, 28 April 2017) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Active raised bogs [7110] ▪ Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] ▪ Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150] ▪ Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> [7210] ▪ Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220] ▪ Alkaline fens [7230] ▪ Limestone pavements [8240] ▪ Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0] ▪ Bog woodland [91D0] ▪ <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029] ▪ <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092] ▪ <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> (Sea Lamprey) [1095] ▪ <i>Lampetra planeri</i> (Brook Lamprey) [1096] ▪ <i>Salmo salar</i> (Salmon) [1106] ▪ <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303] ▪ <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355] ▪ <i>Drepanocladus vernicosus</i> (Slender Green Feather-moss) [1393] ▪ <i>Najas flexilis</i> (Slender Naiad) [1833] 	
000322	Rahasane Turlough SAC	6.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Turloughs [3180] 	<p>Generic conservation objectives are available for this site (NPWS Generic version 7.0, 07 April 2020):</p> <p>‘To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected’.</p>
000606	Lough Fingall Complex SAC	6.25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Turloughs [3180] ▪ Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060] ▪ <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130] ▪ Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210] ▪ Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> [7210] ▪ Limestone pavements [8240] ▪ <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303] 	<p>Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, 14 January 2019) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie</p>
000996	Ballyvaughan Turlough SAC	14.80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Turloughs [3180] 	<p>Generic conservation objectives are available for this site (NPWS Generic version 7.0, 07 April 2020):</p>

				'To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected'.
001271	Gortnandarragh Limestone Pavement SAC	9.99	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limestone pavements [8240] 	Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, 17 April 2019) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie
001285	Kiltiernan Turlough SAC	8.55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Turloughs [3180] 	Generic conservation objectives are available for this site (NPWS Generic version 7.0, 07 April 2020): 'To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected'.
001312	Ross Lake and Woods SAC	6.73	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp. [3140] ▪ <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303] 	Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, 18 October 2018) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie
001926	East Burren Complex SAC	11.59	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp. [3140] ▪ Turloughs [3180] ▪ Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260] ▪ Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060] ▪ <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130] ▪ Calaminarian grasslands of the <i>Violetalia calaminariae</i> [6130] ▪ Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210] ▪ Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) [6510] ▪ Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> [7210] ▪ Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) [7220] ▪ Alkaline fens [7230] ▪ Limestone pavements [8240] 	Generic conservation objectives are available for this site (NPWS Generic version 7.0, 07 April 2020): 'To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected'.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Caves not open to the public [8310] ▪ Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0] ▪ <i>Euphydryas aurinia</i> (Marsh Fritillary) [1065] ▪ <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303] ▪ <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355] 	
002034	Connemara Bog Complex SAC	3.94	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coastal lagoons [1150] ▪ Reefs [1170] ▪ Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) [3110] ▪ Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and/or <i>Isoeto-Nanojuncetea</i> [3130] ▪ Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160] ▪ Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260] ▪ Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010] ▪ European dry heaths [4030] ▪ Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) [6410] ▪ Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130] ▪ Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140] ▪ Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150] ▪ Alkaline fens [7230] ▪ Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0] ▪ <i>Euphydryas aurinia</i> (Marsh Fritillary) [1065] ▪ <i>Salmo salar</i> (Salmon) [1106] ▪ <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355] ▪ <i>Najas flexilis</i> (Slender Naiad) [1833] 	Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, 28 October 2015) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie
002244	Ardrahan Grassland SAC	9.34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060] ▪ <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130] ▪ Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210] ▪ Limestone pavements [8240] 	Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, 24 April 2019) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie
002294	Cahermore Turlough SAC	14.46	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Turloughs [3180] 	Generic conservation objectives are available for this site (NPWS Generic version 7.0, 07 April 2020): 'To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the

				Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected'.
002352	Monivea Bog SAC	13.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Active raised bogs [7110] ▪ Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] ▪ Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150] 	Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, 01 December 2015) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie
004031	Inner Galway Bay SPA	0.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Great Northern Diver (<i>Gavia immer</i>) [A003] ▪ Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] ▪ Grey Heron (<i>Ardea cinerea</i>) [A028] ▪ Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] ▪ Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050] ▪ Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] ▪ Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056] ▪ Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [A069] ▪ Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137] ▪ Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] ▪ Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] ▪ Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] ▪ Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] ▪ Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160] ▪ Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] ▪ Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) [A169] ▪ Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] ▪ Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182] ▪ Sandwich Tern (<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>) [A191] ▪ Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] ▪ Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] 	Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, 01 May 2013) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie
004042	Lough Corrib SPA	0.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gadwall (<i>Anas strepera</i>) [A051] ▪ Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056] ▪ Pochard (<i>Aythya ferina</i>) [A059] ▪ Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) [A061] ▪ Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A065] ▪ Hen Harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>) [A082] ▪ Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>) [A125] ▪ Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] ▪ Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] ▪ Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182] ▪ Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] ▪ Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A194] ▪ Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395] 	<p>Generic conservation objectives are available for this site (NPWS Generic version 7.0, 07 April 2020):</p> <p>'To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA'.</p> <p>'To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] 	of the wetland habitat at Lough Corrib SPA as a resource for the regularly-occurring migratory waterbirds that utilise it.'
004089	Rahasane Turlough SPA	6.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038] ▪ Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050] ▪ Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] ▪ Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] ▪ Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395] ▪ Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] 	Generic conservation objectives are available for this site (NPWS Generic version 7.0, 07 April 2020): 'To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the wetland habitat at Rahasane Turlough SPA as a resource for the regularly-occurring migratory waterbirds that utilise it'.
004142	Cregganna Marsh SPA	0.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395] 	Generic conservation objectives are available for this site (NPWS Generic version 7.0, 07 April 2020): 'To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA'.
004181	Connemara Bog Complex SPA	8.56	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] ▪ Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>) [A098] ▪ Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] ▪ Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182] 	Generic conservation objectives are available for this site (NPWS Generic version 7.0, 07 April 2020): 'To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA'.

5. Assessment of Connectivity/Pathways

European Sites and their associated qualifying features are identified as occurring in the Zone of Impact of a Plan (Variations) where pathways establish a link between the lands subject to that plan and European Sites, or where the lands subject to the plan are likely to play an important role in supporting populations of mobile species (i.e. birds etc.) that are listed as special conservation interests/qualifying species for surrounding European Sites.

For the purposes of this assessment, pathways are restricted to hydrological, noise, lighting and disturbance:

1. Hydrological Pathways

A hydrological pathway (incl. surface water and groundwater) is established where a European Site is located downstream of the plan area, or upstream of the plan area where qualifying feature of interest of the European Site includes freshwater dependent mobile qualifying species.

2. Noise Pathway

A noise disturbance pathway is established where the European Sites is located within 500m of the boundary of the plan area. European Sites at a greater distance than 500m will not be sensitive to noise emissions that could be generated by any land use activities that may arise as a result of the proposed Variations.

3. Light Disturbance Pathway

A light disturbance pathway is established where the European Sites is located within 250m of the boundary of the plan area. European Sites at a greater distance than 250m will not be sensitive to light emissions that could be generated by any land use activities that may arise as a result of the proposed Variations.

4. General Disturbance Pathway

A general disturbance (i.e. resulting from human-related terrestrial and other activities) pathway is established where the European Sites is located within 500m of the boundary of the plan area. European Sites at a greater distance than 500m will not be sensitive to human-related activities that may arise as a result of the proposed Variations.

Those sites deemed to be within the Zone of Impact of the Plan (Variations) are highlighted in colour on Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.2 European Sites located within the likely zone of impact of the Project.

Site name	Hydrological Pathway	Noise Pathway	Light Pathway	Human-related Disturbance Pathway	Does the European Site occur within the Zone of Impact of the Plan?
Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex SAC	No. The SAC boundary is located 10.38km from the plan area and the marine habitats of conservation concern are outside the Zone of Impact of any hydrologically generated impacts within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 10.38km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 10.38km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any light generated within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 10.38km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any human related activity generated within the plan area.	No. This European Site is located outside the Zone of Impact of the proposed Variations due to the absence of any impact pathways between the plan area and this Site.
Moneen Mountain SAC	No. There are no hydrological pathways connecting the plan area to this SAC.	No. This SAC is located 12.41km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 12.41km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any light generated within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 12.41km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any human related activity generated within the plan area.	No. This European Site is located outside the Zone of Impact of the proposed Variations due to the absence of any impact pathways between the plan area and this Site.
Castletaylor Complex SAC	No. There are no hydrological pathways connecting the plan area to this SAC.	No. This SAC is located 7.7km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 7.7km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any light generated within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 7.7km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any human related activity generated within the plan area.	No. This European Site is located outside the Zone of Impact of the proposed Variations due to the absence of any impact pathways between the plan area and this Site.
Coole-Garryland Complex SAC	No. There are no hydrological pathways connecting the plan area to this SAC.	No. This SAC is located 14.71km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 14.71km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any light generated within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 14.71km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any human related activity generated within the plan area.	No. This European Site is located outside the Zone of Impact of the proposed Variations due to the absence of any impact pathways between the plan area and this Site.
Galway Bay Complex SAC	The plan area is located adjacent to this SAC. Given this connectivity and physical	This SAC is located adjacent to the plan area and within the Zone of Impact of	This SAC is located adjacent to the plan area and within the	Given the physical proximity, and in line with the findings of the AA Screening undertaken on	Yes

	proximity, and in line with the findings of the AA Screening undertaken on the CDP, there is a potential pathway.	noise generated within the plan area.	Zone of Impact of light generated within the plan area.	the CDP, there is a potential human-related disturbance pathway.	
Lough Corrib SAC	The plan area is located adjacent to this SAC. Given this connectivity and physical proximity, and in line with the findings of the AA Screening undertaken on the CDP, there is a potential pathway.	This SAC is located adjacent to the plan area and within the Zone of Impact of noise generated within the plan area.	This SAC is located adjacent to the plan area and within the Zone of Impact of light generated within the plan area.	Given the physical proximity, and in line with the findings of the AA Screening undertaken on the CDP, there is a potential human-related disturbance pathway.	Yes
Rahasane Turlough SAC	No. There are no hydrological pathways connecting the plan area to this SAC.	No. This SAC is located 6.km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 6.10km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any light generated within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 6.10km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any human related activity generated within the plan area.	No. This European Site is located outside the Zone of Impact of the proposed Variations due to the absence of any impact pathways between the plan area and this Site.
Lough Fingall Complex SAC	No. There are no hydrological pathways connecting the plan area to this SAC.	No. This SAC is located 6.25km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 6.25km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any light generated within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 6.25km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any human related activity generated within the plan area.	No. This European Site is located outside the Zone of Impact of the proposed Variations due to the absence of any impact pathways between the plan area and this Site.
Ballyvaughan Turlough SAC	No. There are no hydrological pathways connecting the plan area to this SAC.	No. This SAC is located 14.80km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 14.80km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any light generated within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 14.80km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any human related activity generated within the plan area.	No. This European Site is located outside the Zone of Impact of the proposed Variations due to the absence of any impact pathways between the plan area and this Site.
Gortnandarragh Limestone Pavement SAC	No. There are no hydrological pathways connecting the plan area to this SAC.	No. This SAC is located 9.99km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 9.99km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any light generated within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 9.99km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any human related activity generated within the plan area.	No. This European Site is located outside the Zone of Impact of the proposed Variations due to the absence of any impact pathways between the plan area and this Site.

			generated within the plan area.		pathways between the plan area and this Site.
Kiltiernan Turlough SAC	No. There are no hydrological pathways connecting the plan area to this SAC.	No. This SAC is located 8.55km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 8.55km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any light generated within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 8.55km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any human related activity generated within the plan area.	No. This European Site is located outside the Zone of Impact of the proposed Variations due to the absence of any impact pathways between the plan area and this Site.
Ross Lake and Woods SAC	No. There are no hydrological pathways connecting the plan area to this SAC.	No. This SAC is located 9.7km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 9.7km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 9.7km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 9.7km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.
East Burren Complex SAC	No. There are no hydrological pathways connecting the plan area to this SAC.	No. This SAC is located 11.59km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 11.59km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any light generated within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 11.59km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any human related activity generated within the plan area.	No. This European Site is located outside the Zone of Impact of the proposed Variations due to the absence of any impact pathways between the plan area and this Site.
Connemara Bog Complex SAC	No. There are no hydrological pathways connecting the plan area to this SAC.	No. This SAC is located 3.94km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 3.94km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 3.94km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This European Site is located outside the Zone of Impact of the proposed Variations due to the absence of any impact pathways between the plan area and this Site.
Ardrahan Grassland SAC	No. There are no hydrological pathways connecting the plan area to this SAC.	No. This SAC is located 3.94km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 3.94km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 3.94km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This European Site is located outside the Zone of Impact of the proposed Variations due to the absence of any impact pathways between the plan area and this Site.

Cahermore Turlough SAC	No. There are no hydrological pathways connecting the plan area to this SAC.	No. This SAC is located 14.46km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 14.46km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 14.46km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This European Site is located outside the Zone of Impact of the proposed Variations due to the absence of any impact pathways between the plan area and this Site.
Monivea Bog SAC	No. There are no hydrological pathways connecting the plan area to this SAC.	No. This SAC is located 13.10km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 13.10km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This SAC is located 13.10km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This European Site is located outside the Zone of Impact of the proposed Variations due to the absence of any impact pathways between the plan area and this Site.
Inner Galway Bay SPA	The plan area is located adjacent to this SPA. Given this connectivity and physical proximity, and in line with the findings of the AA Screening undertaken on the CDP, there is a potential pathway.	Given connectivity and physical proximity, and in line with the findings of the AA Screening undertaken on the CDP, there is a potential pathway.	Given connectivity and physical proximity, and in line with the findings of the AA Screening undertaken on the CDP, there is a potential pathway.	Given connectivity and physical proximity, and in line with the findings of the AA Screening undertaken on the CDP, there is a potential pathway.	Yes
Lough Corrib SPA	The plan area is located adjacent to this SPA. Given this connectivity and physical proximity, and in line with the findings of the AA Screening undertaken on the CDP, there is a potential pathway.	Given connectivity and physical proximity, and in line with the findings of the AA Screening undertaken on the CDP, there is a potential pathway.	Given connectivity and physical proximity, and in line with the findings of the AA Screening undertaken on the CDP, there is a potential pathway.	Given connectivity and physical proximity, and in line with the findings of the AA Screening undertaken on the CDP, there is a potential pathway.	Yes
Rahasane Turlough SPA	No. There are no hydrological pathways connecting the plan area to this SPA.	No. This SPA is located 6.10km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This SPA is located 6.10km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This SPA is located 6.10km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This European Site is located outside the Zone of Impact of the proposed Variations due to the absence of any impact pathways between the plan area and this Site.

Cregganna Marsh SPA	The plan area is located adjacent to this SPA. Given this connectivity and physical proximity, and in line with the findings of the AA Screening undertaken on the CDP, there is a potential pathway.	Given connectivity and physical proximity, and in line with the findings of the AA Screening undertaken on the CDP, there is a potential pathway.	Given connectivity and physical proximity, and in line with the findings of the AA Screening undertaken on the CDP, there is a potential pathway.	Given connectivity and physical proximity, and in line with the findings of the AA Screening undertaken on the CDP, there is a potential pathway.	Yes
Connemara Bog Complex SPA	No. There are no hydrological pathways connecting the plan area to this SPA.	No. This SPA is located 8.56km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This SPA is located 8.56km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This SPA is located 8.56km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This European Site is located outside the Zone of Impact of the proposed Variations due to the absence of any impact pathways between the plan area and this Site.

Following the precautionary principle, potential hydrological and other pathways between European Sites and the lands subject to Variation proposals have been highlighted in Table 5.1 above.

However, the existence of a pathway does not automatically equate to the likelihood of a significant effect occurring (i.e. where a pathway exists but the magnitude of the potential impact generated at the source is sufficiently small, the likelihood of the pathway giving rise to a significant effect can be ruled out). This theme is explored further in the following Section of this report where the potential for the proposed Variations to give rise to likely significant effects is assessed.

Table 5.1 above illustrates that the proposed Variations could potentially impact, either directly or indirectly, on the following 5 no. European Sites by virtue of their physical proximity/ connectivity:

1. Galway Bay Complex SAC
2. Lough Corrib SAC
3. Inner Galway Bay SPA
4. Lough Corrib SPA
5. Cregganna Marsh SPA

The next step of this Screening is to examine the nature and extent of the proposed Variations in order to assess their potential to result in development/ land use activities which could give rise to likely significant effects on the 5 no. European Sites identified above as occurring within the Zone of Impact of the proposed Variations.

6. Potential for the Proposed Variations to give rise to Likely Significant Effects

The proposed Variations sit within the framework of the operational Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 (CDP). The CDP sets the city wide planning policy framework for all projects and development in the city. All planning proposals are assessed against the policies and objectives of the CDP and all lower plans must be consistent with the CDP. An Appropriate Assessment was carried out at all stages of the CDP in order to ensure that its policies and objectives did not result in significant adverse impacts on the integrity of any of the identified European Sites.

The individual elements of the proposed Variations to the CDP that may impact on the European Sites are outlined in detail in Table 6.1 below. The Table below examines all amendments proposed by the Variations, including those in relation to content, policies and objectives, and assesses whether the proposed changes will have the potential, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, to result in likely significant effects to European Sites. The following are the changes proposed to the Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 (CDP). The ~~struck-through~~ text is to be omitted and proposed changes are shown by red text.

Table 6.3 Assessment of Elements of proposed variations to result in land use activities and likely significant effects to European Sites.

New or amended Content, Policies/Objectives	Potential for Land Use Effects	Potential Impact on the integrity of the identified European sites?	Screen In / Out	Reason for Screening In / Out
Proposed Variation No. 5 (PV5): To align the Development Plan with the National Planning Framework (NPF), Regional Spatial Economic Strategy (RSES) and Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) and to incorporate the Galway City Council Climate Adaptation Strategy.				
<p>Amend Development Plan Text</p> <p>Replace references to the National Spatial Strategy (2002–2020) (NSS), to Project Ireland 2040 including the National Planning Framework 2040 (NPF).</p> <p>Replace references to the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs), to the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES) including the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP).</p>	No	No	Out	Modification of text to reflect RSES/NPF – Not likely to result in a significant effect.
<p>Insert in Preface – Strategic Policy Framework</p> <p>This variation shall be read in conjunction with the existing Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 and shall prevail in case of any conflict between it and existing policies and specific objectives.</p> <p>The National Development Plan and the National Spatial Strategy (2002–2020) (NSS) has been superseded by Project Ireland 2040 including the National Planning Framework 2040 (NPF). The Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) have been superseded by the</p>	No	No	Out	Modification of text to reflect RSES/NPF – Not likely to result in a significant effect.

<p>Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy 2020-2032 (RSES). The RSES includes a Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) 2020-2032 for Galway City and Metropolitan area. The NPF/RSES/MASP is the statutory framework for planning at national and regional level and the city development plan reflects and aligns with this hierarchy.</p>				
<p>Chapter 1: Introduction and Core Strategy</p> <p>Amend Strategic Goal</p> <p>Enable the city to fulfil its role as a National Gateway an NPF designated Regional City, a regional centre and contribute to the economic recovery through the provision of balanced and sustainable economic opportunities for growth, innovation and investment across all employment sectors and allow the role of the Gateway City and Metropolitan Area to harness the strengths and maximise the economic development for the whole West Region.</p> <p>Amend Section 1.4 Core Strategy – Galway City</p> <p>National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 (NSS)</p> <p>The NSS sets out a planning framework for the future sustainable development of Ireland. It proposes a more balanced pattern of population, employment and physical development between regions. It advocates the continued support of development in the Greater Dublin Region but with a focused development in the nine Gateway Cities and nine Hub Towns. Galway has been identified as a Gateway having the characteristics and critical mass that can facilitate the national objectives and sustain and drive the wider regional economy of the west. This approach was reaffirmed in the <i>Update and Outlook NSS (October 2010)</i> but owing to recent</p>	No	No	Out	Modification of text to reflect new and updated national/regional level policies – Not likely to result in a significant effect.

<p>economic, societal and demographic changes, the DECLG in 2013 advised that a comprehensive review of the NSS was intended. This review is still awaited, in the interim the NSS still remains the national policy on spatial planning.</p> <p>Project Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework 2040 (NPF) Published in February 2018, the NPF is the strategic planning framework for the future sustainable development of the country to 2040. It proposes the focussed development of the four Regional Cities as viable urban centres of scale which can act as alternatives and a counterbalance to the continued growth of Dublin and its surrounding region and act as drivers of growth for their respective wider regions. Galway has been designated as a Regional City and together with the Metropolitan Area has the characteristics and capacity to deliver the national strategic outcomes of the NPF which include sustainable city living, a strong economy, enhanced quality of life and reduced carbon footprint. The NPF envisages the population of Galway City and Suburbs to grow by between 40,000 - 45,000 people by 2040 which is an increase of almost 55%. It also targets half of the homes to accommodate this population increase to be located within the existing built footprint.</p> <p>The NPF is supported by the <i>Implementation Roadmap for the National Planning Framework (July 2018)</i>. It sets out a programme for the implementation of the NPF and includes transitional population projections at Regional and County level to inform development plans.</p> <p>The NPF is underpinned by the National Development Plan (NDP) which sets the framework for national capital investment to 2027. Additionally an Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) has been put in place to support the objectives of the National Planning Framework for the Regional Cities and their Metropolitan Areas and for a number of large towns.</p>				
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<p>Regional Planning Guidelines West Region (RPGs) 2010-2022</p> <p>The NSS has been implemented at regional level through the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs). The RPGs provide a broad planning framework at regional level and reflect the objectives of the NSS. With respect to Galway City this means that the guidelines support the role of the Gateway and acknowledge the role of the city as a key economic driver for the West Region. The RPGs, based on the NSS regional population projections, aim to concentrate population in the Galway Gateway and have included for a targeted population of 98,700 for the city by the year 2022.</p> <p>Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032 (RSES)</p> <p>This RSES provides a high-level development framework for the Northern and Western Region to support the implementation of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the relevant economic policies and objectives of Government. It sets out a settlement hierarchy for the region, including key target locations for population and employment growth. It includes a range of Regional Policy Objectives which supports future investment in infrastructure and services and which align with the spatial framework of the NPF.</p> <p>It establishes Galway as the largest regional urban centre. It recognises the primacy of the city in the settlement hierarchy of the Northern and Western Regional Assembly (NWRA) area. It also acknowledges the significant influence that the city exerts on much of the western part of the region in developing the economy and in improving competitiveness. Reflecting this influence and as required by the NPF, the RSES includes a Metropolitan Area Strategic plan for Galway. A key sustainability element of the RSES and MASP is to deliver growth in a compact form with an objective to locate at least half of all new homes that are targeted within the city footprint of the MASP.</p>				
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<p>Insert in Section 1.4 Core Strategy – Galway City</p> <p>Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP)</p> <p>There is a requirement under the National Planning Framework for a Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) for Galway to be developed and implemented as part of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. The MASP area includes Galway City and its environs and the county settlements of Bearna, Oranmore and Baile Chláir (see map). The MASP is a strategic planning framework which identifies Strategic Growth Areas and opportunities for regeneration. It identifies key infrastructure, services and facilities that will be required to support sustainable city growth and regeneration. It sets out how the NPF population targets can be met in accordance with the principles of sustainable development with the aim to deliver compact growth.</p> <p>MASP Map (See Section 2 of this report)</p> <p>For the city and suburbs, the population targets set out in the MASP are to accommodate 23,000 persons to 2026 and a further 12,000 persons to 2031, to be substantially delivered within the existing built-up footprint.</p> <p>The MASP, on review of relevant city, county and local area plans, affirms that the NPF population targets can be adequately provided for on the current zoned lands within existing local level plans in the MASP area. It identifies Strategic Growth Areas which are part of the settlement and development strategy for the city and also includes county settlements within the metropolitan boundary.</p> <p>...</p>	No	No	Out	<p>The CDP already supports many of the policies of the NPF and RSES and this text includes minor technical amendments to align national, regional and local planning policy. This text sets out a strategic planning framework which identifies Strategic Growth Areas and opportunities for regeneration within the plan area. Population and housing targets do not require changes to land uses in the city, with sufficient capacity for the Development Plan period 2017–2023. The inclusion of this text and the delivery of strategic planning framework will not result in land use effects over and above those previously assessed as part of the AA process on the CDP and will not have the potential, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, to result in likely significant effects to European Sites.</p>
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<p>Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan- Strategic Growth Areas</p> <p>-Ardaun LAP Area</p> <p>-Regeneration Lands at Ceannt Station Quarter, Inner Harbour and Headford Road</p> <p>-Consolidation of the existing neighbourhoods of Knocknacarra, Rahoon, Castlegar and Roscam</p> <p>- Murrrough LAP Area</p> <p>Within the Galway County Council Administrative area of the MASP, Baile Chláir, Bearna, Oranmore and Briarhill are identified to accommodate a portion of the MASP population growth targets.</p>				
<p>Section 1.5 Population, Households and Housing Targets</p> <p>Amend Table 1.1 (See Section 2 of this report)</p>	No	No	Out	As outlined above, population and housing targets do not require changes to land uses in the city, with sufficient capacity for the Development Plan period 2017–2023. The proposed amendments will not result in land use effects over and above those previously assessed as part of the AA process on the CDP and will not have the potential, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, to result in likely significant effects to European Sites.
<p>Insert in Section 1.5 Population, Households and Housing Targets:</p> <p>The National Planning Framework sets out a targeted pattern of growth for Galway City and Suburbs to 2040 of between 40,000 - 45,000 people. Specific population targets for Galway City are set out in the RSES and MASP. The target for the city is to reach a population of 102,900 by 2026, that is an increase of 23,000 people</p>	No	No	Out	As outlined above population and housing targets do not require changes to land uses in the city, with sufficient capacity for the Development Plan period 2017–2023. The inclusion of this text will not result in land use effects over and above those previously assessed as part of the AA process on the CDP and will

<p>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.</p> <p>It is estimated based on the RSES/MASP population targets, that the increase in the number of households in Galway City from 2016 to 2026 would be in the order of 8,443 (See Table). This is taking the census records of 2011 households as the baseline and adopting the average size of city households then at 2.72 to be constant from 2011 to 2026. The current Development Plan estimates a potential housing yield to 2023 of 9093 units based on residential land availability. These estimates indicate sufficient capacity for the Development Plan period 2017–2023. It is therefore considered that the Core Strategy and policies and objectives of the Plan is consistent with the National Planning Framework Policy the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan.</p> <p>As part of the review of the Development Plan which will commence in January 2021, a ‘Housing Need Demand Assessment’ (HNDA) will be undertaken in order to correlate and accurately align future housing requirements. It will consider current household sizes and demand for a range of suitable housing types. The HNDA will inform land use and housing policies. In addition a Density and Building Height study for the city will also be carried out in accordance with the requirements of SPRR1 of the Urban Development and Building Heights, Guidelines for Planning</p>				<p>not have the potential, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, to result in likely significant effects to European Sites.</p>
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<p>Authorities (2018)⁵, which will support sustainable densities within the city and inform the development and settlement strategy for the city.</p>				
<p>Chapter 2 Housing and Sustainable Neighbourhoods</p> <p>Amend Policy 2.2 Housing Strategy</p> <p>-Secure the implementation of the Housing Strategy 2017-2023, which has been informed by the Core Strategy, by ensuring Ensure that sufficient suitable lands are zoned to meet the extent of housing needs identified in the Strategy in accordance with the NSS and Regional Planning Guidelines National Planning Framework 2040 (NPF), the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) and the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) targeted population for Galway City.</p>	No	No	Out	<p>Modification of text to reflect new and updated national/regional level policies – Not likely to result in a significant effect.</p>
<p>Insert in Policy 2.2 Housing Strategy</p> <p>-Undertake a ‘Housing Need Demand Assessment’ (HNDA) in order to correlate and accurately align future housing requirements. The HNDA will inform land use and housing policy.</p> <p>-Undertake a Density and Building Height study for the city which will support sustainable densities within the city. The study will be undertaken in accordance with SPRR1 of the Urban Development and Building Heights, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2018).</p>	No	No	Out	<p>This text relates to a commitment to undertake technical support documents to inform future land use and housing policy. As these amendments to the CDP relate to documents which may frame policy in the future, it is not considered to result in effects on European sites over and above any addressed as part of the AA of the CDP.</p>

⁵ SPRR 1 states that in accordance with Government policy to support increased building height and density in locations with good public transport accessibility, particularly town/ city cores, planning authorities shall explicitly identify, through their statutory plans, areas where increased building height will be actively pursued for both redevelopment, regeneration and infill development to secure the objectives of the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and shall not provide for blanket numerical limitations on building height.

<p>Chapter 3 Transportation</p> <p>Amend Policy 3.5 Public Transport</p> <p>Support the long term plans for the re-development of Ceannt Station as a multi-modal transportation interchange in the context of Galway as a Gateway and a Regional Centre. an NPF designated Regional City and Metropolitan Area within the Northern and Western Regional Assembly area</p>	No	No	Out	Modification of text to reflect new and updated national/regional level policies – Not likely to result in a significant effect.
<p>Chapter 5: Economic Activity</p> <p>Amend Strategy</p> <p>Support and facilitate the sustainable economic development of Galway as an NPF designated Regional City and Metropolitan Area within the Northern and Western Regional Assembly area Gateway for the West Region.</p>	No	No	Out	Modification of text to reflect new and updated national/regional level policies – Not likely to result in a significant effect.
<p>Chapter 8 Built Heritage and Urban Design</p> <p>Insert in section 8.8 Specific Objectives</p> <p>Undertake a Density and Building Height study for the city. The study will be undertaken in accordance with SPRR1 of the Urban Development and Building Heights, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2018).</p>	No	No	Out	This text relates to a commitment to undertake a technical support document to inform future land use and housing policy. As the amendment to the CDP relates to a document which may frame policy in the future, it is not considered to result in effects on European sites over and above any addressed as part of the AA of the CDP.

<p>Chapter 9 Environment and Infrastructure</p> <p>Amend Section 9.2 – Climate Change Resilience</p> <p>In the future and subsequent to the publication of national guidelines, it is anticipated that a climate change adaptation strategy will be prepared for the city having regard to the EPA Local Authority Adaptation Guidelines, (2016), for climate change.</p> <p>Galway City Council adopted its Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 on the 9th September 2019. This Strategy is a requirement under the National Adaptation Framework 2018. It sets out strategic priorities, measures and responses for adaptation as required by the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015. The strategy is based on four main themes including (i) critical infrastructure and buildings, (ii) natural and cultural capital, (iii) water resources and flood risk management and (iv) community services. It includes a range of actions under each theme, to be implemented over the period of the Strategy in partnership with the Climate Action Regional Office (CARO) and key stakeholders.</p> <p>Policy 9.2 –Climate Change Resilience</p> <p>Support the implementation of the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework, 2012.</p> <p>Support the implementation of the Galway City Council Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024.</p>	No	No	Out	<p>The Climate Adaption Strategy is a requirement under the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework and sets out strategic priorities, measures and responses for adaptation as required by the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015. The text is consistent with climate change resilience policy in the CDP, it is not considered to result in effects on European sites over and above any addressed as part of the AA process of the CDP.</p>
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Proposed Variation No. 6 (PV6): Insert the following Specific Objective in Chapter 11 Section 11.2.2 Natural Heritage, Recreation and Amenity RA Land Use Zoning Objectives:				
<p>RA lands at Cappagh Park. The Council will consider the development of an Aquatic Sports and Fitness Centre adjoining and linked with the existing community centre.</p> <p>The purpose of this variation is to allow for consideration of an Aquatic Sports and Fitness Centre on Recreation and Amenity Lands at Cappagh Park. Government funding has been awarded under the Large Scale Sports Infrastructure Fund to advance the design and implementation of a facility for Swimming, Water Polo and associated fitness facilities at this location. Elected Members recently considered a feasibility study of options for delivery of a facility. The study was an agenda item at the June Council meeting and Members voted to give support to the project.</p> <p>The inclusion of this specific objective will enable detailed plans for the large scale sports facility to advance to the planning process stage.</p>	No	No	Out	<p>This text allows for the consideration of an Aquatic Sports and Fitness Centre on Recreation and Amenity Lands at Cappagh Park under Government funding. Cappagh Park is linked to Galway Bay via the Bearna Stream and so there is connectivity to the Galway Bay European sites: Galway Bay Complex SAC and Inner Galway Bay SPA.</p> <p>Under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive there is a requirement to establish whether, in relation to plans and projects, appropriate assessment (AA) is required. If, following screening, it is considered that AA is required then the proponent of the plan or project must prepare a Natura Impact Report/Natura Impact Statement. A plan or project will only be authorised after the competent authority has ascertained, based on scientific evidence, screening for Appropriate Assessment, and a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment where necessary.</p> <p>The CDP includes policy to ensure that any new development will be considered at the Project level in terms of assessment under the requirements of the Habitats Directive and the need for Appropriate Assessment at that level.</p> <p>There will be no potential for this Variation, alone or in combination with other plans or projects to result in likely significant effects to European Sites (See also Section 7).</p>

7. Assessment of Potential In-Combination Effects

Cumulative impacts or effects are changes in the environment that result from numerous human-induced, small-scale alterations. Cumulative impacts can be thought of as occurring through two main pathways: first, through persistent additions or losses of the same materials or resource, and second, through the compounding effects as a result of the coming together of two or more effects;- In-combination effects.

As part of the Habitats Directive Article 6(3) assessment process consideration must be given to the potential for the Variations to combine with other plans or projects to result in cumulative negative effects to European Sites. Consideration has been given for the potential of the Variations of the Plan to combine with a number of other plans relevant to the wider surrounding area.

These plans include:

- Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework
- Regional Spatial Economic Strategy 2020-2032 and MASP for Galway
- Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 and lower tier Plans
- Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021 and neighbouring Local Area Plans

The Proposed Variations were considered in combination with plans and projects in the area that could result in cumulative impacts on European Sites. The AA process was integrated into the various stages of the making of the NPF, RSES/MASP, Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 and neighbouring plans. Any new applications for a Project area will be initially assessed on a case by case basis initially by the Competent Authority which will determine the requirement for AA as per the requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. Under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive there is a requirement to establish whether, in relation to plans and projects, appropriate assessment (AA) is required. If, following screening, it is considered that AA is required then the proponent of the plan or project must prepare a Natura Impact Report/Natura Impact Statement. A plan or project will only be authorised after the competent authority has ascertained, based on scientific evidence, screening for Appropriate Assessment, and a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment where necessary.

Given that all substantive elements of the proposed Variations, as identified in Table 6.1 will not have the potential to result in likely significant effects to European Sites, there will be no potential for these changes to combine with the above listed plans, or any other plans or projects to result in likely significant effects to European Sites.

8. Conclusion

The Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 contains overarching policy which aims to ensure that all plans and projects in the City which could, either individually or in-combination with other plans and projects, have a significant effect on a European site or sites are initially subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment. This policy will ensure that all plans and projects, including those arising from the Galway City Development Plan and Variations, will themselves be subject to the Appropriate Assessment process.

Therefore, there is no possibility of the proposed Variations undermining the conservation objectives of any of the qualifying interests or special conservation interests of the European sites and likely significant effects can be excluded.

Following an examination, analysis and evaluation of the relevant information, including in particular, the nature of Proposed Variations 5 and 6 and potential relationships with European sites and their conservation objectives, as well as considering other plans and projects, and applying the precautionary principle, it is the professional opinion of the author of this report that there is no potential for likely significant effects on any European sites, for the reasons set out in Section 6 above. Therefore, it is the professional opinion of the author of this report that the proposed Variations 5 and 6 do not require an Appropriate Assessment or the preparation of a Natura Impact Report (NIR).

Table 8.4 Screening Summary.

European Site	Screening Summary
Galway Bay Complex SAC (000268)	The nearest Special Areas of Conservation are associated with the River Corrib and Galway Bay. Any new development will be considered at the Project level in terms of assessment under the requirements of the Habitats Directive and the need for Appropriate Assessment at that level. Consequently, in view of best scientific knowledge and on the basis of objective information, the proposed variations, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, are not likely to have significant effects on any European Sites as a result of the proposed variations.
Lough Corrib SAC (000297)	
Inner Galway Bay SPA (004031)	The nearest Special Protection Areas are associated with the River Corrib and Galway Bay. Any new development will be considered at the Project level in terms of assessment under the requirements of the Habitats Directive and the need for Appropriate Assessment at that level. Consequently, in view of best scientific knowledge and on the basis of objective information, the proposed variations, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, are not likely to have significant effects on any European Sites as a result of the proposed variations.
Lough Corrib SPA (004042)	
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