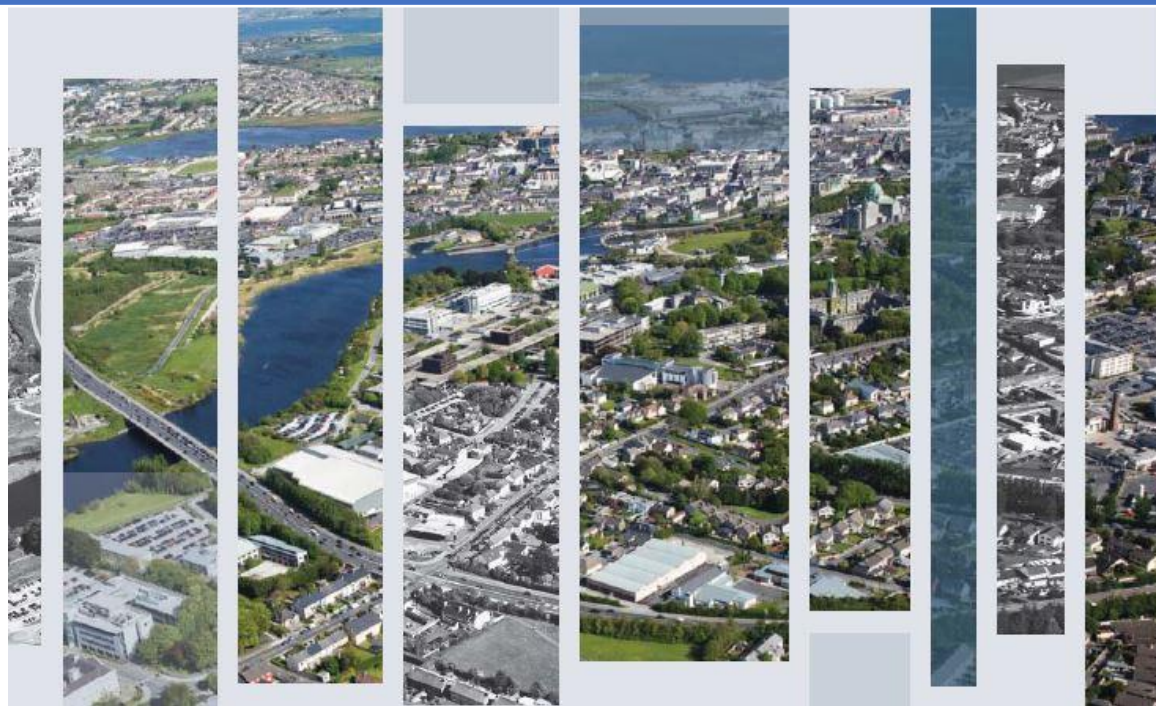


# Screening for Appropriate Assessment Determination and Screening Report for Variation 7 to the Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023



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 VARIATION NO. 7 TO THE CITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2017-2023**

Variation No. 7 to the Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 includes a proposal to amend Land Use Zoning and Specific Objectives Map to extend the existing Specific Objective – Bus Route (GTS) to provide for a link through RA zoned lands from College Road to Lough Atalia Road. It also includes a proposal to Amend Section 3.10 Specific Objectives to provide additional text that further supports the Galway Transport Strategy projects including Public Transport measures, the City Centre Access Network, the Cross City Link, and the Cycle Network.

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 Variation 7 to the Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023* concluded that the Variation does 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 Variation 7 to the Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023* 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.7 does 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

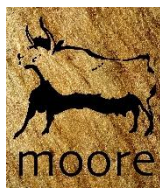
# Report for the purposes of Appropriate Assessment Screening

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

## Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 Proposed Variation 7

September 2020



Prepared by: Moore Group – Environmental Services



Comhairle Cathrach na Gaillimhe  
Galway City Council

On behalf of  
Galway City Council

<b>Plan Proponent</b>	Galway City Council
<b>Plan</b>	Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 Proposed Variation 7
<b>Title</b>	Report for the purposes of Appropriate Assessment Screening Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 Proposed Variation 7

<b>Project Number</b>	20171	<b>Document Ref</b>	GCDP_PV 7_AA Screening Report_200928
<b>Revision</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Date</b>
Rev0	Issued for client review	G. O'Donohoe 	25 September 2020
Rev1	LA Revision	G. O'Donohoe 	28 September 2020
<b>Moore Archaeological and Environmental Services Limited</b>			

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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 Variation 7 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 Variation to the Plan is not directly connected with, or necessary for, the management of any European Site, consequently the Proposed Variation to the Plan is 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 variation 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 legislation<sup>1</sup>, 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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](http://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 Variation

Notice has been given pursuant to Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) that Galway City Council, being the Planning Authority for the City, propose to make a variation of the Galway City Development Plan 2017 – 2023 in respect of the following:



**Proposed Variation No. 7 (PV7):**

To amend the Land Use Zoning and Specific Objectives Map to extend the existing Specific Objective – Bus Route (GTS) to provide for a link through RA zoned lands from College Road to Lough Atalia Road.

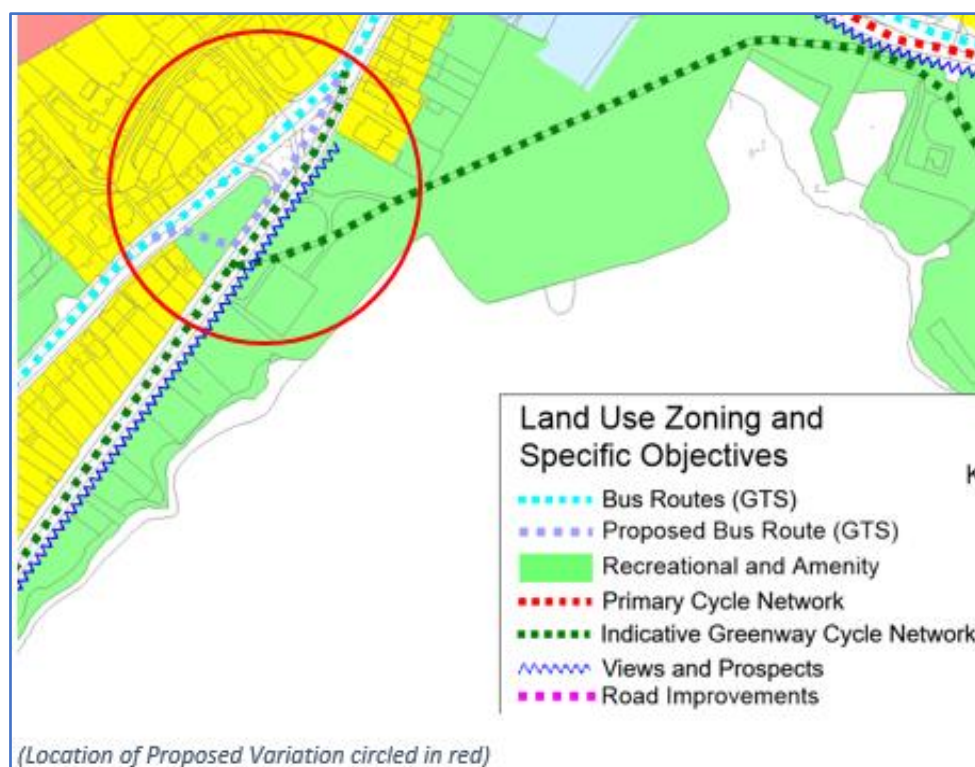
To amend Section 3.10 Specific Objectives to provide additional text that further supports the Galway Transport Strategy projects including Public Transport measures, the City Centre Access Network, the Cross City Link, and the Cycle Network.

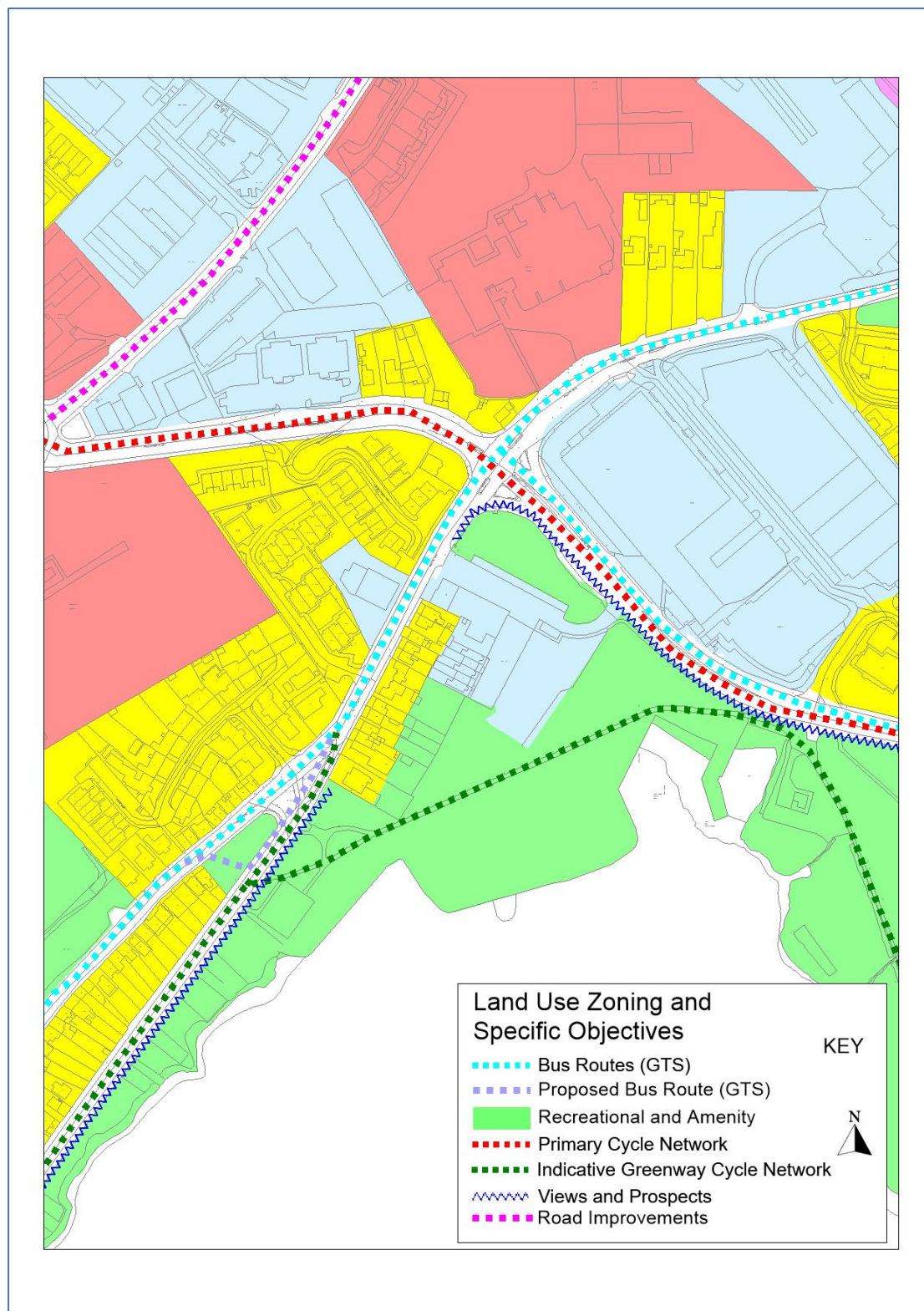
It is necessary to vary the Development Plan to facilitate these changes.

**Amend Land Use Zoning and Specific Objectives Map to Extend the existing Specific Objective – Bus Route (GTS) to provide for a link through RA zoned lands from College Road to Lough Atalia Road.**

This relates to the Galway Transport Strategy Bus Route objective, the route of which is mapped on the City Development Plan Land Use Zoning and Specific Objectives Map.

The following extracts from the Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 Land Use Zoning and Specific Objectives Map shows the modification to the Bus Route (GTS) which constitutes the Proposed Variation highlighted in blue.





**Map of Extract of Land Use Zoning and Specific Objectives Map showing proposed Variation – Proposed Bus Route (GTS)**

**Amend Chapter 3, Section 3.10 Specific Objectives (additional text highlighted in red):****Traffic and Road Network**

Implement the traffic management and infrastructural changes to facilitate the provision of the City Centre Access Network as part of the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) and support any additional land requirements where deemed necessary through design along the associated route and acknowledge that the objective to deliver the City Centre Access Network and associated traffic management and infrastructural changes has priority over other objectives including land use zoning objectives along identified routes.

**Public Transport**

Implement traffic management and infrastructural changes to facilitate the provision of the 'Cross City Link' as part of the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) and support any additional land requirements where deemed necessary through design along the associated routes and acknowledge that the objective to deliver the Cross City Link and associated traffic management and infrastructural changes has priority over other objectives including land use zoning objectives along identified routes.

Implement traffic management and infrastructural changes to facilitate the development of a public bus network in accordance with the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) and support any additional land requirements where deemed necessary through design along the associated routes and acknowledge that the objective to deliver the public bus network and associated traffic management and infrastructural changes has priority over other objectives including land use zoning objectives along identified routes.

**Cycling**

Implement traffic management and infrastructural changes to facilitate the development of a cycle network including for a core, secondary and feeder network in accordance with the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) and support any additional land requirements where deemed necessary through design along the associated routes and acknowledge that the objective to deliver the cycle network and associated traffic management and infrastructural changes has priority over other objectives including land use zoning objectives along identified routes.

The purpose of the variation is to accommodate a minor realignment of the bus route which is proposed to be routed through RA zoned lands located at the junction of College Road and Lough Atalia Road. The change proposed has been brought about as a result of the continuing design process of the Cross City Link project. The Cross City Link will support improvements to public transport routes with high frequency bus services linking the eastern and western suburbs of the city through the city centre. It will also provide for high quality pedestrian and cyclist facilities.

The modification to the Bus Route objective at this location will enable detailed plans for the Cross City Link to advance to consent application stage. The Cross City Link is a key project of the Galway Transport Strategy and is reflected in the City Development Plan Policy 3.4 *“Support the GTS proposals to prioritise public transport movements in the city centre through the implementation of a designated public transport route, the Cross-City Link”*. It is also supported by the National Transport Authority (NTA) through the Galway BusConnects programme. This realignment will also have the potential to allow the redundant road space to be used for amenity purposes.

The changes proposed have been brought about as a result of the continuing design and implementation process of key Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) projects namely the City Centre Access Network, the Cross City Link, the Public Bus Network and the Cycle Network. The amended wording extends support for these projects.

Notwithstanding this, many of the associated projects by their nature will need to go through the planning consent process which will include for all associated detailed design and supporting environmental assessments, a specific public consultation period and a consequent assessment and decision making 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 Variation

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](http://www.npws.ie)) on the 24/09/2020. 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 Variation are presented in Figure 4.1 and listed in Table 4.1.



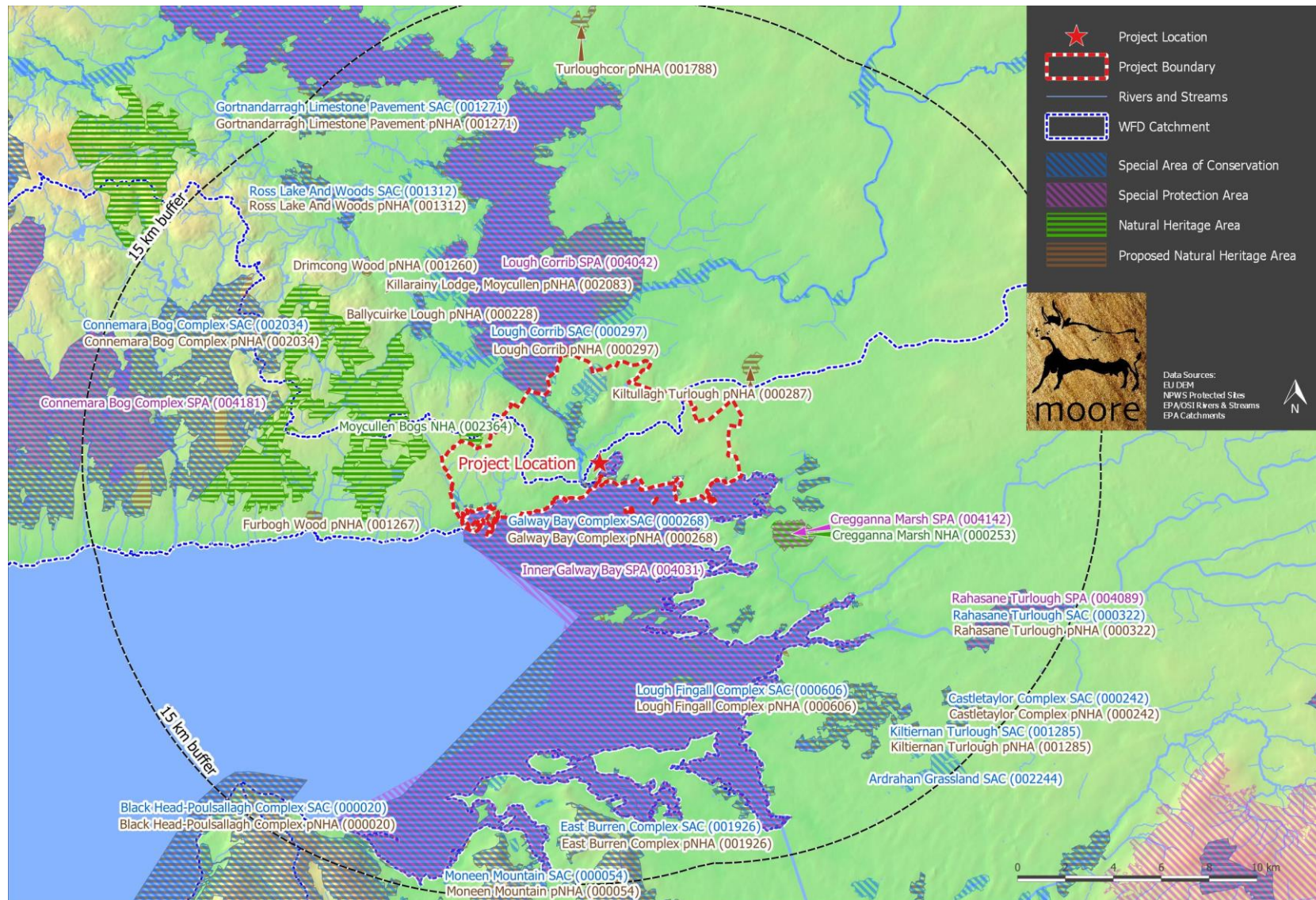


Figure 4.1. Showing European sites in the vicinity of the proposed outer variation boundary.

Table 4.1 European Sites located within the likely zone of impact<sup>2</sup> of the Project.

Site Code	Site name	Distance (km) <sup>3</sup>	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	12.38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reefs [1170]</li> <li>Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220]</li> <li>Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130]</li> <li>Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculus fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260]</li> <li>Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060]</li> <li><i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130]</li> <li>Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210]</li> <li>Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) [6510]</li> <li>Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) [7220]</li> <li>Limestone pavements [8240]</li> <li>Submerged or partially submerged sea caves [8330]</li> <li><i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i> (Petalwort) [1395]</li> </ul>	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"> <li>Turloughs [3180]</li> <li>Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060]</li> <li><i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130]</li> <li>Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210]</li> <li>Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) [7220]</li> <li>Limestone pavements [8240]</li> <li><i>Euphydryas aurinia</i> (Marsh Fritillary) [1065]</li> <li><i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303]</li> </ul>	<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>
000242	Castletaylor Complex SAC	12.23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Turloughs [3180]</li> <li>Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060]</li> <li><i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130]</li> <li>Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210]</li> <li>Limestone pavements [8240]</li> </ul>	<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</p>

<sup>2</sup> All European sites potentially connected irrespective of the nature or scale of the proposed variation.<sup>3</sup> Distances indicated are the closest geographical distance between the proposed variation boundary (taken as the City 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'.
000268	Galway Bay Complex SAC	0.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]</li> <li>▪ Coastal lagoons [1150]</li> <li>▪ Large shallow inlets and bays [1160]</li> <li>▪ Reefs [1170]</li> <li>▪ Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220]</li> <li>▪ Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]</li> <li>▪ Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310]</li> <li>▪ Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) [1330]</li> <li>▪ Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410]</li> <li>▪ Turloughs [3180]</li> <li>▪ <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130]</li> <li>▪ Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210]</li> <li>▪ Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> [7210]</li> <li>▪ Alkaline fens [7230]</li> <li>▪ Limestone pavements [8240]</li> <li>▪ <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]</li> <li>▪ <i>Phoca vitulina</i> (Harbour Seal) [1365]</li> </ul>	Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, 16 April 2013) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at <a href="http://www.npws.ie">www.npws.ie</a>
000297	Lough Corrib SAC	0.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) [3110]</li> <li>▪ Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and/or <i>Isoeto-Nanojuncetea</i> [3130]</li> <li>▪ Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp. [3140]</li> <li>▪ Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260]</li> <li>▪ Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210]</li> <li>▪ Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) [6410]</li> <li>▪ Active raised bogs [7110]</li> <li>▪ Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]</li> <li>▪ Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150]</li> <li>▪ Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> [7210]</li> <li>▪ Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) [7220]</li> <li>▪ Alkaline fens [7230]</li> <li>▪ Limestone pavements [8240]</li> <li>▪ Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0]</li> <li>▪ Bog woodland [91D0]</li> </ul>	Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, 28 April 2017) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at <a href="http://www.npws.ie">www.npws.ie</a>



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029]</li> <li>▪ <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092]</li> <li>▪ <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> (Sea Lamprey) [1095]</li> <li>▪ <i>Lampetra planeri</i> (Brook Lamprey) [1096]</li> <li>▪ <i>Salmo salar</i> (Salmon) [1106]</li> <li>▪ <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303]</li> <li>▪ <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]</li> <li>▪ <i>Drepanocladus vernicosus</i> (Slender Green Feather-moss) [1393]</li> <li>▪ <i>Najas flexilis</i> (Slender Naiad) [1833]</li> </ul>	
000322	Rahasane Turlough SAC	11.53	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Turloughs [3180]</li> </ul>	<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	9.16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Turloughs [3180]</li> <li>▪ Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060]</li> <li>▪ <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130]</li> <li>▪ Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210]</li> <li>▪ Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> [7210]</li> <li>▪ Limestone pavements [8240]</li> <li>▪ <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303]</li> </ul>	Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, 14 January 2019) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at <a href="http://www.npws.ie">www.npws.ie</a>
001271	Gortnandarragh Limestone Pavement SAC	12.64	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Limestone pavements [8240]</li> </ul>	Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, 17 April 2019) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at <a href="http://www.npws.ie">www.npws.ie</a>
001285	Kiltiernan Turlough SAC	11.91	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Turloughs [3180]</li> </ul>	<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</p>

				Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected’.
001312	Ross Lake and Woods SAC	9.89	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp. [3140]</li> <li>▪ <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303]</li> </ul>	Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, 18 October 2018) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at <a href="http://www.npws.ie">www.npws.ie</a>
001926	East Burren Complex SAC	11.59	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp. [3140]</li> <li>▪ Turloughs [3180]</li> <li>▪ Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculus fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260]</li> <li>▪ Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060]</li> <li>▪ <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130]</li> <li>▪ Calaminarian grasslands of the <i>Violetalia calaminariae</i> [6130]</li> <li>▪ Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210]</li> <li>▪ Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) [6510]</li> <li>▪ Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> [7210]</li> <li>▪ Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) [7220]</li> <li>▪ Alkaline fens [7230]</li> <li>▪ Limestone pavements [8240]</li> <li>▪ Caves not open to the public [8310]</li> <li>▪ 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]</li> <li>▪ <i>Euphydryas aurinia</i> (Marsh Fritillary) [1065]</li> <li>▪ <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303]</li> <li>▪ <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]</li> </ul>	<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>
002034	Connemara Bog Complex SAC	6.95	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Coastal lagoons [1150]</li> <li>▪ Reefs [1170]</li> <li>▪ Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) [3110]</li> <li>▪ Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and/or <i>Isoetes-Nanojuncetea</i> [3130]</li> <li>▪ Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160]</li> <li>▪ Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculus fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260]</li> <li>▪ Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010]</li> <li>▪ European dry heaths [4030]</li> <li>▪ Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) [6410]</li> </ul>	Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, 28 October 2015) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at <a href="http://www.npws.ie">www.npws.ie</a>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130]</li> <li>Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140]</li> <li>Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150]</li> <li>Alkaline fens [7230]</li> <li>Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0]</li> <li><i>Euphydryas aurinia</i> (Marsh Fritillary) [1065]</li> <li><i>Salmo salar</i> (Salmon) [1106]</li> <li><i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]</li> <li><i>Najas flexilis</i> (Slender Naiad) [1833]</li> </ul>	
002244	Ardrahan Grassland SAC	13.20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060]</li> <li>Juniperus communis formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130]</li> <li>Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) [6210]</li> <li>Limestone pavements [8240]</li> </ul>	Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, 24 April 2019) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at <a href="http://www.npws.ie">www.npws.ie</a>
004031	Inner Galway Bay SPA	0.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Great Northern Diver (<i>Gavia immer</i>) [A003]</li> <li>Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017]</li> <li>Grey Heron (<i>Ardea cinerea</i>) [A028]</li> <li>Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046]</li> <li>Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050]</li> <li>Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052]</li> <li>Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056]</li> <li>Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [A069]</li> <li>Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137]</li> <li>Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140]</li> <li>Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142]</li> <li>Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149]</li> <li>Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157]</li> <li>Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160]</li> <li>Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162]</li> <li>Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) [A169]</li> <li>Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179]</li> <li>Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182]</li> <li>Sandwich Tern (<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>) [A191]</li> <li>Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193]</li> <li>Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</li> </ul>	Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, 01 May 2013) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at <a href="http://www.npws.ie">www.npws.ie</a>
004042	Lough Corrib SPA	0.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gadwall (<i>Anas strepera</i>) [A051]</li> <li>Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056]</li> <li>Pochard (<i>Aythya ferina</i>) [A059]</li> <li>Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) [A061]</li> <li>Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A065]</li> <li>Hen Harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>) [A082]</li> <li>Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>) [A125]</li> </ul>	<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</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140]</li> <li>▪ Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179]</li> <li>▪ Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182]</li> <li>▪ Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193]</li> <li>▪ Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A194]</li> <li>▪ Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395]</li> <li>▪ Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</li> </ul>	<p>the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA’.</p> <p>‘To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the wetland habitat at Lough Corrib SPA as a resource for the regularly-occurring migratory waterbirds that utilise it.’</p>
004089	Rahasane Turlough SPA	11.46	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038]</li> <li>▪ Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050]</li> <li>▪ Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140]</li> <li>▪ Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156]</li> <li>▪ Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395]</li> <li>▪ Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</li> </ul>	<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 wetland habitat at Rahasane Turlough SPA as a resource for the regularly-occurring migratory waterbirds that utilise it’.</p>
004142	Cregganna Marsh SPA	2.41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395]</li> </ul>	<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>
004181	Connemara Bog Complex SPA	11.41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017]</li> <li>▪ Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>) [A098]</li> <li>▪ Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140]</li> <li>▪ Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182]</li> </ul>	<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>

## 5. Assessment of Connectivity/Pathways

European Sites and their associated qualifying features are identified as occurring in the Zone of Impact of a Plan (Variation) 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 Variation.

### 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 Variation.

### 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 Variation.

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

*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 Variation 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 Variation 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 Variation 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 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
Lough Corrib 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.	
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 Variation 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 Variation 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 Variation due to the absence of any impact 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 Variation 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	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.		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 Variation 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 Variation 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 Variation 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	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	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



	undertaken on the CDP, there is a potential pathway.		CDP, there is a potential pathway.		
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 Variation due to the absence of any impact pathways between the plan area and this Site.
Cregganna Marsh SPA	No. There are no hydrological pathways connecting the plan area to this SPA.	No. This SPA is located 2.41km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This SPA is located 2.41km from the plan area and is outside the Zone of Impact of any noise generated within the plan area.	No. This SPA is located 2.41km 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 Variation due to the absence of any impact pathways between the plan area and this Site.
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 Variation 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 Variation to give rise to likely significant effects is assessed.

Table 5.1 above illustrates that the Proposed Variation could potentially impact, either directly or indirectly, on the following 4 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

The next step of this Screening is to examine the nature and extent of the Proposed Variation in order to assess their potential to result in development/ land use activities which could give rise to likely significant effects on the 4 no. European Sites identified above as occurring within the Zone of Impact of the Proposed Variation.

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

The Proposed Variation sits 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 Variation 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 proposed changes are shown by red text.

Table 6.3 Assessment of Elements of Proposed Variation 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
<b>Amend Land Use Zoning and Specific Objectives Map to Extend the existing Specific Objective – Bus Route (GTS) to provide for a link through RA zoned lands from College Road to Lough Atalia Road.</b>	No	No	Out	Minor modification of Bus Route objective previously assessed. The modification facilitates implementation of City Development Plan Policy 3.4 <i>“Support the GTS proposals to prioritise public transport movements in the city centre through the implementation of a designated public transport route, the Cross-City Link.”</i> – Not likely to result in a significant effect.
<b>Amend Chapter 3, Section 3.10 Specific Objectives (additional text highlighted in red):</b>				
<b>Traffic and Road Network</b>  Implement the traffic management and infrastructural changes to facilitate the provision of the City Centre Access Network as part of the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) <b>and support any additional land requirements where deemed necessary through design along the associated route and acknowledge that the objective to deliver the City Centre Access Network and associated traffic management and infrastructural changes has priority over other objectives including land use zoning objectives along identified routes.</b>	No	No	Out	<p>This text allows for the consideration of additional land requirements where deemed necessary through design to support the Galway Transport Strategy. There is proximal connectivity to the European sites: Lough Corrib SAC, Lough Corrib SPA, Galway Bay Complex SAC and Inner Galway Bay SPA at the inner extent of Lough Atalia.</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>
<p><b>Public Transport</b></p> <p>Implement traffic management and infrastructural changes to facilitate the provision of the 'Cross City Link' as part of the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) and support any additional land requirements where deemed necessary through design along the associated routes and acknowledge that the objective to deliver the Cross City Link and associated traffic management and infrastructural changes has priority over other objectives including land use zoning objectives along identified routes.</p>	No	No	Out	<p>This text allows for the consideration of additional land requirements where deemed necessary through design to support the Galway Transport Strategy. There is proximal connectivity to the European sites: Lough Corrib SAC, Lough Corrib SPA, Galway Bay Complex SAC and Inner Galway Bay SPA at the inner extent of Lough Atalia.</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>

<p><b>Public Transport</b></p> <p>Implement traffic management and infrastructural changes to facilitate the development of a public bus network in accordance with the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) and support any additional land requirements where deemed necessary through design along the associated routes and acknowledge that the objective to deliver the public bus network and associated traffic management and infrastructural changes has priority over other objectives including land use zoning objectives along identified routes.</p>	No	No	Out	<p>This text allows for the consideration of additional land requirements where deemed necessary through design to support the Galway Transport Strategy. There is proximal connectivity to the European sites: Lough Corrib SAC, Lough Corrib SPA, Galway Bay Complex SAC and Inner Galway Bay SPA at the inner extent of Lough Atalia.</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>
<p><b>Cycling</b></p> <p>Implement traffic management and infrastructural changes to facilitate the development of a cycle network including for a core, secondary and feeder network in accordance with the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) and support any additional land requirements where deemed necessary through design along the associated routes and acknowledge that the objective to deliver the cycle network and associated traffic management and infrastructural changes has priority over other objectives including land use zoning objectives along identified routes.</p>	No	No	Out	<p>This text allows for the consideration of additional land requirements where deemed necessary through design to support the Galway Transport Strategy. There is proximal connectivity to the European sites: Lough Corrib SAC, Lough Corrib SPA, Galway Bay Complex SAC and Inner Galway Bay SPA at the inner extent of Lough Atalia.</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,</p>

				<p>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>
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## 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 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 Transport Strategy 2016 and relevant transport projects being advanced
- Galway Public Realm Strategy 2019
- Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021 and neighbouring Local Area Plans

The Proposed Variation was 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 above mentioned plans and projects. The Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 also incorporates GTS measures, the AA and supporting NIR of the City Development Plan concluded that through the implementation of the overarching policies and objectives of the City Development Plan no negative in-combination effects to European sites are expected. 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 Variation, 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 Variation 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 Variation 7 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 Variation 7 does 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.
Lough Corrib SAC (000297)	
	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 Variation, 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 Variation.
Inner Galway Bay SPA (004031)	The nearest Special Protection Areas are associated with the River Corrib and Galway Bay.
Lough Corrib SPA (004042)	
	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 Variation, 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 Variation.



## 9. European Sites References

Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2010) Guidance on Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland (as amended February 2010).

European Commission (2000) Managing Natura 2000 sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC.

European Commission Environment DG (2001) 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, Brussels.

European Commission (2006) Nature and biodiversity cases: Ruling of the European Court of Justice. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg.

European Commission (2007) Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/43/EEC: Clarification of the concepts of: alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interests, compensatory measures, overall coherence and opinion of the Commission. European Commission, Brussels.

NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Galway Bay Complex SAC 000268. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

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NPWS (2017) Conservation Objectives: Lough Corrib SAC 000297. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

NPWS (2019) The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2020) Conservation objectives for Lough Corrib SPA [004042]. Generic Version 7.0. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2020) Conservation objectives for Cregganna Marsh SPA [004142]. Generic Version 7.0. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2020) National Parks and Wildlife Service Metadata available online at <https://www.npws.ie/maps-and-data>