



Comhairle Contae Mhaigh Eo
Mayo County Council

VOLUME 5

Environmental Reports

Strategic Environmental Assessment



VOLUME 5
ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS



Strategic Environmental Assessment Statement Interim Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028

Prepared under the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004. (S.I. 436/2004) and (S.I. 200/2011)

August 2022

Document Stage	Document Version	Prepared by
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1 Introduction

Mayo County Council has approved the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 (MCDP) in the 29th June 2022 County Council Meeting. The main purpose of the SEA Statement is to provide information on the decision-making process. To document how environmental considerations, the views of statutory consultees and other submissions and the recommendations of the SEA Environmental Report have been taken into account in the MCDP, as well as the monitoring arrangements.

The MCDP was also screened for likely significant effects on European Sites listed in the EU Habitats Directive and a Natura Impact Report accompanied the preparation of the MCDP.

This SEA Statement includes the following information:

- Summary of how environmental considerations have been integrated into the MCDP (Section Two)
- Summary of how submissions received during consultation have been taken into account in the MCDP (Section Three);
- Reasons for choosing the recommended development scenario, in the light of other reasonable alternatives considered (Section Four);
- Measures that are to be undertaken to monitor the significant environmental effects of implementing the MCDP (Section Five).

2 Summary of how Environmental Considerations and the SEA Environmental Report have been integrated into the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to present a summary of how environmental considerations and consultation have informed the plan preparation process. Legislation and guidance relating to SEA recommends that the process of plan preparation, SEA and Appropriate Assessment (AA) should be integrated and prepared in an iterative process to facilitate the ongoing assessment and evaluation of environmental considerations during plan preparation. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) was also undertaken during the plan process and the SEA considered findings from this assessment through.

A multi-disciplinary team worked on the SEA and AA elements of the MCDP. Key tasks associated with the SEA were as follows:

Table 1 STAGES IN SEA

Stage of SEA	Plan
Stage 1 Screening	Screening is the first stage of SEA to determine if the plan requires full SEA. The SEA Regulations state that SEA is mandatory for certain plans including County Development Plans. Therefore, mandatory SEA was required and the SEA progressed to the next stage of SEA – Scoping.
Stage 2 Scoping	The purpose of the SEA Scoping report is to identify the scope of the SEA and ensure that relevant data and environmental topics are included in the SEA. The Scoping report was issued to the statutory environmental authorities in 2018 for comment. The MCDP review process was paused to facilitate the adoption of the Northern and Western Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy 2020-2032 of which the MCDP must comply. The NW RESS was adopted in early 2020 and the review of the MCDP commenced thereafter, hence the pause in timing between the SEA Scoping and plan review process.
Stage3 Environmental Report	The Environmental Report tells the story of the MCDP and how environmental considerations have been addressed and included during the preparation process. The appropriate assessment and strategic flood risk assessment is also discussed in the Environmental Report. The Draft Plan consultation stage was originally advertised to take place from December 23 rd , 2020 until March 16 th , 2021. 1,267 submissions were received during this Draft Plan consultation period, of which 5 no. were subsequently withdrawn (See Appendix I of the CE Report). Councillors agreed to extend the Development Plan review period on the 26th of July 2021, following a commencement order to extend the plan process arising from Covid disruptions (Section 9A of Planning & Development Act (amendment) 2021). This draft plan takes the consideration of the Chief Executive’s Report and material amendments to Draft Plan.
Stage 4 SEA Screening of material amendments to the plan	The Elected Council Members, having considered the Draft Mayo County Development Plan 2021-2027 and the Chief Executive’s Report on submissions received, resolved, following Council meeting dated 15th February 2022, to amend the Draft Plan. These amendments constitute a material alteration to the Draft Mayo County Development Plan 2021-2027. Mayo County Council screened the Proposed Material Amendments and has determined that Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) are required with respect to certain Proposed Material Amendments. The proposed Material Amendments, the associated SEA Screening Determination and SEA Environmental Report, AA Screening Determination and AA Natura Impact Report were available for public display from Tuesday 29th March 2022 until 4.00pm on Tuesday 26th

	<p>April 2022 (both dates inclusive). The SEA and AA did not recommend a number of material alterations be included in the MCDP, particularly those relating to Chapters Two and Three, please see Chapter 8 of the updated SEA ER for further assessment and commentary.</p>
Stage 4 SEA Statement- current stage	<p>This stage is the final output of the SEA process and tells the story of the SEA process. It has been prepared now the MCDP is finalised and approved by Mayo County Council.</p>

2.2 Baseline Data, Geographical Information System and environmental sensitivity mapping.

The baseline data assists in describing the current state of the environment, facilitating the identification, evaluation and subsequent monitoring of the effects of the plan. It helps identify existing environmental problems in and around the plan area and in turn these can be quantified (for certain environmental parameters) or qualified. This highlights the environmental issues relevant to each SEA parameter and ensures that the plan implementation does not exacerbate such problems. Conversely this information can also be used to promote good environmental practices and opportunities for environmental enhancement, thereby improving environmental quality where possible.

Baseline data was gathered for all parameters. Other data was gathered from the Irish Water, the EPA, Met Eireann, and Geological Survey of Ireland amongst others.

The SEA has also used a Geographical Information System (GIS) in the following ways:

- To provide baseline information on a range of environmental parameters;
- To assist in assessment of alternatives;
- To help assess in-combination or cumulative impacts, and
- To provide maps to illustrate environmental parameters in the SEA Environmental Report.

2.3 Mitigation

Mitigation involves ameliorating significant negative effects. Where the environmental assessment identifies significant adverse effects, consideration is given in the first instance to preventing such impacts or where this is not possible, to lessening or offsetting those effects. Mitigation measures can be generally divided into those that:

- Avoid effects;
- Reduce the magnitude or extent, probability and/or severity of effect;
- Repair effects after they have occurred, and
- Compensate for effects, by balancing out negative impacts with positive ones.

The iterative process of the plan preparation has facilitated the integration of environmental considerations into the layout and text of the plan. In addition, potential positive effects of implementing the plan have been and will be maximised and potential adverse effects have been and will be avoided, reduced or offset. Specific measures developed for the strategy are presented in Chapter Nine of the SEA ER. A suite of specific mitigation measures developed for the MCDP are presented overleaf in Table 2.

In addition, there are a number of material alterations not recommended through the SEA and AA process and these are discussed in Section 2.3.2.

2.3.1 Mitigation Measures-

The following table presents the some of the key mitigation measures recommended for the MCDP that were included in the final plan.

Table 2 Mitigation Measures –Amendment of Text

<p>Climate Action & Renewable Energy: To transition to a low carbon and climate resilient county, with an emphasis on reduction in energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions, through a combination of effective mitigation and adaptation responses to climate change; in addition to maximising the opportunities to become a national leader in renewable energy generation, whilst safeguarding the environment and other amenities. increasing the resilience of our Natural & Cultural Capital to climate change by planning and implementing appropriate adaptation measure</p>	
<p>SO 9</p> <p>Ecological Impact Assessment, Appropriate Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment</p> <p>a) To ensure the assessment of all planning applications in the Plan area have regard to the information, data and requirements of the Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Report, SEA Environmental Report and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Report contained in Volume V of the Mayo CDP 2022-2028</p> <p>b) To require project planning to be fully informed by ecological and environmental constraints at the earliest stage of project development and any necessary assessment to be undertaken, including assessments of disturbance to species, protected under the Wildlife Act and /or the Flora Protection Act.</p> <p>c) To comply with the objectives and requirements of the Habitats Directive, specifically Article 6(3) and where necessary 6(4), Birds, Water Framework, and all other relevant EU Directives and all relevant transposing national legislation.</p> <p>d) Ensure that proposals for developments located within identified or potential flood risk areas, or which may exacerbate the risk of flooding elsewhere, are assessed in accordance with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines (DoEHLG/OPW 2009) and Circular PL2/2014 (or any updated/superseding document), the relevant policies, objectives and guidelines within this plan and shall also take account of the National CFRAM Programme Flood Hazard Mapping and Flood Risk Management Plans when they become available.</p>	
RHP 5	To ensure that rural housing applications employ site specific design solutions to provide for proposals that integrate into the landscape, reflect and enhance local landscape character and that respect their location in terms of siting, design, materials, finishes and landscaping.
RHP 8	To require that new houses in the rural areas ensure the protection of water quality in the arrangements for on-site waste water disposal, ensure provision of a safe means of access in relation to road and public safety, avoid flood risk and ensure the conservation of sensitive areas such as natural habitats, ecological connectivity , the environs of protected structures and other aspects of heritage.
Tourism and Recreation	
TRP 14	To support the implementation of the opportunities and actions identified in the Mayo Tourism Strategy and Action Plan – Destination Mayo 2015-2021 regarding the development of spiritual and pilgrimage tourism in Mayo, in conjunction with the Fáilte Ireland, the Tourism section of Mayo County Council and other relevant stakeholders through: (a) To exploring the development of a long-distance Spiritual Trail linking Croagh Patrick, Ballintubber Abbey and Knock Shrine. Investigate the potential of linking this trail to Burriscarra, Cong, Turlough and the Monasteries of the Moy through the Tourism Section of Mayo County Council and other relevant stakeholders.

	<p>(b) To explore a range of spiritual walking and pilgrimage events to showcase Mayo as a spiritual tourism destination, with particular emphasis on generating overnight stays for visitors to Knock Shrine.</p> <p>(c) To support and facilitate the development of Knock as a world-renowned religious tourist destination</p> <p>(d) To investigate the delivery of pilgrim trail improvements and upgrades on the Croagh Patrick trail and Tochar Padraig trail.</p> <p>Opportunities to enhance ecological connectivity should be integrated as part of any linking of routes to strengthen and support green infrastructure. SEA and AA measures relating to the above were identified in the Destination Mayo Plan and should be adhered to and integrated to any project level assessments.</p>
TRO 7	<p>To investigate the further development, growth and tourism potential of the Wild Nephin Ballycroy National Park and Dark Sky initiative in a sustainable manner. This approach should demonstrate good practice in terms of eco tourism and wilderness and seek to gain recognised accreditation on same</p>
BEO 22	<p>Apply the following key attributes when considering public realm and public space enhancements:</p> <p>Accessible - connected and linked permeable spaces to ensure ease of movement.</p> <p>Functional - safe, adaptable and social environments to attract and foster activity.</p> <p>Attractive - visually pleasing spaces with high quality design, materials and installations (lighting, furniture and signage) based on a singular common design theme.</p> <p>Distinctive - reference to local context and building on the character and identity of place.</p> <p>Where appropriate recreational considerations and access to blue and greens space should be underpinned by the Green Space Principles¹ including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enhance urban greening through planting strategies that mitigate noise and air pollution and maximise local biodiversity gain and facilitate sustainable drainage (e.g. deciduous wooded and wildflower meadow areas). ● A networked approach: emphasising green infrastructure networks (rather than isolated parks) can provide new opportunities for connecting existing and new green spaces and creating linkages between urban and rural areas. Examples include greenways and linear parks, local greenways or cycleways that link to regional and national greenways and de-culverting watercourses to provide new blue corridors. ● Well managed and maintained, creating a high-quality environment: poorly managed spaces or vandalism lead to negative perceptions among potential users.

¹ Eco-Health: Ecosystem Benefits of Green Space for Health. EPA Research Report No 328

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Multifunctional uses: examples include spaces that encourage active mobility, physical activity and sports, relaxation and tranquillity, and opportunities for social exchange (e.g. that incorporate community gardens or encourage park runs). ● Create multisensory restorative environments that help mitigate the psychological stresses of modern living through the provision of “restive places for rejuvenation”.
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Note: Please note the reference numbers in the above table refer to the initial numbering set out in the DRAFT Mayo County Development Plan 2021-2027.

2.3.2 Material Alterations

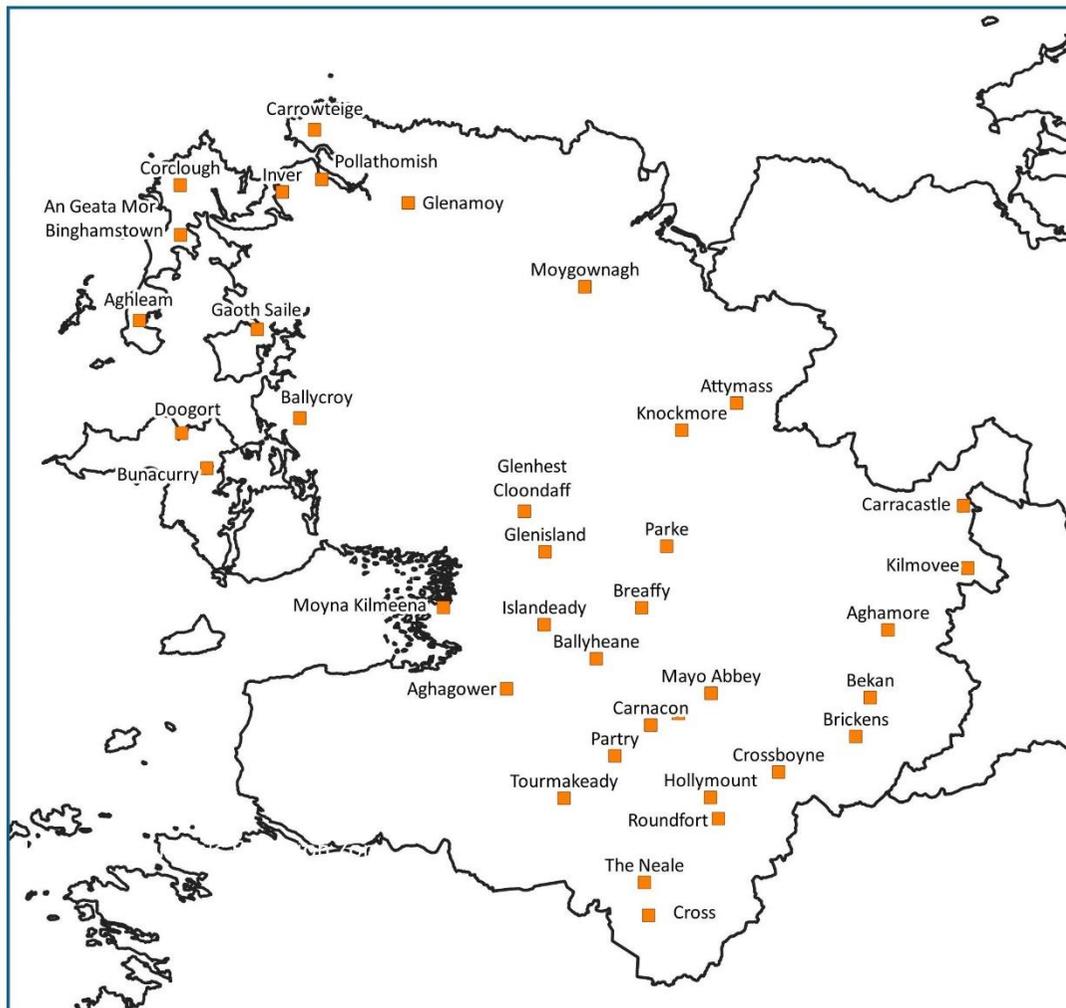
A number of Proposed Material Alterations are not consistent with many SEOs (including in particular material alterations relating to Chapter Two: Core Strategy and Chapter Three: Rural Housing eg: Core Policy CSP 1,CSO 5, CSP4, CSO 7 and Rural Housing Policy RHP1, RHP2 and RHP7 (these policy and objective reference numbers refer to those set out in the Draft Mayo County Development Plan 2021-2027).

In particular they do not align with sustainable development and are identified as generating direct effects across a range of SEOS by liberalising the approach to housing in terms of compact growth, rural housing criteria and national and regional policies as identified in the National Planning Framework and RESS. Effects are identified as direct, indirect, and cumulative for short to long term.

Key effects include:

- Potential effects on wildlife and biodiversity, through severance effects, loss of connectivity, habitat fragmentation and supporting resources in particular water including surface and groundwater
- Potential effects arising from above on mobile species and habitats
- Potential effects associated with material assets and the additional costs and burdens associated with services such as wastewater, water supply, transport, waste management etc.
- Issues in provision of above services and poor efficiencies by not utilising and maximising serviced lands and a service led development approach
- Contributing to decline of smaller settlements and redirecting of housing to rural areas or areas under pressure and subsequent failure to achieve or contribute to compact growth and targets for same.
- Loss of soil and geology with accompanying effects around surface water run off at cumulative scale
- Increasing nutrient loading on water bodies and contribution to declining water quality.
- Increase of carbon emissions associated with lost opportunity for integrated landuse and transport and maximizing non vehicular trips associated with compact growth
- Conflicts between transport emissions and air quality
- Loss of local landscape character, setting of architectural heritage with accompanying landscape and seascape impacts.
- Effects on population and human health arising from the above.

Specific mitigation measures are recommended to reduce, avoid and /or ameliorate potential significant environmental effects, where possible in relation to other material alterations, examples are provided below:



Tier V Settlements. On foot of a request from the OPR in their submission to the Draft Plan, the planning authority was required to identify core areas and opportunity sites within proposed Tier IV and V settlements. Further to consultation with Municipal District Architects the areas in question were identified on the settlement maps in the Draft Plan and in a number of cases, this also required the extension of the settlement boundary. For the remaining settlements based on aerial imagery review, these material alterations are not significant at strategic scale as the alterations relate to areas within the existing settlements and frequently comprise built land and artificial surfaces. The existing environmental protection measures of the MCDP 2022-2028 should provide appropriate mitigation.

Mitigation Measures: where the Opportunity Sites relate to backlands and there is mature trees or hedgerows/scrub these should be subject to ecology surveys including bat surveys as appropriate. These woodland habitats should be retained and integrated to any future development wherever possible.

Where older buildings are present, these should be retained/integrated to promote adaptive reuse, retention of vernacular architecture where possible. Such buildings should be assessed for bird nesting and bat roosting potential.

3 Summary of how consultations were taken into account.

3.1 Introduction

The following section summarises key points and how they were addressed in the SEA and the MCDP.

3.2 Consultation on SEA- Scoping

The purpose of the SEA Scoping report is to identify the scope of the SEA and ensure that relevant data and environmental topics are included in the SEA.

The table below summarises key points raised during the SEA Scoping Stage.

Table 3 SEA Scoping

Consultee	Key Issue Raised	SEA Response
SEA Section Office of Evidence and Assessment Environmental Protection Agency	<p>Main Points</p> <p>Merit in reviewing whether environmental improvements or deterioration have occurred over the Plan period, with a view to reviewing the robustness of existing mitigation measures or plans policies/objectives and strengthening where necessary.</p>	<p>SEA response</p> <p>Noted. The Forward Planning Team and Environmental Assessment Team (SEA, AA and SFRA) had workshop that reviewed the existing MCDP in terms of key environmental issues and this has informed the scope of this SEA ER.</p>
Transition to a low carbon climate resilient economy and society	<p>You should ensure that the Plan aligns with national commitments on climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as relevant sectoral, regional and local adaptation plans. The EPA has published Local Authority Adaptation Guideline Research Report 164 and guidance on the Integration of Climatic Factors into SEA in Ireland. The Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment climate adaptation guidance is also available at: https://dcca.gov.ie/en-ie/climate-</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>
Key aspects to consider in preparing Plan and SEA	<p>Protecting European and nationally designated sites including SPA/SACs and associated habitats, species and ecological linkages.</p> <p>Maintain and improve water quality status and protect high status waters</p> <p>Supporting the need for integrated catchment management of river basin catchments/sub catchments in collaboration with other key stakeholders</p> <p>Areas of extreme-high groundwater vulnerability</p> <p>Ensuring land use zoning/development is appropriate to risk of flooding identified</p> <p>Linking development to the ability to provide adequate critical service infrastructure</p> <p>Protecting and where possible enhancing non designated biodiversity including ecological corridors/linkages, hedgerows and wetlands</p> <p>Historic landfills within and adjacent to the plan area</p> <p>Control and management of alien invasive species</p> <p>Control and management of noise</p> <p>Assessing/mitigating the potential for cumulative environmental effects</p>	<p>Noted, these key aspects will inform the development of Strategic Environmental Objectives in the SEA, in addition to inclusion in the scope of the description of the environment.</p>
Some key plans to consider	<p>National Planning Framework</p> <p>Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for Western and Northern Region</p> <p>National River Basin Management Plan for Ireland</p> <p>National Mitigation Plan</p> <p>National Climate Adaption Plan</p>	<p>Noted and any intervening national/regional/county plans post 2018 will be considered in Chapter Three, Relationship to Plans, Policies and Programmes. These will also help inform the SEOs.</p>

Consultee	Main Points	SEA response
	<p>Irish Water’s Capital Investment Plan, Water Services Strategic Plan and Draft National Water Resources Plan Western CFRAMS Wild Atlantic Way Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan Grid 25 Implementation Programme Pollution Reduction Programme for Shellfish Waters Freshwater Pearl Mussel Sub Basin Management Plan/Forestry and Freshwater Pearl Mussel Plan</p>	
Guidance and data	<p>Scoping Process Guidance/Resources referenced. Including Guidance on Integrating Climate Change into SEA. EPA State of the Environment Report 2016 SEA Web GIS Search and Reporting Tool River Basin Catchment Management Tool</p>	<p>Noted, the guidance will be used in the SEA and plan preparation process. Noted and will be used in baseline and to inform scope of SEA.</p>
Development Application Unit, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.	<p>Obligations of competent authorities in relation to nature conservation.</p>	
Comment on Issues Paper	<p>It is recommended that, as at present, the new plan should have a section or chapter with information and maps on key elements of the natural heritage and biodiversity of the plan area, and objectives for their conservation – see below. Biodiversity considerations should also be reflected in other sections of the plan, as appropriate and as required to reflect AA mitigation and SEA measures to safeguard European sites, biodiversity and the environment.</p>	
	<p>In land use planning, where multiple uses or ‘green infrastructure’ models are envisaged, it is advised that a clear distinction is made between nature conservation obligations, and other land uses, e.g. tourism, recreation and amenity. In certain scenarios, changes in land uses or increased pressures can lead to or perpetuate habitat loss, deterioration and fragmentation, or species disturbances which may be inconsistent with nature conservation objectives and obligations. Good land use planning should seek to anticipate and manage such competing requirements, including by early consideration of constraints, the selection of optimal locations and options, and by having a set of steps or measures in the plan to guide the planning and design of future projects to maximise their likely success. These steps or measures could dovetail with the SEA measures and any mitigation from the NIR. Alternatively, reference could be made to guiding principles and steps or approaches in associated or related plans or strategies, e.g. the ‘Greenways</p>	<p>Noted. In the SEA there will be a discussion on ecosystem services, green and blue infrastructure. The consideration of principles through SEA and AA mitigation in this regard and identification of constraints is acknowledged and recognised as a key and critical consideration.</p>

Consultee	Main Points	SEA response
	Strategy' (in preparation) which should include measures to guide the planning, routing and assessment of future greenways and blueways.	
	Where (subject to) 'sustainable development' is used to indicate the safeguarding of the environment and of natural resources, it would be beneficial and would provide clarity if the term was defined in the plan to mean, among other things, the absence of adverse effects on the conservation objectives and integrity of a European site, or of adverse effects on any other statutory nature conservation site.	Noted, this will be considered and included as clarification if appropriate.
	An outline of key elements of biodiversity of relevance to the plan is given in Appendix 1, and includes sites, habitats, species of flora and fauna, certain river catchments, and ecological networks. There are interrelationships between biodiversity, flora and fauna and most other environmental issues or topics, including population, human health, water, soil, air, climatic factors, landscape, and possibly architectural and archaeological heritage. The potentially significant effects of the plan on these interdependencies should be explored and assessed in the SEA.	Noted. The key elements will form part of the Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna (BFF) baseline and potential effects on same be subject to evaluation as part of the SEA process.
	There will be overlaps and linkages between biodiversity, flora and fauna in SEA, and sites, habitats and species of relevance to the AA and Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. SEA should address all such issues in general, as well as any other relevant provisions of the Habitats and Birds Directives, including in respects of Article 6(1), 6(2) and 10 of the Habitats Directive, and associated national legislation. See also the general duties of a public authority above.	Noted, and agreed per scope of BFF of this SEA ER.
	The plan should be developed to integrate biodiversity considerations in a positive, proactive and precautionary way, and this should be reflected in the text and content of the plan, including its aims, objectives and policies, as well as in maps and land use zoning objectives. The findings and recommendations of SEA should be assimilated into the plan, and should modify the content of the plan where necessary. The biodiversity, flora and fauna section of the Environmental Report should be prepared by or in conjunction with a suitably qualified ecologist(s), and other specialists as necessary, and in conjunction with the NIS to ensure full integration of biodiversity issues and concerns. The EPA's Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment best practice guidance is of relevance in this regard.	Noted, and agreed. Noted, please see report preparation team in Section 1.4.1
	The Environmental Report is required to contain information on environmental protection objectives which are established at international to national level, and are relevant to the plan. For biodiversity, flora and fauna, these should integrate with the objectives and obligations of other directives such as the Habitats Directive, the Birds Directive, the Water Framework Directive and the Floods Directive, and with the Wildlife Acts, 1976-2000, and the National Biodiversity Plan.	Noted, and agreed. The Biodiversity SEOS will reference the Directives.

Consultee	Main Points	SEA response
	Land use planning should also take into account and safeguard any ecological restoration or mitigation measures delivered in connection with developments that have carried out, or cases where habitat restoration or environmental enhancement was required.	
	<p>The monitoring programme should be set out clearly and developed in such a manner to ensure it will identify effects on the environment that will or may arise, and to monitor the effectiveness of any mitigation on which the assessment relies. While it may be considered efficient to use monitoring programmes that are already in place and run by other authorities, it is important to establish that these are in fact designed in such a way that they will identify the effects anticipated from the particular plan in question. As such, it is important to understand the objectives, methodologies, parameters, assumptions, etc. of any existing monitoring programme that is proposed to be used in such a way.</p> <p>It is advisable to set out clearly where responsibilities for monitoring programmes lie, and their frequency and reporting/publication arrangements, as well as the procedures that will be put in place to ensure that there is a response mechanism to any unforeseen or undesirable negative effects/results, and that remedial action will be taken, if necessary.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Agreed</p>
Available Ecological Information	List provided of datasets including those from NPWS, Biodiversity Ireland, Article 17 Reports, Birdwatch Ireland, Bat Conservation Ireland etc.	Noted and will be used to access data as required.
Appropriate assessment	<p>It appears that it has been determined that AA is required in this case, meaning that an NIR is required. It is advised that the Council's references to a 'Habitats Directive assessment' should be reviewed and revised in line with the applicable legislation and associated terminology. General notes on the preparation of an NIS are included in Appendix 2, and should be taken into account, as relevant, as they also apply to an NIR. As outlined above, there should be due regard to the terminology, stages and tests of the AA process as set out in relevant legislation.</p> <p>Where the NIR identifies that plan-level mitigation is necessary, including to avoid or reverse adverse effects on European sites and to manage future scenarios, this must amend and be reflected in the content and objectives of the final plan wherever necessary. Specific and repeated cross-referencing to mitigation measures in other sections or reports may be used but should be done clearly, consistently and unambiguously.</p> <p>The AA is carried out by the competent authority for the final iteration of the plan, prior to its adoption.</p> <p>The AA must take account of the NIR (including any addenda or revisions), and should address the content of submissions made where issues or concerns are raised regarding the effects on European sites. The AA and decision-making authority has obligations to</p>	Noted.

Consultee	Main Points	SEA response
	<p>address scientific uncertainties or discrepancies, including matters raised by other parties, particularly in relation to the implications for European sites and their conservation objectives in the AA; the final determination should demonstrate how the differing scientific opinions were resolved, noting that case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union (e.g. case C-258/11) has established that an appropriate assessment cannot have lacunae, and must contain complete, precise and definitive findings and conclusions with regard to the implications of a project for the conservation objectives and integrity of a European site or sites.</p>	

4 Consideration of Alternatives

4.1 Introduction

One of the critical roles of the SEA is to facilitate an evaluation of the likely environmental consequences of a range of alternative development scenarios, in this case the MCDP.

These alternative development scenarios should meet the following considerations:

- Take into account the geographical scope, hierarchy and objectives of the plan –be realistic
- Be based on socio-economic and environmental evidence – be reasonable
- Be capable of being delivered within the plan timeframe and resources –be implementable
- Be technically and institutionally feasible – be viable.

Three online workshops were held with the environmental assessment consultants (SEA, AA and SFRA) and the Forward Planning Team and other sections of Mayo County Council (Environment, Heritage, Architecture). These focused on the following themes:

1. Review of environmental performance of current CDP.
2. Consideration of Alternatives
3. Workshop with Environment Section focusing on water quality issues in particular.

Maps were also provided in the briefing note and workshop to help focus discussions.

In assessing the different scenarios the following questions were considered:

Question	Sub-Question
Does this alternative provide:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enough homes • of appropriate types • in appropriate locations • at the appropriate times
	Provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate facilities and services; • in appropriate locations; • at the appropriate times These should be well designed and inclusive and should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • health; • education; • recreation and sport; • community and leisure; and • other essential services
	Reduce the need to travel through more sustainable patterns of land use and development Encourage modal shift to more sustainable forms of travel Enable key transport infrastructure improvements Provide and enhance the provision of community access to green infrastructure Design for passive supervision of open space and public realm Minimise exposure to noise and light pollution
	Protect and enhance natural habitats, wildlife, biodiversity and geodiversity where possible Protect the integrity of European sites and other designated nature conservation sites Encourage the creation of new habitats and features for wildlife Prevent isolation/fragmentation and re- connect / de-fragment habitats
	Enhance water quality and help to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive Protect groundwater resources Minimise and reduce the potential for exposure of people to ground pollution Address flood risk and minimise effects on natural flood processes

Conserve soil resources where possible and avoid waste of same
 Promote brownfield development
 Remediate contaminated land/land subject to illegal dumping
 Protect and enhance archaeology and heritage assets, and areas of sensitive landscape character
 Improve access to, and enjoyment, understanding and use of cultural assets where this will not cause harm

Minimise and reduce the potential for exposure of people to noise, air and light pollution.
 Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
 Encourage sustainable, low carbon building practices and design
 Reduce energy use
 Promote renewable energy generation
 Reduce water use
 Provide adequate infrastructure to ensure the sustainable supply of water and disposal of sewerage
 Maximise opportunities for recycling and minimising waste

Respond to the likelihood of predicted climate change events

Option One: Amend settlement hierarchy and revise growth in fewer areas in line with infrastructural provision

This alternative is to amend the number of settlements within the plan area, reducing the number of smaller settlements, and targeting growth in a fewer number of locations where appropriate infrastructure is already in place and outside higher environmentally sensitive area. Eg: flooding, protected areas, areas susceptible to climate change effects. Demand for rural housing would be directed and encouraged towards these settlements such as Tier II and Tier III settlements as a priority.

This would see a reduced number of settlements within the plan area, targeting growth in a few number of locations where appropriate infrastructure is already in place. Designated areas (European Sites, Groundwater Protection Zones etc) would be subject to appropriate environmental protection measures in line with the regulatory framework. Rural development policies would support agriculture, forestry, renewable energy and tourism.

Option Two: Dispersed Settlement led approach

This scenario envisages growth of all settlements within the County with heavy emphasis on accommodating housing within existing settlements. Other than the Key Towns as identified in the RSES (Ballina, Castlebar) and established towns such as Claremorris, Ballyhaunis, Swinford there would be no hierarchy of settlements. Designated areas (European Sites, Groundwater Protection Zones etc.) would be subject to appropriate environmental protection measures in line with the regulatory framework. As above, rural development policies would support agriculture, forestry, renewable energy and tourism. Rural housing would be assessed individually in line with criteria in NPF and NW RESS

Option Three: Strategic Planning Approach

This scenario is a planned sustainable development approach to planning in the County. Development will be focused within zoned and serviced areas. Nodal settlements would be promoted under this scenario including digital hubs in settlements that have capacity in terms of water and wastewater infrastructures. This scenario plans for the strengthening of rural villages and residential development into designated settlements.

All rural areas identified as being under Urban generated pressure are required to apply local need criteria to all rural housing applications in those areas. Rural areas identified as Rural Areas under Strong urban influence and scenic route areas would allow and provide for rural housing with an assessment of local need criteria and promotion of reuse of existing buildings.

Appropriate environmental protection measures will be implemented for designated areas. In this scenario particular rural development activities would be more strategic and certain areas identified to support tourism,

agriculture, forestry, renewable energy whilst avoiding areas of greatest vulnerability to climate change effects. Adaptation to climate change as required under the RSES would be a key element of this approach.

4.3 Preferred Alternative

Following the above evaluation and assessment, the preferred strategic alternative for the approach to MCDP was Alternative 3. This is based on the following:

- Greater consistency with the requirements of the NPF and NW RESS
- This approach identifies areas under pressure from urban generated rural housing and aims to more strategically approach rural housing in line with NPF and NW RESS requirements around compact growth and sustainable communities
- Developing existing settlements, compact growth, serviced settlements are more robustly planned for under this Scenario.
- Key towns are planned for and will be subject to LAP in line with the RPOs of the NW RESS. The Tier II and III can be planned for in terms of town centre opportunity sites, public realm and permeability enhancements that increase the attractiveness of town and village centre living whilst efficiencies in terms of existing infrastructure area maximised and reduced reliance on private or individual septic tanks and wells.
- Smarter Travel policies, reduction in commuting, increased walking and cycling can fit better within this scenario;
- By a hierarchy of settlements, this approach can identify at settlement level opportunities for enhancing green and blue infrastructure, particularly where towns and villages have been subject to habitat surveys.
- Rural housing trend likely to continue albeit more slowly with this scenario but within a stronger policy framework and hierarchy with a more robust criteria based approach
- This scenario directs development to town and village centres;
- This approach allows for better protection of designated sites and achievement of WFD targets as serviced led development is directed to settlements.
- Reuse of brownfield and infill sites promoted in this scenario. This scenario performs strongest in terms of cultural heritage as it promotes reuse of older and historical buildings and the embodied carbon within these structures. Indirect, positive interactions with PHH and L SEOS under this scenario also.

5 Monitoring

5.1 Introduction

It is proposed, in accordance with the SEA Directive, to base monitoring on a series of indicators which measure changes in the environment, especially changes which are critical in terms of environmental quality, for example water pollution levels. Monitoring will focus on the aspects of the environment that are likely to be significantly impacted upon by the implementation of the MCDP 2022-2028.

The targets and indicators are derived from the Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) discussed in Chapter Five. The target underpins the objective whilst the indicators are used to track the progress of the objective and targets in terms of monitoring of impacts.

The monitoring programme will consist of an assessment of the relevant indicators and targets against the data relating to each environmental component. Similarly, monitoring will be carried out frequently to ensure that any changes to the environment can be identified.

It is proposed that the SEA monitoring reporting should be undertaken as a mid-term review of the plan. However, in some cases as data becomes available, Mayo County Council may prepare an additional SEA Monitoring Report. In turn the list below is subject to review at each reporting stage to reflect new data. Should the monitoring regime identify significant impacts (such as impacts on designated sites) early on in the plan implementation, this should trigger a review of the plan and monitoring regime. In addition, the identification of positive impacts from monitoring should also be reported as this will assist in determining successful environmental actions.

It is recommended that data arising from planning applications, particularly in terms of environmental constraints mapping and Environmental Impact Statements be integrated into the GIS and monitoring system. This will assist in assessing cumulative impacts also, in particular ecology and water quality.

Finally, it is recommended that the monitoring report be made available to the public upon its completion. It is recommended that this data be shared with neighbouring local authorities to assist in monitoring cross county effects and ensure consistency of monitoring.

TABLE 0-1 SEA MONITORING

Strategic Environmental Objective	Target	Indicator/Data Sources	Source/Responsibility/Frequency
Population, Human Health and Quality of Life			
<p>P1 – Protect, enhance and improve people’s quality of life based on high quality residential, community, educational, working and recreational environments and on sustainable travel patterns.</p>	<p>Increase in the number of green and blue space in settlements.</p> <p>Improved trends in perceived quality of life related to these matters.</p> <p>Bonds to ensure the completion of developments until taken charge.</p> <p>No significant deterioration in human health as a result of environmental factors.</p>	<p>No/area of green spaces and amenities available to the public as shown in public realm improvements</p> <p>Improved trends in perceived quality of life related to these matters as gathered through surveys.</p> <p>Employment rates over the lifetime of the Plan.</p> <p>Completion handover of development to MCC</p> <p>Availability of public transport/ smarter travel initiatives.</p> <p>Occurrence of any decline in human health around the plan area.</p>	<p>MCC – URDF funding and other funding sources</p> <p>CSO – every six years in line with census</p> <p>MCC - Annual</p> <p>Iarnrod Eireann - Annual</p> <p>Bus Eireann – Annual</p>
<p>P2 - To protect human health from hazards or nuisances arising from incompatible land uses/developments.</p>	<p>No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors.</p> <p>Number of complaints received from public relating to Noise, Air and Water Emissions.</p>	<p>Any occurrence of spatially concentrated deterioration in human health.</p> <p>Complaints to MCC Environment Section, Health and Safety Authority and EPA</p>	<p>CSO – every six years and as results arise on a yearly basis from the 2016 census</p> <p>Healthwell Database</p> <p>MCC – Annual</p>
Biodiversity			
<p>BFF1 – Conserve and enhance biodiversity at all levels</p>	<p>No reduction in length or loss of hedgerows.</p> <p>Operators who conduct mechanical hedge cutting should have achieved the Teagasc proficiency standard MT 1302-Mechanical Hedge Trimming.</p> <p>30% broadleaf/native afforestation.</p> <p>Protection and promotion of non-designated salmonid rivers.</p> <p>No. ecological networks or parts thereof which provide significant connectivity between areas of local</p>	<p>Percentage of unique habitats and species lost in non-designated sites over the lifetime of the Plan through trending of annual/bi-annual surveys.</p> <p>Percentage of broadleaf/native afforestation.</p> <p>Number of green infrastructure and blue infrastructure measures implemented during Part 8 applications.</p> <p>Number of pollinator friendly planting schemes as part of public realm works.</p> <p>Number of pollinator friendly schemes identified under Tidy Towns</p> <p>Number of Part 8 applications</p>	<p>MCC</p> <p>MCC Part 8 planning applications</p> <p>Coillte- Annual</p> <p>NPWS – Annual or as and when surveys completed by NPWS for National Monitoring programmes on a rolling basis and/or surveillance monitoring undertaken for compliance with Article 17 of the Habitats Directive and reported on every 6 years.</p> <p>MCC - Annual</p> <p>OPW - Annual</p> <p>National Biodiversity Data Centre – Annual</p> <p>Ireland River Basin Management Plan –second</p>

Strategic Environmental Objective	Target	Indicator/Data Sources	Source/Responsibility/Frequency
	<p>biodiversity to be lost without remediation as a result of implementation of the MCDP 2022-2028</p> <p>Afford the same level of protection to Margaritifera Sensitive Areas as is afforded to Freshwater Pearl Mussel SAC rivers</p>	<p>requiring Ecological Clerk of Work</p> <p>Percentage loss of connectivity between areas of local biodiversity importance as a result of implementation of the MCDP as evidenced from a resurvey of CORINE mapping and the Biodiversity Mapping undertaken by MCC for towns and villages where present.</p> <p>Decrease in population of freshwater pearl mussels in <i>Margaritifera</i> sensitive areas and/or habitat and water quality deterioration.</p>	<p>and third RBMP Cycle</p>
<p>BFF2 – Avoid and minimise effects on nationally and internationally rare and threatened species and habitats through sensitive design and consultation, recognising ecological connectivity.</p>	<p>No loss of protected habitats and species during the lifetime of the Plan.</p> <p>No compromise in the favourable conservation condition of European sites. No compromise or impact on the achievement of the favourable conservation condition objectives (whether maintain or restore) of European sites.</p>	<p>Designation of additional areas due to biodiversity and/or geological value.</p> <p>Percentage of unique habitats and species lost in designated sites through trending of annual surveys.</p> <p>No./percentage of developments in/near Natura 2000 network.</p> <p>Percentage of European sites in the plan area that are at ‘Favourable’ conservation status.</p> <p>Percentage of Qualifying Interest Features which have achieved their specific objectives of maintain or restore.</p>	
<p>BFF3 – Avoid and minimise habitat fragmentation and seek opportunities to improve habitat connectivity.</p>	<p>Submission of Ecological Impact Assessments for planning applications</p> <p>Number of green and blue infrastructure measures implemented through Part 8 applications.</p> <p>Ensure provision of riparian zones at project/site level.</p>	<p>Number of Ecological Impact Assessments with planning applications.</p> <p>Number of Part 8 applications with green and blue infrastructure measures</p> <p>No. of planning applications with sufficient inclusion of buffer zones where necessary and applicable.</p>	
<p>BFF4 – Ensure careful consideration of non native invasive and alien</p>	<p>Prevent the introduction of new invasive or alien species.</p> <p>Control/manage new</p>	<p>No., type and location of invasive species identified.</p> <p>No. of actions achieved under the Biodiversity Action Plan.</p>	

Strategic Environmental Objective	Target	Indicator/Data Sources	Source/Responsibility/Frequency
species particularly as they relate to watercourses	invasive species. Control/manage/eradicate invasive species throughout the county.	Increase/decrease in coverage of invasive species identified. No. of submissions/observations submitted through invasive species Ireland "Alien Watch". www.invasivespeciesireland.com/alien-watch The National Biodiversity Data Centre will track success in the implementation of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan by measuring increases in the abundance and diversity of pollinators within the Irish landscape as the 81 actions are implemented.	
B5 - Promote green and blue infrastructure networks, including riparian zones and wildlife corridors.	Ensure new development is set back from rivers. The recommended width for larger river channels (>10m) is 35m to 60m and for smaller channels (<10m) is 20m or greater. The determined width should be tailored to site specific, river reach or lakeshore characteristics and their associated habitats. It is important that the buffer zone is large enough to protect the ecological integrity of the river (including emergent vegetation), the riparian zone (bank side vegetation including trees) and takes into account the human history of the area.	No. planning permissions close to water. Number of Part 8 applications with green and blue infrastructure measures	
Water			
W1 – Protect and enhance the status of aquatic	To achieve a Q rating of 4 'good' quality status by 2021.	Biotic quality rating of river waters at EPA monitoring locations.	EPA – Annual as recorded through the WFD Monitoring Programme

Strategic Environmental Objective	Target	Indicator/Data Sources	Source/Responsibility/Frequency
ecosystems and, with regard to their water needs, terrestrial ecosystems and wetlands directly depending on the aquatic ecosystem (quality, level, flow).			
W2– Maintain or improve the quality of surface water and groundwater (including estuarine) to status objectives as set out in the Water Framework Directive (WFD), the River Basin Management Plan and POMS.	Improvement or at least no deterioration in surface water quality by 2021	Changes in receiving water quality as identified during water quality monitoring for WFD, National RBMP conducted by MCC and EPA.	MCC EPA
W3– Reduce the impact of polluting substances to all waters and prevent pollution and contamination of ground water by adhering to aquifer protection plans and to maintain and improve the quality of drinking water supplies.	Improvement or at least no deterioration in surface and groundwaters by 2027 at the latest	Changes in receiving waters and groundwater quality as identified by water quality monitoring programmes conducted by MCC and EPA.	MCC - Annual EPA – Annual
W4 - Promote sustainable water use, water conservation and sources of water	Pressure on water and waste water treatment plants.	Decrease in no. of water shortage notices issued during drought periods. Decrease in the amount of water consumed per household in the	MCC/Irish Water

Strategic Environmental Objective	Target	Indicator/Data Sources	Source/Responsibility/Frequency
supply in the plan area and to maintain and improve the quality of drinking water supplies.		plan area.	
W5—Protect flood plains and areas of flood risk from development through avoidance, mitigation and adaptation measures.	<p>In accordance with OPW/DOEHLG, all planning applications within designated Flood Risk Zones A and B as identified in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the plan are required to undertake Flood Risk Assessment.</p> <p>Increase in nature based solutions to flood risk and blue infrastructure measures</p>	<p>Level and location of flooding.</p> <p>Number of measures achieved in Goal 3 of Climate Ready Mayo.</p> <p>Number of NBS that form part of public realm, Part 8 applications.</p>	<p>MCC – Records obtained as and when flood events occur</p> <p>OPW –</p>
Soil and Geology			
SG1 To maximise the sustainable re-use of the existing built environment, derelict, disused and infill sites (brownfield sites), rather than greenfield sites	NPF target of 30% urban development and 20% of rural developing on brownfield lands achieved over lifetime of the plan	Planning applicationsq	MCC annually
SG2 -Conserve, protect and avoid loss of diversity and integrity of designated habitats, geological features, species or their sustaining resources in designated ecological sites.	<p>No loss of diversity and integrity of designated habitats, geological features, species or their sustaining resources in designated ecological sites.</p> <p>Designation of sites as County Geological Sites.</p>	<p>Percentage of habitats, geological features, species etc. Lost over the lifetime of the Plan through trending of annual/bi-annual surveys.</p> <p>No. of areas designated as County Geological Sites.</p>	GSI MCC
Air Quality and Climate			

Strategic Environmental Objective	Target	Indicator/Data Sources	Source/Responsibility/Frequency
AQ1 – Recognise the ecosystems functions of habitats in and around the plan area and promote nature based solutions to climate change mitigation and adaptation.	<p>Maintain and enhance ecosystems functionality in and around plan area</p> <p>Integrate nature based solutions through planning applications, public realm plans, greenways and transport projects.</p>	<p>% land mapped for green and blue infrastructure in urban settings and along greenways.</p> <p>Enhancement of ecological networks/linkages through habitat creation/restoration</p>	MCC
AQ2 – Minimise all forms of air pollution and maintain/improve ambient air quality.	Maintain ambient air quality through reduction of private vehicle usage.	Air quality indicators.	<p><CC - Annual</p> <p>EPA - Annual</p>
AQ3 – Minimise emissions of greenhouse gases and contribute to a reduction and avoidance of human-induced global climate change.	<p>Provide for increased use of public transport.</p> <p>Increase number of cycle lanes and pedestrian routes in the plan area.</p> <p>Establish incentives/increase no. of permissions for renewable energy projects.</p>	<p>Use of public transport.</p> <p>Provision of cycle lanes and walking routes.</p> <p>No. of grants given for insulation works; energy efficiency of new buildings – energy rating figures.</p> <p>No. of planning applications for residential houses with low carbon footprint.</p> <p>No. Of wind turbines permitted which may contribute to mitigation of, and adaptation to Climate Change.</p> <p>Location of permitted wind farms and other renewable energy projects as identified in the Co Mayo RES. w</p>	<p>MCC – Annual</p> <p>CSO – Annual as figures/reports based on 2016 census become available.</p> <p>MCC and SEAI – increase in BER rating at Small Area for towns identified.</p> <p>Number of Energy Retrofitting grants in County</p> <p>MCC – No and type of planning applications in relation to low carbon residential housing and wind turbines and/or commencement of construction of such on an annual basis. SEAI</p>
AQ4 - Reduce car dependency within the plan area by way of an integrated approach to sustainable urban transport.	<p>An increase in the percentage of the population travelling to work or school by public transport or non-mechanical means.</p> <p>A decrease in the average distance travelled to work or</p>	<p>Percentage population within the plan area travelling to work or school by public transport or non-mechanical means.</p> <p>Average distance travelled to work or school by the population of the plan area.</p>	CSO – every 6 years through census information.

Strategic Environmental Objective	Target	Indicator/Data Sources	Source/Responsibility/Frequency
	school by the population of the plan area.		
Material Assets – Waste			
MA1 Avoid and minimise waste generation	Reduction in the quantities of waste sent to landfill.	Quantity of household waste sent to landfill.	MCC Environment Section
MA2 Maximise reuse of material resources and use of recycled materials	Increase in the quantities of waste sent for recycling. Increase in the number of bring banks in the plan area. Compliance with the Region Waste Management Plan	Quantity of household waste sent to recycling Number of repair/ reuse initiatives over plan lifetime	Connaught Waste Management annual report
Material Assets - energy			
MA 3 Minimise energy consumption and encourage use of renewable energy	Increase in renewable energy developments. Adaptive reuse of town centre buildings	No. of renewable energy developments granted planning permission. Establishment of R&D projects (one or more). Meet or exceed County contributions to national renewable energy targets. Meet or exceed County contributions to national energy efficiency/conservation targets. Number of houses increasing BER rating to B3	MCC – new solar farms, windfarms or other renewable energy developments granted. – number of new R&D projects within the Plan area e.g. testing of tidal energy devices. Regional Assembly for the Northern and Western Region Marine Institute SEAO
Material Assets - Transport			
MA4 – Promote sustainable transport patterns and modes	An increase in provision of cycle lanes and pedestrian routes. An increase in population travelling to work and school by public transport or non-motorised transport.	No. of cycle lanes and pedestrian routes provided in the plan area. Percentage of the population within the plan area travelling to work or school by public transport or non-mechanical means. Average distance travelled to work or school by the population of the	MCC CSO – every 6 years through census information. TII

Strategic Environmental Objective	Target	Indicator/Data Sources	Source/Responsibility/Frequency
	A reduction in the distance travelled to work or school by the population of the plan area.	plan area. Number of private cars on road as a percentage of Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT).	
Material Assets – Waste Water			
MA5 To maximise the capacity of wastewater collection networks by excluding surface water run off from the sewage network through the use of SUDs and Blue/green Infrastructure.-	Upgrade existing wastewater treatment plant infrastructure identified within the plan as being insufficient, based on existing and forecasted population demands to meet EU requirements.	Upgraded Waste Water Treatment Plants within the plan area.	Irish Water -Achievement of Water Services Strategic Plan objectives. MCC – granting of permission conditioned based on a future WWTP upgrade. MCC – refusal of permission as no upgrade to WWTP due to take place.
Cultural Heritage			
CH1 – Conserve, preserve and record architectural and archaeological heritage	No permitted development which involves loss of cultural heritage, including protected structures, archaeological sites, Architectural Conservations Areas and landscape features.	No. of developments permitted during the lifetime of the plan which will result in the loss or partial loss of protected structures or sites of archaeological status. No. of additions to the list of Protected Structures. No. of additions to the list of Architectural Conservation Areas. Development of cultural heritage areas for amenity resources.	MCC - ongoing
CH2 –Avoid and minimise effects on historic environment features through sensitive design and consultation.	Increase in consultation and engagement with statutory bodies. Increase in architectural heritage impact assessments	No. Of applications which are referred to the Conservation and Heritage Officers.	MCC - ongoing
CH3 – Support and enhance both tangible and intangible cultural heritage	Increase in awareness of cultural heritage Increase in use of Irish Language Reverse island population trend	No. planning applications for restoration/re-use of vacant and derelict structures. No of Irish Language speakers No of Irish Language Impact	MCC – ongoing CSO

Strategic Environmental Objective	Target	Indicator/Data Sources	Source/Responsibility/Frequency
		assessment Population of Islands	
Landscape			
L1 – Ensure no significant disruption of historic/cultural landscapes and features through objectives of the County Development Plan	. No significant visual impact from development. Ensure no significant disruption of high landscape values.	No. of developments permitted and their impacts on cultural/historic landscapes. No. of developments located within Scenic Route or no degradation of Coastal Areas No. of developments located within a designated scenic view in Co Mayo that disrupt views (based on the LCA). Development and application of framework in relation to the application of LCA and their contribution to SEA.	CCC – ongoing Heritage Council - ongoing Fáilte Ireland - ongoing GSI - ongoing NPWS - ongoing EPA SEA Unit in conjunction with CCC
L2 – Promote and enhance landscape character at county and local scale through sensitive siting and design	Maintain and enhance landscape quality within the plan area by minimising visual impacts through appropriate design, assessment and siting. Number of applications referencing Rural Housing Guidelines Number of applications reflecting native tree /hedgerows and local stone treatments	No. of developments located within a high landscape area that disrupt views No of large scale developments permitted with Visual Impact Assessment prepared Km of additional hedgerow /treelines planted	MCC - ongoing