

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT

Local Transport Plan for Castlebar 2023

Prepared for Mayo County Council under SI 435 of 2004 as amended

December 2023

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1 Introduction

The European Union Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EC) requires an environmental assessment be carried out for all plans that are prepared for certain specified sectors, including **transport and landuse** of which the proposed **Castlebar Local Transport Plan 2023** (the plan) relates. The following Regulations transpose this Directive into Irish law:

- The European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 435 of 2004),
- The Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 436 of 2004) and further amended by
- S.I. No. 200 of 2011 (European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011) and S.I. No. 201 of 2011 (Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011).

The Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations, 2004 (as amended) state that SEA is mandatory for certain plans while screening for SEA is required for other plans that fall below the specified thresholds. The purpose of this screening report is to determine whether the making and implementation of the plan will or will not, lead to significant environmental effects for the plan area and if it will require a full Strategic Environment Assessment.

In deciding whether a particular plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, regard must be had to the criteria set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive - which is reproduced in the Schedule 2A to the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as inserted by article 12 of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004. The approach to this screening assessment is to assess the draft plan against the criteria contained in Schedule 2a of the Regulations; this is presented in Section Three of this report and Annex A presents a more detailed commentary of each element.

In accordance with Article 9(5) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, Mayo County Council provided notice to the specified environmental authorities that the implementation of the plan would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment. Submissions were received and a final SEA Determination has been made, that no likely significant effects are identified for the implementation of this strategy. Please see Section 2.2 of this Final SEA Screening Report. A SEA Screening Determination is also available separately.

An assessment under Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive has also been undertaken in conjunction with this SEA Screening report and should be read in tandem with this and the plan.

1.1 Scale, nature and location of plan area

Castlebar is located in County Mayo and has a population of 12,068 (2016 census). It is the main administrative, public health, education and commercial centre in the county. The town provides over 9000 jobs, with a jobs/resident worker ratio of 1.920 (2016 census). The Castlebar River passes through the Town Centre and a number of strategic Regional Roads pass around the town, including the R309, which links to the N5 connecting the town to Westport and Dublin, and the R308 and R307, which link to the N84 and N60 connecting the town to Galway.

The study area of Castlebar LTP which is in line with Castlebar and Environs LAP boundary, includes all the key routes and encompasses a predominantly residential area with several schools, retail outlets, employment centres, healthcare services and sports facilities. At a strategic level, the Mayo County

Development Plan (CDP) recognises that the economic development of Mayo will be further enhanced through the development of the economic growth clusters in the county.

Castlebar, along with neighbouring Westport and Ballina, is located within a central strategic growth corridor in the county. From a regional perspective, this corridor provides urban places of scale between the Galway Metropolitan Area to the south and the Sligo Regional Growth Centre to the north, thereby contributing to the realisation of the Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC). The study area includes the Castlebar Town Area with the LTP proposals focusing primarily on the major residential, employment, commercial and leisure centres. All areas within the town are within practicable walking/cycling catchments of one another. Figure 1-1 shows the LAP boundary which has also been adopted as the LTP study area boundary. The area typifies both the opportunity and the challenge of sustainable transport in Mayo County. At present, there is latent demand for active travel facilities as it is a largely residential area within a short distance of trip attractors.

1.2 Outline of Plan

The strategic aim of the Castlebar LTP is to provide for the planning and delivery of transport infrastructure and services in Castlebar that will allow for the generation of a sustainable transport network that can cater for demand. It should also be noted that the individual projects will be subjected to public consultation, environmental assessments, heritage studies, relevant statutory procedures, and consultation with the relevant statutory stakeholders.

The refined options for the LTP of Castlebar are prioritised into five proposals with additional auxiliary works, to be implemented in different phases, which will cover the overall development of transport for the town of Castlebar.

The overriding concept of the Castlebar LTP is to design a functional and accessible active travel network from the town centre outwards. The town centre itself is largely accessible for active travel modes (as shown by the ATOS analysis) with an expansive and permeable network that is enhanced by the Castlebar Urban Greenway. However, this accessibility needs to be capitalised on with enhanced active travel facilities (mobility hubs, frequent bike parking locations etc) and regular maintenance.

The provision of active travel infrastructure (dedicated cycle facilities, bike parking, ebike charging etc) and mobility hubs will enhance the sustainable transport network to make it the most affordable, accessible, convenient and efficient choice of transport within the town centre. The key transport challenges and barriers to active travel identified from the baseline assessment (Section 4) have shown that the town centre periphery is not conducive to active travel modes, and this is creating a car dominant environment within the town centre itself. Therefore, by addressing these severances to active travel and encouraging a modal shift for commuter, school and leisure trips within the town, traffic volumes will reduce within the town centre.

The aims of the plan development are to;

- Create a '15min town' (ie improve accessibility and connectivity within Castlebar so that residents can reach all necessary services with a 15minute walk/cycle);
- Utilise a 'centre out approach' - the ATOS mapping shows that accessibility within the centre is OK and that the issue is accessibility to the centre. Interventions providing the greatest accessibility to the largest catchment will be prioritised;
- Consider the Road User Hierarchy and to propose a network that is functional for all;
- Encouraging active travel trips within the Castlebar town area - particularly for local trips (less than 2km) which make up approximately 40% of car trips on town streets;
- Improving active travel links between the town centre / commercial areas and residential areas including potential employment and residential developments on zoned lands;

- Removing blockages to active travel that are causing severance - providing high quality continuous pedestrian and cyclist facilities through junctions and provide crossings at desire lines;
- Improve accessibility and frequency of existing public transport services;
- Introduce high frequency local bus services.
- Develop a Parking Strategy to establish enhanced management of parking, to encourage better use of existing parking available more removed from Town centre and thereby enabling a reduction of parking on town centre streets; and
- Capitalise on the potential through traffic reduction associated with the proposed N5 bypass to enhance active travel infrastructure.

1.3 Alignment with Draft Castlebar Local Area Plan 2023 -2029

Based on consultation and the analysis performed to date, the National Transport Authority (NTA) considers that whilst the LTP should continue to be as closely aligned and integrated with the LAP as possible, the LTP should be viewed as a standalone plan, and considered as an input to the LAP.

The LPT will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment, Ecological Impact Assessment and requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent granting. Actions arising from the plan will demonstrate compliance with the environmental protection measures in the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028, draft Castlebar Local Area Plan 2023 2029, and the SEA Environmental Reports and Natura Impact Reports that accompanies same.

FIGURE 1-1 PLAN LOCATION

2 Schedule 2a screening assessment

2.1 Introduction

The following section and table below present the SEA Screening assessment of the plan against the criteria provided in Schedule 2a of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2001-2011 which details the criteria for determining whether a plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment. More detailed commentary on the strategic themes and supporting actions are provided in Annex A to this report.

The Screening assessment should be read in conjunction with the **Castlebar Local Transport Plan 2023**, and the accompanying Habitats Directive Screening report.

Table 1 SEA Screening

Criteria for determining whether the proposed Castlebar Local Transport Plan 2023 is likely to have significant effects on the environment
<p>1. The characteristics of the Plan having regard, in particular, to:</p>
<p><i>the degree to which the Plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources,</i></p>
<p>The LTP should continue to be as closely aligned and integrated with the LAP as possible, the LTP should be viewed as a standalone plan, and considered as an input to the draft Castlebar and Environs Local Area Plan (LAP). The LPT sets out a series of objectives and actions over the plan period to ensure that essential transport infrastructure will be delivered at the right locations in the town to create opportunities for a modal shift towards more sustainable transport options. This LTP aims to identify long-lasting transport improvements to ensure growing use of sustainable travel modes for work, education, business and visitor trips. The LTP presents a comprehensive analysis of the current transport network in Castlebar Town, outlines the impact of future proposed development on transportation and presents potential solutions to improve conditions for active modes, public transport and private vehicles.</p> <p>As such the LPT supports the statutory plan making process for the Castlebar Local Area Plan and sets out transport infrastructure opportunities for sustainable travel modes and potential solutions in relation to support for modal shifts including active modes, public realm, public transport and private vehicles.</p> <p>The plan will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent granting framework.</p> <p>All planning proposals are assessed against the objectives of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 and all lower plans must be consistent with the County Development Plan including the Castlebar Local Area Plan and the LPT is a stand alone plan but aligned with the LAP.</p>
<p><i>the degree to which the Plan influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy,</i></p>
<p>The plan sits beneath the statutory landuse plans namely Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028. It sets out transport objectives and proposals for the Castlebar town and in this regard influences project level proposals for the plan aera.</p>

The Mayo CDP 2022-2028 has undergone full SEA and AA and consultation with environmental bodies. All measures included in the SEA and AA of the Mayo CDP 2022-2028 and the draft Castlebar Local Area Plan 2023-2029 will apply, as appropriate.

The relevance of the Plan in the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,

Of relevance are existing environmental protection measures in the Mayo County Development Plan 2022 -2028 including. The strategic aim to *“to support increased use of sustainable modes of transport; the integration of spatial planning with transport planning; enhanced county and regional accessibility; the transition to a low carbon energy efficient transport system; and the development of a safer, more efficient, effective and connected transport system within Mayo.”* This is set to be achieved through several Integrated Land Use and Transportation Policies. The most relevant to the LTP are:

MTP 1: To support sustainable travel in the county by ensuring future population and employment growth predominantly takes place in urban areas which will warrant provision of public transport services;

- MTP 2: To support and facilitate the integration of land use with transportation infrastructure, through the development of sustainable compact settlements which are well served by public transport;
- MTP 7: To promote the transition to a low carbon integrated transport system by firstly reducing the need for travel through the use of design solutions and innovative approaches with regards to the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, and subsequently to shift to environmentally sustainable modes of transport;
- MTO 5: To retrospectively provide public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure and facilities in existing development areas to achieve growth in sustainable mobility;
- MTO 7: To establish modal shift targets and a monitoring regime to increase the usage of sustainable modes of transport in the towns of Castlebar, Castlebar and Westport, as informed by local transport plans;
- MTP11: To support safer cycling/walking routes to encourage people to be more physically active for transport and leisure purposes;
- MTO 8: To encourage and facilitate the maintenance and further development of the public footpath network, walking and cycling routes and associated infrastructure and where possible the retrofitting of cycle and pedestrian routes into the existing urban road network; and
- MTO 9: To support the establishment of a network of interlinked cycle ways and walk ways in the county and the adjoining counties and specifically to support the development of a link between the Great Northern Greenway and the Great Western Greenway, having regard to best practice standards including the Design Manual for Urban Roads, Streets and the NTA Cycle Manual and the TII Standard DN-GEO-03084 'The Treatment of Transition Zones to Towns and Villages on National Roads or any amending/superseding national guidance or manual.

Other relevant environmental policies that apply to the LPT include:

SO9: Ecological Impact Assessment, Appropriate Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

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 5 of the Mayo CDP 2022-2028.

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

Ecological Impact Assessments (EclA) and assessments of disturbance to species protected under the Wildlife Act and/or the Flora Protection Act and of Habitat IV species protected under the Habitats Directive.

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.

NEP 1: To support the protection, conservation and enhancement of the natural heritage and biodiversity of County Mayo, including the protection of the integrity of European sites, that form part of the Natura 2000 network, the protection of Natural Heritage Areas, proposed Natural Heritage Areas Ramsar Sites, Nature Reserves and Wild Fowl Sanctuaries (and other designated sites including any future designations)

NEO 6: To protect surface waters, aquatic and wetland habitats and freshwater and waterdependent species through the implementation of all appropriate and relevant Directives and transposed legislation and seek to protect and conserve the quality, character and features of inland waterways by controlling developments close to navigable and non-navigable waterways.

NEO 11: To ensure that the impact of development within or adjacent to national designated sites, Natural Heritage Areas, Ramsar Sites and Nature Reserves likely to result in significant adverse effects on the designated site is assessed by requiring the submission of an Ecological Impact Assessment report (EclA), Environmental Report (ER), an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), if deemed necessary, and/or a Natura Impact Assessment (NIS), if deemed necessary, prepared by a suitably qualified professional, which should accompany planning applications.

CAP 1: To support and enable the implementation and achievement of European and national objectives for climate adaptation and mitigation as detailed in the following documents, taking into account other provisions of the Plan (including those relating to land use planning, energy, sustainable mobility, flood risk management and drainage);

- Climate Action Plan (2019 and any subsequent versions);
- National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (2018 and any subsequent versions).
- Relevant provisions of any Sectoral Adaptation Plans prepared to comply with the requirements of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, including those seeking to contribute towards the National Transition Objective, to pursue, and achieve, the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by the end of the year 2050; and Mayo Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (2019-2024 and any subsequent versions)

Environmental problems relevant to the plan

Key environmental problems relevant to the plan area, ie: Castlebar are identified in the SEA ER of the Draft Castlebar Local Area Plan and include:

- Adapting to impacts of climate change and mitigation of effects, meeting obligations under the Climate Act including reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from sectors including transport
- Enhancing town centre vitality and public realm
- Promotion of brownfield and town centre

- The 3rd Cycle Draft Moy and Killala Bay Catchment Report (HA 34) (Catchments Science & Management Unit 2021) identifies two nutrient sensitive areas (Castlebar River, and Lough Cullin) downstream of the urban area of Castlebar, but notes that objectives are being met through tertiary treatment at Castlebar WWTP.
- Invasive species (zebra mussels) have been identified as a significant pressure in two lake waterbodies (Cullin and Castlebar lakes). Urban wastewater is no longer considered a significant pressure in Castlebar, but domestic wastewater remains a significant pressure in Castlebar River. Additionally diffuse urban pressures, caused by misconnections, leaking sewers and runoff from paved and unpaved areas, have been identified as a significant pressure in Castlebar (Catchments Science & Management Unit 2021). Decline in the water quality at Castlebar/Lannagh is a priority area for the Local Authorities Water Programme (LAWPRO) in the third cycle.

the relevance of the plan in the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans linked to waste-management or water protection).

The LPT is aligned, as a stand alone report with the Castlebar Local Area. Key EU legislation relevant to the plan includes *inter alia*, the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), the EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), the EU Water Framework Directive (2006/60/EC), the EU Groundwater Directive 92006/118/EC), the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2014 S.I. 350 of 2014 and national legislation including the Wildlife Act 1976, as amended, and Flora Protection Order 1999.

The LPT also seeks to support the achievement of transport emission reductions in the Climate Action Plan 2023, which are set to reduce by 51% by 2030. This includes a 20% reduction in total vehicle kilometres, a reduction in fuel usage, and significant increases to sustainable transport trips and modal share. This is to be done through active travel infrastructure, improved public transport, planning, innovation and financial supports for improved system, travel, vehicle and demand efficiencies.

Proposals and projects arising from the LPT relating to transport are all subject to detailed design and requirements of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 and draft Castlebar LAP 2023 -2029 of which it is an integral element.

Should development arise, the application of appropriate legislation such as the Water Framework Directive, the Habitats Directive, the SEA directive and the EIA Directive, will apply as appropriate.

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:

the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,

At this strategic level, minor landuse effects are identified as proposals in the LPT primarily relate to small scale interventions to enhance walking, cycling and public transport through increased permeability, safety and accessibility. Should specific projects arise they will be subject to full compliance with the planning and consenting process by the relevant local authority.

the cumulative nature of the effects,

Cumulative effects are not identified for the LPT but positive cumulative effects relate to interactions between Air Quality, Climate change, Population and Human health and some Material Asset SEOs. .
<i>the trans boundary nature of the effects</i>
No transboundary effects are identified
<i>the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),</i>
No such risks are identified as arising from the plan.
<i>the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).</i>
Potential effects are predominantly confined to the plan area, in the absence of mitigation applied through existing plan provisions in the Mayo CDP 2022 -2028 and draft Castlebar LAP 2023 -2029, there is a risk of effects on surface water quality with potential effects downstream.
<i>the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</i>
(a) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage A screening statement in support of Appropriate Assessment has also been prepared for this plan in line with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). A finding of no likely significant effects has been determined to inform Mayo County Council, the competent authority in their decision making.
(b) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values, In order to be realised, potential projects or proposals arising from the plan by Mayo County Council will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent granting framework. Such legislation, policies, plans and programmes include lower tier environmental assessment including Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment. Should projects arise from the plan, the statutory consent process as outlined above will apply.
(c) intensive land-use, The LPT identifies potential transport projects and interventions across the plan area. These relate primarily to built land and existing artificial surfaces and represent small scale minor interventions at strategic scale.
(a) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status. A Screening report for Appropriate Assessment has been undertaken and accompanies the Castlebar LPT and SEA Screening report. The AA screening report has concluded that the plan will not result in land use activities that have the potential to result in negative impacts to the qualifying features of interest of European Sites and will not have the potential to compromise the achievement of the conservation objective of European Sites. The AA Screening states: The projects are largely small scale and low impact. The distance from the SAC networks also provides protection from the projects proposed as part of this Plan. At a plan level, none of the projects and objectives outlined within the LTP are of the scale, or of a nature, which could have significant adverse impacts on the European sites within the Zone of Influence. Project level assessments will still

need to be carried out to examine the individual circumstances of each project, as part of the inherent planning consent process. It is concluded that the Draft Plan will not result in any significant effects on Natura 2000 sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

It can be concluded by Mayo County Council, that the LPT is not likely, to have a significant effect on any European Sites in view of their Conservation Objectives and on the basis of best scientific evidence and therefore a Stage II Appropriate Assessment of the LPT is not required.

2.2 Draft SEA screening determination

The plan is a land use plan and is being screened for the requirement for SEA in accordance with the requirements of:

- Directive 2001/42/EC (SEA Directive) and particularly Articles 3(3), 3(4) & 3(5) relate to 'Screening' for the requirement for SEA.
- S.I. No. 435 of 2004 European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011 - European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011.
- Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, which sets out the "Criteria for determining whether a plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment"

Section 9 (1) of the (2004) Regulations (S.I. No. 435) (as amended) states "*subject to sub-article (2), an environmental assessment shall be carried out for all plans and programmes*

*(a) which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, **transport**, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism and **town and country planning or land use**, and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, or "*

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

The Castlebar Local Transport Plan 2023 is aligned with the draft Castlebar LAP but is a separate report. It identifies a number of interventions that are assessed as not giving rise to potential environmental effects. In order to be realised, potential projects or proposals arising from the plan will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent granting framework.

The AA Screening of the plan as set out in the accompanying Screening Statement in support of Appropriate Assessment shows that the plan will not result in land use activities that have the potential to result in negative impacts to the qualifying features of interest of European Sites and will have the potential to compromise the achievement of the conservation objective of European Sites.

In light of the above findings, it is determined that the **Castlebar Local Transport Plan** does not require full SEA.

2.3 Consultation with statutory bodies

In accordance with Article 9(5) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, Mayo County Council provided notice to the specified environmental authorities that the implementation of the plan would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

The following statutory bodies made a submission:

- Environmental Protection Agency.

The themes raised included:

- Role of EPA,
- Sustainable development,
- SEA Screening good practice guidance
- Aligning climate change into transport planning
- Information on available environmental datasets,
- SEA Screening Determination.

2.4 Final SEA Screening Determination

In light of the above submission, it has been determined that no changes are proposed for the plan and no likely significant effects are identified for the implementation of the Castlebar Local Transport Plan.

As stated under Section 2.2. the Castlebar Local Transport Plan 2023 is aligned with the Castlebar Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2023 -2029 but is a separate report. It identifies a number of interventions that are assessed as not giving rise to potential environmental effects. In order to be realised, potential projects or proposals arising from the plan will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent granting framework.

The AA Screening of the plan as set out in the accompanying Screening Statement in support of Appropriate Assessment shows that the plan will not result in land use activities that have the potential to result in negative impacts to the qualifying features of interest of European Sites and will have the potential to compromise the achievement of the conservation objective of European Sites. In light of the above findings and consultation submissions under SI 435 of 2004, as amended, it is determined that the **Castlebar Local Transport Plan** does not require full SEA. This is the final SEA Determination of the Castlebar Local Transport Plan.

ANNEX A SEA commentary of Castlebar Local Transport Plan

Table A.1 below presents the Strategic Environmental Objectives used in the SEA ER of the Castlebar Local Area Plan for consistency these are used in the SEA Screening table, presented in Table A.3 overleaf. Table A.2 shows the symbols used in the assessment matrix of the objectives of the Castlebar LPT 2023. Landuse zonings and evaluation are provided in Table A.4 (TBC).

TABLE A-0-1 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES

SEA Topic	Strategic Environmental Objectives
Biodiversity Flora and Fauna (BFF)	BFF1: Conserve and enhance biodiversity at all levels
	BFF2: Avoid and minimise effects on nationally and internationally rare and threatened species and habitats through sensitive design and consultation, recognising ecological connectivity
	BFF3: Avoid and minimise habitat fragmentation and seek opportunities to improve habitat connectivity
	BFF4: Ensure careful consideration of non-native invasive and alien species issues particularly as they relate to waterbodies
	BFF5: Promote green and blue infrastructure networks, including riparian zones and wildlife corridor
Population, Human Health (PHH)	PH1: 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.
	PH2: To protect human health from hazards or nuisances arising from incompatible land uses/developments.
Water (W)	W1: Protect and enhance the status of aquatic 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 National River Basin Management Plan and POMS
	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
	W4: Promote sustainable water use and water conservation in the Plan area and to maintain and improve the quality of drinking water supplies
	W5: Protect flood plains and areas of flood risk from development through avoidance, mitigation and adaptation measures

SEA Topic	Strategic Environmental Objectives
Soil and Geology (SG)	SG1: To maximise the sustainable re-use of the existing built environment, derelict, disused and infill sites (brownfield sites), rather than greenfield sites.
	SG2: Conserve, protect and avoid loss of diversity and integrity of designated habitats, geological features, species or their sustaining resources in designated ecological sites
Material Assets (MA)	MA1: Avoid and minimise waste generation.
	MA2: Maximise re-use of material resources and use of recycled materials.
	MA3: Minimise energy consumption and encourage use of renewable energy.
	MA4: Promote sustainable transport patterns and modes.
	MA5: To maximise the capacity of wastewater collection networks and treatment plants by excluding surface water run-off from the sewage network through the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and Blue/Green infrastructure.
Air Quality & Climate (AQ C)	AQ1: Recognise the ecosystems functions of habitats in and around the plan area and promote nature-based solutions to climate change mitigation and adaptation.
	AQ2: Minimise all forms of air pollution and maintain/improve ambient air quality.
	AQ3: Minimise emissions of greenhouse gases and contribute to a reduction and avoidance of human-induced global climate change.
	AQ4: Reduce car dependency within the plan area by way of an integrated approach to sustainable urban transport.
Cultural Heritage (CH)	CH1: Conserve, preserve and record architectural and archaeological heritage.
	CH2: Avoid and minimise effects on historic environment features through sensitive design and consultation.
	CH3: Support and enhance both tangible and intangible cultural heritage.
Landscape (L)	L1: Ensure no significant disruption of historic/cultural landscapes and features through objectives of the County Development Plan.
	L2: Promote and enhance landscape character at county and local scale through sensitive siting and design.

TABLE A-0-2 CRITERIA USED IN THE SEA EVALUATION

Likely to improve status of SEOs	↑	No likely interaction with /insignificant impact with SEOs	0
Probable conflict with SEOs – unlikely to be mitigated	↓	Potential conflict with SEOs – likely to be mitigated	↕

TABLE A-3 SEA EVALUATION OF CASTLEBAR LPT 2023

Upgrades/and or new routes are planned as part of the LTP. This includes changes to the pedestrian network, the cycle network, the public transport network and the road network.

The LTP consists of a number of smaller projects such as junction redesign to include active travel crossings, introduction of controlled crossing points, provision of dedicated cycle facilities and footpath widening, signage and new lighting; junction upgrades and traffic management. Bigger projects include new footpaths and cycleways or road widening into previously undeveloped land; new park and stride/mobility hub areas; introduction of two new bus routes; new bridges and potential new road routes such as the Northern Orbital Link Road (NORR).

The proposed LTP has been broken down into 6 general proposals which will be carried out in a phased approach over the life-time of the plan (until 2029, and beyond). The LTP outlines short term objectives and longer-term aspiration objectives and each scheme has a delivery timeline associated with it - this is presented in Table 2-1.

	Objective	BFF	PHH	W	SG	AQ C	LA	CH	MA	IR
Pedestrian Network Objectives	P1 Provide an integrated network for Castlebar Town through the development of a connected and continuous pedestrian network to connect the main origin and destinations via a functional pedestrian network with adequate crossing facilities to make walking the most attractive mode choice.	↕	↑	↕	↕	↑	↕	↑	↑	↑
	P2 Upgrades and repairs to “day to day” key routes between residential areas and local education, employment and community facilities to include resurfacing, kerb repairs, widening, drainage and landscaping. Where possible, upgrade the footpaths up to DMURS standards, and provide dedicated pedestrian facilities	↕	↑	↕	↕	↑	↕	↑	↑	↑

	Objective	BFF	PHH	W	SG	AQ C	LA	CH	MA	IR
	P3 Enhance the existing infrastructure through the provision new pedestrian links to overcome severance caused by the R309 and Castlebar River	↕	↑	↕	↕	↑	↕	↑	↑	↑
	P4 Improved filtered permeability through the use of laneways and the opening up of cul-de-sacs for pedestrians to increase directness and connectivity, to enhance access to homes, jobs, schools, shops, public transport and services	↕	↑	↕	↕	↑	↕	↑	↑	↑
	P5 Formalise existing permeability links.	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
	P6 Improve safety for pedestrians, by improving crossing points particularly along the R309, R307, Stephen Garvey Way/Hopkins Road, Lannagh Road and Westport Road	↕	↑	↕	↕	↑	↕	↑	↑	↑
	P7 Improved accessibility for vulnerable population cohorts within the town centre to include priority parking, handrails at gradients, public seating, footpath widening, public toilets and public bins	↕	↑	↕	↕	↑	↕	↑	↑	↑
	P8 New or improved public lighting, security and signage for walking route to enhance visibility of existing links to create a more connected and safer pedestrian network. If deemed necessary, lighting along ecologically sensitive areas such must be sensitively designed and wildlife friendly	↕	↑	↕	↕	↑	↕	↕	↑	↑

Objective	BFF	PHH	W	SG	AQ C	LA	CH	MA	IR
9 Engage with schools with the aim of increasing walking mode share and support Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS)	↕	↑	↕	↕	↑	↕	↑	↑	↑

SEA Commentary: For the above objectives positive interactions with SEOS are identified for a consistent range of parameters, in particular AQ C, PHH and MA SEOs – this is due to actions around enhanced pedestrian safety, encouragement of modal shifts, increased permeability and physical interventions that prioritise pedestrians over the private car.

For example, P8, P6 and P1.

A number of the objectives are identified as requiring mitigation include the objective for increased lighting (P8) – depending where this is located, this could adversely affect biodiversity and wildlife if light spill was created along existing dark corridors, or increased lighting was a result over sensitive habitats including the River Moy and smaller rivers in the plan area.

Similarly, proposals for P3 -New infrastructure (e.g bridges) will require construction with associated impacts if instream works required.

Project level Appropriate Assessment is sufficient to protect Natura 2000 sites

The AA States for P7: Small scale projects, but some upgrades may require deeper excavations and movement of storm drains, which would link hydrologically to the Castlebar River.

The Castlebar LAP¹ provides the following mitigation measure through objective: *NEP 1: In seeking to protect and enhance the natural environment, Mayo County Council will seek to:*

- *Protect, conserve and enhance the natural heritage of Castlebar, including the protection of the integrity of European sites, that form part of the Natura 2000 network.*
- *Protect and conserve non-designated habitats and species; and*
- *Protect and incorporate existing biodiversity features into the design and construction of new development and public realm and enhancing the biodiversity value of existing open spaces.*

Where development proposals are made along a riparian corridor, ensure that a vegetated strip along the river in consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

The application of the following measures from the Mayo CDP 2022 -2028 will also apply:

NEO 45 To raise awareness of artificial light pollution and identify where lighting improvements or adjustments can be made to reduce its impact, where appropriate.

NEO 46 To protect the Mayo Dark Sky Park at Wild Nephin Ballycroy National Park and any adjoining sites that form part of the designated network, from adverse levels of artificial light pollution and encourage the use of Dark Sky Friendly lighting for all new lighting and lighting upgrades

¹ The Castlebar Town and Environs LAP 2023 -2029 was adopted by Mayo County Council in December 2023 so references have been amended to remove ‘draft’.

	Objective	BFF	PHH	W	SG	AQ C	LA	CH	MA	IR
	<p><i>It is recommended that the following from the Mayo CDP 2022 -2028 apply:</i></p> <p><i>SO9 Ecological Impact Assessment, Appropriate Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.</i></p> <p>a) <i>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 5 of the Mayo CDP 2022-2028.</i></p> <p>b) <i>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 Ecological Impact Assessments (EclA) and assessments of disturbance to species protected under the Wildlife Act and/or the Flora Protection Act and of Habitat IV species protected under the Habitats Directive.</i></p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p><i>BEO 14: To identify and retain good examples of vernacular architecture and historic street furniture in situ, for example, cast-iron post boxes, water pumps, signage, street lighting, kerbing and traditional road and street surface coverings.</i></p> <p><i>BEO 24: To apply the following key attributes when considering public realm and public space enhancements: Accessible - connected and linked permeable spaces to ensure ease of movement. Functional - safe, adaptable and social environments to attract and foster activity. Attractive - visually pleasing spaces with high quality design, materials and installations (lighting, furniture and signage) based on a singular common design theme. Distinctive - reference to local context and building on the character and identity of place. Where appropriate, recreational considerations and access to blue and greens space should be underpinned by the Green Space Principles including: • 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. • 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”.</i></p>									

	Objective	BFF	PHH	W	SG	AQ C	LA	CH	MA	IR
Cycle Network Objectives	C1: Provide an integrated network for Castlebar Town through the development of a connected and continuous cycle network comprised of greenway, primary, secondary and feeder routes to connect the residential, education, employment, retail, commercial, healthcare and community centres.	↕	↑	↕	↕	↑	↕	↑	↑	↑
	C2 Upgrades and repairs to “day to day” key routes between residential areas and local education, employment and community facilities to include resurfacing, kerb repairs, widening, drainage and landscaping. The infrastructure required will be determined for a route-by-route basis and depend on existing conditions/constraints and will be delivered to NCM standard for cycle facilities.	↕	↑	↕	↕	↑	↕	↑	↑	↑
	C3 Enhance the existing infrastructure through the provision new cycle links to overcome severance caused by the R309 and Castlebar River	↕	↑	↕	↕	↑	↕	↕	↑	↑
	C4 Improved filtered permeability through the use of laneways and the opening up of cul de-sacs for pedestrians to increase directness and connectivity. to enhance access to homes, jobs, schools, shops, public transport and services.	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
	C5 Formalise existing permeability links	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑

	Objective	BFF	PHH	W	SG	AQ C	LA	CH	MA	IR
	C6 Provision of dedicated cycle facilities at junctions (R309 & Moneen, R309 & Spencer Street, R309 & Lannagh, Stephen Garvey Way & Hopkins Road & Tesco, Hopkins Road & Lannagh Road)	↕	↑	↕	↕	↑	↕	↑	↑	↑
	C7 Create a network that can cater for demand from commuter, delivery, leisure and tourist cyclists that is accessible to all population cohorts.	↕	↑	↕	↕	↑	↕	↑	↑	↑
	C8 Provision of safe and secure covered cycle parking within the town centre and at major trip attractors.	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
	C9 Provision of charging infrastructure for electric bikes within the town.	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
	C10 Prioritise investment in schemes that will deliver the greatest modal shift potential	↕	↑	↕	↕	↑	↕	↕	↑	↑
	C11 New or improved public lighting, security and signage for cycling routes.	↕							↑	↑
	C12 Engage with schools with the aim of increasing cycling mode share.	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑

Some actions such as C9 provision of charging infrastructure in town centre or covered cycle parking (C8) are minor landuse interventions and at strategic scale are not identified as giving rise to significant environmental effects. Others such as C12 relates to engagement and awareness to increase modal share, not generating direct landuse effect but positive across all SEOS should it result in increasing numbers of pedestrians and cyclists across the plan are with local improvements for AQ, CC and PHH SEOs. C3 and C2 require full adherence to all policies and objectives in the Castlebar LAP and Mayo CDP (see SEA commentary and inclusion of main relevant mitigatory policies from the Mayo CDP) in relation to ecological assessment and avoidance of adverse effects on water quality, landscape and biodiversity in particular.

For C2, the AA screening states: Small scale projects, but some upgrades may require deeper excavations and movement of storm drains, which would link hydrologically to the Castlebar River. Project level Appropriate Assessment is sufficient to protect Natura 2000 sites.

	Objective	BFF	PHH	W	SG	AQ C	LA	CH	MA	IR
Public Transport Network Objectives	PT1 Improve the routing and frequency of existing bus services, including either an expansion of the 'Local Link' bus network to include short distance trips within the Castlebar Town Area or through the provision of a new high frequency local bus service. Co-ordinated timetabling to facilitate quick interchange between local and regional services will also be facilitated	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
	PT2 Improve the frequency and connectivity of existing rail services.	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
	PT3 Provide bus priority infrastructure in the town centre where required.	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
	PT4 Improve public transport stops in respect to location, information, accessibility, infrastructure and visibility	↕	↑	↕	↕	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
	PT5 Ensure convenient access from residential, employment, education, healthcare and retail facilities to public transport stops.	↕	↑	↕	↕	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
	PT6 Improve integration between the train station, town centre and local bus routes	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
	PT7 Development of a bus interchange at Stephen Garvey Way with covered and secure waiting area and welfare facilities.	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↕	↕	↑	↑
	PT8 Enhance connectivity of Castlebar Train Station with the provision of improved active travel connections and 'Park and Ride' infrastructure	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑

Generally positive interactions relating to public transport objectives. Some such as PT7 should ensure the design of central bus stop that is covered enhances and contributes to the townscape character and should be designed in line with BEO24 of the Mayo CDP 2022 -2028.

	Objective	BFF	PHH	W	SG	AQ C	LA	CH	MA	IR
Where landuse effects are identified these should be mitigated through existing objectives in the Castlebar LAP 2023-2029 and Mayo CDP 2022 2028 as they relate to town centre and are small in scale.										
Road Network Objectives	R1 Reduce unnecessary vehicular trips passing through Castlebar Town Centre through traffic management measures, transport demand management measures and parking strategies.	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
	R2 Reduce vehicular emissions in town centre by promoting mode transfer to sustainable travel modes.	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
	R3 Provide 'Phase 1' of the N26 Castlebar Bypass and assess feasibility of the indicative long term eastern bypass route	↕	↕	↕	↕	↕	↕	↕	↕	↕
	R4 Assess the feasibility of an eastern bypass in the longer term	↕	↕	↕	↕	↕	↕	↕	↕	↕
	R5 Provision of Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure within the town centre	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
	R6 Maintain adequate vehicular capacity and access	↕	↕	↕	↕	↕	↕	↕	↕	↕

SEA Comment: reducing unnecessary trips and emissions from same are positive across all SEOS through improved local air quality and positive interactions with BFF and PHH SEOs in particular.

The Castlebar LAP 2023 -2029 provides the following mitigation measure through objective: *NEP 1: In seeking to protect and enhance the natural environment, Mayo County Council will seek to:*

- *Protect, conserve and enhance the natural heritage of Castlebar, including the protection of the integrity of European sites, that form part of the Natura 2000 network.*
- *Protect and conserve non-designated habitats and species; and*
- *Protect and incorporate existing biodiversity features into the design and construction of new development and public realm and enhancing the biodiversity value of existing open spaces.*

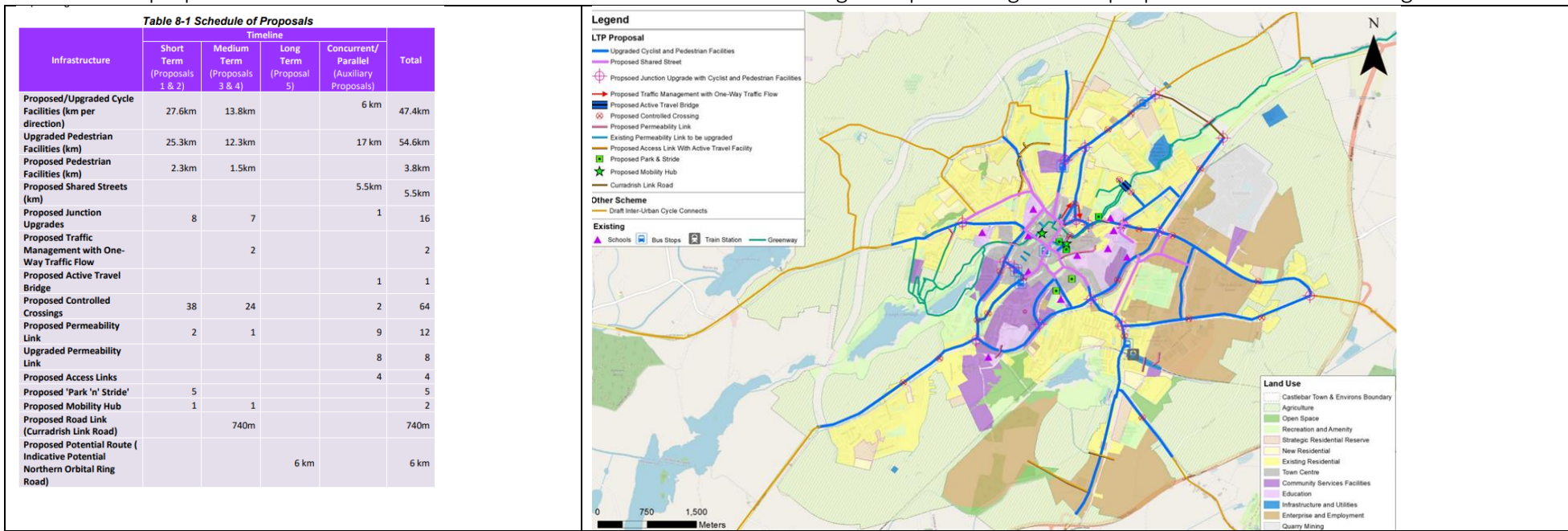
Where development proposals are made along a riparian corridor, ensure that a vegetated strip along the river in consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

	Objective	BFF	PHH	W	SG	AQ C	LA	CH	MA	IR
	<p><i>The application of the following measures from the Mayo CDP 2022 -2028 will also apply:</i></p> <p><i>NEO 45 To raise awareness of artificial light pollution and identify where lighting improvements or adjustments can be made to reduce its impact, where appropriate.</i></p> <p><i>NEO 46 To protect the Mayo Dark Sky Park at Wild Nephin Ballycroy National Park and any adjoining sites that form part of the designated network, from adverse levels of artificial light pollution and encourage the use of Dark Sky Friendly lighting for all new lighting and lighting upgrades</i></p> <p><i>It is recommended that the following from the Mayo CDP 2022 -2028 apply:</i></p> <p><i>SO9 Ecological Impact Assessment, Appropriate Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.</i></p> <p><i>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 5 of the Mayo CDP 2022-2028.</i></p> <p><i>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 Ecological Impact Assessments (EclA) and assessments of disturbance to species protected under the Wildlife Act and/or the Flora Protection Act and of Habitat IV species protected under the Habitats Directive.</i></p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p><i>BEO 14: To identify and retain good examples of vernacular architecture and historic street furniture in situ, for example, cast-iron post boxes, water pumps, signage, street lighting, kerbing and traditional road and street surface coverings.</i></p> <p><i>BEO 24: To apply the following key attributes when considering public realm and public space enhancements: Accessible - connected and linked permeable spaces to ensure ease of movement. Functional - safe, adaptable and social environments to attract and foster activity. Attractive - visually pleasing spaces with high quality design, materials and installations (lighting, furniture and signage) based on a singular common design theme. Distinctive - reference to local context and building on the character and identity of place. Where appropriate, recreational considerations and access to blue and greens space should be underpinned by the Green Space Principles including: • 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. • Multifunctional uses: examples include spaces that encourage active mobility, physical</i></p>									

Objective	BFF	PHH	W	SG	AQ C	LA	CH	MA	IR
<p>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</p> <p>AA comment relating to R6 This project would require statutory environmental assessments, including route selection if it were to go ahead. Project level Appropriate Assessment is sufficient to protect Natura 2000 sites. Would likely require significant mitigation and monitoring at the project level.</p>									

SEA Evaluation of Landuse proposals

A schedule of proposals is included in the LPT and listed below in Table A2 with Figure A presenting the LPT proposals and landuse zonings.



	Commentary of Proposals	BFF	PHH	W	SG	AQ C	LA	CH	MA	IR
	Maps of the proposed works areas are presented in Appendix A.	↕	↑	↕	↕	↑	↕	↑	↑	↑

The proposed works are to take place in Castlebar town, Co. Mayo . This is a predominantly urban region, 22.75-hectares in area. The nearest watercourse is the Castlebar River, which runs along the eastern boundary of the town, with a downstream later connection to the River Moy system. The overall scheme plan area is shown in above in Table A.

The study area of Castlebar LTP which is in line with the Castlebar Town and Environs 2023-2029 LAP boundary, includes all the key routes and encompasses a predominantly residential area with several schools, retail outlets, employment centres, healthcare services and sports facilities. Investment in transport infrastructure will facilitate increased pedestrian and cycle movement across the town improving connectivity between businesses, schools, housing, places of worship.

Proposals 1 and 2&2 are mostly at distance from Castlebar River, and to the SE side of Castlebar. No river crossings form part of these proposals. These relate to interventions in built land and artificial surfaces.

Proposal 3 is confined to the built up area of Castlebar along existing routes.

Proposal 4 entails a new link road to the north-east of the town, and would involve a new road bridge crossing Castlebar River.

Proposal 5 is the NORR route - to the NW of Castlebar, and has two river crossings - one at an unnamed river that flows into Mallard Lough, and the other across the Castlebar River as it runs between Castlebar Lough and Lough Lannagh.

Proposal 6 is largely confined to existing streets, and around the town centre both north and south of the river.

The AA Screening concludes;

Castlebar LTP presents a comprehensive suite of measures to provide for a more sustainable travel network in Castlebar, in line with targeting a reduction in air emissions as per climate change objectives.

Many of the proposed projects are small in scale and are likely to have impacts only associated within the footprint of the works e.g. junction upgrades, footpath upgrades, cycle path upgrades. In total there are:

- 47.7km of cycle path upgrades on existing routes
- 54.6km of new/pedestrian footpath upgrades
- 8 junction upgrades and
- 38 controlled crossings.

In general, these works are small scale and unlikely to have significant effects on the Natura 2000 Network, however even minor works which require movement of services or drains have the potential for impact through works with the stormwater system, which may lead to local rivers. Additional small scale works include shared pedestrian spaces; improved public transport service for bus and train; and improved traffic management and signalling.

	Commentary of Proposals	BFF	PHH	W	SG	AQ C	LA	CH	MA	IR
	<p>In general, the cycleways and paths stick to already established routes and avoid routes along the Castlebar River, which is already bounded by the Castlebar Greenway and by urban built land. Permeability onto the greenway; improved safety; lighting; mobility access; and an improved infrastructure to promote walking and cycling are some of the core objectives of the LTP.</p> <p>Mobility hubs are also proposed, on already developed land, as well as improved bus infrastructure facilities, car and electric bicycle charging stations. These have the potential for impact via excavation and construction. These construction projects are small scale and located at distance from the main hydrological pathway to the river. Some bigger projects are also present e.g. proposed bridge crossings for active travel and a new link road are proposed. Additionally, a large project aspirational/long term project is presented via the new orbital road to the north of Castlebar (NORR project).</p> <p>These projects with more potential for impacts such as bridge crossings (potential for in-streams works) would likely require mitigation to protect both ex-situ species. This protection of species will be done more effectively at project level/during route selection given the small-scale of the relevant habitats involved e.g. spawning beds.</p> <p>Key mitigation measures in the Castlebar LAP 2023 -2029 and the Mayo CDP 2022 -2028 would apply and require full adherence and implementation through development management and in the case of the NORR project route options, environmental assessment.</p> <p>The Castlebar LAP 2023-2029 provides the following mitigation measure through objective: <i>NEP 1: In seeking to protect and enhance the natural environment, Mayo County Council will seek to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Protect, conserve and enhance the natural heritage of Castlebar, including the protection of the integrity of European sites, that form part of the Natura 2000 network.</i> - <i>Protect and conserve non-designated habitats and species; and</i> - <i>Protect and incorporate existing biodiversity features into the design and construction of new development and public realm and enhancing the biodiversity value of existing open spaces.</i> <p><i>Where development proposals are made along a riparian corridor, ensure that a vegetated strip along the river in consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service.</i></p> <p><i>The application of the following measures from the Mayo CDP 2022 -2028 will also apply:</i></p> <p><i>NEO 45 To raise awareness of artificial light pollution and identify where lighting improvements or adjustments can be made to reduce its impact, where appropriate.</i></p> <p><i>NEO 46 To protect the Mayo Dark Sky Park at Wild Nephin Ballycroy National Park and any adjoining sites that form part of the designated network, from adverse levels of artificial light pollution and encourage the use of Dark Sky Friendly lighting for all new lighting and lighting upgrades</i></p> <p><i>It is recommended that the following from the Mayo CDP 2022 -2028 apply:</i></p> <p><i>SO9 Ecological Impact Assessment, Appropriate Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.</i></p> <p><i>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 5 of the Mayo CDP 2022-2028.</i></p>									

	Commentary of Proposals	BFF	PHH	W	SG	AQ C	LA	CH	MA	IR
b)	<p><i>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 Ecological Impact Assessments (EclA) and assessments of disturbance to species protected under the Wildlife Act and/or the Flora Protection Act and of Habitat IV species protected under the Habitats Directive.</i></p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p><i>BEO 14: To identify and retain good examples of vernacular architecture and historic street furniture in situ, for example, cast-iron post boxes, water pumps, signage, street lighting, kerbing and traditional road and street surface coverings.</i></p> <p><i>BEO 24: To apply the following key attributes when considering public realm and public space enhancements: Accessible - connected and linked permeable spaces to ensure ease of movement. Functional - safe, adaptable and social environments to attract and foster activity. Attractive - visually pleasing spaces with high quality design, materials and installations (lighting, furniture and signage) based on a singular common design theme. Distinctive - reference to local context and building on the character and identity of place. Where appropriate, recreational considerations and access to blue and greens space should be underpinned by the Green Space Principles including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• 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).</i> <i>• 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.</i> <i>• Well managed and maintained, creating a high-quality environment: poorly managed spaces or vandalism lead to negative perceptions among potential users.</i> <i>• 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).</i> <i>• Create multisensory restorative environments that help mitigate the psychological stresses of modern living through the provision of “restive places for rejuvenation</i> 									

