

Castlebar Local Area Plan 2023-2029

Final Natura Impact Report
September 24



Comhairle Contae Mhaigh Eo
Mayo County Council



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Purpose

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Executive Summary

This report provides an Appropriate Assessment of the Castlebar Town and Local Environs Local Area Plan. The report should be read in conjunction with the AA Concluding Statement and in light of the assessments at different stage of both the draft plan, the material amendments and the ministerial directions associated with the Plan.

This final report incorporates all updates to policies, includes the adopted material amendments (subjected to the ministerial direction), and the final land use zonings (also subjected to ministerial direction).

This Appropriate Assessment has been prepared in line with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora; the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended); and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477/2011). It is also informed by guidance including Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2010) and Office of the Planning Regulator: OPR Practice Note PN01 - Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management (2021).

This NIR takes account any legislative changes or European site boundary changes which may have occurred from the time of the initial assessment to the final adoption of the plan. None of the changes associated with these were significant to the outcomes of the assessment.

The Appropriate Assessment Stage 1 Screening and Stage 2 NIR were conducted in co-ordination with both the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), as well as the Local Transport Plan for Castlebar.

Before a plan can be adopted, the 'competent authority' (Mayo County Council) needs to prove that the plan would have no significant effects on European sites' integrity. An uncertain result is not acceptable and is treated as adverse until proven otherwise.

It is accepted best-practice for the assessment of strategic planning documents to be run as an iterative process alongside the plan development, with the emerging policies/objectives continually assessed for their possible effect on European sites and amended as necessary to ensure the adopted plan will not result in any significant effects on any European site (alone or in-combination). The Castlebar Town and Local Environs Local Area Plan was assessed iteratively, and a summary of the assessments at each stage is provided within the Concluding Statement.

The source-receptor-pathway model was used for this assessment. An assessment of the plan identified European sites could be impacted upon by pathways (i.e., surface-water, groundwater, air pollution etc, disturbance). Two European sites have pathway-receptors for potential significant effects arising from the implementation of the Plan, these are:

- River Moy SAC (Site Code: 002298)
- Lough Conn and Lough Cullin SPA (Site Code: 004228)

The AA Screening Assessment also assesses the LAP policies/objectives and identifies those that could have an adverse impact upon screened in European sites. Eighteen policies and objectives were screened in as having the potential to cause an adverse impact on integrity of the screened-in European sites. The most likely effects of the LAP on the European sites identified within the zone of influence are related to new development pressures including changes to surface-water quality (e.g., surface run-off), air pollution and increased recreational pressures arising from increased population in Castlebar and increase in tourism. Land-use zonings were screened iteratively throughout the inception of the plan, and the final land-use zonings are presented here.

The NIR determined that the Castlebar LAP is not likely to have significant effects, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects on the screened in European sites. This conclusion is based on and adhering to the avoidance/mitigation measures as detailed in Section 8, all likely significant effects have been screened out.

Material alterations (subjected to Ministerial Direction) have been incorporated into this final NIR.

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Abbreviations

AA	Appropriate Assessment
CDP	County Development Plan
CEMP	Construction Environment Management Plan
CIEEM	Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management
CJEU	Court of Justice of the European Union
DoEHLG	Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
EC	European Community
EclA	Ecological Impact Assessment
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
GSI	Geological Survey of Ireland
GWB	Groundwater Body
IROPI	Imperative Reason of Overriding Public Interest
LAP	Local Area Plan
MCDP	Mayo County Development Plan
NBDC	National Biodiversity Data Centre
NIR	Natura Impact Report
NIS	Natura Impact Statement
NPF	National Planning Framework
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
OPW	Office of Public Works
OSI	Ordnance Survey Ireland
PE	Population Equivalent
QI	Qualifying Interest
RBMP	River Basin Management Plan
RSES	Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SPA	Special Protection Area
SuDS	Sustainable Drainage Systems
WFD	Water Framework Directive
ZoI	Zone of Influence

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

JBA Consulting Ireland Ltd. has been commissioned by Mayo County Council to undertake a Natura Impact Report (NIR) in relation to the Castlebar Local Area Plan (LAP) 2023 – 2029.

The Castlebar LAP sets out the land-use plan and strategy for the development of Castlebar over the period of 2023-2029 and will replace the previous LAP (2014-2020) when adopted.

This NIR documents the Appropriate Assessment process and results in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora).

1.2 Legislative Context

The Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) aims to maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of habitats and species of community interest across Europe. The requirements of Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive have been transposed into Irish legislation by means of the Habitats Regulations, 1997 (S.I. No. 94 of 1997) and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011).

Under the Directive, a network of sites of nature conservation importance have been identified by each Member State as containing specified habitats or species requiring to be maintained or returned to favourable conservation status. In Ireland, the network consists of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), and also candidate sites, which together form the *Natura 2000* network.

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive requires that, in relation to European designated sites (i.e., SACs and SPAs that form the *Natura 2000* network), "*any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to **appropriate assessment** of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives*".

A competent authority (e.g., Local Authority) can only agree to a plan or project after having determined that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned.

The competent authority is Mayo County Council.

1.3 Appropriate Assessment Process

Guidance on the Appropriate Assessment (AA) process was produced by the European Commission in 2002, which was subsequently developed into guidance specifically for Ireland by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG 2009 rev 2010). These guidance documents identify a staged approach to conducting an AA, as shown in Figure 1-1.



Figure 1-1: The Appropriate Assessment Process

1.3.1 Stage 1 - Screening for AA

The initial, screening stage of the Appropriate Assessment is to determine:

- whether the proposed plan or project is directly connected with, or necessary for, the management of the European designated site for nature conservation

- if it is likely to have a significant adverse effect on the European designated site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects

For those sites where potential adverse impacts are identified, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, further assessment is necessary to determine if the proposals will have an adverse impact on the integrity of a European designated site, taking into account the sites conservation objectives (i.e., the process proceeds to Stage 2).

1.3.2 Stage 2 - AA

This stage requires a more in-depth evaluation of the plan or project, and the potential direct and indirect impacts arising from it on the integrity and the interest features of the European designated site(s), alone and in-combination with other plans and projects, taking into account the site's structure, function and conservation objectives. Where required, mitigation or avoidance measures will be suggested.

The competent authority can only agree to the plan or project after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site(s) concerned. If this cannot be determined, and where mitigation cannot be achieved, then alternative solutions will need to be considered (i.e., the process proceeds to Stage 3).

1.3.3 Stage 3 - Alternative Solutions

Where adverse impacts on the integrity of European sites are identified, and mitigation cannot be satisfactorily implemented, alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the plan or project that avoid adverse impacts need to be considered. If none can be found, the process proceeds to Stage 4.

1.3.4 Stage 4 - IROPI

Where adverse impacts of a plan or project on the integrity of European sites are identified and no alternative solutions exist, the plan will only be allowed to progress if 'imperative reasons of overriding public interest' can be demonstrated. In this case compensatory measures will be required.

The process only proceeds through each of the four stages for certain plans or projects. For example, for a plan or project, not connected with management of a site, but where no likely significant impacts are identified, the process stops at stage 1. Throughout the process, the precautionary principle must be applied, so that any uncertainties do not result in adverse impacts on a site.

1.3.5 Recent judgements of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) and how they are used in this assessment

The CJEU issued a ruling on the consideration of avoidance and reduction measures as a result of the case known as *People over Wind, Peter Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta* (Case C-323/17). This judgement stated that measures intended to reduce or avoid effects on a European site should only be considered within the framework of an AA, and it is not permissible to take into account such measures at the screening stage. In practice, this means that any activities that are not integral to the plan or project (i.e., the plan or project could conceivably take place without them) and have the effect of avoiding or reducing an impact on a European site, cannot be considered at the screening stage.

The CJEU ruling in the case of *Grace & Sweetman* [2018] (C-164/17) clarified the difference between avoidance and reduction (mitigation) measures and compensation. Measures intended to compensate for the negative effects of a plan or project cannot be taken into account in the assessment of the implications of a plan or project, and instead are considered under Article 6(4). This means that any plan or project where an effect on the integrity of a European site remains and can only be offset by compensation, would need to proceed under Article 6(4), demonstrating "imperative reasons of overriding public interest".

The judgements referred to as the Dutch Nitrogen cases [2018] (C-293/17 and C-294/17) have important implications for plans and projects that could potentially impact on sites that are exceeding critical thresholds for input of damaging ammonia (but could also reasonably apply where other nutrients are impacting European sites). The judgements state that the use of

thresholds to exclude project impacts is acceptable in principle, and that strategic plans can be used as mitigation but only with consideration of the certainty (or otherwise) of the outcomes of those strategic plans. It clarifies that where the status of a habitat type is already unfavourable the possibility of authorising activities which increase the problem is necessarily limited.

The CJEU ruling in the case of *Holohan v An Bord Pleanala (C-462/17)* also clarified the importance in AA of taking into account habitat types and species outside the boundary of the European site, where implications of the impacts on those habitat and species may impact the conservation objectives of the European site. In this assessment functionally linked and supporting habitat for species outside of European site boundaries are assessed where they could potentially impact the conservation objectives of any screened in European sites.

The CJEU delivered a significant judgment in the *Eco Advocacy (In Case C-721/21)*. Six questions were referred by the Irish High Court. This request for a preliminary ruling concerns the interpretation, inter alia, of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. The ruling indicated that:

- The High Court asked whether a decision maker had to give detailed and explicit reasons in order to dispel all reasonable scientific doubt from an AA screening perspective. The CJEU held that a decision maker, in carrying out and recording its decision on AA screening, does not have to respond to all points of fact and law raised during their decision-making process. It has to meet “the requisite standard” which is not so demanding.
- An applicant for permission in its AA screening report/and a decision maker in undertaking its AA screening can take into account “standard features” i.e. all the constituent elements of that project inherent in it/elements that are incorporated into a projects design not with the aim of reducing its negative effects (even where these have the effect of reducing harmful effects on a European site).

1.3.6 Guidance Documents

This NIR has been prepared having regard to the Birds and Habitats Directives, the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-15 as amended and relevant jurisprudence of the EU and Irish courts. The following documents have also used to provide guidance during the assessment:

The Screening for Appropriate Assessment has been prepared having regard to the Birds and Habitats Directives, the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-15 as amended and relevant jurisprudence of the EU and Irish courts. The following documents have also been used to provide guidance for the assessment:

- DEHLG (2009 rev 2010) Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland Guidance for Planning Authorities. Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG, 2009).
- Office of the Planning Regulator (2021) OPR Practice Note PN01 - Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management (OPR 2021).
- EC (2019). Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg. European Commission (European Commission 2019).
- EC (2021). Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC- https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/pdf/methodological-guidance_2021-10/EN.pdf (European Commission 2021).
- EC (2007) Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/43/EEC – Clarification of the concepts of: alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interest, compensatory measures, overall coherence, opinion of the commission. European Commission (European Commission 2007).
- CIEEM (2018). Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland - Terrestrial, Freshwater, and Coastal, Second Ed. (CIEEM 2018)
- (DTA 2022) The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook, UK by Tyldesley, D. and Chapman, C. (accessed online only with login requirements)

1.3.7 Data Sources

A desktop survey was conducted of available published and unpublished information, along with a review of data available on the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) web-based databases, to identify key habitats and species (including legally protected and species of conservation concern) that may be present within ecologically relevant distances from the scheme as explained below. The data sources below have informed the assessment:

- NPWS website (www.npws.ie), (<https://www.npws.ie/>), where site synopses, Natura 2000 data forms and conservation objectives were obtained along with Annex I habitat distribution data and status reports.
- (NPWS 2019a) The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. Volume 1: Summary Overview. Unpublished NPWS report.
- (NPWS 2019b) The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. Volume 2: Habitat Assessments. Unpublished NPWS report.
- (NPWS 2019c). The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. Volume 3: Species Assessments. Unpublished NPWS report.
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA 2021) maps website (<https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>)
- Geological Survey Ireland Spatial Resources (GSI 2021) maps website (dcenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/)

1.3.8 Limitations and Constraints

The assessment necessarily relies on some assumptions, and it was inevitably subject to some limitations. These do not affect the conclusion, but the following points are recorded to ensure the basis of the assessment is clear:

- The LAP is a higher-level plan. Therefore, this assessment cannot include any detailed assessment of any developments that may arise from the implementation of this Plan. Where broad level assessments are required to determine the potential for cumulative or in-combination impacts, the precautionary principle is used.
- Any changes to the Plan will require re-assessment by a suitably qualified Ecologist to determine if further screening and assessment will be required. In all instances of this assessment, the precautionary principle is used.

2 Castlebar Local Area Plan 2023-2029

2.1 Background

The LAP sets out the overall development strategy and planning policy objectives for the town for coming years. It also seeks to provide for the medium-term planning and development benefit for Castlebar as a Key Town identified in the Northern & Western Regional Spatial Economic Strategy (RSES) 2020-2032 and which is also reflected in the County Development Plan. The Core Strategy, Settlement Hierarchy and Housing Need and Demand Assessment outlined in Chapter 2 of the Mayo County Development Plan (MCDP) sets out the growth agenda for the town of Castlebar.

The LAP supports economic growth, education service and community related development in line with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development. The plan's policy objectives, and development management guidelines and standards have also been informed by best practice, national planning guidance and the MCDP, where appropriate. The Local Transport Plan sets out a clear strategy for sustainable development that is closely aligned with sustainable transportation.

2.2 Profile of Castlebar

Castlebar is located approximately 63km north of Galway City, and 13km northeast of Westport - see Figure 2-1.

The town is located on the convergence of the N5, N84, and N60 national roads, with the N60 providing access to the N17 and M17, respectively. The town also benefits from immediate access from the southeast edge of the town to the Westport-Dublin Railway Line. Castlebar has been designated as a Key Town in the RSES.

The town also benefits from important energy and telecommunications infrastructure which are considered key for the location of industrial and technological companies, for example; Castlebar is connected to An Bord Gáis gas pipeline network and has several providers of fibre optic broadband networks. The town has an important sub-regional role in delivering retail provision, employment, and community facilities in particular education and healthcare.

The town is sufficiently serviced with primary and post-primary level facilities; however, there will be a requirement for extra school place provision at both primary and post-primary levels should population increases occur. The GMIT Castlebar campus achieving TU status in 2022 will also be a major asset to the third level resources of the town.

In terms of population trends, according to the most recent 2022 Central Statistics Office (CSO) figures, the total population of Castlebar was recorded as 13,054 persons, which represents a increase from the 2016 recorded population of 12,068 (~8%).

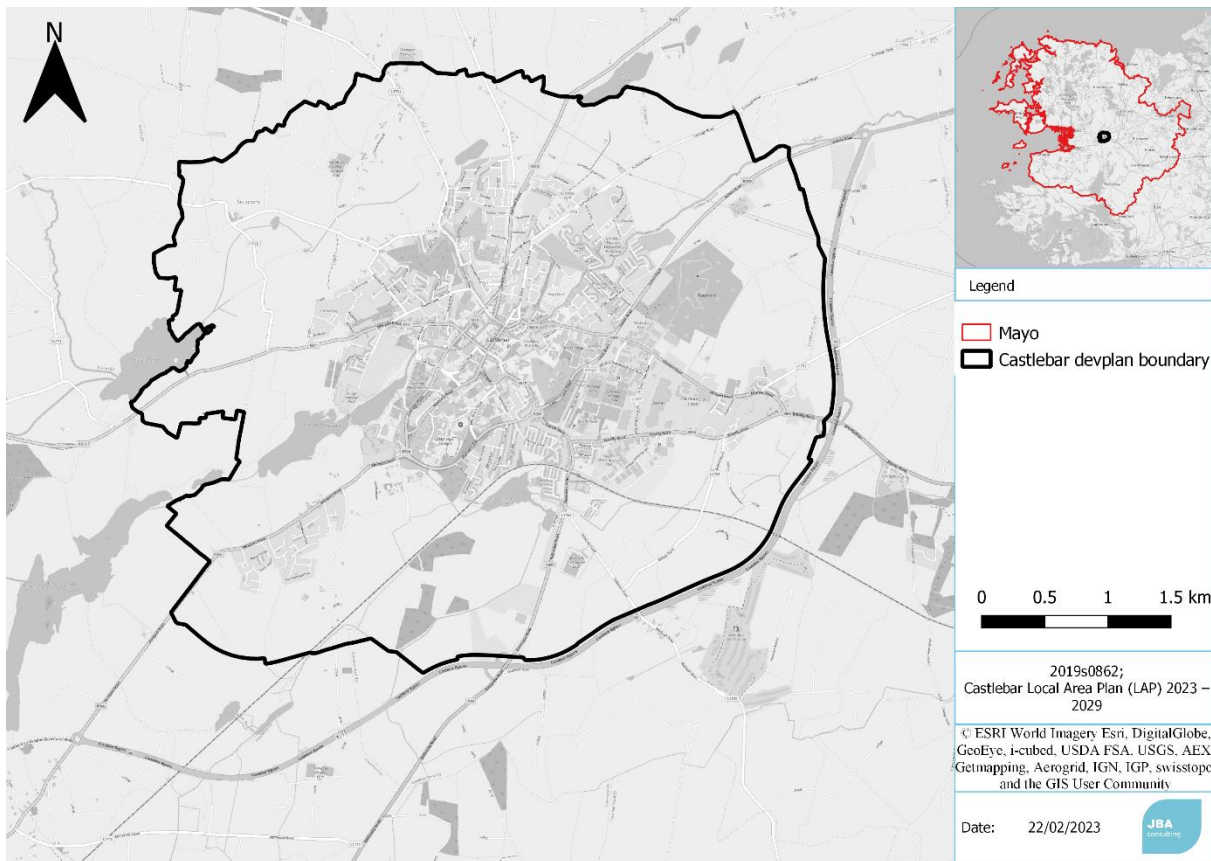


Figure 2-1 Location of Castlebar and the Plan Boundary

2.3 Vision Statement

The current Castlebar LAP is in draft and therefore, only draft policies and objectives are available. However, there is a vision statement, which is as follows:

"To support and grow the role of the Key Town of Castlebar, in tandem with Westport, to become a future linked Regional Growth Centre for the Western Region, and continue to facilitate its sustainable, socio-economic growth within the context of a high-quality environment and a strong and vibrant diverse sustainable community, supporting a wide range of employment opportunities, services and amenities. Thereby continuing to make Castlebar an attractive place to live, work, invest, do business, visit and invest in, whilst ensuring a transition to a low carbon and climate resilient town."

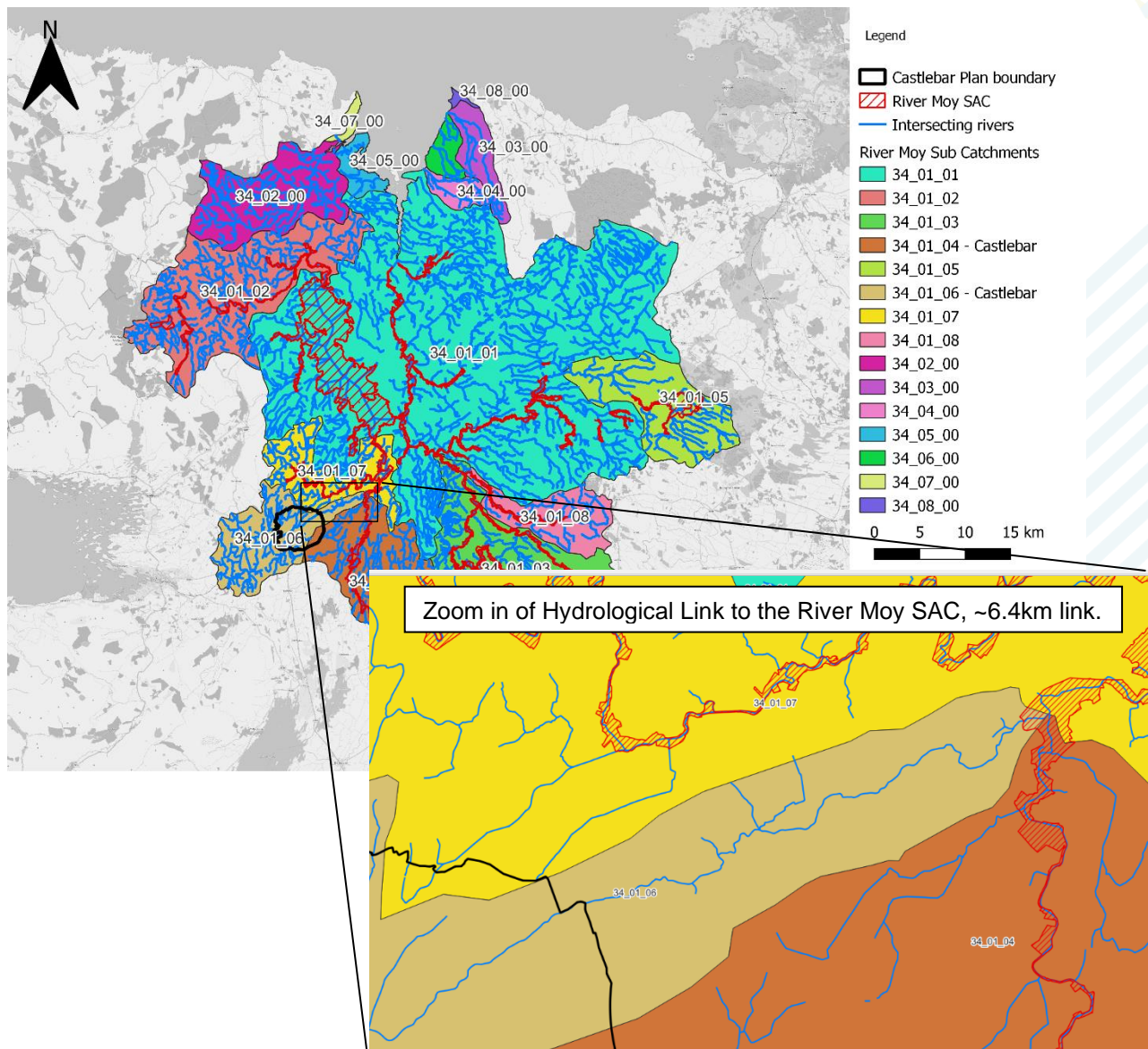
3 Existing Environment

This section summarises the relevant existing environment within the Plan boundaries and its surroundings. All relevant baseline data is information on the conditions necessary for the maintenance of European sites.

3.1.1 Surface Waterbodies

The main surface waterbody in Castlebar is the Castlebar River. This is part of the Moy and Killala Bay catchment, sub-catchment Castlebar_SC_010, Cod 34_21, (MapID 31_01_06). Part of the south-eastern part of the Plan area drains to the SE in sub-catchment Castlebar_SC_010, Code 34_22 (MapID 31_01_04). Both these are part of the larger River Moy and Killala Bay Catchment. The River Moy itself has an SAC designation, which covers some of its tributaries, although not the Castlebar River. See Figure 3-1.

The areas in the development plan are hydrologically linked to River Moy SAC. From the edge of the Plan area to the SAC is 5.2km over land, and approximately 6.4km hydrologically.



Under the Water Framework Directive (WFD), the Status of (2013 - 2018) has been assigned a "Moderate" (EPA 2021).

Parts of the Castlebar River, as part of the River Moy catchment is assigned protection under the Salmonid Regulations (S.I. 293) and the stretch of river passing through the town is one of the reaches protected under these regulations. (O'Reilly 1998) describes the Castlebar River as holding good excellent stock of brown trout, particularly near Turlough Village.

3.1.2 Groundwater Bodies

Castlebar's town, and the plan boundary, are in a highly karstic region composed of Dark fine-grained limestone, thick-bedded pale limestone, minor shale and shale bedrock, with regions of red and green sandstone; however, there are no recorded karstic features (e.g., swallow holes/caves) within the Plan boundary.

The Plan area mostly lies on an aquifer with a good recharge coefficient rate, that is composed of "Regionally Important Aquifer- Karstified (conduit)", and partially composed of "Locally Important Aquifer" (GSI, 2022).

Table 3-1: Features Influencing Aquifer Vulnerability using GSI Datasets

	Source	Description (N = north of site, S = south of site) Site = Castlebar LAP Boundary
Bedrock Geology 100k	GSI	There are numerous bands of different bedrock types across the site. From south to north, these are: Sandstone, pebbly conglomerate (N) Silica poor, with analcime & olivine (N) Dark limestone & shale, sandy oolite (N) Dark cherty limestone, thin shale (S) Dark fine-grained limestone, shale (S)
Subsoils (Quaternary Sediment)	GSI	Urban lithology Till derived from limestones Cut over raised peat
Subsoil Permeability	GSI	Moderate
Teagasc Soils	GSI	Majority Made ground Deep well drained mineral (Mainly basic) Mineral poorly drained (Mainly basic) Cutover/cutaway peat Shallow well drained mineral (Mainly basic)
Bedrock Aquifer	GSI / EPA	Regionally Important Aquifer - Karstified (conduit) Locally Important Aquifer - Bedrock which is Generally Moderately Productive (N) Poor Aquifer - Bedrock which is Generally Unproductive except for Local Zones (N)
Groundwater Recharge - Recharge Coefficient	GSI	Majority of Plan Boundary is 20% 60 - 85%
Groundwater Vulnerability	GSI	High to Extreme (Figure 3-1)
WFD Groundwater Body	EPA	IE_WE_G_0034 - Not at risk (N) IE_WE_G_0033 - Not at risk (S)

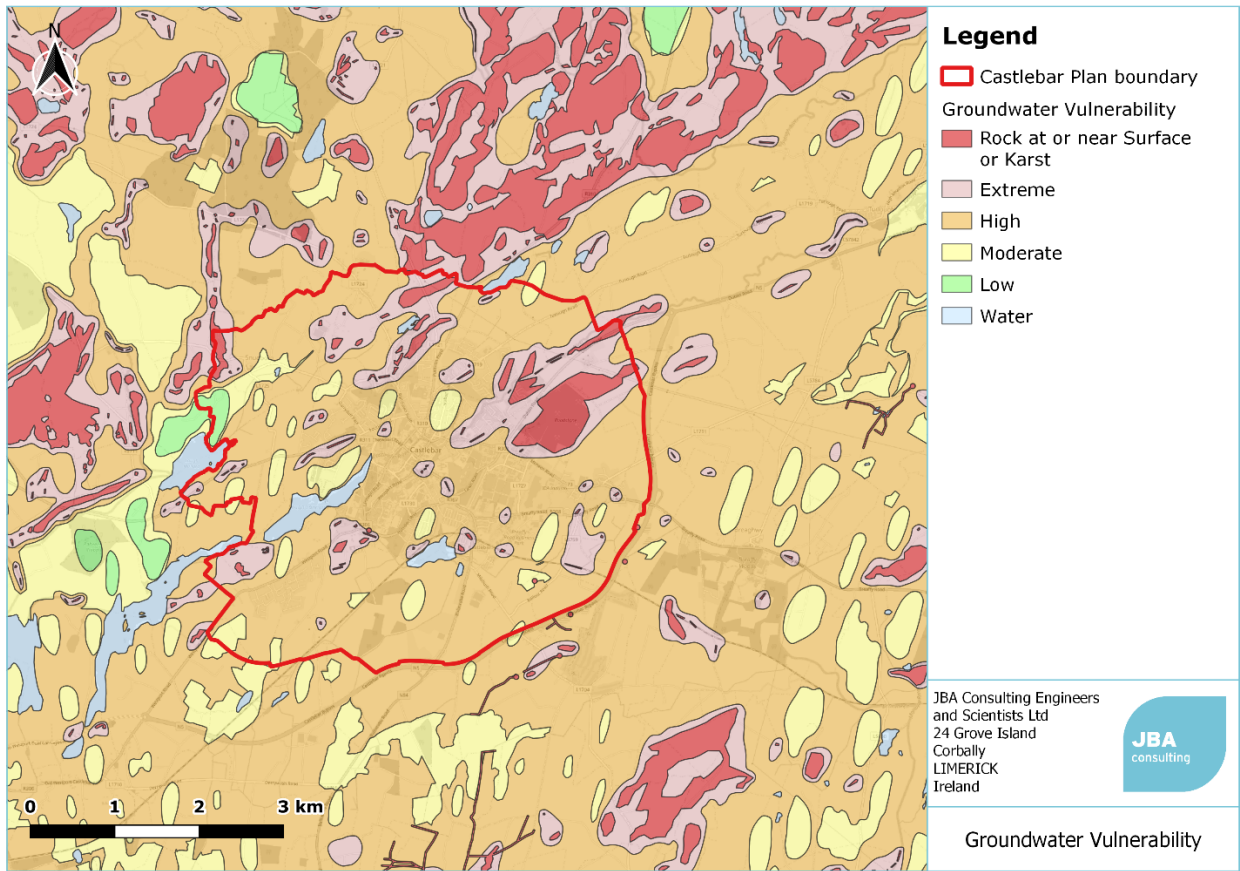


Figure 3-1: Groundwater Vulnerability at the Site

The plan area is largely within the Swinford Groundwater Body (described as karstic bedrock), but the northern part of the plan area is within the Foxford Groundwater Body, which is described as poorly productive bedrock).

3.1.3 Wastewater

Castlebar town is serviced by a Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) with a Population Equivalent (PE) of 28,000. Castlebar currently consists of a population of 12,068 (2016 census), so there is sufficient capacity at the treatment plant for the population size and any considerable increase (UWWTD, 2017). The EPA's Urban Status Inspection labelled this plant with as 'Compliant', with the plant meeting all performance parameters, and indicated that the discharge will not have a significant impact on any European Sites.

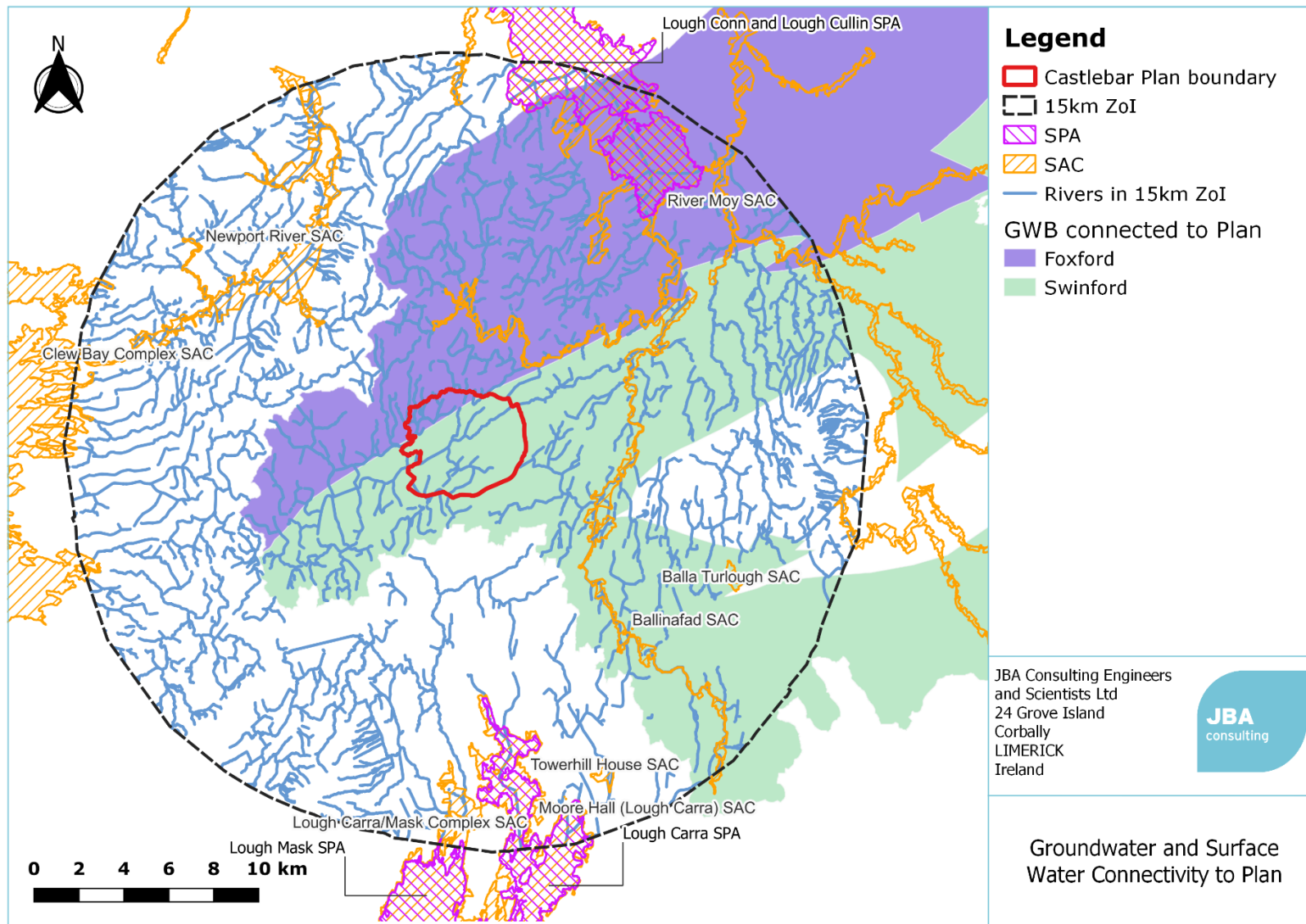


Figure 3-3: Groundwater and Surface Water Bodies Connected to the Plan Boundary including the Foxford (north) and Swinford (south) GW Bodies.

4 European Sites, Pathways and Potential Impacts

4.1 Zone of Influence

The Zone of Influence (Zoi) within which potential impacts from any proposed project or plan must be considered for significance depends on a variety of factors. This includes the nature, location and extent of the plan or project, the ecological receptors present within the European sites within the area and the potential for in-combination impacts (DoEHLG 2009). The DoEHLG (2009) guidance identifies that Screening for AA of a plan or project should consider the following European sites:

- Any European sites within or adjacent to the plan or project area.
- Any European sites within the likely Zoi of the plan or project. This is dependent on the nature and scale of the plan, with 15km generally recommended for plans, but potentially much less for projects.
- Any European sites that are more than 15km from the plan or project area, but may potentially be impacted upon, for example, through a hydrological connection.

When determining the Zoi for this Plan, the nature and scale of the proposed policies and objectives are considered in relation to the conservation objectives of the European sites that may be connected to the Plan. For an impact to occur, a Source (potential impacts from the Plan), Pathway (e.g., surface water, groundwater, land or air connectivity) and Receptor (Qualifying Interests (QIs) of the European sites) must be present.

4.2 European sites in Zoi

There are no European Sites located within the Plan area, with three SPAs and eight SACs within 15km of the plan area. These European Sites include:

- Lough Carra SPA
- Lough Conn and Lough Cullin SPA
- Lough Mask SPA
- Balla Turlough SAC
- Ballinafad SAC
- Clew Bay Complex SAC
- Lough Carra/Mask Complex SAC
- Moore Hall (Lough Carra) SAC
- Newport River SAC
- River Moy SAC
- Towerhill House SAC

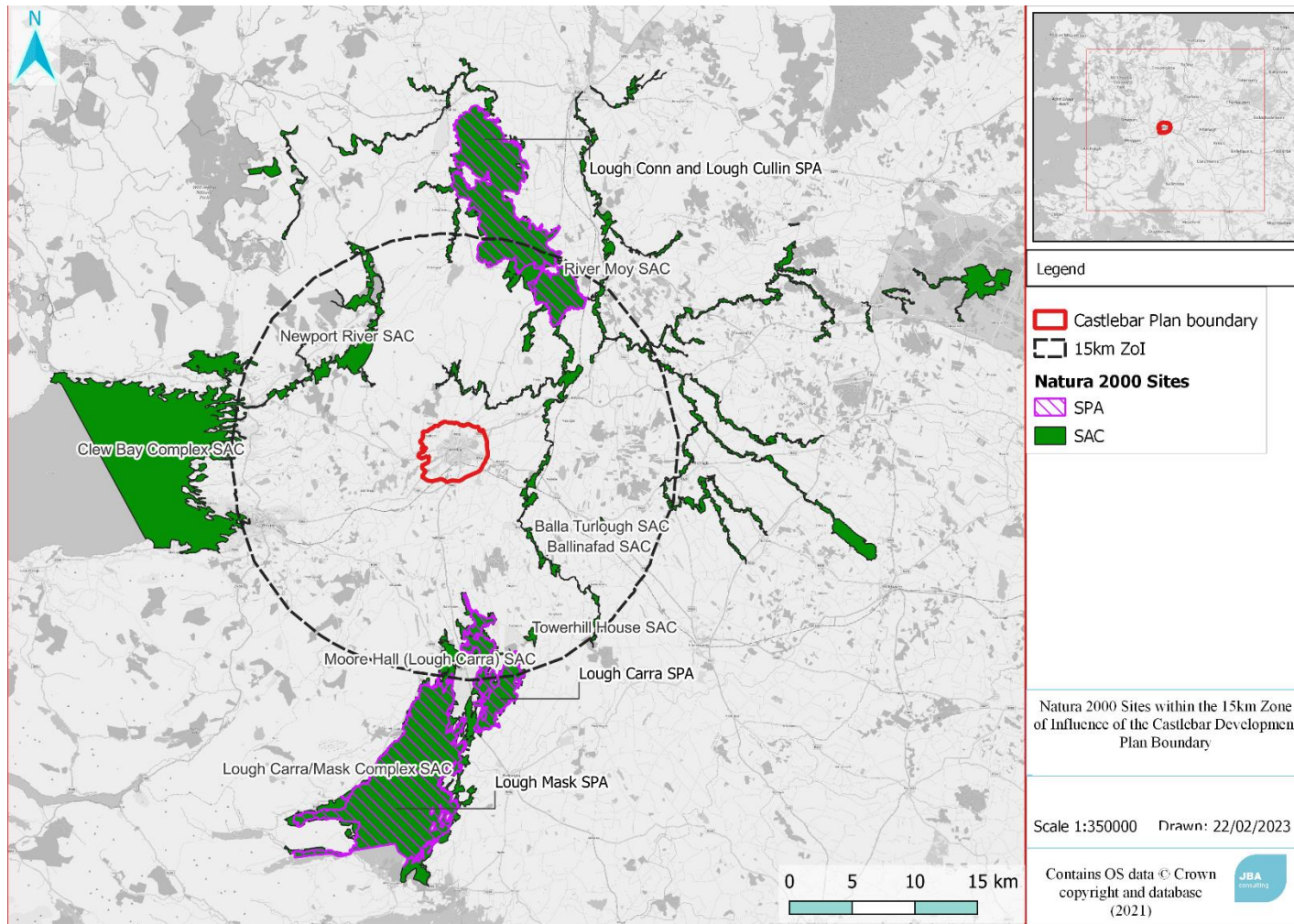


Figure 4-1: European sites located within Castlebar Local Area Plan and within 15km of the Plan area.

Figure 4-1 displays the European site locations in relation to the Plan area. See Table 4-1 for the Qualifying Features for each European site

Table 4-1: European sites within 15km of the Plan area

Site Code	Sites within 15km of Plan area	Distance from Plan	Qualifying Interests	Brief description of site
002298	River Moy SAC	1.5km N, 6.4km hydrologically	<p>Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) [6510]</p> <p>Active raised bogs [7110]</p> <p>Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]</p> <p>Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150]</p> <p>Alkaline fens [7230]</p> <p>Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0]</p> <p>Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0]</p> <p><i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092]</p> <p><i>Petromyzon marinus</i> (Sea Lamprey) [1095]</p> <p><i>Lampetra planeri</i> (Brook Lamprey) [1096]</p> <p><i>Salmo salar</i> (Salmon) [1106]</p> <p><i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]</p>	<p>Alluvial woodland occurs at several locations along the shores of the lakes. Some of the bogs include significant areas of active raised bog habitat. Alkaline fen is considered to be well developed within the site. An extensive stand occurs as part of a wetland complex at Mannin and Island Lakes on the Gloré River. The Moy system is one of Ireland's premier Salmon waters, with Sea Lamprey, Brook Lamprey, Otter and White-clawed Crayfish also present. Forestry poses a threat in that sedimentation and acidification can occur. Sedimentation can cover the gravel beds resulting in a loss of suitable spawning grounds.</p>
002144	Newport River SAC	5.38km W	<p><i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029]</p> <p><i>Salmo salar</i> (Salmon) [1106]</p>	<p>Relatively short, flowing from Beltra Lough to the sea at Newport, Co. Mayo. Flows through wet grassland and wet heath.</p>
000463	Balla Turlough SAC	9.9km SW	<p>Turloughs [3180]</p>	<p>Balla Turlough occurs at the northern edge of the main range of turloughs in Mayo and Roscommon and is one of very few within the Moy catchment. Overall, the turlough is of high ecological value for its range of unusual topographical features and vegetation communities. The amount and physical shape of the peat present here is of interest in offering a comparison with other northern turloughs where peat-cutting has been widespread. Turloughs are an increasingly rare habitat in Europe and Ireland, and Balla is important as an excellent example of an unusual turlough in a very natural condition.</p>
004228	Lough Conn and Lough Cullin SPA	10km NE	<p>Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) [A061]</p> <p>Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A065]</p> <p>Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182]</p> <p>Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395]</p> <p>Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</p>	<p>Situated in north Co. Mayo and are connected by a narrow inlet near Pontoon. Lough Conn is a traditional breeding site for gulls and terns. The site also supports a good diversity of wintering waterfowl species, including Greenland White-fronted Goose and a nationally important population of Tufted Duck. The occurrence of Greenland White-fronted Goose, Whooper Swan and Golden Plover is of note as these species are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. Part of the Lough Conn and Lough Cullin SPA is a</p>

Site Code	Sites within 15km of Plan area	Distance from Plan	Qualifying Interests	Brief description of site
				Wildfowl Sanctuary.
002081	Ballinafad SAC	7.65km SE	<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303]	A breeding site for the Lesser Horseshoe Bat and consists of a large building which was formerly used as an agricultural college. The bats use the roof space which they access through roof hatches. Surrounding woodland provides suitable foraging habitat within a small radius of the day roost site, a feature which is of paramount importance to this species because it avoids flying across open spaces. Although the number of bats at this site is relatively low, the site is important as it is the most northerly point in Europe where this species is known to occur.
001774	Lough Carra/Mask Complex SAC	8km S	Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) [3110] Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and/or <i>Isoeto-Nanojuncetea</i> [3130] Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp. [3140] European dry heaths [4030] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210] Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> [7210] Alkaline fens [7230] Limestone pavements [8240] Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0] <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303] <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355] <i>Hamatocaulis vernicosus</i> (Slender Green Feather-moss) [6216]	The underlying geology results in a good diversity of habitats, which support many scarce and rare plants and animals. Curramore House provides a summer breeding site of the Lesser Horseshoe Bat. Suitable features also make the area fit for otter foraging.
004051	Lough Carra	8.15km S	Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182]	One of the prime examples in Ireland of a hard water marl lake. It is fringed by a diverse complex of limestone and wetland habitats. The wetland habitats include both Great Fen-sedge (<i>Cladium mariscus</i>) fen and alkaline fen. In addition to the fen habitats, there are widespread reed swamps, wet grassland and some freshwater marsh communities around the lakeshores.
002179	Towerhill House SAC	11.75km S	<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303]	Offers ideal winter hibernation conditions as it is humid and remains at a constant temperature, with very little disturbance from visitors. Notable for being along the northern limit of the distribution of the species in Europe. Commercial tree felling would pose a negative impact on bat roosts. Macro-invertebrate community of the wetland area is

Site Code	Sites within 15km of Plan area	Distance from Plan	Qualifying Interests	Brief description of site
				also of interest, containing elements characteristic of littoral lacustrine and slow flowing riverine habitats. There is also a high diversity of aquatic beetle species at this site.
000527	Moore Hall SAC	12.85km S	<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303]	Three distinct areas used by the bats at this site: a two-storey former dwelling which is used as a summer breeding site; a series of cellars and adjoining underground passage which are used as winter hibernation sites; and an underground passage in a small stone building, bats have uninterrupted access to all sites.
001482	Clew Bay Complex SAC	13.76 W	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Coastal lagoons [1150] Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) [1330] Embryonic shifting dunes [2110] Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120] Machairs (* in Ireland) [21A0] Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0] <i>Vertigo geyeri</i> (Geyer's Whorl Snail) [1013] <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355] <i>Phoca vitulina</i> (Harbour Seal) [1365]	Wide, west-facing bay on the west coast of Co. Mayo. The geomorphology of the bay has resulted in a complex series of interlocking bays creating a wide variety of marine and terrestrial habitats. Important populations of Otter and Common (Harbour) Seal are found in Clew Bay, and the snail species <i>Vertigo geyeri</i> , which is also listed on Annex II of the E.U. Habitats Directive, has been recorded from this site.
004062	Lough Mask SPA	14.55km S	Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) [A061] Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182] Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [A183] Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	The sixth largest lake in the country. Lough Mask is one of the most important inland gull breeding sites in the country, with nationally important populations of three gull species. It also has a nationally important colony of Common Tern. The site supports a good diversity of wintering waterfowl, including a nationally important population of Tufted Duck. The site is also regularly utilised by a proportion of the Erriff/Derrycraff population of Greenland White-fronted Goose. The occurrence of three species, Whooper Swan, Greenland White-fronted Goose and Common Tern is of note as these species are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. Part of Lough Mask SPA is a Wildfowl Sanctuary.

4.3 Potential Impacts on European Sites

Development for housing, business, infrastructure, services, and recreation/tourism promoted as part of the Castlebar LAP can potentially have adverse impacts on the habitats and species for which European sites are designated.

These impacts can be direct, such as habitat loss, fragmentation, or degradation, or indirect such as disturbance or pollution from construction, transportation etc. They can include long-term effects associated with the operational phase of proposed developments or general population growth, and short-term effects arising from construction phases.

This chapter identifies the potential impacts and their pathways to European sites within and adjacent to Castlebar which may arise resulting from the Castlebar LAP. It then goes on to identify the types of impact/pathways to which the qualifying features present upon the European sites are particularly sensitive.

As outlined in the EC guidance on the assessment of plans and projects affecting European sites (European Commission 2021) examples of impacts that could potentially occur through the implementation of Plans are as follows: habitat loss, degradation, disturbance, fragmentation, indirect effects (invasive species; human and animal penetration; additional development). Hazards are described in Table 4-2 below:

Table 4-2: Potential Hazards to European sites

Potential Hazard	Description
Habitat loss	This is a loss of habitat within the designated boundaries of a European site – it is expected that there would be no direct loss to development resulting from implementation of the LAP, as there is no overlap in plan areas with Natura Sites.
Habitat fragmentation	Change in comparison with the original and desired states (e.g. creation of several small habitat patches instead of one large one, hectares of habitat exposed to the edge effect). Most likely to affect species.
Changes in physical regime	These are changes to physical process that will alter the present characteristics of the European site e.g., fluvial, and geomorphological processes, erosion processes, deposition.
Physical damage	This includes recreational pressures such as trampling and erosion, and where sites are close to urban areas, other damaging activities may occur such as rubbish tipping, vandalism, arson, and predation, particularly by cats.
Habitat/community simplification	Changes to environmental conditions, due to human activities, which result in a reduction and fragmentation of habitats that will reduce biodiversity.
Disturbance (noise, visual)	Activities which result in disturbance, causing sensitive birds and mammals to deviate from their normal, preferred behaviour, such as construction, recreational, traffic.
Competition from invasive non-native species	Activities may cause the introduction or spread of invasive non-native animals and plants, which could result in changes to community composition and even to the complete loss of native communities.
Changes in water levels or tables	Activities that may affect surface and groundwater levels, such as land drainage and abstraction, may have adverse impacts on water dependant habitats and species.
Changes in water quality	Activities that may impact upon water quality, such as accidental pollution spills, run-off from urban areas, nutrient enrichment from agriculture, and discharge from sewage works, may adversely affect wetland habitats and species.
Changes to surface water flooding	Activities that may result in a reduction or increase in the frequency and extent of surface water flooding, which may affect riverine and floodplain habitats
Turbidity and siltation	Increases in turbidity within water environments can impact upon aquatic plants, fish and wildfowl due to sedimentation and reduction in penetrable light.
Pollution	Activities that may lead to the release of pollutants to the air such as oxides of nitrogen, oxides of sulphur or ammonia, or pollutants deposited on the ground through acidification or terrestrial eutrophication via soil (deposition of nitrogen).

4.3.1 Qualifying Interests and Sensitivity to Hazards

Table 4-2 shows the qualifying features of the European sites within ZoI of the Castlebar Plan area and identifies the hazards to which they are most sensitive.

It must be noted that during the assessment of the potential impacts of the LAP on a European site, all the potential hazards will be considered.

Table 4-2: Sensitivity of Qualifying Features to Potential Hazards

European site	Qualifying Interest	Habitat loss	Habitat fragmentation	Changes in physical regime	Physical damage	Habitat/community simplification	Disturbance (noise/visual)	Competition from invasive non-native species	Changes in water levels or table	Changes in water quality	Changes to surface water flooding	Turbidity and siltation	Pollution
River Moy SAC	Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> , <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>)	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓
	Active raised bogs Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Alkaline fens	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓
	Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i>)	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> (<i>White-clawed Crayfish</i>)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
	<i>Petromyzon marinus</i> (<i>Sea Lamprey</i>) <i>Lampetra planeri</i> (<i>Brook Lamprey</i>) <i>Salmo salar</i> (<i>Salmon</i>)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
	<i>Lutra lutra</i> (<i>Otter</i>)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Newport River SAC	<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> (<i>Freshwater Pearl Mussel</i>) <i>Salmo salar</i> (<i>Salmon</i>)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Balla Turlough SAC	Turloughs	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lough Conn and Lough Cullin SPA	Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Wetland and Waterbirds	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ballinacorney SAC	<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> (<i>Lesser Horseshoe Bat</i>)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓
Lough Carra/Mask Complex SAC	Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i> and/or <i>Isoeto-Nanojuncetea</i> Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara spp.</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

European site	Qualifying Interest	Habitat loss	Habitat fragmentation	Changes in physical regime	Physical damage	Habitat/community simplification	Disturbance (noise/ visual)	Competition from invasive non-native species	Changes in water levels or table	Changes in water quality	Changes to surface water flooding	Turbidity and siltation	Pollution
	Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i>	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓
	Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites)	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓
	Alkaline fens	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	European dry heaths												
	Limestone pavements												
	Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i>)												
	<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> (Lesser Horseshoe Bat)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓
	<i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	<i>Hamatocaulis vernicosus</i> (Slender Green Feather-moss)	✓	✓		✓				✓		✓		✓
Lough Carra	Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Towerhill House SAC	<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> (Lesser Horseshoe Bat)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓
Moore Hall SAC	<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> (Lesser Horseshoe Bat)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓
Clew Bay Complex SAC	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide Coastal lagoons Large shallow inlets and bays Embryonic shifting dunes	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Annual vegetation of drift lines Perennial vegetation of stony banks	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>)	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) Machairs (* in Ireland)	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓				✓
	<i>Vertigo geyeri</i> (Geyer's Whorl Snail)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	<i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) <i>Phoca vitulina</i> (Harbour Seal)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

European site	Qualifying Interest	Habitat loss	Habitat fragmentation	Changes in physical regime	Physical damage	Habitat/community simplification	Disturbance (noise/ visual)	Competition from invasive non-native species	Changes in water levels or table	Changes in water quality	Changes to surface water flooding	Turbidity and siltation	Pollution
Lough Mask SPA	Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Wetland and Waterbirds	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

4.4 An initial scoping of European sites within 15km of the Plan area

Ten European sites are located within 15km of the Plan boundary. No further sites are hydrologically linked up to 20km.

Some of these European Sites can be further screened out based on lack of pathways from the Plan. In Table 4-3 below, these sites are further screened for pathways including surface water, groundwater, and air pathways, as well as disturbance to species if applicable. European sites are screened-in if at least one pathway is identified.

Table 4-3: European Sites Pre-Screening based on ZOI and Potential Pathways

Site Code	European Sites within 15km of Plan area	Distance from Plan	Surface water pathway	Groundwater pathway	Air Pathway	Disturbance pathway	Pathway?
002298	River Moy SAC	1.5km	Yes - 6.4km downstream.	Yes, same GW body as the (Swinford) as the lower part of the Moy Catchment.	Possible pathway, as located to NE and proximity.	Weak pathway for direct disturbance. But, species which utilise the River Moy SAC may also use the Castlebar River (ex-site habitat for species), or via recreational pressures on the river itself.	Yes - surface, groundwater and air
002144	Newport River SAC	5.38km	No - Separate surface waterbody	No. Separate GWB (Clifden Castlebar IE_WE_G_0017).	No - Unlikely pathway due to distance and direction (NW) from Plan boundary and air dispersion	No - Salmon and Freshwater Pearl Mussel are qualifying interests, however, there is not considered to be any direct disturbance pathway between the Plan area and these species, as there is no hydrological connection	No
002081	Ballinafad SAC	7.65km	No - no hydrological connection	No. QI features are not groundwater dependent.	Unlikely pathway due to distance	No - Lesser Horseshoe Bat are a qualifying interest but are not expected to be impacted upon by the Development Plan.	No
001774	Lough Carra/Mask Complex SAC	8km	No - Separate hydrological unit (Corrib)	No - closest Groundwater body to Plan is Ballyhean IE_WE_G_0022 but is outside of the Plan area	Unlikely pathway due to distance	No - Terrestrial and aquatic habitats, as well as limestone features are not expected to be impacted due to the distance from the Plan boundary. Lesser Horseshoe Bat and Otter are qualifying interests but are not expected to be impacted upon by noise or visual disturbance due to distance from the Development Plan.	No
004051	Lough Carra SPA	8.15km	No - Separate hydrological unit (Corrib)	No - closest Groundwater body to Plan is Ballyhean IE_WE_G_0022 but is outside of Plan boundary	Unlikely pathway due to distance	No - Common Gull are a qualifying interest and are not likely to be present in Plan area to be at risk of increased recreational pressures	No
000463	Balla Turlough SAC	9.9km	No surface water connection.	QI is groundwater dependent, and in the same GW body. However, the distance and direction of the GW flow, presence of surface water features indicates no connection. No functional pathway identified.	Unlikely pathway due to distance	N/A - No species QI	No
004228	Lough Conn and Lough Cullin SPA	10km	Pathway identified. Part of the River Moy Hydrological unit. But >15km downstream. Pathway considered not functional.	Pathway identified. Foxford GWB IE_WE_G_0034 is overlapping with part of the plan area. However, distance, and poorly productive bedrock means pathway is not functional.	Unlikely pathway due to distance	Yes - SPA protected for Annex I species Tufted Duck, Greenland White-fronted Goose, and other bird species Common Scoter, Common Gull and Species likely to be present in Plan area and risk of increased recreational pressure.	Yes - disturbance

Site Code	European Sites within 15km of Plan area	Distance from Plan	Surface water pathway	Groundwater pathway	Air Pathway	Disturbance pathway	JBA Pathway?
002179	Towerhill House SAC	11.75km	No - Separate hydrological unit (Corrib)	No. QI features are not groundwater dependent.	Unlikely pathway due to distance	No - Lesser Horseshoe Bat are a qualifying interest but are not expected to be impacted upon by the Development Plan.	No
000527	Moore Hall SAC	12.85km	No - Separate hydrological unit (Corrib)	No. QI features are not groundwater dependent.	Unlikely pathway due to distance	No - Lesser Horseshoe Bat are a qualifying interest but are not expected to be impacted upon by the Development Plan.	No
001482	Clew Bay Complex SAC	13.76km	No - Separate hydrological unit (Errif-Clew Bay)	No. Separate GWB Newport IE_WE_G_0023	Unlikely pathway due to distance	No - Terrestrial and aquatic habitats, as well as limestone features are not expected to be impacted due to the distance from the Plan boundary. Harbour Seal and Otter are qualifying interests but are not expected to be impacted upon by noise or visual disturbance due to distance from the Development Plan.	No
004062	Lough Mask SPA	14.55km	No - Separate hydrological unit (Corrib)	No. Separate GWB Killavally IE_WE_G_0018	Unlikely pathway due to distance	No - Annex I species Greenland White-fronted Goose, Common Tern are QI's for the site, with Tufted Duck, Black-headed Gull, Common Gull, and Lesser Black-backed Gull also occupying. Due to the habitats these species utilise there is not considered to be any direct disturbance pathway between the Plan area and these species.	No

4.5 Summary of Pre-Screening

Due to lack of pathways based on preliminary screening on Sites within the ZoI of 15km (Table 4-4), the following European Sites will not be further assessed for potential impacts:

- Newport River SAC
- Ballinacfad SAC
- Lough Carra/Mask Complex SAC
- Lough Carra SPA
- Balla Turlough SAC
- Towerhill House SAC
- Moore Hall SAC
- Clew Bay Complex SAC
- Lough Mask SPA

The European sites that have been identified which contain a pathway-receptor for potential significant effects arising from the implementation of the Plan area are:

- River Moy SAC - for surface water, groundwater and air pathway
- Lough Conn and Lough Cullin SPA - disturbance pathway.

4.6 Potential Impact Pathways from the Plan

The LAP has the potential to cause a number of direct and indirect effects on European Sites via one or more pathways. The potential effects from plans and projects include long-term effects associated with the operational phase of proposed developments or general population growth, and short-term effects arising from the development construction phases. The main potential effects are described below.

4.6.1 Hydrological Impacts

New development and population increase can result in hydrological effects to existing watercourses and groundwater resources. Such effects can include changes to surface and groundwater flows, quality and levels; this can have subsequent effects on habitats and supported species. The main types of potential hydrological effects are as follows:

- *Water abstraction* – new developments would increase the demand for water resulting in increased levels of water abstraction and subsequently affect surface and/or ground water flow, quality, and levels. Any such effects would be more extreme during the summer as water demand will peak at this time. The assessment of potential effects of increased water demand will consider how the public water supply system operates and how it is regulated with other water-resource consents.
- *Water discharges* – new developments could result in an increase in discharges to water via foul and surface water/storm water drainage (flood risk). This could also occur during construction phases (e.g., oil spillage or other pollution incidents from construction plant and machinery) but would be short-term and of reduced significance. Discharges can also occur during the operational phase of works through the increased use of waterways by motor powered boats and oil from a higher number of cars using roads close to the watercourse network. Such discharges can impact on surface water and ground water quality, quantity, and flows. The water quality effects of the plan are likely to be either controlled by existing consent regimes (which must undergo AA) or have diffuse ‘in-combination’ effects that are difficult to quantify and therefore any assessment must focus on the development of suitable mitigating policy that will minimise the impacts of development on water quality.

The screening assessment will consider the potential for impacts on a European site due to changes in water levels and/or quality by taking into consideration the vulnerability of their interest features to such impacts, and the pathways i.e., the hydrological connectivity between the site and the areas proposed for development. Developments along the Castlebar River, and those with run-off entering the storm water system have a direct connection to the River Moy SAC.

In line with the *People over Wind & Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta Case C-323/1*, policy or proposal-level protective and mitigation measures relating to water abstraction and/or water discharges will only be considered at the AA stage (NIR).

A large proportion of the activities which exploit water resources, such as agriculture, flood defence, recreation, power generation, fisheries or nature conservation, will not be directly controlled or influenced by options/policies contained within the LAP. Furthermore, specific consenting regimes, independent of the Local Plan, tend to regulate water supply and exploitation in relation to water-resource sensitive European sites. However, development promoted or supported by the LAP will likely increase demand for water.

Additionally, ongoing flooding has occurred in the past few years at several households in the areas of Rathbawn and Garryduff, and residents have had their properties flooded on a regular basis.

4.6.1.1 Site Specific Hydrological Pressures:

The 3rd Cycle Draft Moy and Killala Bay Catchment Report (HA 34) (Catchments Science & Management Unit 2021) identifies 2 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.

It is likely hydromorphological impacts from the Moy and Lough Lannagh Drainage Schemes will be focused on; issues related to urban run-off in Castlebar town are also likely to be considered; as well as potential issues related to agriculture, and domestic Wastewater (WFD Cycle 2, 2018: Catchment Moy & Killala Bay Sub-catchment Castlebar_SC_010, Code 34_22, catchments.ie).

4.6.2 Recreational impacts

An increase in recreational impacts from an increased urban population may include dog-walking, jogging, cycling, horse-riding, motorbike scrambling, boating and other water-based leisure activities.

Improved access to the countryside and increased tourism will also attract more visitors to the area as well as residents. This can lead to significant pressures on sensitive habitats resulting in damage and disturbance to the species they support. Typical impacts of tourism and recreation include:

- Physical damage, for example from trampling and erosion.
- Disturbance to species, such as ground-nesting birds and wintering wildfowl, from walking, cycling and water sports, resulting in increased mortality and nesting failures, and displacement of species.
- Air pollution and disturbance from traffic.
- Disturbance from dogs and damage from dog excrement.

In addition, where sites are close to urban areas and new developments, recreational pressures can be exacerbated by other damaging activities such fly-tipping, vandalism, arson, and bird predation by cats.

Many European sites will be vulnerable to some degree of impact resulting from recreational pressure, although the effects of recreational impacts are complex and very much dependent on the specific conditions and interest features at each site. For example, some bird species are more sensitive to disturbance associated with walkers or dogs than others; some habitats will be more sensitive to trampling than others; and some sites will be more accessible than others.

Most recreational activities with the potential to affect European sites are 'casual' and pursued opportunistically (e.g., walking, walking dogs, riding) which makes it difficult to quantify or predict the impacts of these activities on European sites and harder to control or manage. It also means it is difficult to explore in detail all potential impacts of recreational pressures at the strategic level. However, it is possible for plans and strategies to influence recreational use of European sites through the planning process, for example by increasing the amount of green/open space and leisure/recreational facilities required within or near developments if potentially vulnerable European sites are located nearby. As Lough Conn and Lough Cullin SPA is not within the Plan area, it is unlikely that the activities outlined above will prove to be impactful, though an urban expansion could see an increase in the numbers of anglers at Lough Conn.

The screening assessment will consider the potential for recreational pressures on a European site by taking into consideration the vulnerability of their interest features to such pressures, the accessibility of the site to the public, and the likely attractiveness of the site and its habitats/species to visitors.

4.6.3 Urbanisation, Urban Sprawl, Linear Development

This is a broad term that can act as a pathway to produce a number of often distinct impacts. Population increasing in Castlebar will lead to an increase in impacts from development. Given the distance to the SAC, urbanisation with the Local Area Plan boundary is not considered to have a direct impact on the Natura Network. As the River Moy SAC is at distance, the potential for urbanisation is considered low from but Linear development along the L721 and the R310 would have the potential to cause impacts where in proximity to the River Moy SAC.

4.6.4 Transport and Related Infrastructure

To enhance the local economy of Castlebar, and to promote residential, commercial, and recreational development, transport and its related infrastructure will likely increase. New or additional transport infrastructure to support expanding development can have impacts, during construction and operation, on European Sites, and can act as a pathway to produce several usually disparate impacts to European sites. This can include:

- Habitat loss should any infrastructure development occur within the boundaries of a European site.
- Loss of supporting habitats, damaging or changing feeding and roosting locations used by wetland birds that are not within the boundaries of the designated site, but that provide important functional habitat linkages, can also be a significant impact.
- Habitat fragmentation, whereby new development results in the separation of available habitats or splits extensive areas of suitable habitat. It is most likely to impact upon species.
- Disturbance (noise and visual) associated with both the construction phase (e.g., from plant movements, machinery) and also the operational phase (e.g., increased traffic). This typically affects sensitive species such as birds and mammals causing them to deviate from their normal preferred behaviour.
- Air pollution from increased traffic both during the construction and operational phases.

4.6.5 Air Quality

New developments and an increase in population have the potential to result in increased use of the road network by vehicles, which could have adverse effects on air quality. This could have subsequent effects on habitats sensitive to air quality changes and higher deposits of nitrogen dioxide, particulates, and sulphur dioxide (diesel trains). It should be noted that the likelihood of this air pollution effect is greatly reduced as the distance increases between the deposit area (typically the road network) and the European site. Pollutant levels can be expected to fall noticeably at a distance less than 50m from the source and can be expected to fall to background levels at more than 200m. From a study conducted by (Smithers *et al.* 2016) in relation to the amounts of NOx and NO2 associated with vehicle emissions, respectively, levels are greatest within the first 50-100m from the road but could also become evident at increased distances.

Increased populations can lead to increased air emissions. Castlebar is in a coal burning restricted zone (EPA, 2022) as one of the top 39 towns outside Dublin/Cork. This measure will help to minimise air emissions.

Developments with considerable air emissions may also discharge fine particulates, which depending on air dispersion patterns may settle out in areas which can be susceptible to effects from air pollution e.g., increased eutrophication from the particulate matter settling out - bogs are particularly sensitive to nitrogen, ammonia and acid deposition.

The Air Quality Index for the area is overall good, with the nearest air quality station being Station 26 (EPA 2022), located at the EPA Office along John Moore Road.

5 Cumulative and/or in-combination Impacts

As part of the AA, in addition to considering the proposed Plan itself, other relevant Projects and Plans in the region that may induce cumulative impacts must also be considered. As such, the list below contains Plans and Projects that are relevant to Castlebar LAP and that may interact to cause cumulative and/or in-combination effects to European sites and QIs.

5.1.1 Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028

The Mayo County Development Plan (MCDP) 2022-2028 was adopted at a Special Planning Meeting on the 29th June 2022. The Plan is now in effect as and from 10th August 2022.

The plan sets out the overall strategy for planning and sustainable development for the county. Chapter 10 of the plan outlines the aims of the Mayo County Council to protect and enhance the natural heritage and biodiversity of designated and non-designated ecological sites and sets out the policies and objectives for this. The Castlebar LAP complements the implementation of the current MCDP.

The Natura Impact Report is being produced to assess potential impacts to European Sites as a result of the plan. Actions that may arise from the Mayo CDP will be considered at a project level where appropriate, which will ensure that any cumulative or in-combination impacts are addressed. However, due to the high-level nature of this Plan, it is not possible to determine with confidence the likely impacts or mitigation measures required yet in detail.

Therefore, cumulative or in-combination impacts may arise as a result of projects that may occur as a result of this Plan and will be subject to AA which will assess these in detail and provide suitable mitigation measures where appropriate. Mitigation measures that may be required are discussed in Section 8. Protective policies within this plan and within the MCDP will provide inherent protection for the European sites.

5.1.2 National Planning Framework - Project Ireland 2040

National Planning Framework - Project Ireland 2040 is the government's long-term overarching strategy to make Ireland a better country for all of its people. Alongside the development of physical infrastructure, Project Ireland 2040 supports business and communities across all of Ireland in realising their potential. The National Development Plan and the National Planning Framework combine to form Project Ireland 2040. Development of infrastructure may have localised adverse impacts. Actions that may arise as a result of Project Ireland 2040 will be considered at a project level, which will ensure that any cumulative or in-combination impacts are addressed. Due to the high-level nature of this Plan, it is not possible to determine with confidence the likely impacts or mitigation measures required yet in detail.

Therefore, cumulative or in-combination impacts may arise as a result of projects that may occur as a result of Project Ireland 2040. Any projects that may arise as a result of this plan will have a project level AA which will assess these in detail and provide suitable mitigation measures where appropriate.

5.1.3 River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021

The River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) (DoHPLG 2018) for Ireland 2018-2021 sets out the actions that Ireland will take to improve water quality and achieve 'good' ecological status in water bodies (rivers, lakes, estuaries and coastal waters) by 2021 (DoHPLG, 2018a).

The plans described the classification results and identified measures that can be introduced in order to safeguard waters and meet the environmental objectives of the WFD:

- Prevent deterioration of water body status
- Restore good status to water bodies
- Achieve protected areas objectives
- Reduce chemical pollution of water bodies

These objectives support the policies in the LAP. However, any projects that may arise as a result of this plan will have a project level AA which will assess these in detail and provide suitable mitigation measures where appropriate.

The River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027 is at Public Consultation Stage.

The third cycle of Ireland's River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for the period 2022-2027 has not yet been fully adopted. As of June 2024, the plan is still undergoing public consultation. The draft RBMP has been prepared and is available for public review and feedback until June 24, 2024 (<https://www.gov.ie/en/consultation/95fcb-public-consultation-on-the-natura-impact-statement-of-the-3rd-cycle-river-basin-management-plan>).

The plan aims to protect and improve water quality in Ireland's rivers, lakes, estuaries, and seas, in line with the EU Water Framework Directive. It includes measures for addressing various water quality issues, such as agricultural runoff, sewage pollution, and the impacts of climate change (Catchments.ie)

Once the public consultation period ends, the feedback will be reviewed, and necessary updates will be made before the final plan is adopted (Catchments.ie).

These objectives in both the current River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 and the draft plan 2022-2027 support the policies in the LAP. However, any projects that may arise as a result of this plan will have a project level AA which will assess these in detail and provide suitable mitigation measures where appropriate.

5.1.4 Mayo Co. Co. Climate Change Adaptation Strategy

Mayo Co. Co. has developed a 5-year Climate Adaptation Strategy – Climate Ready Mayo which sets out a vision for a climate ready County, that understands how climate change will affect their communities and businesses. As well as setting out how the County will work together to reduce the risk and avail of the opportunities that climate change will bring. The strategy has been through a Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening and an AA screening, where the AA concluded that the strategy will have no significant effect on European sites.

6 Screening Assessment

This section considers the development policies of the Castlebar LAP and identifies whether they are likely to have significant effects on European sites, either alone or in-combination with other plans.

Section 3 identified that the following European Sites have a pathway for impact:

- Lough Conn and Lough Cullin SPA
- River Moy SAC

6.1 Introduction

Assessment of the potential impacts of Castlebar LAP aims, objectives, strategies and policies is required under regulation 42 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011).

This section aims to identify whether the proposed Plan aims, objectives, strategies and policies are likely to have a significant effect, either alone, or in-combination with other projects and plans, on the European Sites within the Zol.

The 'screening' process addresses and records the reasoning and conclusions in relation to the first two tests of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive:

- Is the plan or programme directly connected to or necessary for the management of the site; and
- Will the plan or programme, alone or in-combination with other plans and projects, have a significant effect on a European site in view of its conservation objectives.

If the effects are deemed to be significant, potentially significant, or uncertain, then the plan or programme that is under assessment is subject to a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment, reported in the form of a NIR.

The aims, objectives, strategies, and policies of Castlebar LAP are not directly connected to the management of any European Sites; however, they could have potential to cause significant effects on European Sites.

6.2 Screening methodology

In accordance with DEHLG guidance, the key to determining if an AA is required for a Plan, is in the assessment of whether the plan and its policies and objectives are likely to have a significant effect on a European site.

For this process, the screening of this plan has been broken down into 4 steps.

1. Description of the programme (Section 2);
2. Screening of European sites within the Zol of the plan dependent on the presence of potential pathways and nature of the qualifying interests.
3. Assessing the policies and objectives to identify potential impacts. Determining the significance of these potential impacts and the requirement for follow up assessments.
4. Screening Statement with conclusions. This is presented in Section 6.5

6.2.1 The Precautionary Principle

If there is uncertainty, and it is not possible, based on the information available, to confidently determine no likely significant effects on a site then the precautionary principle will be applied, and the plan will be subject to an AA.

6.2.2 Mitigation, Avoidance and Protective Measures

Following the *People over Wind & Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta* Case C-323/17, the assessment does not consider protective, avoidance or mitigation measures for stage 1 Screening. These measures are carried forward and considered as part of the stage 2 AA.

6.3 Screening of Development Policies and Objectives

The development policies have initially been screened following the methodology set out in DTA Publications Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook (DTA 2022). Each policy is allocated one or more screening category, shown in Table 6-1 below. The results of the initial screening are shown in Table 6-2. Where several categories to screen out a policy are applicable, the most relevant categories are listed in the table. The screening outcome includes any relevant in-combination assessment outcomes.

Table 6-1: Screening categories for the development policies (adapted from DTA, 2022)

Screening Category	Description	Screening Outcome
A	General statement of policy/general aspiration.	Out
B	Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals.	Out
C	Proposal referred to but not proposed by the plan.	Out
D	Environmental Protection/site safeguarding policy.	Out
E	Policies or proposals that steer change in such a way as to protect European sites from adverse effects.	Out
F	Policy that cannot lead to development or other change.	Out
G	Policy or proposal that could not have any conceivable effect on a European site.	Out
H	Policy or proposal, the actual or theoretical effects of which cannot undermine the conservation objectives (either alone or in combination with other aspects of this or other plans or projects).	Out
I	Policy or proposal with a likely significant effect on a site alone.	In
J	Policy or proposal with an effect on a site but not likely to be significant alone, so need to check for likely significant effects in combination.	Dependant on in-combination test
K	Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination.	Screened out after in-combination test
L	Policy or proposal likely to have a significant effect in combination.	Screened in after in-combination test.

Note that some of the transport policies which were originally screened in during the Draft Plan have now been screened out, as they are covered under a stand-alone assessment for the Local Transport Plan.

Table 6-2: Screening Table of Castlebar LAP Policies and Objectives

Policy No. and Summary	Screening Category	Screening Outcome
Chapter 2 – Development Strategy		
Development Strategy Policies		
DSP1		
Support and facilitate the sustainable growth of social, economic and residential development in Castlebar in accordance with the National Planning Framework, the Northern & Western Regional Spatial Economic Strategy 2020-2032, and the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 (and any review thereof).	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
DSP2		
Support the compact growth of Castlebar to ensure that new development proceeds in a sustainable manner and at an appropriate scale, density and sequence and in line with the Core Strategy.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
DSP3		
Promote measures to reduce vacancy and the underuse of existing building stock and support initiatives that promote the reuse, refurbishment and retrofitting of existing buildings within the Castlebar Plan area.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
DSP4		
Ensure that sufficient land is available at appropriate locations to satisfy the Economic Development Strategy and County Core Strategy growth allocation for Castlebar and to ensure Castlebar maintains its status as one of Mayo's Key Towns and that key employment sites are provided.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
DSP5		
Ensure the vitality and viability of the town centre is maintained and enhanced and to strengthen its function by facilitating the development of residential, retail, community, tourism, professional and other services, subject to compliance with the policies and development management standards of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
DSP6		
Ensure that all new development within the Castlebar LAP area accord with the policies, objectives and development standards set out in the Mayo County Development 2022-2028 in respect of waste water systems.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
DSP7		
Support the effective and efficient use of land in Castlebar, prioritising compact growth through the development of brownfield/infill land in the built-up footprint of the town in preference to greenfield land.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
DSP8		
Require the preparation and assessment of all planning applications in the plan area to have regard to the information, data and requirements of Appropriate Assessment,	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/ site safeguarding/ threshold policies	Out

Policy No. and Summary	Screening Category	Screening Outcome
Natura Impact Report, SEA Environment Report and Strategy Flood Risk Assessment Report that accompany this LAP. There shall be a requirement of Ecological Impact Assessment as appropriate in the Plan area.	K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	
Development Strategy Objectives		
DSO1		
Deliver at least 30% of all new homes in Castlebar within the existing built up footprint of the town.	I - Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone L - Policy or proposal which might be likely to have significant effect in-combination	IN
DSO2		
Seek the sustainable intensification and consolidation of the existing built environment in accordance with the objectives for compact growth in higher-level spatial plans through appropriate infill, brownfield development, supported by the necessary physical and community infrastructure.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
DSO3		
Promote sustainable economic development, enterprise and employment opportunities and prioritise the town centre as the primary location for retail and services.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
DSO4		
Promote and facilitate sustainable modes of transport prioritising walking, cycling and public transport, whilst protecting and improving existing road infrastructure.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/ site safeguarding/ threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
DSO5		
Protect, conserve and enhance the built environment, through promoting awareness, utilising relevant heritage legislation and ensuring quality urban design principles are applied to all new developments, respecting historic and architectural heritage.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
DSO6		
Protect, enhance and connect areas of natural heritage, green and blue infrastructure and open space for the benefits of quality of life and biodiversity, capitalising on climate change adaptation and flood risk measures.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/ site safeguarding/ threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
DSO7		
Ensure the highest quality of public realm and urban design principles are applied to all new developments.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
DSO8		
Guide the future development of Castlebar in accordance with the Town Centre First policy approach seeking to bring people and appropriate business/services back into the heart of Castlebar through place-making, good quality urban design, sustainable mobility and control of development in other locations which might undermine this	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out

Policy No. and Summary	Screening Category	Screening Outcome
objective.		
DSO9		
<p>Ensure the future development of Castlebar supports the just transition to a low carbon society and economy, implementing national policy to reduce gas emissions, improve environmental quality and contribute to national targets for climate change.</p>	<p>A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	<p>Out</p>
DSO10		
<p>Monitor the scale, type, tenure and location of constructed and permitted developments in Castlebar during the lifetime of the Plan and apply appropriate development management standards to ensure compliance with the Core Strategy and the County Development Plan to achieve the delivery of strategic, plan-led and coordinated balanced development within the town.</p>	<p>A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	<p>Out</p>
Chapter 3 – Climate Action		
Climate Action Policies		
CAP1		
<p>Mitigate against the effects of climate change, adapt to its impacts, and to ensure resilience, development proposals should take into account and demonstrate how they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) promoting sustainable patterns of development including development in sustainable locations; b) promoting the use of energy efficient, micro-generating and decentralised renewable energy systems, including through incorporating sustainable design features and the use of zero carbon technologies; c) promoting the use of zero carbon technologies; d) facilitating sustainable travel by encouraging active travel and travel by public transport in preference to the private car; e) supporting the adaption of existing homes to reduce energy use, including Protected Structures and those located within Architectural Conservation Areas, providing there is no adverse impact on historic character or appearance. f) supporting the delivery of facilities needed to divert waste away from landfill and promote the prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery of materials (including heat from waste) with disposal to landfill as the final option; g) limiting / mitigating the likely greenhouse gas emissions, including through the provision of green infrastructure, and minimising resource and energy requirements through the siting, design and layout of all new development; h) working with natural environmental processes through promoting green infrastructure and the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems / Nature Based Solutions. 	<p>A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	<p>Out</p>
CAP2		
<p>Promote and encourage development which is resilient to climate change by ensuring that development proposals demonstrate sustainable design principles for new buildings/ services/site including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) measures such as green roofs and green walls to reduce internal overheating and the urban heat island effect; 	<p>A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	<p>Out</p>

Policy No. and Summary	Screening Category	Screening Outcome
<p>b) ensuring the efficient use of natural resources (including water) and making the most of natural systems both within and around buildings;</p> <p>c) minimising pollution by reducing surface water runoff through increasing permeable surfaces and use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS);</p> <p>d) reducing flood risk, damage to property from extreme events– residential, public and commercial;</p> <p>e) reducing risks from temperature extremes and extreme weather events to critical infrastructure such as roads, communication networks, the water/drainage network, and energy supply;</p> <p>f) promoting and protecting biodiversity and green infrastructure.</p>		
CAP3		
<p>Promote low carbon development within the County which will seek to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, and which will meet the highest feasible environmental standards during construction and occupation. New development should generally demonstrate/provide for:</p> <p>a) Building layout and design which maximises daylight, natural ventilation, active transport and public transport use;</p> <p>b) Sustainable building/services/site design to maximise energy efficiency;</p> <p>c) Sensitive energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings</p> <p>d) Energy efficiency, energy conservation, and the increased use of renewable energy in existing and new developments;</p>	<p>A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	Out
CAP4		
<p>Support a successful transition to a circular economy where waste and resources are minimised in accordance with emerging legislation and national strategy including the Circular Economy Programme 2021-2027, as amended or superseded.</p>	<p>A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	Out
CAP5		
<p>Support the designated and any future Decarbonising Zone (DZ) in Castlebar and associated implementation plan promoting measures to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions and improve general environmental conditions in this area.</p>	<p>A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	Out
CAP6		
<p>Support Energy Master Plans prepared by Sustainable Energy Communities in Castlebar, in particular, where appropriate, to support the recommendations of the Castlebar Energy Master Plan.</p>	<p>A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	Out
CAP7		
<p>Support and encourage the development of small scale wind renewable facilities / micro- renewable energy production.</p>	<p>B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/ site safeguarding/ threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	Out
CAP8		
<p>Promote and encourage positive community and/or co-operative led climate action initiatives and projects in Castlebar that seek to reduce carbon emissions, improve</p>	<p>A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals</p>	Out

Policy No. and Summary	Screening Category	Screening Outcome
energy efficiency, enhance green infrastructure and encourage awareness on climate change issues.	K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	
CAP9		
Promote the use of district heating systems in new residential and commercial developments where such development does not have a negative impact on the surrounding environment, landscape, biodiversity or local amenities.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/ site safeguarding/ threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
CAP10		
Support the development of sustainable low-carbon climate resilient communities and encourage a climate adaptation and mitigation approach to developments which will enable regeneration.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/ site safeguarding/ threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
CAP11		
Encourage innovation and facilitate the development of pilot schemes in Castlebar that support climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/ site safeguarding/ threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
Climate Action Objectives		
CAO1		
Ensure all development proposals shall have regard to the Mayo Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (2019) and the associated SEA and NIS Environmental Reports, any revised or forthcoming adaptation, mitigation or climate action strategies in the formulation of any plans and when assessing planning application for future developments.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/ site safeguarding/ threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination Project level NIS provides protection.	Out
CAO2		
Consider a variation of the development plan within a reasonable period of time, or to include such other mechanism, as may be appropriate, to ensure that the development plan will be consistent with the approach to climate action recommended in the revised Local Area Plan Guidelines when adopted or any other relevant guidelines.	I - Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone L - Policy or proposal which might be likely to have significant effect in combination	In
CAO3		
Promote the use of smart climate change, energy and carbon off-setting solutions in new developments. In the cases of large industrial, commercial or newly constructed public buildings, the incorporation of renewable technologies, such as solar energy in the design will be encouraged, subject to compliance with all relevant planning criteria. The Council encourages the NZEB standard of building or equivalent for all new development and the use of blue and green infrastructure as a mechanism for surface water management and improving public realm.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/ site safeguarding/ threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
CAO4		
Support high levels of energy conservation, energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources in existing buildings, including retro-fitting of appropriate energy efficiency measures in the existing building stock, and to actively retrofit Mayo County Council's housing stock to a B2 Building Energy Rating (BER) in line with the	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in	Out

Policy No. and Summary	Screening Category	Screening Outcome
Government's Housing for All Plan retrofit targets for 2030.	combination	
CAO5		
<p>Have regard to Goal 3 of the Mayo Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024: Increase the Resilience of Natural and Cultural Capital:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build awareness of Nature Based Adaptation Solutions and Green Infrastructure. 2. Support biodiversity for its intrinsic value within the natural environment and its importance in climate change adaptation. 3. Develop a database of impacts of climate change on Mayo's Natural Environment. 4. Identify Cultural and Heritage Sites vulnerable to climate change and develop adaptation and management policies. 5. Encourage adaptation in Agriculture and Local Food Supply 	<p>A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/ site safeguarding/ threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	Out
Chapter 4 – Town Centre Regeneration Strategy		
Town Centre Policy		
TCP1		
<p>Ensure that new development in the town centre, and in particular, the opportunity areas comprise the highest of qualitative and design standards, complimenting the existing historical built fabric, or natural heritage, sustaining Castlebar as a town in which to live, work, invest in and do business.</p>	<p>I - Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone L - Policy or proposal which might be likely to have significant effect in-combination</p>	In
TCP2		
<p>Seek to develop and improve areas within the town that are in need of regeneration, renewal and redevelopment. The Council will seek to apply, where appropriate, the provisions of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, Derelict Sites Act, and use Compulsory Purchase Orders and other active land management instruments, as appropriate, to facilitate regeneration, housing supply, employment opportunities and community facilities.</p>	<p>I - Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone L - Policy or proposal which might be likely to have significant effect in-combination</p>	In
TCP3		
<p>Protect the visual character, built & cultural heritage, ambience and vitality of the traditional heart of the town centre in order to meet the retailing and service needs of the area, in addition to offering a pleasant and attractive environment for shopping, business, tourism, recreation and living.</p>	<p>A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	Out
TCP4		
<p>Actively encourage, support and facilitate environmental and public realm improvements in Castlebar to address environmental quality, urban design, safety, identity and traffic impact.</p>	<p>B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/ site safeguarding/ threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	Out
TCP5		
<p>Support the development of the further public realm projects in Castlebar that will enhance the aesthetics of the town's built and natural character and improve the overall ambience and visitor experience of the town.</p>	<p>B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/ site safeguarding/ threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	Out
TCP6		

Policy No. and Summary	Screening Category	Screening Outcome
Embed an age-friendly approach to the design of the public realm.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
TCP7		
Support and encourage the principle of healthy place-making in Castlebar.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
Town Centre Objectives		
TCO1		
Encourage and facilitate the development of Opportunity Sites in Castlebar for a mixture of uses that will contribute to the regeneration, vibrancy, diversity, vitality, attractiveness, safety, liveability and compact growth of the town centre. In conjunction with this, proposed developments must demonstrate how they will interact within its context and the wider urban area.	I - Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone L - Policy or proposal which might be likely to have significant effect in-combination	In
TCO2		
Continue to develop and implement the Castlebar Town Centre Regeneration Strategy, and encourage and facilitate the reuse and regeneration of derelict, vacant, backland and underutilised lands and buildings in the town centre through active land management for retail, residential and other mixed uses and where necessary through appropriate legislative mechanisms/instruments and / or by supporting the progression and delivery of projects funded by the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund and other appropriate funds to achieve this aim.	I - Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone L - Policy or proposal which might be likely to have significant effect in-combination	In
TCO3		
(a) Promote high quality place-making and public realm in accordance with the Mayo Development Plan 2022 – 2028, including the Development Management Standards, any replacement thereof and any relevant Section 28 Guidance. All development shall demonstrate climate resilience measures to climate-proof critical infrastructure. (b) Ensure the highest quality of public realm and urban design principles are applied in the town centre, and the opportunity areas identified in this Proposed Plan. The success of the public realm is high quality, easily maintained street furniture, soft landscaping. Drainage solutions should be designed on the principles of SuDS. (c) Ensure development proposals have given proper consideration to the urban design criteria of site context, connectivity, inclusivity, variety, efficiency, distinctiveness, layout, public realm, adaptability, privacy and amenity, parking and detailed design.	I - Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone L - Policy or proposal which might be likely to have significant effect in-combination	Out
TCO4		
Work with landowners and other stakeholders in the redevelopment of the identified 'opportunity sites' for appropriate town centre uses over the lifetime of the Plan.	I - Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone L - Policy or proposal which might be likely to have significant effect in-combination	In
TCO5		
Work in partnership with community groups in the development of regeneration initiatives and public realm enhancement projects and to seek funding for projects as	A - General statement policy/general aspiration	Out

Policy No. and Summary	Screening Category	Screening Outcome
opportunities arise.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	
TCO6		
Support the provision of cycling infrastructure, bicycle parking facilities and electric vehicle charging points in the town centre, in accordance with the recommendations of the Local Transport Plan and subject to traffic and pedestrian safety	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/ site safeguarding/ threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
TCO7		
Undertake a building heights and residential density study for Castlebar town, within a year of adoption of this Local Area Plan, in order to identify suitable locations within the town where development potential for greater height and density rates can be suitably accommodated. These may require screening for SEA/AA and Ecological Impact Assessment as appropriate.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration D - General plan-wide environmental protection/ site safeguarding/ threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
TCO8		
Developers will be required to prepare urban design frameworks/masterplan for the Opportunity Sites in Castlebar Town Centre to inform future development proposals.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/ site safeguarding/ threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
TCO9		
Maintain and enhance the vitality and vibrancy of the Town Centre by addressing and controlling leakage of social, economic and service activities to areas outside the Town Centre..	A - General statement policy/general aspiration K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
TCO10		
Prevent the use of film or screening that obscures the glazed areas of a shopfront window where it negatively impacts upon the streetscape.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
Chapter 5 – Economic Development		
Economic Development Policy		
EDP1		
Encourage the development of employment areas in a comprehensive and sequential manner which uses existing infrastructure effectively and efficiently, ensuring they are designed to the highest architectural and landscaping standards, with natural site features, such as watercourses, trees and hedgerows be retained and enhanced as an integral part of the development/scheme.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/ site safeguarding/ threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
EDP2		
Support the development and expansion of enterprise and employment within Castlebar, and to co-operate with all stakeholders, landowners and relevant agencies to attract investment, while at the same time ensuring there is no resultant negative impact on the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/ site safeguarding/ threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
EDP3		

Policy No. and Summary	Screening Category	Screening Outcome
Support and promote the development of economic and enterprise development and activity in a manner which contributes to the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable county.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
Economic Development Objectives		
EDO1		
Engage with IDA Ireland and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment in seeking to attract Foreign Direct Investment into Castlebar.	I - Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone L - Policy or proposal which might be likely to have significant effect in-combination	In
EDO2		
Ensure new enterprise and employment uses provide Workplace Travel Plans /Mobility Management Plans to reduce dependency on private modes of travel consistent with the principles set out in the National Transport Authority guidance: 'Achieving Effective Workplace Travel Plans'.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals G - Policy or proposal that could not have any conceivable effect on a site	Out
EDO3		
Support, promote and facilitate the provision of shared co-working spaces/hubs in town centre and other appropriate locations in Castlebar to provide multi-purpose flexible workspace options.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
Retail and Town Centre Policy		
EDP4		
Support the retail function of Castlebar as a Regional Tier 2 Category town in the Retail Hierarchy, and to consolidate existing retail development within the town centre.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
EDP5		
Support and facilitate the development of retail, retail services and niche retailing in the town centre area, including new/infill development and redevelopment of an appropriate scale.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	In
EDP6		
Support and facilitate the development of retail led tourism associated with the natural and built heritage assets of Castlebar.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
Retail and Town Centre Objectives		
EDO4		
The Council, in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines for Local Authorities (DECLG, 2012 or as amended or superseded) will continue to protect and promote the vitality and viability of Castlebar town centre, including applying a 'town centre first approach' or sequential test for retail developments.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out

Policy No. and Summary	Screening Category	Screening Outcome
<p>EDO5</p> <p>Manage the over proliferation of certain undesirable uses such as fast-food outlets, amusement arcades, off licences, bookmakers, and of other non-retail uses in the interest of protecting the vibrancy, residential amenity and public realm of Castlebar's town centre.</p>	<p>B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals G - Policy or proposal that could not have any conceivable effect on a site</p>	<p>Out</p>
<p>EDO6</p> <p>Ensure that new shop front and signage design contributes positively to and enhances the streetscape and is in accordance with the guidance set out in The Development Management Standards of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 and as set out in the Mayo Shopfronts Booklet (Mayo County Council).</p>	<p>A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	<p>Out</p>
<p>EDO7</p> <p>Support, promote and facilitates measures, such as town centre regeneration, implementation of the local transport plan to improve accessibility and public realm improvements and other town centre first initiatives over the plan period, to reduce retail and commercial vacancy in Castlebar town centre.</p>	<p>A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals G - Policy or proposal that could not have any conceivable effect on a site</p>	<p>Out</p>
Tourism Policy		
<p>EDP7</p> <p>Support and encourage the provision of ground floor live work units and/or co-working spaces, as part of mixed-use and residential developments, in appropriate town centre locations, as a means of enlivening streets and to provide flexible accommodation for small businesses and remote working opportunities.</p>	<p>A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	<p>Out</p>
<p>EDP8</p> <p>Promote and support Castlebar as the sports capital of Mayo and seek to provide effective access to recreation and leisure opportunities within the natural environment and to maximise the local economic development opportunities while safeguarding the natural and build heritage.</p>	<p>B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals G - Policy or proposal that could not have any conceivable effect on a site</p>	<p>Out</p>
<p>EDP9</p> <p>Encourage the development of tourism activities such as water-based activities, cultural and food tourism including festivals and food markets in Castlebar.</p>	<p>B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	<p>Out</p>
<p>EDP10</p> <p>Support the development of new tourist facilities or the upgrading / extension of existing tourist facilities.</p>	<p>I - Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone L - Policy or proposal which might be likely to have significant effect in-combination</p>	<p>In</p>
<p>EDP11</p> <p>Promote festivals and sporting events to increase the tourism, cultural and lifestyle profile of the town.</p>	<p>I - Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone L - Policy or proposal which might be likely to have significant effect in-combination</p>	<p>In</p>
<p>EDP12</p> <p>Encourage linkages to strong tourism locations such as Westport to realise the potential of the Castlebar Westport Economic Growth Cluster (CWEG).</p>	<p>B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in</p>	<p>Out</p>

Policy No. and Summary	Screening Category	Screening Outcome
	combination	
Tourism Objectives		
EDO8		
Support and facilitate the development of an integrated network of greenways and heritage trails, including the Castlebar Urban Greenway to Turlough and Westport.	I - Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone L - Policy or proposal which might be likely to have significant effect in-combination	In
EDO9		
Work with all relevant stakeholders and Failte Ireland to facilitate the provision of standardised signage and interpretation for tourism facilities and tourist attractions throughout the town.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals G - Policy or proposal that could not have any conceivable effect on a site	Out
Chapter 6 – Housing and Sustainable Communities		
Residential Development Policy		
HSCP1		
Encourage the compact growth of Castlebar and undertake a town centre first approach to ensure that development proceeds sustainably and at an appropriate scale, density and sequence and in line with the County Core Strategy Table.	I - Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone L - Policy or proposal which might be likely to have significant effect in-combination	In
HSCP2		
Promote healthy place-making, increase the liveability factor of Castlebar, encourage the most efficient use of land, and ensure a mixture of residential unit types that are designed and constructed on the principles of universal design, life-long adaptability and energy efficiency.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/ site safeguarding/ threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
HSCP3		
Encourage the reuse of upper floors above commercial premises in Castlebar for residential accommodation.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
HSCP4		
Support new residential development and infill development that occurs in tandem with the delivery of supporting physical and social infrastructure.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals G - Policy or proposal that could not have any conceivable effect on a site	Out
HSCP5		
Support approved housing bodies and other sectoral agencies in the provision of a greater diversity of housing type and tenure, including social housing and exploring new models at low cost rental and affordable homeownership.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals G - Policy or proposal that could not have any conceivable effect on a site	Out
Residential Development Objectives		
HSCO1		
Support, promote and facilitate the appropriate consolidation, densification and/or redevelopment of brownfield and infill sites for residential uses within the footprint of the existing built up area, where appropriate, including living above the shop opportunities.	I - Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone L - Policy or proposal which might be likely to have significant effect in-combination	In

Policy No. and Summary	Screening Category	Screening Outcome
<p>HSC02</p> <p>Safeguard the amenity and integrity of completed residential estates and provide for smarter travel options, it is the objective of the Council to ensure that new access proposals to any adjoining lands through an existing completed residential estate is provided for pedestrian or bicycle movements/connectivity only.</p>	<p>A - General statement policy/general aspiration K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	<p>Out</p>
<p>HSC03</p> <p>Seek to provide Traveller Specific Accommodation at appropriate locations close to key services, including education, community, health, recreation and public transport facilities in accordance with the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024 (or any updated).</p>	<p>A - General statement policy/general aspiration K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	<p>Out</p>
<p><i>Density, Design and Mix Policy</i></p>		
<p>HSCP6</p> <p>Require that an appropriate sustainable mix of housing type, tenure, density and size is provided in all new residential areas, and in appropriate brownfield/infill areas to meet the needs of the population of Castlebar, including the provision of special needs housing, which includes housing for older people, people with disabilities, social housing, affordable housing and accommodation for the travelling community.</p>	<p>A - General statement policy/general aspiration K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	<p>Out</p>
<p><i>Residential Density, Design and Mix Objectives</i></p>		
<p>HSCO4</p> <p>Require that a good mix of housing types and sizes is provided in all new residential areas and in appropriate brownfield/infill areas within the town centre and existing residential areas, to meet the needs of the population of Castlebar, including the provision of appropriate supported housing and longer term residential care solutions designed for older people and/or people with disabilities. This will include accommodation provided under Part V requirements.</p>	<p>A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	<p>Out</p>
<p>HSCO5</p> <p>Support and promote high levels of energy conservation, energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources in existing buildings, including retro fitting of energy efficiency in traditional buildings. All new buildings will be required to achieve the Nearly Zero Energy Buildings (NZEB) standard in line with the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD).</p>	<p>B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/ site safeguarding/ threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	<p>Out</p>
<p>HSCO6</p> <p>Comply with the Special Policy Planning Requirements (SPPRs) for apartment standards and building heights issued under Section 28(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).</p>	<p>B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/ site safeguarding/ threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	<p>Out</p>
<p><i>Gaeltacht Service Town Policy</i></p>		
<p>HSCP7</p> <p>Support the role of Castlebar as a Gaeltacht Service Town and support the implementation of Castlebar Irish Language Plan when published.</p>	<p>B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals G - Policy or proposal that could not have any conceivable effect on a site</p>	<p>Out</p>
<p><i>Gaeltacht Service Town Objective</i></p>		
<p>HSCO7</p>		

Policy No. and Summary	Screening Category	Screening Outcome
Support and assist the formulation and implementation of Irish Language Plans through the lead agency Údarás Na Gaeltachta, within Castlebar as a Gaeltacht service Towns, as defined under the Gaeltacht Act, 2012.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
Age Friendly Policies		
HSCP8		
Promote an age-friendly town, which seeks universal accessibility and age-friendly homes in accordance with the Age-Friendly Ireland - Ten Universal Design Features, 2021, and the best-practice guidance outlined in the Building for Everyone – A Universal Design Approach, by the Centre of Excellence in Universal Design.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
Age Friendly Objectives		
HSCO8		
Support the objectives set out in Mayo Age Friendly County Strategy 2022–2026 and any subsequent strategy, regarding the implementation of Age Friendly principles in the planning, design and delivery of physical infrastructure, public realm works, business and commercial premises.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
HSCO9		
Encourage the delivery of facilities and services for older people, at appropriate locations in Castlebar.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals G - Policy or proposal that could not have any conceivable effect on a site	Out
Community, Arts and Educational Policy		
HSCP9		
Facilitate and support a broad range of community, cultural and recreational facilities to serve the future needs of the residents of the Plan area and its wider catchment.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals G - Policy or proposal that could not have any conceivable effect on a site	Out
Community, Arts and Educational Objectives		
HSCO10		
Facilitate and secure the provision of social infrastructure to support existing and new communities within the Plan area, in a manner which provides flexibility to respond to varied and changing community needs.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
HSCO11		
Encourage the development of new facilities and improvements to and expansion of existing facilities for educational, early learning, childcare and healthcare facilities, at appropriate locations in Castlebar.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
HSCO12		
Actively engage with the Department of Education and Skills in the identification and delivery of school sites to address the emerging demands.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
Sports and Recreation Objectives		

Policy No. and Summary	Screening Category	Screening Outcome
HSC013		
Support, promote and facilitate the development of cultural, arts and performance spaces in Castlebar.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals G - Policy or proposal that could not have any conceivable effect on a site	Out
HSC014		
Support the endeavours of sports and community groups in their acquisition and/or use of lands for sports and recreation purposes.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals G - Policy or proposal that could not have any conceivable effect on a site	Out
HSC015		
Facilitate and promote the development of a network of playgrounds, amenity spaces and recreational areas for children of all ages which are universally designed throughout the town and its environs.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
HSC016		
Support and facilitate the provision for the development of an outdoor running track for Castlebar.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
HSC017		
Develop a recreational strategy for Lough Lannagh, in order to aid and enable Castlebar's emergence as a major sports and adventure destination in Mayo.	I - Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone L - Policy or proposal which might be likely to have significant effect in-combination	In
HSC018		
Seek the development of additional municipal facilities that are available for all users within the town of Castlebar and its surrounding areas.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals G - Policy or proposal that could not have any conceivable effect on a site	Out
Chapter 7 – Movement and Transport		
Sustainable Mobility Policies		
MTP1		
Improve accessibility and movement within Castlebar, reduce dependency on private car transport, increase permeability in the town, and encourage the use of energy efficient forms of transport through the promotion of walking, cycling and public transport.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
MTP2		
Engage and co-operate with the Department of Transport, National Transport Authority (NTA), Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Irish Rail, Local Link and other stakeholders to improve the provision of public transport and public transport facilities in Castlebar.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
MTP3		
Ensure that new developments are designed to comply with Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2019) including making provision for pedestrian and cycle infrastructure and enhancing connectivity and accessibility to the town.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in	Out

Policy No. and Summary	Screening Category	Screening Outcome
	combination	
MTP4		
<p>Improve accessibility and movement within Castlebar, reduce dependency on private car transport, increase permeability in the town, and encourage the use of energy efficient forms of transport through the promotion of walking, cycling and public transport.</p>	<p>B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	Out
MTP5		
<p>Support the provision of cycling infrastructure, bicycle parking facilities and electric vehicle charging points in the town centre, in accordance with the recommendations of the Castlebar Local Transport Plan (as adopted) and subject to traffic and pedestrian safety.</p>	<p>B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	Out
MTP6		
<p>Make provisions for the use of electric vehicles through a significant increase in the provision of clearly and exclusively designated electric car charging points on public and private land in partnership with ESB and other relevant stakeholders and landowners.</p>	<p>A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	Out
Sustainable Mobility Objectives		
MTO1		
<p>a) Encourage and facilitate the maintenance and further development of the public footpath network, walking and cycling routes and associated infrastructure within the town and where possible the retrofitting of cycle and pedestrian routes into the existing urban road network.</p> <p>b) Promote and facilitate the enhancement of the public realm in order to create attractive, cohesive and well-connected places in order to encourage walking and cycling as more viable forms of transport within the town</p>	<p>B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p> <p>Note: Local Transport Plan (including paths, cycleways etc.) has its own screening, and project level provision for assessment.</p>	Out
MTO2		
<p>Seek the provision of workplace mobility plans for proposals for large scale employment and the development of Smarter Travel Initiatives as set in Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future 2009-2020 (or any replacement thereof).</p>	<p>B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p> <p>Note: Local Transport Plan (including paths, cycleways etc.) has its own screening, and project level provision for assessment.</p>	Out
MTO3		
<p>Promote sustainable, compact development by ensuring that all proposals for residential and mixed-use developments, including infill and brownfield, at design stage will consider/ incorporate provisions for pedestrian and cyclist activity and associated facilities that will integrate into the existing road/street network and proposed active travel network in the town</p>	<p>B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p> <p>Note: Local Transport Plan (including paths, cycleways etc.) has its own screening, and project level provision for assessment.</p>	Out
MTO4		
<p>Identify appropriate locations on public lands in partnership with ESB for the provision of battery charging infrastructure for electric vehicles in Castlebar.</p>	<p>B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in</p>	Out

Policy No. and Summary	Screening Category	Screening Outcome
	combination	
MTO5		
To monitor and review the progress of the Castlebar Local Transport Plan in line with the Monitoring & Review strategy set out in this Plan, and in accordance with its stated goals and objectives.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
Road Policies		
MTP7		
Ensure new development proposals comply with Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Local Authorities (DTTS, 2013) and safeguard the integrity, capacity and safety of national roads.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
Castlebar Local Transport Plan Objectives		
MTO 6		
Support the implementation of all measures and actions set out in the Castlebar Local Transport Plan once completed and adopted by the council in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination Note: Local Transport Plan (including paths, cycleways etc.) as its own screening, and project level provision for assessment.	Out
MTO 7		
Support the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in dependency on the private car • Discouragement of vehicular through traffic • Enhancement the public realm through traffic management and transport interventions • Development of public transport services. • Provision of transport demand management measures 	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination Note: Local Transport Plan (including paths, cycleways etc.) as its own screening, and project level provision for assessment	Out
Car Parking Objectives		
MTO8		
Explore and provide 'Park and Stride' facilities and Mobility Hubs at appropriate locations in the town, in accordance with the recommendations of the Castlebar LTP (once adopted) and in partnership with the relevant stakeholder.	A - General statement policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
MTO9		
Facilitate the provision of: a) Public car parks in its own role and/or in partnership with third parties, in its control of on-street parking and off-street parking to provide for short term shopping and business parking requirements and for the needs of local residents, rather than long term commuter parking.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out

Policy No. and Summary	Screening Category	Screening Outcome
b) Investigate the possibility of providing coach parking within the Plan Area.		
Chapter 8 – Built Heritage		
Built Heritage Conservation		
BEP1		
Maintain, conserve and protect the architectural quality, character and scale of Castlebar	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/ site safeguarding/ threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
BEP2		
Encourage high quality and well-designed buildings, structures, public spaces and streets and support and promote healthy placemaking and quality of life.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/ site safeguarding/ threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
BEP3		
Protect the town centre by ensuring all new developments are compatible with the existing character and visual amenity of Castlebar.	G - Policy or proposal that could not have any conceivable effect on a European site. K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination.	Out
BEP4		
Encourage residential uses on the upper floors of town centre commercial properties, where appropriate, and to encourage the retention of residential use except where an alternative use has been established, to maintain and enhance the overall vitality of the town centre area.	A - General statement of policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
BEP5		
Have regard to Mayo Shopfronts Design Guide for shopfronts and signs and to encourage the use of traditional shopfront designs and materials and signs.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/ site safeguarding/ threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
Built Heritage Conservation Objectives		
BEO1		
Prohibit the use of plastic and neon lit shop signs within the town core and at other locations where the planning authority deem them unsuitable.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/ site safeguarding/ threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
Architectural Heritage and Record of Protected Structures Policy		
BEP6		
Encourage the rehabilitation, renovation, climate-proofing and re-use of existing protected structures and vernacular buildings within the plan area, where appropriate, over the demolition of same and new-build on-site	A - General statement of policy/general aspiration K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
Architectural Heritage and Record of Protected Structures Objectives		

Policy No. and Summary	Screening Category	Screening Outcome
BEO2		
Protect all structures in Castlebar that are listed in the County Mayo Record of Protected Structures.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
BEO3		
Preserve the form and character of the protected structures by ensuring that any proposed sub-division of protected structures for multiple residential units does not impair the character of the protected structure.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
BEO4		
Ensure that any alterations or interventions to protected structures shall be executed to a high conservation standard in order to protect their significance or value. Any applications for development of protected structures shall be accompanied by an assessment carried out by an accredited conservation architect, in accordance with the Councils requirements.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
BEO5		
Identify places of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest, and to define them as Architectural Conservation Areas over the lifetime of the Plan and to undertake an assessment to inform the potential ACA designation for the following areas: Chapel Street, The Mall, Historic Core or any other special character areas considered by the Planning Authority worthy of such protection in the town.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
Archaeological Heritage Policy		
BEP7		
Support and promote the protection, appropriate management and sympathetic enhancement of the archaeological heritage within the Plan area, in particular by implementing the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the National Monuments Act 1930 (as amended).	A - General statement of policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
Archaeological Heritage Objective		
BEO6		
Protect and preserve in situ (or upon agreement preservation by record) items of archaeological interest provided for on the Sites and Monuments Record (www.archeology.ie) from inappropriate development that would adversely affect and/or detract from interpretation and setting of these sites.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/ site safeguarding/ threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
BEO7		
Ensure proposals contribute to the protection and preservation of the archaeological value of sites including underwater sites associated with the Castlebar River, Lough Lannagh & Saleen Lough.	A - General statement of policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/ site safeguarding/ threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out

Policy No. and Summary	Screening Category	Screening Outcome
Placemaking and Views and Prospects Policies		
BEP8		
Encourage and facilitate improvements to the physical fabric and environment of the town, including streetscape, street furniture, landscaping (hard and soft), signage and wirescape, while recognising that both private and public developments can contribute to effective public realm.	A - General statement of policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
BEP9		
Promote the regeneration of Castlebar town centre by making better use of underutilised land and buildings, particularly within the existing built up areas to achieve compact growth.	A - General statement of policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
Chapter 9 – Natural Environment		
Designated Sites Policy		
NEP1		
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 is retained in consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service.	A - General statement of policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/ site safeguarding/ threshold polices E - Policies or proposals that steer change in such a way as to protect European sites from adverse effects K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
NEP2		
Seek to ensure that new plans or projects would not result in significant climatic impacts on European sites because of their scale, resource or transportation requirements, operation or emissions, either cumulatively or in combination with other development.	A - General statement of policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/ site safeguarding/ threshold polices E - Policies or proposals that steer change in such a way as to protect European sites from adverse effects K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
Designated Sites Objectives		
NEO1		
Open up access to the Castlebar River for recreational and amenity purposes.	I - Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone L - Policy or proposal which might be likely to have significant effect in-combination	In
Ecological Corridor Policy		
NEP3		

Policy No. and Summary	Screening Category	Screening Outcome
Protect, reinforce and strengthen the Green and Blue Infrastructure network in Castlebar and strengthen links to the wider regional network. This should be informed by appropriate ecological surveys and assessment.	A - General statement of policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/ site safeguarding/ threshold polices	Out
Ecological Corridor Objective		
NEO2		
Support and work with the local community in the development of blue and green infrastructure in the town and in the enhancement of the biodiversity and conservation value of the river and lakes corridors.	A - General statement of policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/site safeguarding/threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
Trees and Hedgerows Policy		
NEP4		
There shall be a presumption against the felling, topping, lopping or wilful destruction of mature trees as part of development proposals. Where a development proposal involves the felling, topping, lopping or threatens the destruction of a mature tree or trees, a tree survey will need to be included in the submission, carried out by a qualified Tree Specialist to justify the exceptional circumstances for their interference. The applicant must demonstrate the justification and rationale for removal of mature trees in terms of effect on ecology and landscape and demonstrate how replacement planting will compensate for loss of trees and woodland features. An assessment of potential tree roost features by a qualified and experienced ecologist may also be requested as part of such proposals.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/site safeguarding/threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
NEP5		
Protect and incorporate existing biodiversity features such as hedgerows and surface water features into the design and construction of new development and public realm. Where the loss of the existing features is unavoidable new biodiversity features should incorporate native species, and species of local provenance to replace the existing hedgerow.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/site safeguarding/threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
Trees and Hedgerows Objectives		
NEO3		
Increase tree planting and pollinator friendly planting, in accordance with the recommendations of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025, and any future editions, throughout Castlebar and in open spaces in new developments in order to enhance local biodiversity, visual amenity and surface water management in partnership with relevant stakeholders.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/site safeguarding/threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
Chapter 10 – Infrastructure and Environmental Services		
Flood Risk Management Policies		
IESP1		
Manage flood risk in Castlebar in conjunction with the Office of Public Works and in accordance with the requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009) and circular PL02/2014 (August 2014).	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/site safeguarding/threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out

Policy No. and Summary	Screening Category	Screening Outcome
<p>IESP2</p> <p>Extensions of existing uses or minor development within flood risk areas will be supported, provided they do not: obstruct important flow paths; introduce a number of people into flood risk areas; entail the storage of hazardous substances; have adverse impacts or impede access to a watercourse, floodplain or flood protection and management facilities; or increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. Proposals of this nature shall be accompanied by a commensurate assessment of the risks of flooding in accordance with the Planning Systems Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009.</p>	<p>D - Environmental Protection/site safeguarding policy</p> <p>E - Policies or proposals that steer change in such a way as to protect European sites from adverse effects</p>	<p>Out</p>
<i>Flood Risk Management Objectives</i>		
<p>IESO1</p> <p>a) Manage flood risk in accordance with the requirements of “The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities”, DECLG and OPW (2009) and any revisions thereof and consider the potential impacts of climate change in the application of these guidelines.</p> <p>b) Require applications in areas at risk of flooding to be supported by a comprehensive flood risk assessment. All flood risk assessments should have regard to ‘The Planning System and Flood Risk Management’ (DEHLG and OPW, Nov.2009) as revised by Circular PL 2/2014, national flood hazard mapping, predicted changes in flood events resulting from climate change and the Moy-Killala Bay Catchment Flood Risk and Management Plan.</p> <p>c) Minimise flood risk arising from pluvial (surface water) flooding in Castlebar by promoting the use of natural flood risk management measures including sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), minimising extent of hard surface/paving, and smart solutions such as innovative green infrastructure.</p> <p>d) Demonstrate that future development will not result in increased risk of flooding elsewhere, restrict flow paths, where compensatory storage / storm water retention measures shall be provided on site.</p> <p>e) Have regard to the most up to date Flood Mapping as presented on the Office of Public Works (OPW) maps.</p>	<p>B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals</p> <p>D - General plan-wide environmental protection/site safeguarding/threshold policies</p> <p>K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	<p>Out</p>
<i>Drinking Water and Wastewater Policies</i>		
<p>IESP3</p> <p>Discourage the over concentration/proliferation of individual septic tanks and treatment plants to minimise the risk of groundwater pollution.</p>	<p>B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals</p> <p>D - General plan-wide environmental protection/site safeguarding/threshold policies</p> <p>K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	<p>Out</p>
<p>IESP4</p> <p>a) Support the implementation of the Irish Water Investment Plans.</p> <p>b) Liaise with Irish Water, to maximise the potential of existing capacity and to facilitate the timely delivery of new water services infrastructure, to facilitate existing and future growth.</p>	<p>B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals</p> <p>D - General plan-wide environmental protection/site safeguarding/threshold policies</p> <p>K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	<p>Out</p>
<p>IESP5</p> <p>Support the implementation of the relevant recommendations and measures as outlined in the relevant River Basin Management Plan - 2022-2027 and</p>	<p>I - Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone</p> <p>D - General plan-wide environmental protection/site safeguarding/threshold</p>	<p>In</p>

Policy No. and Summary	Screening Category	Screening Outcome
<p>associated Programme of Measures, or any such plan that may supersede same during the lifetime of this plan.</p>	<p>polices E- Policies or proposals that steer change in such a way as to protect European sites from adverse effects. L - Policy or proposal which might be likely to have significant effect in-combination</p>	
<i>Drinking Water and Wastewater Objectives</i>		
IESO2		
<p>Ensure that on-site private wastewater treatment plants, where permitted, are operated in compliance with EPA's Code of Practice Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (Pollution Equivalent 10) (2021), as may be amended.</p>	<p>B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/site safeguarding/threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	Out
IESO6		
<p>Where available, new development shall be obliged to connect to the public sewer and public water mains, subject to a connection agreement with Irish Water, in order to protect all waters in the plan area, and also to consolidate the urban structure and to control ribbon development along approach roads into Castlebar.</p>	<p>A - General statement of policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/site safeguarding/threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	Out
IESO4		
<p>Support and facilitate the delivery of free outdoor drinking water refilling stations at appropriate locations.</p>	<p>A - General statement of policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/site safeguarding/threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	Out
<i>Energy Network Policies</i>		
IESP6		
<p>Support and promote the sustainable improvement and expansion of the electricity transmission and gas distribution network that supply the Castlebar LAP area, while taking into consideration landscape, residential, amenity and environmental considerations.</p>	<p>D - General plan-wide environmental protection/site safeguarding/threshold polices</p>	Out
IESP7		
<p>Promote and encourage the use of renewable energy technologies at appropriate locations within the Castlebar plan areas existing and proposed building stock, such as district heating, micro generation (photovoltaic, micro wind, micro hydro and micro combined heat and power) and other renewable energy technologies, which do not adversely affect residential amenity or environmental quality.</p>	<p>B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - Environmental Protection/site safeguarding policy</p>	Out
IESP8		
<p>Support and liaise with statutory and other energy providers in relation to power generation, in order to ensure adequate power capacity for the existing and future needs of Castlebar.</p>	<p>B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/site safeguarding/threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	Out
<i>Waste Management Policies</i>		

Policy No. and Summary	Screening Category	Screening Outcome
<p>IESP9</p> <p>Protect environmental quality in Castlebar through the implementation of European, national and regional policy and legislation relating to air quality, greenhouse gases, climate change, light pollution, noise pollution and waste management.</p>	<p>B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/site safeguarding/threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	<p>Out</p>
<p>IESP10</p> <p>Support waste reduction and sustainable waste management through prevention, reduction and recycling and by facilitating the provision of adequate waste infrastructure, such as bring banks, at locations that will not adversely affect residential amenity or environmental quality.</p>	<p>A - General statement of policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/site safeguarding/threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	<p>Out</p>
<p>Waste Management Objectives</p>		
<p>IESO5</p> <p>Require all mixed-use, commercial and residential developments to be provided with adequate internal and external space for the correct storage of waste and recyclable materials and should accord with the Development Management Standards 4.11 of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028. In particular, in relation to shared bin spaces such as apartment developments. In such cases the following must be provided for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adequate space must be given for waste to be segregated and stored in an appropriate manner; - A multi occupancy development will require a designated, ventilated waste storage area of sufficient size which allows for the segregation of waste; - New and re-designed commercial buildings and apartment complexes should have waste facilities designed in a manner that waste can be collected directly from them and where possible waste and recyclables should not have to be collected on the street or at the front of the premises. 	<p>D - Environmental Protection/site safeguarding policy E - Policies or proposals that steer change in such a way as to protect European sites from adverse effects</p>	<p>Out</p>
<p>IESO6</p> <p>Promote the prevention, reduction and recycling of waste in new developments, new development proposals shall be required to show how this is to be achieved and shall seek to ensure on site provision for waste storage and segregation (bio-waste/dry recyclables/residual waste) pending collection at all new domestic and non-domestic premises.</p>	<p>A - General statement of policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/site safeguarding/threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	<p>Out</p>
<p>IESO7</p> <p>Adequately maintain recycling facilities and secure the provision of additional facilities, as required, including in conjunction with new developments.</p>	<p>A - General statement of policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/site safeguarding/threshold polices K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	<p>Out</p>
<p>IESO8</p> <p>Facilitate the installation of bring bank(s) at suitable locations within the plan area, which do not adversely affect residential amenity or environmental quality of the area</p>	<p>B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/site safeguarding/threshold polices</p>	<p>Out</p>

Policy No. and Summary	Screening Category	Screening Outcome
K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination		
Information Communications Technology and Broadband Policies		
IESP11		
<p>Co-operate with the relevant agencies to facilitate the undergrounding of all electricity, telephone and television cables in urban areas wherever possible, in the interests of visual amenity.</p> <p>Where undergrounding of cables is being pursued, proposals should demonstrate that environmental impacts including the following are minimised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat loss as a result of removal of field boundaries and hedgerows (right of way preparation) followed by topsoil stripping (to ensure machinery does not destroy soil structure and drainage properties); • Short to medium term impacts on the landscape where, for example, hedgerows are encountered; • Impacts on underground archaeology; • Impacts on soil structure and drainage; and • Impacts on surface waters as a result of sedimentation. 	<p>A - General statement of policy/general aspiration B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals D - General plan-wide environmental protection/site safeguarding/threshold policies K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	Out
IESP12		
Seek the undergrounding of all electricity, telephone and television cables in the town including the town centre and in residential and amenity areas.	D - Environmental Protection/site safeguarding policy	Out
IESP13		
Discourage a proliferation of above ground utility boxes in the town and to seek screening measures and discreet locations in conjunction with the provision of such structures.	<p>B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	Out
Information Communications Technology and Broadband Objectives		
IESO9		
Ensure that all new development proposals, incorporates communications service infrastructure broadband including ducting on an open access basis.	<p>B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	Out
IESO10		
Facilitate the provision of adequate telecommunication infrastructure within the plan area, including telephone and broadband services, to the requirements of the relevant service providers and in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.	<p>B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	Out
Chapter 11 – Land Use Zoning Objectives		
LUZ1		
Ensure that development progresses in accordance with the land use zoning objectives as set out in Table 10.1 and the Land Use Matrix contained in Table 11.2.	<p>A - General statement of policy/general aspiration K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination</p>	Out
LUZ 2 - Town Centre Inner (TCI) and Outer (TCO)		
To maintain and enhance the vitality, viability and environment of the town centre and	A - General statement of policy/general aspiration	Out

Policy No. and Summary	Screening Category	Screening Outcome
provide for appropriate town centre uses.	K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	
LUZ 3 - Enterprise and Employment		
To provide land for industrial, enterprise and employment uses.	A - General statement of policy/general aspiration K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
LUZ 4 - Education		
To provide land for educational use and ancillary facilities.	A - General statement of policy/general aspiration K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
LUZ 5 - Existing Residential		
To protect and improve the amenity and character of existing residential areas.	A - General statement of policy/general aspiration K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
LUZ 6 - New Residential		
To provide for high quality new residential development and other services incidental to residential development.	A - General statement of policy/general aspiration K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
LUZ 7 - Strategic Residential Reserve		
<p>To protect and safeguard suitable, undeveloped lands for future multiple residential developments. These lands are generally not developable during the lifetime of this plan for multiple residential developments. This position will be reviewed by the Planning Authority periodically over the lifetime of the plan to ensure housing growth targets are achieved (Core Strategy Table).</p> <p>Where it is apparent that 'New Residential' lands cannot or will not be developed within the plan period, residential development maybe considered within Strategic Residential Reserve.</p> <p>Single houses shall only be considered on a limited basis, where it has been established that the lands in question do not adversely impact on the intended future use of these lands; form part of the overall family landholding and no other appropriately zoned lands are available within of the plan boundary; and a demonstrable economic or social need has been established (Objective RHO 1 of the Mayo County Development Plan).</p>	A - General statement of policy/general aspiration K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
LUZ 8 - Community Services / Facilities		
To provide land for social, health, public administration and educational services and facilities.	A - General statement of policy/general aspiration K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
LUZ 9 - Quarry/Mining		
<p>To provide for extraction / quarrying and associated activities including processing of extracted materials and land restoration.</p>	<p>I - Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone</p> <p>L - Policy or proposal which might be likely to have significant effect in-combination</p>	In
LUZ 10 - Recreation and Amenity		

Policy No. and Summary	Screening Category	Screening Outcome
To protect and improve the provision, attractiveness, accessibility and amenity value of public open space, amenity and recreation.	A - General statement of policy/general aspiration K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
LUZ 11 - Agriculture		
To reserve land for agricultural and rural uses and to preserve the amenity of the town setting.	A - General statement of policy/general aspiration K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
LUZ 12—Open Space		
To preserve, provide for and improve active and passive recreational public and private open space.	A - General statement of policy/general aspiration K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
LUZ 13- Infrastructure and Utilities		
To provide land for public infrastructure and public utilities.	B - Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
LUZ 14 - Ancillary Uses		
To ensure that developments ancillary to the parent use of a site are considered on their merits irrespective of what category the ancillary development is listed under in the zoning matrix of this County Development Plan.	A - General statement of policy/general aspiration K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
LUZ 15 - Established Use/Non- Conforming Uses		
To generally support reasonable extensions and improvements to premises that accommodate established/non-conforming uses, where it is considered by the Planning Authority that the proposed development would not be injurious to the amenities of the area and would be consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.	A - General statement of policy/general aspiration K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out
Chapter 12 – Implementation and Monitoring		
Implementation and Monitoring Policy and Objective		
IM1		
Monitor development for compliance with the objectives of the Core Strategy and adjust, where necessary, the approach taken to the consideration of development proposals in order to ensure effective alignment with the National, Regional and County policies and objectives.	A - General statement of policy/general aspiration K - Policy or proposal not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination	Out

6.4 Land-Use Zoning

Land use zonings have been reviewed as part of this LAP. Existing residential; Town Centre; Educational; Open space were as they are confined to existing zonings; are small scale in nature or are lower impact in by their nature (e.g. open space). Open space has also been used to provide a buffer to the waterbodies in the vicinity of Lough Lannagh and Saleen Lough, helping to provide support to the Natura 2000 network. Areas of higher groundwater vulnerability have been avoided for the most part, with agriculture remaining the main zoning in these more vulnerable areas to the northeast and northwest

The remaining zonings - community services facilities, enterprise and employment, infrastructure and & utilities, new residential were examined during the Draft stage of the plan, at material amendments stage, and during both the public submissions and from zonings proposed by council members. The final zonings presented here are consistent with core strategies, following Ministerial Direction.

The zonings are unlikely to significantly effect the integrity of European Sites within the zone of influence.

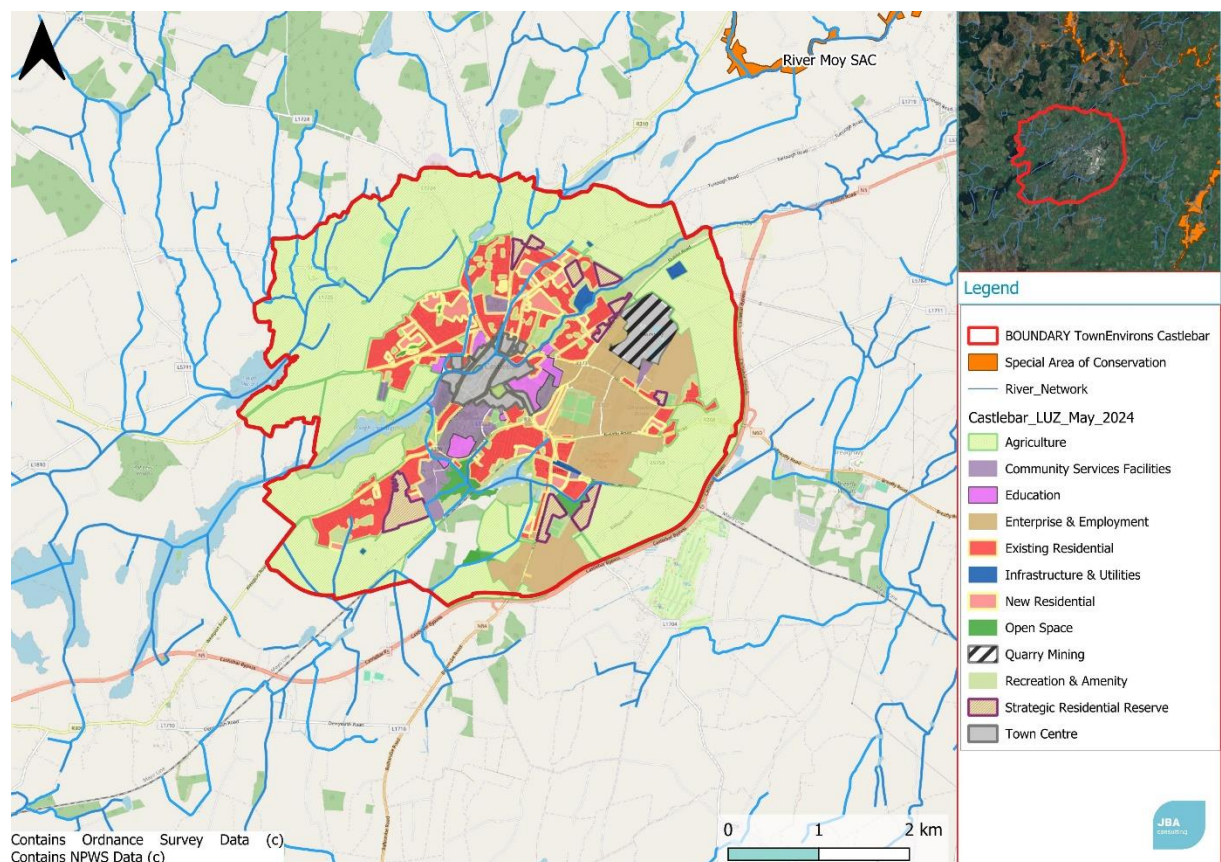


Figure 6-1: Final Draft Zonings (post Ministerial Direction).

6.4.1 Opportunity Sites

The opportunity sites are largely confined to the built-up area in the town centre, and are more infill developments. These may have the standard construction and development type impacts associated with them, but in a zoning sense they do not pose a threat to the integrity of the Natura 2000 network. Those sites in proximity to the river should be particularly careful to mitigate against impact through the hydrological connection to the River Moy.

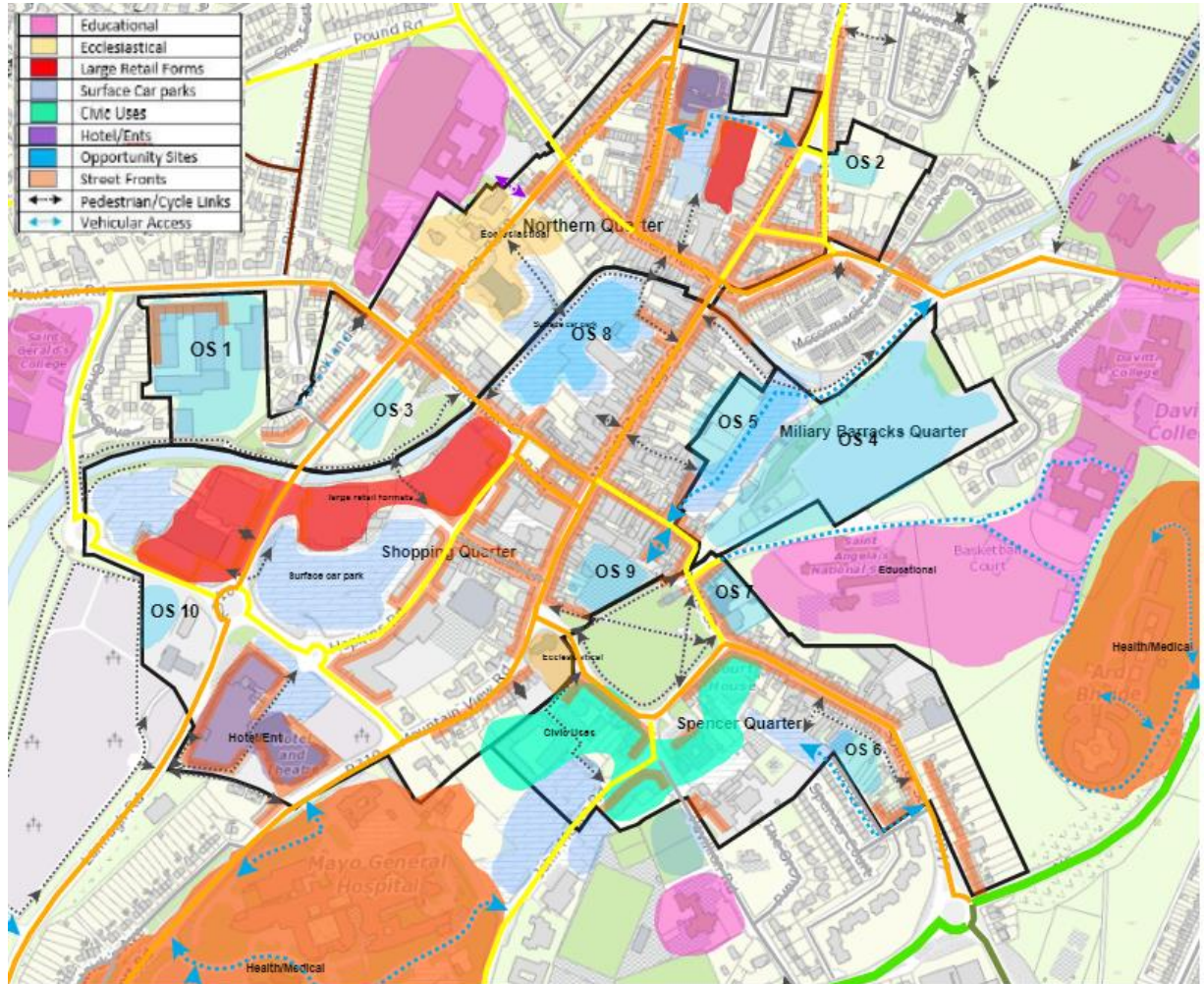


Figure 6-2: Opportunity Sites

6.5 Screening Statement and Conclusions

A number of policies and objectives have been screened out alone and in-combination with other plans and projects. The following table lists the policies and objectives, for each Chapter, that have been identified as having potential to have an impact upon European sites. A total of 23 Policies and objectives have been screened in.

6.5.1 Conclusion

The 23 screened in policies and objectives could impact upon the two European designated sites identified at the pre-screening stage (Section 4.5) and therefore, those sites are taken forward to AA.

Table 6-3: Policies and objectives screened in

Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5	Chapter 6	Chapter 7	Chapter 8	Chapter 9	Chapter 10	Chapter 11	Chapter 12
DSO1	CAO2	TCP1 TCP2 TCO1 TCO2 TCO4	EDO1 EDP5 EDP10 EDP11 EDO8	HSCP1 HSCO1 HSCO17			NEO1	IESP5	LUZ9	

7 Natura Impact Report

This NIR aims to determine whether the proposed Plan would result in significant adverse impacts on the integrity of any European site with respect to the site's structure, function, and/ or conservation objectives. It also aims to provide supporting information for the competent authority to carry out an AA of the proposed Plan.

The AA Screening identified that the LAP could potentially have significant adverse effects on the following sites:

- Lough Conn and Lough Cullin SPA
- River Moy SAC

This section details the AA of the potential effects of the LAP document on the integrity of the identified European sites.

7.1 Description of Screened-in Sites

The Castlebar LAP Draft could potentially have significant adverse effects alone on the Screened-in European Sites which are further described in this section.

7.1.1 Lough Conn and Lough Cullin SPA [004228]

The River Deel, Addergoole, and Castlehill are the main rivers flowing into Lough Conn with the River Moy outflowing of Lough Cullin. These loughs form part of an important salmonid fishery and an important site for wintering wildfowl. Both loughs are one of only four breeding sites in Ireland for Common Scoter.

7.1.1.1 Qualifying Interests

- Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*) [A061]
- Common Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*) [A065]
- Common Gull (*Larus canus*) [A182]
- Greenland White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*) [A395]
- Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]

To acknowledge the importance of Ireland's wetlands to wintering waterbirds, "Wetland and Waterbirds" may be included as a Special Conservation Interest for some SPAs that have been designated for wintering waterbirds and that contain a wetland site of significant importance to one of more of the species of Special Conservation Interest. Thus, a second objective is included as follows:

Objective: To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the wetland habitat at Lough Conn and Lough Cullin SPA as a resource for the regularly occurring migratory waterbirds that utilise it.

7.1.1.2 Conservation Objectives

The conservation objective of all the bird species at the SPA is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA (NPWS, 2022).

Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing, and
- the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and
- the conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

- population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and

- the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and
- there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

Objective: To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:

- Tufted Duck
- Common Scoter
- Common Gull
- Greenland White-fronted Goose

To acknowledge the importance of Ireland's wetlands to wintering waterbirds, "Wetland and Waterbirds" may be included as a Special Conservation Interest for some SPAs that have been designated for wintering waterbirds and that contain a wetland site of significant importance to one of more of the species of Special Conservation Interest. Thus, a second objective is included as follows:

Objective: To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the wetland habitat at Lough Conn and Lough Cullin SPA as a resource for the regularly occurring migratory waterbirds that utilise it.

7.1.1.3 Site Vulnerabilities

As part of the Standard Data Form for European sites, the negative impacts and activities with high effect on the SPA are detailed to identify where future Plans, or Projects, could have an impact on a European site if a threat/ pressure is likely to be exaggerated due to the Plan. The threats and pressures upon Lough Conn and Lough Cullin SPA are listed in Table 7-1 below.

Table 7-1: Threats, pressures, and activities with impacts on the Lough Conn and Lough Cullin SPA (NPWS 2022)

Code	Threats and pressures	Rank	Source
I01	Invasive non-native species	L	i
A08	Fertilisation	M	o
F02.03	Leisure fishing	H	i
B	Sylviculture, forestry	M	o

Key: L = Low; M = Medium; o = outside; i = inside

7.1.2 River Moy SAC

The River Moy SAC is a diverse site consisting of bog, fen, oak woodlands, alluvial forests and lowland hay meadows. The River Moy supports White-clawed Crayfish, Sea and Brook Lamprey, Salmon and Otter. The SAC is located within the LAP boundary and could be directly impacted upon by the LAP.

7.1.2.1 Qualifying Interests

The site is a SAC selected for the following habitats and species listed on Annex I / II of the EU Habitats Directive (* = priority; numbers in brackets are Natura 2000 codes):

- Lowland hay meadows (*Alopecurus pratensis*, *Sanguisorba officinalis*) [6510]
- Active raised bogs [7110]
- Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]
- Depressions on peat substrates of the *Rhynchosporion* [7150]
- Alkaline fens [7230]
- Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0]
- Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0]
- *Austropotamobius pallipes* (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092]
- *Petromyzon marinus* (Sea Lamprey) [1095]

- *Lampetra planeri* (Brook Lamprey) [1096]
- *Salmo salar* (Salmon) [1106]
- *Lutra lutra* (Otter) [1355]

7.1.2.2 Conservation Objectives

The conservation objectives for River Moy SAC are to maintain or restore favourable conservation condition of the Qualifying Interest features of the site (NPWS, 2016).

Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing, and
- the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and
- the conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

- population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and
- the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and
- there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

Table 7-2: Conservation Objectives for the Qualifying Interests for the River Moy SAC (NPWS, 2016)

Qualifying Interest	Attributes	Measure	Target
Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> , <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) [6510]	Not in Conservation Objectives document		
Active raised bogs [7110]	Habitat area	Hectares	Restore area of active raised bog to 132.4ha, subject to natural processes
	Habitat distribution	Occurrence	Restore the distribution and variability of active raised bog across the SAC.
	High bog area	Hectares	No decline in extent of high bog necessary to support the development and maintenance of active raised bog.
	Hydrological regime: water levels	Centimetres	Restore appropriate water levels throughout the site.
	Transitional areas between high bog and adjacent mineral soils (including cutover areas)	Hectares; distribution	Restore adequate transitional areas to support/protect active raised bog and the services it provides
	Vegetation quality: central ecotope, active flush, soaks, bog woodland	Hectares	Restore 66.2ha of central ecotope/active flush/soaks/bog woodland as appropriate
	Vegetation quality: microtopographical features	Hectares	Restore adequate cover of high quality microtopographical features
	Vegetation quality: bog moss (<i>Sphagnum</i>) species	Percentage cover	Restore adequate cover of bog moss (<i>Sphagnum</i>) species to ensure peat-forming capacity
Typical ARB species: flora	Occurrence	Restore, where appropriate, typical active raised bog flora	

Qualifying Interest	Attributes	Measure	Target
	Typical ARB species: fauna	Occurrence	Restore, where appropriate, typical active bog fauna
	Elements of local distinctiveness	Occurrence	Maintain features of local distinctiveness, subject to natural processes
	Negative physical indicators	Percentage cover	Negative physical features absent or insignificant
	Vegetation composition: native negative indicator species	Percentage cover	Native negative indicator species at insignificant levels
	Vegetation composition: non-native invasive species	Percentage cover	Non-native invasive species at insignificant levels and not more than 1% cover
	Air quality: nitrogen deposition	Kg N/ha/year	Air quality surrounding bog close to natural reference conditions. The total N deposition should not exceed 5kg N/ha/yr
	Water quality	Hydrochemical measures	Water quality on the high bog and in transitional areas close to natural reference conditions
Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]	The long-term aim for Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration is that its peat-forming capability is re-established; therefore, the conservation objective for this habitat is inherently linked to that of Active raised bogs and a separate conservation objective has not been set in River Moy SAC.		
Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150]	Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion is an integral part of good quality Active raised bogs and thus a separate conservation objective has not been set in River Moy SAC.		
Alkaline fens [7230]	Habitat area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes
	Distribution	Occurrence	No decline, subject to natural processes.
	Hydrological regime	Metres	Appropriate natural hydrological regimes necessary to support the natural structure and functioning of the habitat
	Peat formation	Appropriate peat formation, where appropriate	Active peat formation, where appropriate
	Water quality: nutrients	Water chemistry measures	Appropriate water quality to support the natural structure and functioning of the habitat
	Vegetation structure: typical species	Percentage	Maintain vegetation cover of typical species including brown mosses and vascular plants
	Vegetation composition: trees and shrubs	Percentage	Cover of scattered native trees and shrubs less than 10%
	Physical structure: disturbed bare ground	Percentage	Cover of disturbed bare ground less than 10%. Where tufa is present, disturbed bare ground less than 1%

Qualifying Interest	Attributes	Measure	Target
	Physical structure: drainage	Percentage	Areas showing signs of drainage as a result of drainage ditches or heavy trampling less than 10%
Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0]	Habitat area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes
	Habitat distribution	Occurrence	No decline.
	Woodland size	Hectares	Area stable or increasing. Where topographically possible, "large"; woods at least 25ha in size and "small" woods at least 3ha in size
	Woodland structure: cover and height	Percentage and metres	Diverse structure with a relatively closed canopy containing mature trees; subcanopy layer with semi-mature trees and shrubs; and well-developed layer
	Woodland structure: community diversity and extent	Hectares	Maintain diversity and extent of community types
	Woodland structure: natural regeneration	Hectares	Seedlings, saplings and pole age-classes occur in adequate proportions to ensure survival of woodland canopy
	Woodland structure: dead wood	m ³ per hectare; number per hectare	At least 30m ³ /ha of fallen timber greater than 10cm diameter; 30 snags/ha; both categories should include stems greater than 40cm diameter
	Woodland structure: veteran trees	Number per hectare	No decline
	Woodland structure: indicators of local distinctiveness	Occurrence	No decline
	Vegetation composition: native tree cover	Percentage	No decline. Native tree cover not less than 95%
	Vegetation composition: typical species	Occurrence	A variety of typical native species present, depending on woodland type, including oak (<i>Quercus petraea</i>) and birch (<i>Betula pubescens</i>)
	Vegetation composition: negative indicator species	Occurrence	Negative indicator species, particularly non-native invasive species, absent or under control
Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0]	Woodland structure: cover and height	Percentage and metres	Diverse structure with a relatively closed canopy containing mature trees; subcanopy layer with semi- mature trees and shrubs; and well-developed herb layer
	Woodland structure: community diversity and extent	Hectares	Maintain diversity and extent of community types
	Woodland structure: natural regeneration	Seedling: sapling: pole ratio	Seedlings, saplings and pole age-classes occur in adequate proportions to ensure survival of woodland canopy
	Hydrological regime: flooding depth/height of water table	Metres	Appropriate hydrological regime necessary for maintenance of alluvial vegetation

Qualifying Interest	Attributes	Measure	Target
	Woodland structure: dead wood	m ³ per hectare; number per hectare	At least 30m ³ /ha of fallen timber greater than 10cm diameter; 30 snags/ha; both categories should include stems greater than 40cm diameter (greater than 20cm diameter in the case of alder)
	Woodland structure: veteran trees	Number per hectare	No decline
	Woodland structure: indicators of local distinctiveness	Occurrence	No decline
	Vegetation composition: native tree cover	Percentage	No decline. Native tree cover not less than 95%
	Vegetation composition: typical species	Occurrence	A variety of typical native species present, depending on woodland type, including Alder (<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>), willows (<i>Salix spp</i>) and, locally, Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>) and Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>) and Birch.
	Vegetation composition: negative indicator species	Occurrence	Negative indicator species, particularly non-native invasive species, absent or under control
White-clawed Crayfish <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>	Distribution	Occurrence	No reduction from baseline.
	Population structure: recruitment	Occurrence of juveniles and females with eggs	Juveniles and/or females with eggs in all occupied tributaries
	Negative indicator species	Occurrence	No alien crayfish species
	Disease	Occurrence	No instances of disease
	Water quality	EPA Q value	At least Q3-4 at all sites sampled by EPA
	Habitat quality: heterogeneity	Occurrence of positive habitat features	No decline in heterogeneity or habitat quality
<i>Petromyzon marinus</i> (Sea Lamprey) [1095]	Distribution: extent of anadromy	Percentage of river accessible	Greater than 75% of main stem length of rivers accessible from estuary
	Population structure of juveniles	Number of age/size groups	At least three age/size groups present
	Juvenile density in fine sediment	Juveniles/m ²	Mean catchment juvenile density at least 1/m ²
	Extent and distribution of spawning habitat	m ² and occurrence	No decline in extent and distribution of spawning beds
	Availability of juvenile habitat	Number of positive sites in 3rd order channels (and	More than 50% of sample sites positive

Qualifying Interest	Attributes	Measure	Target
		greater), downstream of spawning areas	
<i>Lampetra planeri</i> (Brook Lamprey) [1096]	Distribution	Percentage of river accessible	Access to all watercourses down to first order streams
	Population structure of juveniles	Number of age/size groups	At least three age/size groups of brook/river lamprey present
	Juvenile density in fine sediment	Juveniles/m ²	Mean catchment juvenile density of brook/river lamprey at least 2/m ²
	Extent and distribution of spawning habitat	m ² and occurrence	No decline in extent and distribution of spawning beds
	Availability of juvenile habitat	Number of positive sites in 2nd order channels (and greater), downstream of spawning areas	More than 50% of sample sites positive
<i>Salmo salar</i> (Salmon) [1106]	Distribution: extent of anadromy	Percentage of river accessible	100% of river channels down to second order accessible from estuary
	Adult spawning fish	Number	Conservation Limit (CL) for each system consistently exceeded
	Salmon fry abundance	Number of fry/5 minutes electrofishing	Maintain or exceed 0+ fry mean catchment-wide abundance threshold value. Currently set at 17 salmon fry/5 minutes sampling
	Out-migrating smolt abundance	Number	No significant decline
	Number and distribution of redds	Number and occurrence	No decline in number and distribution of spawning redds due to anthropogenic causes
	Water quality	EPA Q value	At least Q4 at all sites sampled by EPA
<i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]	Distribution	Percentage positive survey sites	No significant decline
	Extent of terrestrial habitat	Hectares	No significant decline. Area mapped and calculated as 1068.8ha
	Extent of freshwater (river) habitat	Kilometres	No significant decline. Length mapped and calculated as 479.4km
	Extent of freshwater (lake) habitat	Hectares	No significant decline. Area mapped and calculated as 1248.2ha

Qualifying Interest	Attributes	Measure	Target
	Couching sites and holts	Number	No significant decline
	Fish biomass available	Kilograms	No significant decline
	Barriers to connectivity	Number	No significant increase

7.1.2.3 Site Vulnerabilities

The River Moy SAC is vulnerable to several potential impacts, including agriculture, invasive non-native species and forestry activities. The negative impacts and activities with high effect on the SAC are listed in Table 7-3 below.

Table 7-3: Threats, pressures, and activities with impacts on the River Moy SAC (NPWS 2022)

Code	Threats and pressures	Rank	Source
H01.05	Diffuse pollution to surface waters due to agricultural and forestry activities	H	b
D04.02	Aerodrome, heliport	M	b
B01	Forest planting on open ground	H	b
C01.03	Peat extraction	M	b
I01	Invasive non-native species	H	b
B05	Use of fertilisers (forestry)	H	b
A02.01	Agricultural intensification	H	b

Key: H = high; M = Medium; b = both inside and outside

7.2 Potential significant effects on Screened-In European Sites

As outlined in Section 4.3 the potential impacts that could occur through the implementation of the Plan are:

- Loss/reduction of supporting habitat area (ex-situ habitat that may support European Sites)
- Disturbance to key species
- Habitat or species population fragmentation
- Reduction in species density
- Changes in key indicators of conservation value, such as changes in water quality and quantity
- Air pollution

7.2.1 Loss or reduction of habitat area

Direct habitat loss is caused where there is complete removal of a habitat type. Loss of habitat can also occur through the deterioration of habitat quality and therefore a loss of the function of that habitat. This can be due to factors such as land-take requirements, physical alterations and introduction of invasive non-native species as a result of development or works necessary to promote sustainable or any type of development. The outcomes of the objectives, aims, strategies and policies of the Plan, such as development leading to population increase and the support of the economic growth of Castlebar could potentially cause these impacts.

Because Castlebar is at distance from European Sites there is limited potential that the European sites screened into this assessment may be adversely affected in this manner through the implementation of the proposed Plan. However ex-situ quality habitat may be present that provides a supporting role to the SAC e.g. areas of river that support aquatic species such as Salmon, Lamprey and White-clawed Crayfish that are functionally connected to the SAC. Additionally riparian corridors, hedgerows and local water bodies may act as ecological stepping stones in support of the European sites.

The implementation of environmental mitigation measures for development and growth, although primarily beneficial in the provision of refuges for species and the protection and restoration of habitats including bog and wetland habitats, may result in changes of land use within the LAP area. If measures are inappropriately implemented, habitat loss or degradation of habitat quality may occur.

Avoidance/mitigation measures are detailed in Section 8 to ensure the potential for habitat loss will not adversely affect the integrity of a European site due to the implementation of the proposed Plan.

7.2.2 Disturbance to key species

Key species are those species listed within the annexes of the Habitats Directive for which European sites are designated. Disturbance to species supported by a European site may result due to physical disturbance of a habitat that may result in direct mortalities or displacement of the species. Sources of disturbance may also take the form of increased noise, visual presence of people, vibration, and increased illumination of areas through increased or expanded development without mitigation measures in place. Increased disturbance levels within the sensitivity threshold of a species may cause the displacement or flight of a species from their respective habitat.

In relation to the proposed Plan, activities that may potentially disturb key bird species are those that will result in physical disturbance due to works being carried out, such as the implementation of the policies and/or objectives of the Plan including increased tourism, population growth or development in general at Lough Conn and Lough Cullin SPA. These objectives may pose sources of disturbance during construction of works and their operation. The works may also cause disturbance to the resting and/or breeding places and foraging areas of these key species.

Avoidance/ mitigation measures are detailed in Section 8 to ensure that disturbance to key species will not adversely affect the integrity of a European site due to the implementation of the proposed Plan.

7.2.3 Fragmentation

Habitat and species population fragmentation occurs when the connectivity between habitats and species is restricted or lost and impedes the natural movement of a species. This can result in singular habitat units being formed and isolated species communities. Fragmentation can arise as a result of barriers to migratory movements where important corridors exist, e.g., riparian corridors. The inappropriate installation of measures that may act as a barrier to free movement of a species and/ or physically separate a habitat, will result in fragmentation.

The implementation of the policies and/or objectives of the plan including increased tourism, population growth or development in general may pose sources of disturbance during construction of works and their operation that can lead to fragmentation. They may result in the installation of structures that may impede movement of a species within the River Moy Catchment. An increase in development, can lead to fragmentation of habitats impacting the resilience of the habitats to change.

Avoidance/ mitigation measures are detailed in Section 8 to ensure that fragmentation will not adversely affect the integrity of a European site due to the implementation of the proposed Plan.

7.2.4 Reduction in species density

Reduction in the density of species may arise due to the factors discussed above, habitat loss or degradation, disturbance and fragmentation. As outlined above, the objectives of the proposed Plan have the potential to cause these impacts. Impacts from recreation, agriculture, infrastructure and development may cause fragmentation or habitat loss of supporting habitat may result in reduction of species density of Annex I birds and other species of bird at Lough Conn and Lough Cullin SPA.

Avoidance/mitigation measures are detailed in Section 8 to ensure that reduction in species density will not adversely affect the integrity of a European site due to the implementation of the proposed Plan.

7.2.5 Changes in key indicators of conservation value

The key indicators of conservation value for the European sites likely to be affected by the implementation of the proposed Plan include surface water and groundwater quality and quantity. Water bodies are one of the key pathways for impact and are easily affected by impacts themselves. Any deterioration in water quality could potentially result in adverse impacts, either directly or indirectly, to marine species, such as salmon within the River Moy SAC. Maintaining the hydrological regime, e.g., recharge, flow rates and direction, of these habitats is also very important for the function and structure of the habitats and the species that they support.

Avoidance/ mitigation measures are detailed in Section 7 to ensure that reduction in species density will not adversely affect the integrity of a European site due to the implementation of the proposed Plan.

7.2.6 Air Pollution

Developments and population increases can lead to increased use of the road network by vehicles and in turn have an adverse effect on air quality.

The outcomes of the objectives and policies of the Plan which will likely lead to population increase and increased use of the road network within and surrounding Castlebar will likely reduce air quality in the Plan area. However, vehicle emission levels are known to be greatest within 50-100m from the road (Smithers et al. 2016). Lough Conn and Lough Cullin SPA is located approximately 10km from the Plan boundary and are therefore not within close proximity to major roads reducing the likely impact of air pollution on these habitats.

The River Moy SAC lies 1.5km outside of the Plan boundary, to the North-east. This closer proximity may pose a threat to the water quality but likelihood of significant impact is limited by the distance and nature of the receiving habitat, which is not highly sensitive to airborne sedimentation.

Mitigation measures are detailed in Section 8 to ensure that changes in key indicators of conservation value due to the implementation of the proposed Plan will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site.

7.3 Assessment of Impacts upon Site Integrity

An assessment of whether the identified potential impacts of the Castlebar LAP will result in adverse effects on the integrity of the screened in European sites as defined by the conservation objectives and the status of the sites is detailed in Section 7.4.

7.4 Rationale for Screened in Policies and Objectives and Identification of Potential Impacts Arising

Screened in ID	Screened in Policy / Objective	Rationale for Potential Impact
DSO1	Deliver at least 30% of all new homes in Castlebar within the existing built up footprint of the town.	Possible construction and operational based impacts. While the policy is positive in its usage of utilising the built-up footprint of the town linking into older surface/stormwater systems can be problematic in itself.
CAO2	Consider a variation of the development plan within a reasonable period of time, or to include such other mechanism, as may be appropriate, to ensure that the development plan will be consistent with the approach to climate action recommended in the revised Local Area Plan Guidelines when adopted or any other relevant guidelines.	Open policy allowing for changes to plan. Construction and operation arising from alterations to existing plans
TCP1	Ensure that new development in the town centre, and in particular, the opportunity areas comprise the highest of qualitative and design standards, complimenting the existing historical built fabric, or natural heritage, sustaining Castlebar as a town in which to live, work, invest in and do business.	While the policy is positive in its usage of utilising the built-up footprint of the town, works will constitute development which could result in increased discharges to water to the Castlebar River both and construction at operational level.
TCP2	Seek to develop and improve areas within the town that are in need of regeneration, renewal and redevelopment. The Council will seek to apply, where appropriate, the provisions of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, Derelict Sites Act, and use Compulsory Purchase Orders and other active land management instruments, as appropriate, to facilitate regeneration, housing supply, employment opportunities and community facilities.	While the policy is positive in its usage of utilising the built-up footprint of the town, works will constitute development which could result in increased discharges to water to the Castlebar River both and construction at operational level.
TCO1	Encourage and facilitate the development of Opportunity Sites in Castlebar for a mixture of uses that will contribute to the regeneration, vibrancy, diversity, vitality, attractiveness, safety, liveability and compact growth of the town centre. In conjunction with this, proposed developments must demonstrate how they will interact within its context and the wider urban area.	While the policy is positive in its usage of utilising the built-up footprint of the town and a variety of uses, works will constitute development which could result in increased discharges to water to the Castlebar River both at construction and operational level.
TCO2	Continue to develop and implement the Castlebar Town Centre Regeneration Strategy, and encourage and facilitate the reuse and regeneration of derelict, vacant, backland and underutilised lands and buildings in the town centre through active land management for retail, residential and other mixed uses and where necessary through appropriate legislative mechanisms/instruments and / or by supporting the progression and delivery of projects funded by the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund and other appropriate funds to achieve this aim.	While the policy is positive in its usage of utilising the built-up footprint of the town and a variety of uses, works will constitute development which could result in increased discharges to water to the Castlebar River both at construction and operational level.
TCO4	Work with landowners and other stakeholders in the redevelopment of the identified 'opportunity sites' for appropriate town centre uses over the lifetime of the Plan.	Possible construction and operational based impacts

Screened in ID	Screened in Policy / Objective	Rationale for Potential Impact
EDO1	Engage with IDA Ireland and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment in seeking to attract Foreign Direct Investment into Castlebar.	May result in construction, increased development, emissions.
EDP5	Support and facilitate the development of retail, retail services and niche retailing in the town centre area, including new/infill development and redevelopment of an appropriate scale.	May result in construction, increased development.
EDP10	Support the development of new tourist facilities or the upgrading / extension of existing tourist facilities.	May resulting construction/development based impacts. Tourism impacts (e.g. disturbance to QI species) can extend outside the town to the hinterland including the Natura 2000 Network.
EDP11	Promote festivals and sporting events to increase the tourism, cultural and lifestyle profile of the town.	Tourism impacts (e.g. disturbance to QI species) can extend outside the town to the hinterland including the Natura 2000 Network.
EDO8	Support and facilitate the development of an integrated network of greenways and heritage trails, including the Castlebar Urban Greenway to Turlough and Westport.	May result in construction, particularly in proximity to watercourses with hydrological connection to the River Moy SAC.
HSCP1	Encourage the compact growth of Castlebar and undertake a town centre first approach to ensure that development proceeds sustainably and at an appropriate scale, density and sequence and in line with the County Core Strategy Table.	May result in construction, increased development, water based discharges
HSCO1	Support, promote and facilitate the appropriate consolidation, densification and/or redevelopment of brownfield and infill sites for residential uses within the footprint of the existing built up area, where appropriate, including living above the shop opportunities.	While the policy is positive in its usage of utilising the built-up footprint of the town and a variety of uses, works will constitute development which could result in increased discharges to water to the Castlebar River both at construction and operational level.
HSCO17	Develop a recreational strategy for Lough Lannagh, in order to aid and enable Castlebar's emergence as a major sports and adventure destination in Mayo.	May result in disturbance to ex-situ QI species whose populations are functionally linked to the European Sites. Changes in water quality.
NEO1	Open up access to the Castlebar River for recreational and amenity purposes.	Operational disturbance in waterbody with hydrological connection to the River Moy, with changes in water quality and disturbance to ex-situ QI species.
IESP5	Support the implementation of the relevant recommendations and measures as outlined in the relevant River Basin Management Plan - 2022-2027 and associated Programme of Measures, or any such plan that may supersede same during the lifetime of this plan..	Overall positive, but individual project would require assessment if instream work is required i.e. fixing incorrect foul connections into stormwater system
LUZ9	To provide for extraction / quarrying and associated activities including processing of extracted materials and land restoration.	May result in increased development and operational disturbance particularly in terms of groundwater quality.

8 Avoidance/Mitigation Measures

The Castlebar LAP will not in itself, cause any adverse impacts to the overall integrity of the European sites within the Zol of the Plan, due to policies NEP1 and NEP2 safeguarding the integrity of European sites.

Projects/development that arise as a result of the Plan may have adverse effects.

As mentioned above, the Plan includes policies to protect European sites:

- **Policy NEP1:**
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.

- **Policy NEP2:**
Seek to ensure that new plans or projects would not result in significant climatic impacts on European sites because of their scale, resource or transportation requirements, operation or emissions, either cumulatively or in combination with other development.

Additionally policies and objectives provide for protection and enhancement of ecological corridors which may provide a supporting role to the Natura 2000 network,

- **NEP 3:** Protect, reinforce and strengthen the Green and Blue Infrastructure network in Castlebar and strengthen links to the wider regional network. This should be informed by appropriate ecological surveys and assessment.

General ecological measures in **NEP 4** and **NEP 5** for the protection of trees and hedgerows, as well as **NEO 3** in supporting the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025, and **DSP8** and **IESP11** in ensuring that high standards are met throughout the plan area.

Some policies and objectives of the Plan will increase the levels of environmental protection afforded to European sites and their conservation objectives and reduce the potential for adverse impacts from development. These policies include, but are not limited to:

- **EDP1:** Encourage the development of employment areas in a comprehensive and sequential manner which uses existing infrastructure effectively and efficiently, ensuring they are designed to the highest architectural and landscaping standards, with natural site features, such as watercourses, trees and hedgerows be retained and enhanced as an integral part of the development/scheme.
- **MTO2** Seek the provision of workplace mobility plans for proposals for large scale employment and the development of Smarter Travel Initiatives as set in Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future 2009-2020 (or any replacement thereof).
- **MTO3** Ensure that all proposals within the plan area for residential and mixed use developments within the plan area Castlebar at design stage will consider/incorporate pedestrian & cycling provisions and associated facilities that will integrate into the existing & proposed active travel network in the town.
- **BEP6** Encourage the rehabilitation, renovation, climate-proofing and re-use of existing protected structures and vernacular buildings within the plan area, where appropriate, over the demolition of same and new-build on-site
- **IESP5** Support the implementation of the relevant recommendations and measures as outlined in the relevant River Basin Management Plan - 2022-2027 and associated Programme of Measures, or any such plan that may supersede same during the lifetime of this plan.

8.1 Implementation routes for physical works

Measures or projects arising from the objectives, aims, strategies or policies of the LAP requiring physical works may either require planning consent or confirmation, or will be an exempted development.

Works that will require planning consent or confirmation, will be carried out by either a private developer or the Local Authority. Works may progress to construction stage as one of the following:

- Project led by private developer in line with the aims, policies, objectives or strategies of the Plan.
- Project led by the Local Authority under the Planning and Development Regulations.
- Project led by the Local Authority under the Strategic Infrastructure Act.

Project level assessments that may be required for all types of project include:

- Environmental Impact Assessment: For a project above the thresholds specified under Article 23 of the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations, 1989 as amended or a project likely to have significant effects on the environment, having regard to the criteria specified for under Article 27 of the same EIA Regulations 1989 as amended.
- Appropriate Assessment: All projects will be screened for Appropriate Assessment and, where there is a potential for a significant effect on a European (Natura 2000) site, an Appropriate Assessment will be undertaken in accordance the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011.

Exempted developments include those of limited scale and scope, that may fall under the category of flood mitigation works or housing protection schemes. Exempted developments may be carried out by Local Authorities under funding by the OPW, will be exempted in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and will comply with all relevant environmental legislation. This could require the undertaking of an EIA or AA screening for physical works. Local Authorities must supply written confirmation of legislative compliance under condition of funding.

8.2 Project Mitigation: Consenting Process

The consenting process for the progression of measures, actions or projects supported, guided or recommended within the Plan involving physical works, will require the applicable environmental assessments. Also, the consenting authorities may set out specific environmental conditions as part of the project approval.

8.3 Project Mitigation: Pre-Construction/Detailed Design

For the detailed design of projects that may arise as a result of the Plan, where options are available, the design should use a hierarchy to mitigation measures along the following principles:

- Avoidance: avoid creating the potential impact where feasible.
- Mitigation: minimise the potential impact through mitigating measures
- Enhancement: Enhance the environment to better than pre-project conditions, where reasonably possible

The progression of any projects that may arise as a result of the Plan, through the detailed design phase can entail a series of surveys to inform the design, where the scale of surveys would be proportionate to the complexity and potential impacts of the project. These can include:

- engineering structure surveys,
- topographical surveys,

- habitat and species surveys¹
- ornithological surveys,
- bat surveys,
- fish surveys,
- water quality surveys,
- archaeological surveys,
- landscape and visual assessments,
- land valuation surveys and
- other surveys as deemed necessary to prepare a project.

Where necessary, Wildlife Derogation Licences will be sought from the National Park and Wildlife Service Wildlife Licence Unit, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

When large volumes of water are to be discharged to the stormwater system as a result of these projects all levels must be supervised; and that appropriate levels of attenuation/storage should be in place in new projects to prevent overload on the combined system during periods of high rainfall. Rainfall runoff should be managed in accordance with objective IESO1.

The scope of any necessary Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) will contain a WFD assessment if relevant, which will include a hydro-morphological assessment, to consider and support the WFD objectives more clearly. This WFD assessment will inform the project level AA regarding likely significant effects and adverse impacts on the site integrity of European sites in respect of their conservation objectives and if necessary, appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented at project level to ensure adverse effects will not occur.

Where a full EIS is not required for a project (i.e., has been screened out), an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) should be considered to demonstrate how a project accords with relevant planning policy and legislation where an EIA is not required. The findings of an EclA can help competent authorities understand ecological issues when determining applications for consent. Unlike EIA, EclA on its own is not a statutory requirement but can be a valuable evaluation process where habitats, species (including Annex IV species) and ecosystems may be impacted from a development/project. Such habitats may also play a role in supporting a coherent Natura network.

¹ In the context of ecological mitigation, the habitat and species surveys are conducted as required to assess the various aspects for the project, such as ecological surveys for:

- protected or notable habitats and species, including Annex 1 habitats, Annex II and Annex IV species,
- species protected under the Wildlife Acts,
- species protected under the Flora Protection Order,
- the resting and breeding places of relevant species and,
- invasive species, both plant and animal.

8.4 Project Mitigation: Construction Stage

For many project sites, where environmental management may entail multiple aspects, a project specific Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) may be developed. This will form a framework for all environmental management processes, mitigation measures and monitoring and will include other environmental requirements such as invasive no-native species management measures, if applicable.²

A designated environmental officer and project ecologist will be appointed, as appropriate for the project. Biosecurity measures may be required and should be considered depending on the location and conditions on-site.

8.5 Project Monitoring

The Plan, with its associated Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and plan-level AA, sets out a series of monitoring requirements, in connection with the SEA objectives and the predicted effects of the Plan. For measures involving physical works, the project-level EIA and AA, where conducted, will set out the specific monitoring required for each measure.

² There are a range standard type mitigation measures consisting of good construction practices and good planning of works, that are used within construction projects such as for example: Refuelling of plant and vehicles away from watercourses, Installation of wheel-wash and plant washing facilities, working in-channel or on specific works only within environmental windows e.g. in-stream works in Salmonid channels from May to September.

Residual Impact

Table 8-1: Assessment of Impacts upon Site Integrity

Qualifying Interest	Potential source of Impact	Impact on attribute and Target Prior to Mitigation/Avoidance	Avoidance/Mitigation Measures	Residual Impact
Lough Conn and Lough Cullin SPA				
<p>Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) [A061] Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A065] Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182] Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</p>	<p>Habitat loss Habitat fragmentation Changes in physical regime Physical damage Habitat/community simplification Disturbance (noise, visual) Changes in water levels or tables Changes in water quality Changes to surface water flooding Turbidity and siltation Pollution</p>	<p>Lough Conn and Lough Cullin SPA is located 10.01km north and upstream of the Plan area and therefore, will not be directly impacted upon by the Plan. The screened in Policies and Objectives (Table 6-3) of this Plan could cause a decrease in the range and intensity of use of these birds and the functionally linked habitat in the Plan area. These bird species could be adversely impacted through loss or reduction of habitat area, disturbance, fragmentation, reduction in species density, and through changes in key indicators of conservation value.</p>	<p>Built-in to the Plan is fixed mitigation to protect European Sites (NEP1 and NEP2). The Council will ensure that new plans or projects would not result in significant impacts on European sites because of their scale, resource or transportation requirements, operation or emissions, either cumulatively or in combination with other development. These policies will ensure that any development proposal that would promote tourism within or adjacent to Lough Conn and Lough Cullin SPA is located and designed to negate the impacts on this site. Plans that may utilise Lough Lannagh or other local water bodies should include for impacts on bird populations functionally connected to Lough Conn and Lough Cullin SPA. In addition to the above, in relation to development promoted by the Plan, further mitigation measures are outlined in Section 8.1-8.5.</p>	No likely significant effects
River Moy SAC				
<p>Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) [6510]</p>	<p>Habitat loss Changes in physical regime Physical damage Habitat/ community simplification Competition from invasive non-native species Changes in water levels or table Changes to surface water flooding Pollution</p>	<p>This QI is known to be 5km in north and south of Foxford (NWPS, 2020b) which is located at distance from Castlebar and therefore is not expected to be directly or indirectly impacted upon by the Plan.</p>	N/A	No likely significant effects

Qualifying Interest	Potential source of Impact	Impact on attribute and Target Prior to Mitigation/Avoidance	Avoidance/Mitigation Measures	Residual Impact
<p>Active raised bogs [7110] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150] Alkaline fens [7230] Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0]</p>	<p>Habitat loss Changes in physical regime Physical damage Habitat/ community simplification Competition from invasive non-native species Changes in water levels or table Changes in water quality Changes to surface water flooding Pollution</p>	<p>The bog, fen and alluvial forests are not considered present in the Plan area, based on NPWS (2016), therefore, direct impact upon these habitats is not anticipated. These habitats are located at distance from the Plan area and therefore there is no surface water pathways. However, there could be an increase in recreational pressures at the SAC which could have an impact upon habitats, although bogs are most likely inaccessible. Active raised bogs are an air quality sensitive habitat and increased traffic could lead to a detrimental impact upon this QI. The target conservation objectives for these QIs are detailed in Table 7-2. The screened in policies and objectives (Table 6-2) of the Plan could cause adverse impacts to target conservation objectives via surface water pathways and air quality leading to adverse impacts upon these habitats.</p>	<p>Built-in to the Plan is fixed mitigation to protect European Sites (NEP1 and NEP2). The Council will seek to ensure that new plans or projects would not result in significant impacts on European sites because of their scale, resource or transportation requirements, operation or emissions, either cumulatively or in combination with other development.</p> <p>This policy will ensure that any development or tourism/amenity related project proposal within or adjacent to River Moy SAC, or in proximity to the Castlebar River Tributary, is located and designed to negate the impacts on this site.</p> <p>In addition to the above, in relation to development promoted by the Plan, further mitigation measures are outlined in Section 8.</p>	<p>No likely significant effects</p>
<p>Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0]</p>	<p>Habitat loss Changes in physical regime Physical damage Habitat/ community simplification Competition from invasive non-native species Changes in water levels or table Pollution</p>	<p>This QI is not within the Plan area and is located upstream of Castlebar, therefore, it is considered this QI will not be adversely impacted upon by the Plan.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>No likely significant effects</p>

Qualifying Interest	Potential source of Impact	Impact on attribute and Target Prior to Mitigation/Avoidance	Avoidance/Mitigation Measures	Residual Impact
<p><i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092] <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> (Sea Lamprey) [1095] <i>Lampetra planeri</i> (Brook Lamprey) [1096] <i>Salmo salar</i> (Salmon) [1106]</p>	<p>Habitat loss Habitat fragmentation Changes in physical regime Physical damage Habitat/ community simplification Disturbance Competition from invasive non-native species Changes in water levels or table Changes in water quality Turbidity and siltation Pollution</p>	<p>White-clawed Crayfish are known to be present throughout the River Moy system with Lamprey species and Salmon present in the River Moy within and downstream of the plan area. The target conservation objectives for these QIs are detailed in Table 7-2.</p> <p>These QIs could be indirectly impacted upon due to policies and objectives within the Plan. The Plan could lead to adverse impacts upon these species via surface water pathways and increased recreational disturbance (i.e., water activities, fishing).</p>	<p>In-built into the Plan is embedded mitigation to protect European Sites (NEP1; NEP2). The council will support the protection of the integrity of European Sites, that form part of the Natura 2000 network, as well as Nature Reserves and other designated sites including any future designations. NEP2 offers protection to European sites via climatic impacts.</p> <p>In addition to the above, in relation to development promoted by the Plan, further mitigation measures are outlined in Section 8.1-8.5.</p>	<p>No likely significant effects</p>
<p><i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]</p>	<p>Habitat loss Habitat fragmentation Changes in physical regime Physical damage Habitat/ community simplification Disturbance Competition from invasive non-native species Changes in water quality Turbidity and siltation Pollution</p>	<p>Otter are known to be widespread throughout the Moy system. The target conservation objectives for Otter are detailed in Table 7-.</p> <p>The screened in policies and objectives (Table 6-3) of the Plan could cause adverse impacts to target conservation objectives for Otter via disturbance, increased recreational pressures along the Moy as well as surface water pathways (i.e., pollution).</p>	<p>In-built into the Plan is embedded mitigation to protect European Sites (NEP1; NEP2). The council will support the protection of the integrity of European Sites, that form part of the Natura 2000 network, as well as Nature Reserves and other designated sites including any future designations. NEP2 offers protection to European.</p> <p>In addition to the above, in relation to development promoted by the Plan, further mitigation measures are outlined in Section 8.1-8.5.</p>	<p>No likely significant effects</p>

9 Summary and Conclusion

The most likely effects of the LAP on European sites are related to pressures from new development including changes to surface and groundwater levels/quality (surface run-off via the stormwater network pollution events), air pollution and increased recreational pressures arising from increased population in Castlebar.

The Pre-Screening Assessment identified that two European sites had pathway-receptors for potential likely significant effects arising from the implementation of the Plan, these are:

- Lough Conn and Lough Cullin SPA
- River Moy SAC

The AA Screening Assessment screened in 18 of the LAP policies/objectives as these policies/objectives could have an adverse impact on the integrity of the SPA via hydrological, disturbance (recreational/tourism) or air pollution pathways. Therefore, an NIR was required to determine whether the proposed Plan would result in significant adverse impacts on the integrity of the screened in European sites with respect to the site's structure, function, and/or conservation objectives.

Mitigation measures that are provided in the NIR will be implemented throughout the entire extent of the execution of projects that may stem from the Plan. General ecological mitigation measures are provided through the policies themselves, providing inherent mitigation within the Plan itself e.g. NEP1 and NEP 2 Designated Sites Policies.

Mitigation also includes measures to be implemented at the consenting process stage, pre-construction, construction and monitoring for any projects that may arise as a result of the Plan. This will be implemented through following the standard AA process as project level, as determined by the competent authority and use of best practice guidelines via the planning process procedures at a project level.

Mitigation is also provided through general policies that protect the environment at a local level – this supports Article 10 of the Habitats Directive, which provides for protection for ecological corridors and stepping stones in supporting the European Sites. Examples of this are in NEP 3, 4 and 5, as well as overall standards outlined in DSP 8 and IESP 11, and through overall policies that result in a lowering of emissions (such as reduced reliance of car usage, in conjunction with the LTP).

Inclusion of new policies and objectives incorporated iteratively through the plan development process. These strengthen protection at the plan level e.g. DSP8, which specifically gives provision for environmental assessments at the project level.

All these types of mitigation combine to provide support to the protection of the European sites.

The NIR determined that the Castlebar LAP is not likely to have significant effects, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, on the single screened in European site due to the suite of mitigation (including policies NEP1 and NEP2) aimed at safeguarding the integrity of European sites and the local environment.

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