



Athlone Town  
Development Plan  
2014-2020

Volume 4  
Natura Impact Report

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

The Draft Athlone Town Development Plan 2014-2020 has been prepared in accordance with the requirements and provisions of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2010 as amended. It relates to both the functional area of Athlone within the Athlone Town Council boundary and the environs of the town, which is under the jurisdiction of Westmeath County Council.

### 1.2 Regulatory Context

The Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora) formed a basis for the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). Similarly, Special Protection Areas are legislated for under the Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds). Collectively, SACs and SPAs are referred to as Natura 2000 sites. In general terms, they are considered to be of exceptional importance in terms of rare, endangered or vulnerable habitats and species within the European Community. Under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive an Appropriate Assessment must be undertaken for any plan or program that is likely to have a significant effect on the conservation objectives of a Natura 2000 site. An Appropriate Assessment is an evaluation of the potential impacts of a plan on the conservation objectives of a Natura 2000 site, and the development, where necessary, of mitigation or avoidance measures to preclude negative effects. Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive states:

*6(3) Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site (Natura 2000 sites) but likely to have 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 sites conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent National Authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.*

*6(4) If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted. Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest.*

The Habitats Directive promotes a hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation and compensatory measures to be addressed in the Appropriate Assessment (AA) process.

- Firstly, a plan should aim to **avoid** any negative impacts on Natura 2000 sites by identifying possible impacts early in plan making, and writing the plan in order to avoid such impacts.

- Secondly, **mitigation measures** should be applied during the AA process to the point where no adverse impacts on the site(s) remain.
- Under a worst-case scenario, a plan may have to undergo an assessment of alternative solutions. Under this stage of the assessment, **compensatory measures** are required for any remaining adverse effects, but they are permitted only if (a) there are no alternative solutions and (b) the plan is required for *Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest* (the 'IROPI test'). European case law highlights that consideration must be given to alternatives outside the plan boundary area in carrying out the IROPI test. It is a rigorous test which plans are generally considered unlikely to pass.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Introduction

There are four stages in the Appropriate Assessment process.

The aim of the screening process (Stage 1) is to determine whether or not an AA is required. The aim of the AA (Stage 2) is to: identify potential impacts of the plan on its own or in combination with other plans or projects; identify policy and objectives that will avoid and mitigate any negative impacts on Natura 2000 sites; and avoid the need to progress to Stages 3 and 4. Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment results in the production of a Natura Impact Statement, which documents the findings of the assessment.

Plan adoption may only proceed if the Plan will not affect the integrity of a Natura 2000 site. Progression to the third stage would result in changes to the plan in its current form, and would require the implementation of compensatory measures for impacts on Natura 2000 sites. If the recommendations of Stage 2 are incorporated into the proposed plan, then Stages 3 and 4, relating to alternative solutions and compensatory measures, will not be required.

In the preparation of this assessment regard has been given to the following:

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities. Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009)
- Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites – Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission (2001).
- 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 (2007).
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans. Authors: Scott Wilson, Levett-Therivel Sustainability Consultants, Treweek Environmental Consultants and Land Use Consultants (September 2006).

### 2.2 Desk Review

A review was carried out to identify features of ecological importance within the Athlone Town Development Plan (ATDP) and in the area surrounding the boundary of the ATDP within a distance of 15km. Desk top research was carried out using information on Natura 2000 Sites from Site Synopses and Standard Data Forms available on <http://www.npws.ie/en/ProtectedSites/>. Information on qualifying interests and conservation objectives was accessed through NPWS research staff.

A range of additional sources of information including scientific reports produced by, and information on the websites of the EPA, NPWS, Westmeath County Council and other agencies were also reviewed. A full bibliography of information sources reviewed is given in the references section.

### **2.3 Stage 1 – Screening Process**

Screening requires a review of all Natura 2000 sites that could potentially be subject to impacts. It involves identifying whether sites should be included in Stage 2 of the AA. Guidelines recommend a buffer zone of 15km from the plan boundary in compiling the list of sites potentially affected by the proposed plan. Details of the Natura 2000 sites located within 15km of the Draft Athlone Town Development Plan boundary are shown in Fig. 1 and Tables 1, 2 and 3.

Each Natura 2000 site has been reviewed to establish whether or not the plan is likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of the site as defined by its structure and function and its conservation objectives. The qualifying interests of each Natura 2000 site was identified and listed in each site description. The threats to individual qualifying interests and the site as a whole were assessed with reference to the sensitivities of each site and factors that influence the sites conservation status.

The potential threats are summarised into the following categories for screening process:

- Direct impacts refer to habitat loss or fragmentation arising from land-take requirements for development or agricultural purposes. Direct impacts can be as a result of a change in land use or management, such as the removal of agricultural practices that prevent scrub encroachment.
- Indirect and secondary impacts do not have a straight-line route between cause and effect and it is potentially more challenging to ensure that all the possible indirect impacts of the plan – in combination with other plans and projects – have been established. These can arise when a development alters the hydrology of a catchment area, which in turn affects the movement of groundwater to a site and the qualifying interests that rely on the maintenance of water levels. Deterioration in water quality can occur as an indirect consequence of development, which in turn changes the aquatic environment and reduces its capacity to support certain plants and animals. The introduction of invasive species can also be defined as an indirect impact, which results in increased movement of vectors (humans, fauna, surface water), and consequently the transfer of alien species from one area to another.
- Disturbance to fauna can arise directly through the loss of habitat (e.g. bat roosts) or indirectly through noise, vibration and increased activity associated with construction and operation.

Table 4 sets out the final screened list of sites, which includes those sites within or adjacent to the plan's boundary that have clear links to development within its boundary. It also includes sites that could potentially be impacted by the ATDP but require further investigation. These sites are carried forward to Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment to assess whether there will be a significant negative effect on the structure and function of the Natura 2000 site and consequently, on its conservation objectives.

### 3 STAGE 1 - SCREENING

#### 3.1 Brief Description of the Plan

The Athlone Town Plan 2014-2020 is spatially and functionally connected with the Westmeath County Development Plan (WCDP) 2014-2020 and therefore it has been prepared with related and interdependent overarching policies and objectives of the Westmeath County Development Plan (CDP) in mind.

The Athlone Town Plan is intended to provide an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the administrative area and immediate environs of Athlone Town for the period 2014 - 2020, together with the provision of policies and objectives for the future development of the town and environs. It is intended that the long-term vision articulated by the Plan will give a degree of continuity and certainty to the future development of the Plan area.

This vision statement which is included in Chapter 2 section 2.2 of the Draft Plan reads as follows:

*“To provide for the development of Athlone as a driver of sustainable economic growth, commensurate with the Linked Gateway status of the town, whilst balancing the need to safeguard the town’s inherent environmental assets with the creation of appropriate development opportunities. To develop Athlone as a vibrant and dynamic town in which to live, work, do business and visit, offering high quality employment, educational, sporting and tourism facilities, together with sustainable communities.”*

This Athlone Town Development Plan seeks to achieve this vision through a number of initiatives including:

- (i) Prioritising development of the Gateway
- (ii) Promoting the town as a premier destination for Foreign Direct Investment and Retailing.
- (iii) Continuing to respect the primacy of the town centre including prioritising the improvement and enhancement of the public realm
- (iv) Supporting continued public capital investment in enabling infrastructure and achieving economies of scale for services and infrastructure in the town
- (v) Facilitating, supporting and protecting national public investment in infrastructure (such as Transport, Water Services, Housing, Environment and Community Services) to achieve sustainable development of Athlone in accordance with an agreed planning framework.
- (vi) Promoting economic development and employment creation, within defined economic clusters in established Business Parks such as Garrycastle, Blyry, Athlone Business Park and the Strategic Gateway Zone
- (vii) Supporting and promoting the development of Athlone as an international tourist destination through the continued advancement of the “Destination Athlone” initiative.

- (viii) Protecting the town's natural assets by preserving the quality of the River Shannon and its Callows, landscape, parks, open spaces and the architectural, archaeological and cultural heritage of Athlone
- (ix) Promoting social inclusion and the creation of sustainable communities;
- (x) Supporting the development and expansion of Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT)

### **3.2 Area Covered by the Plan**

The study area identified in the Athlone Town Plan covers approximately 1,597 hectares. This Plan covers the Electoral Districts of Athlone East Rural, Athlone East Urban, Athlone West Urban and parts of Tubritt and Moydrum; taking in an area at its eastern end within the administrative boundary of Westmeath County Council. Part of the environs of Athlone is located within the jurisdiction of Roscommon County Council. This area does not form part of this plan but is subject to the Monksland / Bellanamullia Local Area Plan adopted by Roscommon County Council in 2010. Lough Ree SPA/SAC and River Shannon Callows SAC and Middle Shannon Callows SPA fall within the boundary of the development plan. Crosswood Bog SAC borders the development plan border to the east. The Athlone Town Plan boundary in respect to protected areas is included in Figure 1.

### **3.3 Interaction with other Plans**

The E.C. Habitats Directive and the Irish Habitats Regulations 2011 require that the impacts on Natura 2000 sites be assessed from the plan or project in question and also in the presence of other plans and projects that could affect the same Natura 2000 sites. The screening process identified the plans that could act in combination with the Draft Athlone Town Plan to pose likely significant effects on Natura 2000 sites in Athlone and its environs. This Section identifies if these Plans have undergone an appropriate assessment themselves as it is assumed that if a Plan has been adopted following an AA then it cannot pose likely significant adverse effects on Natura 2000 sites.

#### **3.3.1 Westmeath Draft County Development Plan 2014 - 2020**

The Westmeath County Development Plan (WCDP) compliments the Athlone Town Plan and both are consistent in their policies safeguarding Natura 2000 sites. Throughout the draft plan for County Westmeath there is an overarching message to ensure that all plans and projects in the County which are likely to have significant effect on a Natura 2000 site, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. Of particular relevance are the natural and built heritage policies outlined in Chapter 5 outlining details of sites and species that are designated under National and European legislation and discusses the role of Westmeath County Council in protecting designated sites, in conjunction with NPWS.

Overall, the Development Management process and the application of policies / objectives in the plan will assess any future development proposals within the Plan area to ensure the protection of the natural environment and in particular Natura 2000 sites.

These policies and objectives include the following:

**P-CS1** To ensure that, the future spatial development of Westmeath is in accordance with higher level plans including National and Regional Spatial Policy including national policy guidance issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2010 as amended, the River Basin Management Plans, Surface Water Regulations and the Habitats Directive.

**P-CS4** To take in account, in the assessment of development proposals, Article 6(3)(4) and Article 10 of the Habitats Directive, the Surface Water Regulations 2009 and the relevant measures of the River Basin Management Plans 2009-2015.

**P-RE5** To promote sustainable rural tourism in a manner which protects and enhances the rural environment and where it can be demonstrated that resultant development will not have a negative impact on Natura 2000 sites.

**P-NH5** To maintain a record of all previously adopted and proposed plans and programmes and all granted planning developments, which are likely to have a significant effect (directly or through indirect, cumulative or in combination effect) on European sites, within or adjoining the county, to allow for the appropriate assessment of potential cumulative or in combination effects of proposed plans, programmes or projects on such sites.

**P-NAT2** To protect and conserve Special Areas of Conservation, candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and candidate Special Protection Areas, designated by the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht (DAHG) under the EU Birds and Habitats Directives respectively.

**P-NAT3** To protect plant, animal, species and habitats which have been identified by the Habitats Directive, Birds Directive, Wildlife Act (1976) and (Amendment Act) 2000, and the Flora Protection Order S.I No. 94 of 1999.

**P-NAT4** To assess any plan or project in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, and assess whether the Plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on the site either individually or cumulatively upon the integrity, conservation objectives and qualifying interest of any Natura 2000 site.

**P-NAT5** To require appropriate Environmental Assessment such as EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) or Ecological Appraisal for developments not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site, or a proposed European Site and which are likely to have significant effects on the site individually or cumulatively.

**P-NAT6** To consult with prescribed bodies when assessing development proposals affecting sites of biodiversity value with particular emphasis on the Natura 2000 network of sites.

**P-NAT7** To ensure that the Local Authority in fulfilling its responsibility in the supply of services and infrastructure, zoning of lands and undertaking and authorising development, addresses the potential effects on biodiversity and the needs of priority habitats and species within or adjoining sites as identified in the NPWS Report 'The status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland' (2008).

**P-NAT8** To identify and provide appropriate buffer zones between designated ecological sites and local biodiversity features and areas zoned for development.

**O-NAT1** To promote the maintenance and as appropriate, achievement of favourable conservation status of habitats and species and to improve the ecological coherence of Natura 2000 by maintaining and where appropriate developing features in the landscape which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora.



**P-GEO4** To encourage and promote, where appropriate, public access to Geological Sites subject to the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

**P-PTL2** To ensure that peatland areas which are designated for protection under international and national legislation for their habitats, are conserved and managed appropriately to conserve their ecological, archaeological, cultural and educational significance.

**O-WET3** To maintain good ecological status of wetlands and watercourses in support of the provisions of the Water Framework Directive and Ramsar Convention.

**P-LLM3** To adhere to the implementation of provisions of the Shannon River Basin Management Plan to assist the process of achieving good water status for the river catchments and ensure that future development in areas close to the rivers will adhere to the principles of this plan.

**P-NAT9** To prepare Strategic Habitat Management Plans in consultation with NPWS and relevant stakeholders.

**P-WT8** To implement the Shannon and Eastern River Basin Management Plans and their programmes of Measures, in relation to Water Policy.

**P-GW4** To protect groundwater resources and associated habitats and species, in accordance with the requirements of the Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC).

The Westmeath County Development Plan also makes detailed references to policies and objectives in relation to Natural Heritage and Biodiversity, Eskers, Inland Waterways, Flood Risk Management and Assessment, Natural Water Systems, Invasive Species and Landscape Conservation and Management which aim to protect Natura 2000 sites against future plans and projects emanating from the Westmeath County Development Plan. The Athlone Town Plan has been prepared with cognisance to these policies and objectives.

In addition, the Draft Westmeath County Development Plan has been subject to an AA, which concluded that it would not give rise to adverse effects on Natura 2000 sites in County Westmeath or adjoining areas subject to Stage 2 mitigation of certain policies.

### **3.3.2 Shannon International River Basin District Draft Management Plan (2008)**

Both the WCDP and the Athlone Town Plan have regard to the Shannon International River Basin District Draft Management Plan and both include policies and objectives to protect and improve water quality in accordance with the Water Framework Directive. A review of the Article 6 Assessment indicated that the Measures proposed within the Plan are consistent with the mitigation policies within the Draft Town Development Plan in a similar manner to the ERBDMP. There is no significant risk of in-combination effects.

### **3.3.3 Local Area Plans**

Local Area Plans in Athlone are not predicted to pose cumulative adverse impacts, providing they are in compliance with the Athlone Town Plan.

- **Creggan Local Area Plan**

The Creggan Local Area Plan has been subject to an AA, which concluded that it would not give rise to adverse effects on Natura 2000 sites or on the key environmental factors supporting their structure and function such as hydrology in Athlone or adjoining areas, once the recommended mitigation measures have been fully implemented.

- **Curragh-Lissywollen Local Area Plan 2006**

The most recent Curragh-Lissywollen Local Area Plan does not include an Appropriate Assessment of the plan.

- **Cornamagh Local Area Plan 2009**

According to the Appropriate Assessment of the Cornamagh Local Area Plan 2009 it is not envisaged that the development of the Cornamagh area will have any significant environmental impacts on Natura 2000 sites.

- **Irishtown Framework Plan 2009**

The Irishtown Framework Plan 2009 does not include an Appropriate Assessment of the plan.

### **3.3.4 Adjacent Local Authority Plans/Programmes**

- **Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) Local Area Plan 2010 – 2016**

Lough Ree SPA, Lough Ree SAC, Middle Shannon Callows SPA, River Shannon Callows SAC, Lough Croan Turlough SPA, Roscommon River Suck Callows SPA are all Natura 2000 sites shared by Roscommon and Westmeath. The Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) Local Area Plan 2010-2016 carried out a Screening Report of the Plan which concluded that an Appropriate Assessment of the plan was not required. There are a number of policies included within the plan to avoid adverse primary or secondary impacts to the quality of Natura 2000 sites. Therefore no cumulative impacts are predicted as a result of implementation of the plan.

## 4 NATURA 2000 SITES

### 4.1 Natura 2000 sites within the boundary of the Local Area Plan

Natura 2000 sites are protected habitats for flora and fauna of European importance. They comprise Special Areas of Conservation, designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas, designated under the Birds Directive.

The Natura 2000 network of sites, are the prime wildlife conservation areas in the country, considered to be important on a European as well as Irish level. The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) lists certain habitats and species that must be protected. The EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) lists rare and vulnerable species, regularly occurring migratory species and wetlands which attract large numbers of migratory birds each year.

Sites proposed for designation under the Habitats Directive are called candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA) under the Birds Directive, and are legally protected under various legislation, regulation and policy at European, National, Regional and County Level. Details of these sites are forwarded to the EU Commission and once approved by the commission; these sites are formally designated by the Minister as SAC's and SPA's.

The high quality of the natural environment both within and surrounding Athlone is reflected in the fact that there are 4 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) within the boundary of the Athlone Town Plan (additional 8 within 15Km of ATDP boundary) and 2 Special Protection Areas for Birds (SPA's) in Athlone (additional 2 within 15km of ATDP boundary) as illustrated in Figure 1.

All Natura 2000 sites entirely or partially within a 15km buffer from the Athlone Town Plan boundary have been included in this assessment. This buffer is considered ample for application to the subject assessment and is considered to be an appropriate buffer in Section 3.2.3 of *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities December 2009*.

Further details pertaining to the sites are listed below with particular reference to potential impacts arising from the proposed policy are provided below.

### 4.2 Conservation Management Objectives for Natura 2000 sites

At the time of writing specific Conservation Management Plans were unavailable for many of Natura 2000 sites listed in Tables 1, 2 and 3. For sites lacking a published Plan, a list of generic conservation management objectives have been provided by the NPWS. These are:

#### ***For SACs:***

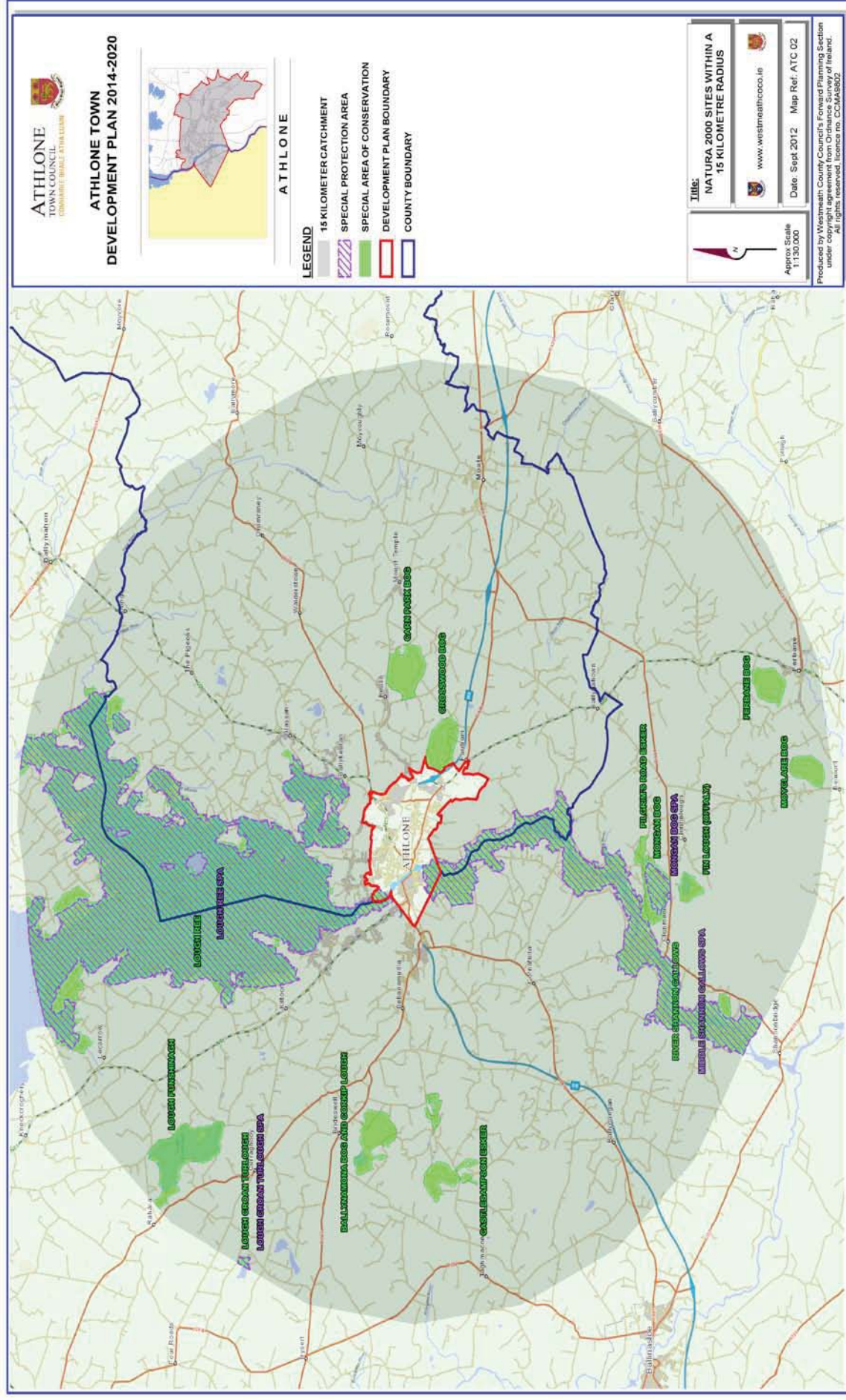
- To maintain the Annex I habitats for which the SAC has been selected at favourable conservation status;
- To maintain the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected at favourable conservation status;
- To maintain the extent, species richness and biodiversity of the entire site; and
- To establish effective liaison and co-operation with landowners, legal users and relevant authorities.

#### ***For SPAs:***

- To maintain the bird species of special conservation interest, for which the SPA has been designated, at favourable conservation status.

Since the Conservation Management Objectives for the Natura 2000 sites focus on maintaining the favourable conservation status of the qualifying interests of each site, the Screening process concentrated on assessing the potential implications of the plan against the qualifying interests of each site. Site details in respect to SACs, and SPAs, relevant to the Athlone Local Area Plan 2014-2020 are outlined below.





**Figure 1 Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the boundary of the Athlone Town Plan.**

Table 1: List of SACs within the boundary of the Athlone Town Plan

Natura 2000 site	Qualifying Interest		Specific Threats to Natura 2000 site	Distance from ATP boundary	Hydrologically sensitive Downstream from WWTP
<b>Site Code: 000440</b> <b>Lough Ree</b>	1355	<i>Lutra lutra</i>	<p>The main threat to the aquatic life in the lake is from artificial enrichment of the waters by agricultural and domestic waste, and also by peat silt in suspension, which is increasingly limiting light penetration. Increased use of the lake for leisure activities, especially boating, will cause disturbance and some physical damage to marginal wetlands. The degraded raised bog is threatened by further cutting, burning and afforestation.</p> <p>Further threats include: Mowing/cutting; grazing; fertilisation; leisure activities including camping and caravans and nautical sports; water pollution; invasion of a species; general forestry management; human habitation and associated infrastructure; scrub encroachment on to grasslands; threats to bog and bog woodland habitats include: peat cutting; drainage and burning; fertilisation.</p>	0 km	Hydrologically sensitive Upstream from WWTP
	3150	Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation			
	7230	Alkaline fens			
	91A0	Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in British Isles			
	6210	Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates ( <i>Festuco Brometalia</i> ) (*important orchid sites).			
	91D0	Bog woodland			
	8240	Limestone pavements			
	7120	Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration			

Natura 2000 site	Qualifying Interest		Specific Threats to Natura 2000 site	Distance from Draft ATP boundary	Hydrologically sensitive Downstream from WWTP
Site Code: 000216 River Shannon Callows	6510	Lowland hay meadows ( <i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> , <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i> )	<p>The main threats to the Annex I habitats (and the other humid grasslands) on the site come from intensification of grassland management which would destroy their semi-natural nature and reduce botanical diversity.</p> <p>The flooding regime generally mitigates against intensification but herbicides and high fertiliser applications have been effectively used in a few places and this trend may increase. Most of the meadows are old meadows and any trend towards change to permanent pasture would be detrimental.</p> <p>This has not happened to date but may in the future, especially if deterioration in the flooding regime makes it more difficult to harvest. Large scale drainage of this section of the river is considered unlikely at present. The limestone pavement is threatened by removal of rock and scrub clearance.</p> <p>Drainage schemes, agricultural pollution and wildfowling threaten the bird-life in the area. Power lines across the site are also hazards for flying birds.</p> <p>Main Threats and Impacts: Mowing/cutting; fertilisation; grazing; abandonment of pastoral systems; Leisure fishing; hunting; waste discharges; communication networks – paths, cycle routes and tracks; bridge, viaduct; other forms of transportation and communication; water pollution; drainage; modifying structures of inland water courses.</p>	0km	Hydrologically sensitive Downstream from WWTP
	6410	Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils ( <i>Molinia caerulea</i> )			
	8240	Limestone pavements			
	91E0	Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> ( <i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i> )			
	1355	<i>Lutra lutra</i>			

Natura 2000 site	Qualifying Interest		Specific Threats to Natura 2000 site	Distance from Draft ATP boundary	Hydrologically and sensitive Downstream from WWTP
<b>Site Code: 002337 Crosswood Bog</b>	7110	Active raised bog	<p>This site continues to be vulnerable to the effects of drying out. The main damaging operations are afforestation and peat-cutting, and these are particularly severe along the southern side of the high bog. The long-term viability of the site may be threatened by these activities should they continue.</p> <p>Main Threats and Impacts: Peat cutting; drainage and burning; afforestation; invasive species; grazing; dumping; fertilisation; restructuring agricultural land; communication routes; cultivation; mowing/cutting; modification of inland water structures; sand and gravel extraction.</p>	0km	Hydrologically sensitive Upstream from WWTP
	7120	Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration			
	3140	Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp.			



Table 2 List of cSAC's within 15 km of the Athlone Town Plan Boundary

Natura 2000 site	Qualifying Interest	Specific Threats to Natura 2000 site	Distance from Draft ATP boundary	Hydrologically sensitive Downstream from WWTP
<b>Site Code:</b> <b>000575 Ferbane Bog Offaly</b>	7110 Active raised bogs	<p>Raised bogs, due to the high water content of peat are vulnerable to activities which increase water loss. Drainage is extensive at this site and has caused significant drying out. Past peat cutting and some active peat cutting have also speeded up water loss with a subsequent deterioration in vegetation cover.</p> <p>Further threats include: removal of hedges and copses; mowing/ cutting; grazing; burning; forestry clearance in surrounding areas</p> <p>Site is currently affected by drainage and is vulnerable to continued water loss.</p> <p>Main threats and Impacts: Adjacent infrastructure, Agricultural, nutrient enrichment, drainage</p>	12.02km	Hydrologically sensitive Downstream from WWTP
	7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration			
	7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion			
<b>Site Code:</b> <b>000576 Fin Lough (Offaly) Offaly</b>	1013 <i>Vertigo geyeri</i>	<p>This site is vulnerable to the effects of further peat cutting, drainage and fire, as these are all factors which increase water loss. Further threats include: removal of hedges and copses; fertilisation; grazing; improved access to site.</p> <p>The site is particularly vulnerable to grassland improvement, i.e. fertilization and re-seeding for grazing of stock, silage and hay. The site is vulnerable to colonization by scrub if the correct grazing regime is not maintained. As with most Irish eskers the site is vulnerable to quarrying for sand and gravel. Main Threats and Impacts: Access to site, Grazing, Quarrying, Scrub encroachment</p>	9.03km	Hydrologically sensitive Downstream from WWTP
	7230 Alkaline fens			
	3140 Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp.			
	7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration			
<b>Site Code:</b> <b>000581 Moyclare Bog Offaly</b>	7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion	<p>This site is vulnerable to the effects of further peat cutting, drainage and fire, as these are all factors which increase water loss. Further threats include: removal of hedges and copses; fertilisation; grazing; improved access to site.</p> <p>The site is particularly vulnerable to grassland improvement, i.e. fertilization and re-seeding for grazing of stock, silage and hay. The site is vulnerable to colonization by scrub if the correct grazing regime is not maintained. As with most Irish eskers the site is vulnerable to quarrying for sand and gravel. Main Threats and Impacts: Access to site, Grazing, Quarrying, Scrub encroachment</p>	13.08 km	Hydrologically sensitive Downstream from WWTP
	7110 Active raised bogs			
	7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration			
<b>Site Code:</b> <b>001776 Pilgrim's Road Esker Offaly</b>	6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates ( <i>Festuco Brometalia</i> ) (*important orchid sites)		6.93km	Not hydrologically sensitive Downstream from WWTP

Natura 2000 site	Qualifying Interest		Specific Threats to Natura 2000 site	Distance from Draft ATP boundary	Hydrologically sensitive Downstream from WWTP
<b>Site Code:</b> <b>002339</b> <b>Ballynamona Bog and Corkip Lough Roscommon</b>	7110	Active raised bogs	<p>The main threats to this site are peat-cutting and associated activities such as drainage and burning. Burning appears to be a frequent occurrence on the peatland area of this site and this damages the structure of the bog surface.</p> <p>The bog woodland, however, may be somewhat protected from burning by the surrounding wet flush vegetation. Agricultural reclamation and afforestation are potential threats to cutover areas of bog within the site. The turlough area is especially vulnerable to agricultural reclamation, drainage and water pollution.</p>	7.12km	Hydrologically sensitive Upstream from WWTP
	7120	Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration			
	7150	Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion			
	91D0	Bog woodland			
	3180	Turloughs			
<b>Site Code:</b> <b>000610 Lough Croan Turlough Roscommon</b>	3180	Turloughs	The southern side of the wetland includes and adjoins intensive farmland and there is a likelihood of eutrophication from this source. Further drainage would damage the site: it could be done through the Cross River. Main Threats and Impacts: drainage; grazing; fertilisation; eutrophication.	14.3km	Hydrologically sensitive Upstream from WWTP
<b>Site Code:</b> <b>000611 Lough Funshinagh Roscommon</b>	3180	Turloughs	Lough Funshinagh would be adversely affected by eutrophication from agricultural intensification in the catchment and also from housing on shore. Actual drainage or a lowering of regional watertables would also be damaging as would an increase in human disturbance. Stock feeding; grazing; Human habitation.	10.6km	Hydrologically sensitive Upstream from WWTP
<b>Site Code:</b> <b>001625 Castlesampson Esker Roscommon</b>	3180	Turloughs	The site is vulnerable to grassland improvement, i.e. fertilization and reseeding, to both overgrazing and undergrazing (the latter would encourage scrub encroachment onto the esker grassland) and to gravel extraction. The whole site has no state protection, but one species of flora which is protected does occur on the site. Further threats include: grazing; mechanical removal of peat; human habitation; general forestry management.	6.33km	Not hydrologically sensitive Upstream from WWTP

Natura 2000 site		Qualifying Interest	Specific Threats to Natura 2000 site	Distance from Draft ATP boundary	Hydrologically sensitive Downstream from WWTP
<b>Site Code:</b> <b>000580 Mongan Bog Offaly</b>	7110	Active raised bogs	<p>Raised bogs, due to the high water content of peat, are vulnerable to activities which cause water loss, such as drainage, peat cutting and fire. Two concentrations of surface drains on the high bog are increasing water loss. Other surface drains and marginal drains are also impacting the site. Peat cutting is at a low intensity but is also affecting the site. Main threats and Impacts: Fragility of the active raised bog, Drainage, Turf cutting, Hydrological works (dams along drains on high bog)</p>	7.38km	Hydrologically sensitive Downstream from WWTP
	7120	Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration			
	7150	Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion			

Table 3 List of SPA's within 15km Athlone Town Plan

Natura 2000 site	Qualifying Interest		Specific Threats to Natura 2000 site	Distance from ATP boundary	Hydrologically sensitive Downstream from WWTP
<b>004064</b> <b>Lough Ree SPA</b>	A038	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>	Whilst recently classified as a mesotrophic system, Lough Ree had been moderately eutrophic in the mid 1990s. It is vulnerable to artificial enrichment of the waters by agricultural and domestic waste. The recent reduction in phytoplanktonic growth has coincided with the invasion of the Shannon system by the Zebra Mussel <i>Dreissena polymorpha</i> (which prey on plankton) but in the longterm this invasive bivalve may threaten the ecology of the lake. Recreational activities, especially boating, presently cause some disturbance to the birds and an increase in such activities would be of concern. Developments above the lake shore could affect feeding grounds of some of the wintering waterfowl and nesting habitat for duck species. Status of nesting <i>Larus gulls</i> requires investigation and numbers could be affected by feral <i>Mustela vison</i> . Threats include: Grazing; fertilisation; general forestry management; Walking; horseriding and non-motorised vehicles; nautical sports; leisure fishing; hunting; water pollution; invasion by a species.	0km	Hydrologically sensitive Upstream from WWTP
	A050	<i>Anas Penelope</i>			
	A052	<i>Anas crecca</i>			
	A053	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>			
	A056	<i>Anas clypeata</i>			
	A061	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>			
	A065	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>			
	A067	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>			
	A004	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>			
	A125	<i>Fulica atra</i>			
	A140	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>			
	A395	<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>			
	A142	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>			
	A193	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>			



Natura 2000 site	Qualifying Interest		Specific Threats to Natura 2000 site	Distance from Draft ATP boundary	Hydrologically sensitive Downstream from WWTP
<b>004096</b> <b>Middle Shannon</b> <b>Callows SPA</b>	A038	<i>Cygnus Cygnus</i>	The principal threat to the ornithological interests in this site is agricultural improvement including drainage attempts to reduce winter flooding. Since 1993 a grant scheme for <i>Crex crex</i> has been in operation for landowners to allow late cutting of meadows. Continuous management is considered to be necessary to maintain the population. However, despite the conservation efforts, summer flooding reduces the numbers in some years. Agricultural intensification may also be affecting numbers of breeding waders. Wildfowling causes some disturbance. Mowing, cutting; Fertilisation; grazing; Abandonment of pastoral systems; leisure fishing; hunting; paths, tracks and cycling routes; bridge, viaduct; water pollution; Nautical sports; walking, horseriding and non-motorised vehicles; urbanised areas, human habitation.	0km	Hydrologically sensitive Downstream from WWTP
	A050	<i>Anas penelope</i>			
	A122	<i>Crex crex</i>			
	A140	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>			
	A142	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>			
	A156	<i>Limosa limosa</i>			
	A179	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>			
	A395	<i>Anser albifrons</i> <i>Flavirostris</i>			
	A082	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>			
	A052	<i>Anas crecca</i>			
	A061	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>			
	A149	<i>Calidris alpina</i>			
	A160	<i>Numenius arquata</i>			
	A162	<i>Tringa totanus</i>			
	A179	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>			
	A153	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>			
	A290	<i>Locustella naevia</i>			
	A113	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>			
	A056	<i>Anas clypeata</i>			
	A999	Wetlands & Waterbirds			

## 5. Screening Assessment

The following Screening Assessment is carried out in accordance with EU Guidance (EC, 2001) and Irish Guidance (DoEHLG, 2009) using the standard Screening Assessment form provided in Annex 2 of the EU Guidance Document.

Implicit in the Habitats Directive is the application of the precautionary principle, which is used (i) where there is potential for negative effects and (ii) where due to inconclusive or insufficient data it is not impossible to determine with sufficient certainty the risk in question (EC, 2000b).

### 5.1 Assessment Criteria

Assessment Criteria
Describe the individual elements of the plan (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the Natura 2000 sites.
<p>There is potential for significant adverse effects on individual Natura 2000 sites identified in the Table 1-3 for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The provision of key services and infrastructural development could result in significant impact to water quality through contamination with sediments, hydrocarbons, faecal coliforms and other contaminants.</li> <li>• The siting and routing of cycleways and pedestrian facilities could potentially impact on adjacent Natura 2000 sites.</li> <li>• Where zoning/rezoning of lands and the introduction of new development is being proposed within the Plan area, infrastructural deficiencies could pose a problem e.g. incapacity of municipal wastewater infrastructures to cater for additional load. The plan should ensure the adequacy of the existing water supply/wastewater treatment facilities and associated networks are assessed.</li> <li>• There is potential for disturbance of species in Natura 2000 sites arising from the individual elements of the draft plan and the cumulative impacts of other plans and projects associated with economic development, promoting tourism and development of associated tourism infrastructure along the Shannon River.</li> <li>• There is currently insufficient information on the exact nature of the location as regards the Loughandonning Link Road, which affects the AI River habitat for protected species, eg lamprey eel.</li> <li>• The zoning of Greenfield lands on the north-western edge of the town for residential development adjacent to Lough Ree SAC and the potential for significant adverse effects on the habitats</li> </ul> <p>The potential impacts on the groundwater environment are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The risk of groundwater pollution during construction works (contaminated runoff or spillage);</li> <li>• The permanent alteration of the natural groundwater flow patterns and levels.</li> <li>• Abstraction altering groundwater levels.</li> </ul> <p>The potential risks to the surface water environment are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wastewater treatment effluent carrying pollutants, nutrients or other contaminants.</li> <li>• Diffuse pollution resulting from development carrying contaminants such as silt, hydrocarbons, Faecal coliforms and cement.</li> <li>• Point source discharge from industrial discharges or other point source discharge.</li> <li>• Nutrients from agricultural lands discharges to groundwater.</li> </ul>

Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the Natura 2000 sites by virtue of:	
Size and Scale	The area covered by the Athlone Town Plan covers approximately 1,597 hectares. Lough Ree SPA/cSAC, River Shannon Callows SAC and Middle Shannon Callows SPA occur within the boundary of the plan. Crosswood Bog cSAC borders the boundary of the plan to the east.
Land-take	The plan will not involve land-take of Natura 2000 sites. Although parts of Natura 2000 sites are located within the Plan area they are zoned as environmentally protected areas and development is restricted in this area.
Distance from Natura 2000 sites or key features of the site	The distances of the Boundary of the Athlone Town Plan to each Natura Site are given in tables 1, 2 and 3 above.
Resource requirements	<p><i>Water abstraction:</i></p> <p>The River Shannon services the Athlone Town Plan Area. Current demand is approximately 9 million litres per day (MLD), which is 2 million gallons per day (MGD). The capacity of the Athlone water treatment plant is approx. 13.6MLD (3MGD), so current demand is being met. The existing water supply require improvements/upgrading to meet the anticipated development needs for the lifetime of the plan and to serve the longer term growth needs of the town. Growth in water demand is primarily driven by population increases which result directly in increased personal consumption and also indirectly in increased industrial / commercial consumption. Economic growth rates, leakage management performance and water conservation performance are also contributory factors in demand growth. Future growth/demand in Athlone is to be met from a new abstraction point at Killinure, one of the inner lakes of the Shannon, for which the Council has a Provisional Order from An Bord Pleanála in June 2008 for 40.9MLD (9MGD). Killinure Lough which forms part of Lough Ree cSAC/ SPA and abstraction from Killinure Lough has the potential to alter the water table of hydrologically dependent Natura 2000 sites.</p> <p><i>Wastewater Treatment:</i></p> <p>The Athlone Town Plan includes a specific objective which states that any development within the area of the plan must be preceded by sufficient capacity in the WWTP. The Athlone Sewerage Scheme is required to cater for the projected expansion of Athlone and the subsequent increased loadings on the town's existing sewerage infrastructure. The scope of the Scheme is to upgrade the Waste Water Treatment Plant and Pumping Station and to upgrade and extend the existing sewer network. It is proposed to upgrade the WWTP from its existing capacity of 30,000 Population Equivalent '(PE) to 40,000 PE to provide for the projected expansion within the town. This upgrade would provide significant storm water storage and relieve the hydraulic load on the plant but WCC is awaiting DECLG approval to proceed to tender. The proposed Athlone Town Plan has set out a number of policies and objectives to ensure that wastewater discharges will not result in perturbations to water quality. The Plan states that any new development within the Plan area will</p>

	be preceded by adequate capacity of the WWTP.
Emissions	<p><i>Surface Water Run-off and Pollution:</i> Surface water run-off from construction site areas adjacent to the River Shannon and rivers which flow into the lake, will have the potential to increase the rates of sedimentation within the lake. The storage of fuels, lubricants and other polluting materials on construction sites adjacent to Natura 2000 sites or rivers upstream of water based sites will present a risk of a pollution incident occurring. The ingress of such polluting materials to the Lough Ree SPA and the River Shannon will have the potential to result in significant perturbations to the water quality of this river and could affect the conservation status of qualifying habitats and species downstream including the Middle and Lower Shannon Callows.</p> <p><i>Air :</i> The Athlone Town Plan has regard to the EU Framework Directive on Air Quality Assessment relating to air quality standards. The inclusion of a policies and related objectives to maintain good air quality within the town will ensure that emissions to air will not represent a significant impact including; “P-NAL2: To seek to preserve and maintain air and noise quality in the county in accordance with best practice and relevant legislation” and “P-NAL2: To promote the preservation of best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development”.</p>
Excavation requirements	The potential impacts of excavations associated with the construction phase of developments within the Plan area are assessed above.
Transportation requirements	Athlone Town Plan contains a number of policies supporting the road development and improvement. Road developments have the potential to have significant impacts on Natura 2000 sites in the form of pollution and changes to the hydrological regime and hydraulic loading during the development and improvement of roads associated watercourse crossings.
<b>Describe any likely changes to the Natura 2000 site arising as a result of:</b>	
Reduction of habitat area	There will be no direct loss of any Natura 2000 lands as a result of the Athlone Town Plan.
Disturbance of key species	<p>Elements of the proposed plan such as development of recreational and amenity facilities adjacent to Natura 2000 sites including walkways and cycle paths by Lough Ree and the River Shannon as well as development of tourist facilities could potentially disturb protected bird species of these sites.</p> <p>Any construction carried out relating to development of tourist facilities has the potential to pollute watercourses leading to possible eutrophication of designated natura 2000 sites and could potentially interfere with the structure and function of these habitats resulting in negative impacts to the distribution or densities of qualifying species.</p>
Habitat or species fragmentation	The Athlone Town Plan could result in the fragmentation of qualifying habitats or the fragmentation of habitats upon which qualifying species of the European Sites under the sphere of influence of the Plan rely.



Reduction in species Density	<p>Developments arising as a result of the Plan will have the potential to adversely affect water quality Natura 2000 sites. Poor construction practices during project-level developments could result in perturbations to the water quality of this watercourse. Any perturbation to the water quality of this river will have the potential to result in a reduction in key species densities occurring within Lough Ree and River Shannon Callows SPA/ SAC. Policies which promote tourism and increased access to Natura 2000 designated sites or locations close to sites have the potential to disturb species.</p>
Changes in key indicators of conservation status	<p>The European Commission (2006) Explanatory Notes and Guidelines for the Assessment, Monitoring and Reporting under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive outlines key indicators for assessing the conservation status of designated sites. The key indicators for assessing the conservation status of key species are:</p> <p><u>Range:</u> As outlined above elements of the Athlone Town Plan will could result in direct or indirect impacts to designated species of European sites under consideration.</p> <p><u>Area covered by habitat type within range:</u> Area of qualifying habitats occurring within Natura 2000 Sites may be affected by the Plan due as outlined above.</p> <p><u>Population:</u> Development resulting from the Athlone Town Plan have the potential to disturb key species of designated site due to disturbance.</p> <p><u>Habitat for the species:</u> As outlined above elements of the Athlone Town Plan have potential to result in damage to site integrity.</p> <p><u>Future Prospects:</u> Elements of the Athlone Town Plan could jeopardise the future prospects of qualifying species supported Natura 2000 site and impede the conservation objectives of the sites being achieved.</p> <p>The key indicators for assessing the conservation status of Annex 1 qualifying habitats are:</p> <p><u>Range:</u> As outlined above elements of the Athlone Town Plan will could result in direct or indirect impacts to European Sites under consideration.</p> <p><u>Area covered by habitat type within range:</u> Area of qualifying habitats occurring within Natura 2000 Sites may be affected by the Plan due as outlined above.</p> <p><u>Specific structures and functions:</u> Aquatic habitats such as the Alkaline Fen and Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration of Lough Ree cSAC and Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinia caerulea</i>) of the River Shannon Callows cSAC function as breeding and foraging habitats for a range of “key species”. This function is maintained by ensuring the hydrological integrity (which includes structure and water quality) of natura 2000 sites and associated water bodies. Policies outlined in the plan could have negative impacts on the specific structure and function of these habitats and the Natura 2000 sites as a whole.</p> <p><u>Future prospects:</u> The Plan policies and objectives could jeopardise the future prospects of qualifying habitats of Natura 2000 sites and impede the conservation objectives of the sites being achieved and negatively influence the conservation status of Annex 1 habitats occurring within Natura 2000 Sites.</p>

Climate change	There is currently insufficient information to predict the effects of climate change on the proposed site. It is predicted that on a national level winters will become wetter and summers drier but the effect on local precipitation is unknown.
<b>Describe any likely impacts on the Natura 2000 Site as a whole in terms of:</b>	
Interference with key relationships that define the structure of the site	Any impacts to qualifying habitats; instream habitats; or the connectivity of the freshwater ecosystems will have the potential to negatively impact on the structure of hydrologically connected European sites including River Shannon Callows cSAC, Middle Shannon Callows SPA and Lough Ree cSAC/SPA. For reasons outlined above the Plan could result in adverse effects to the qualifying Annex 1 habitats or instream habitats; or interfere with hydrologically connected Natura 2000 sites.
Interference with key relationships that define the function of the site	The plan could result in adverse affects to the water quality of surface watercourses will in turn have the potential to negatively impact Annex 1 habitats and/or populations of qualifying species for European Sites. The relationship of species and habitats with the abiotic factors that determine the structure and function of Natura 2000 sites are the key relationship that defines the function of the relevant Natura 2000 sites. For reasons outlined above, the proposed Plan has the potential to result in interference to these key relationships that define the function of the relevant Natura 2000 sites.
<b>Describe from the above the elements of the project or plan or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale of magnitude of impacts is not known</b>	
The screening stage of the Athlone Town Plan finds that the draft plan has potential to have significant adverse impacts upon Lough Ree cSAC, Lough Ree SPA, River Shannon Callows cSAC and Middle Shannon Callows SPA and Crosswood Bog cSAC as listed in Table 4 below. Applying the precautionary principle indicates that there is potential for negative effects resulting from the implementation of the ATDP and there is insufficient information to determine with sufficient certainty the risk in question. Therefore a Stage 2 'Appropriate Assessment' is considered necessary for these sites.	

Table 4 Screened list of sites within 15km of the boundary of the Athlone Town Plan

Site ID	Site Name	Is there potential for:					Disturbance to habitat or species	Qualifying Interest	AA required
		Direct Impacts e.g. Habitat Loss	Indirect Impacts e.g. alteration to the hydrological regime	Surface or water contamination	Ground				
000440	Lough Ree cSAC	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes		Yes
002336	Carn Park Bog cSAC	No	No	No			No		No
000216	River Shannon Callows cSAC	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes		Yes
002337	Crosswood Bog cSAC	Yes	Yes	Yes			No		Yes
000575	Ferbane Bog cSAC	No	No	No			No		No
000576	Fin Lough cSAC	No	No	No			No		No
000581	Moyclare Bog cSAC	No	No	No			No		No
001776	Pilgrim's Road Esker cSAC	No	No	No			No		No
002339	Ballynamona Bog and Lough cSAC	No	No	No			No		No
000610	Lough Croan Turlough cSAC	No	No	No			No		No
000611	Lough Funshinagh cSAC	No	No	No			No		No
001625	Castlesampson Esker cSAC	No	No	No			No		No
000580	Mongan Bog cSAC	No	No	No			No		No
004062	Lough Ree SPA	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes		Yes
004096	Middle Shannon Callows SPA	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes		Yes
004139	Lough Croan Turlough SPA	No	No	No			No		No
004017	Mongan Bog SPA	No	No	No			No		No

## **5.2     AA Screening Conclusions**

The AA screening process has identified that there is potential for the Athlone Town Plan to have significant impacts (in the absence of mitigation) to the following Natura 2000 sites;

- Lough Ree cSAC
- Lough Ree SPA
- River Shannon Callows cSAC
- Middle Shannon Callows SPA
- Crosswood Bog cSAC

Potential impacts to these sites are taken forward for detailed Assessment in Stage Two. All other Natura 2000 sites are not further considered as likelihood of significant impacts on these arising from the Athlone Town Plan has been ruled out due to the lack of any source-pathway-receptor link between these sites and the plan.

## 6 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT - STAGE 2

### 6.1 Potential Impacts of ATDP on Natura 2000 Sites

The range of potential impacts described at the screening stage arise from the specific objectives and policies set out in the Athlone Town Plan as detailed in Section 6.2. Table 5 below lists each objective/policy which gives rise to a potential impact on Natura 2000 sites and also lists the specific mitigation measure which has been included in the LAP to address each impact. A list of all screened policies is given in Appendix 1.

### 6.2 Mitigating Measures in the Plan

The Athlone Town Plan contains numerous measures which will contribute to the conservation of Natura 2000 sites in accordance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive and the qualifying interests of the sites as outlined in section 4.2 above. These include:

**P-NH3** To provide for the protection, conservation and enhancement of wildlife habitats within the River Shannon Callows, Lough Ree and Crosswood Bog and to maintain the conservation value of these designated sites.

**P-NH4** To ensure as far as possible that development does not adversely impact on wildlife habitats and species.

**P-NH5** To support and cooperate with Statutory Authorities and others in support of measures taken to manage designated nature conservation sites in order to achieve their conservation objectives. Specific regard shall be had to Conservation Management Plans and their conservation objectives /management practices, where they exist.

**P-NH9** To protect and conserve wild bird species and their habitats, especially rare or vulnerable species and regularly occurring migratory species.

**P-NH10** To require appropriate environmental assessment such as EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) or Ecological Appraisal for developments not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site and which are likely to have significant effects on the site individually or cumulatively.

**P-NH12** To consult with appropriate Prescribed Bodies and Government Agencies when assessing development proposals affecting designated sites of European importance.

**P-NH13** To conserve the existing wide range of flora, fauna and wildlife habitats in Athlone, through the preservation of ecological corridors and ecological networks, i.e. habitats that link the areas of high nature conservation value, in accordance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.

**P-NH14** To apply the precautionary principle in relation to development proposals in areas identified as being of local nature conservation interest by requiring a scientific/ecological risk assessment to ensure that the development will not impact the integrity and habitat value of the site.

**P-NH15** To conserve and protect all designated sites within and adjacent to the Plan area including Natura 2000 sites, NHAs, Local Biodiversity Areas and sites identified under the Bern and Bonn Conventions, with regard to protection of migratory species and habitats.

**P-GW4** To protect groundwater resources and associated habitats and species, including the Shannon Callows in accordance with the requirements of the Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC).

**P-CS6** To take in account, in the assessment of development proposals, Article 6(3)(4) and Article 10 of the Habitats Directive, the Surface Water Regulations 2009 and the relevant measures of the Shannon River Basin Management Plan 2009-2015.

#### **6.2.1 Additional measures**

Elsewhere in the Athlone Town Plan a number of policies are included which although not directly related to Natura 2000 sites, will ensure that the environmental quality of Athlone is protected. Relevant policies and objectives include the following:

**P-NH13** To conserve the existing wide range of flora, fauna and wildlife habitats in Athlone, through the preservation of ecological corridors and ecological networks, i.e. habitats that link the areas of high nature conservation value in accordance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.

**P-NH16** To promote the provision, maintenance and conservation of green infrastructure in Athlone, in the form of linear parks, nature trails, wildlife corridors and urban woodlands.

**O-ESK1** To assess any proposals for development in proximity to esker sites with reference to the scientific amenity and landscape value and groundwater vulnerability of the esker landscape.

**P-WW1** To protect and enhance the natural heritage and landscape character of the River Shannon including the Callows and maintain them free from inappropriate development and to provide public access, subject to ecological constraints.

**P-WW2** To maintain or enhance biodiversity richness by protecting rivers, stream corridors and valleys by reserving riparian zones/ecological corridors, maintaining them free from inappropriate development, discouraging culverting or realignment, and promoting natural flood functions.

**P-WW3** To ensure that Athlone's watercourses are retained for their biodiversity and flood protection values and to conserve and enhance where possible the wildlife habitats of the Town's watercourses and wetlands.

**O-WW2** To consult with Waterways Ireland and the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the DoEHLG and Inland Waterways Association and local communities on development proposals that may affect inland waterways, rivers, lakes, canals or water courses.

**O-WW3** To require that run off from proposed developments do not result in deterioration of downstream watercourses or habitats.

**O-WW4** To assess development proposals which involve lighting along water courses, rivers, streams and canal corridors, in order to mitigate impacts of lighting on bats and other species.

**O-WW6** To consult Fisheries Board and the National Parks and Wildlife Service on any development proposal concerning riparian areas and watercourses and to take account of the requirements for the protection of fisheries habitat during construction and development works at river sites.

**O-WW7** To maintain good ecological status of wetlands and watercourses in support of the provisions of the Water Framework Directive.

**O-WW8** To make provision for a wildlife corridor along the entirety of the AI River to maintain existing habitats and biodiversity.

**P-WT2** To facilitate the implementation of the relevant provisions of Water Pollution Legislation.



**P-GW1** To ensure, through the implementation of the Shannon International River Basin Management Plan and its associated Programmes of Measures and any other associated legislation, the protection and improvement of all drinking water, surface water and ground waters.

**P-GW2** To implement the EC (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations, 2010 (S.I. No. 610 of 2010) in the protection of waters against pollution from nitrates and phosphates.

**P-GW3** To ensure that the licensing of discharges of effluent to groundwater, is in accordance with the requirements of the EC Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations, 2010 (S.I. No. 9 of 2010)

**P-GW5** To protect and safeguard Protected Areas on the Water Framework Directive Register of Protected Areas.

**P-WST2** To ensure that public wastewater collection and treatment infrastructure fully complies with the requirements of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations 2001 and 2004 and promote, as appropriate, specific provisions for the implementation of the relevant recommendations set out in the recent Focus on Urban Waste Water Discharges in Ireland Report (EPA, 2012).

**P-WST3** To prevent zoned land being developed unless sufficient waste water treatment capacity is available, in conformity with the objectives of the Shannon River Basin Management Plan.

**P-CS10** To protect and conserve buildings, sites, public open spaces and features of special architectural, historic, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest and to protect features of natural heritage, including the River Shannon, Canal, watercourses and habitats.

The Appropriate Assessment process is an iterative exercise in which issues of concern to nature conservation were addressed and resolved as the Plan preparation evolved. In this regard policies were amended to address potential ecological impacts in the following areas: amenity and Recreational Uses, Brownfield Sites, Wind Energy, Infrastructural Availability and Locations, Flood Risk Assessment, Green Routes and the Protection of Waters from pollution.

**Table 5 Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

Policy/Objective giving rise to potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites.		Potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites (in the absence of mitigation).	Specific Mitigation (Policies) included within ATDP to address these potential impacts.
<b>Chapter 3 - Housing</b>			
P-AHA1	To restrict residential development not related to farming or forestry practices in defined water catchments areas of Lough Ree, with the exception of the erection of a house for a member of an existing residential farm family who will inherit the farm, or another member of the family, provided that not more than two dwellings (existing and proposed) be permitted on any farm holding within the water catchment and only where this relates to the first dwelling for the applicant and no alternative site is available outside the water catchment. Where there is a conflict with P-AHA2, this policy shall take precedence.	<p>Single house developments with wastewater treatment units on undeveloped lands zoned agriculture have the potential to adversely impact water quality.</p> <p>Increase in inputs to Athlone WWTP, through additional residential or commercial units, or increases in intensity of land use have the potential to lead to deterioration in water quality.</p> <p>Pollution of watercourses may occur through the discharge of treated wastewater and during construction. This in turn may lead to cumulative and indirect impacts on Natura sites downstream of the discharge point.</p>	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17
P-AHA2	To restrict development not related to farming practices and tourism in all high amenity areas, with the exception of housing for the immediate family (son/daughter) of established residents living on the landholding, who demonstrate a housing need and have long-term intrinsic links with the area. The entire landholding will be demonstrated to have been in the resident's ownership since 2000. No more than three additional dwellings to be permitted on any such holding and provided there is no alternative site on the holding outside the Area of High Amenity.	<p>Single house developments with wastewater treatment units on undeveloped lands zoned agriculture have the potential to adversely impact water quality. Increase in inputs to Athlone WWTP, through additional residential or commercial units, or increases in intensity of land use have the potential to lead to deterioration in water quality.</p> <p>Pollution of watercourses may occur through the discharge of treated wastewater and during construction. This in turn may lead to cumulative and indirect impacts on Natura sites downstream of the discharge point.</p>	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-NH17

Policy/Objective giving rise to potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites.	Potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites (in the absence of mitigation).	Specific Mitigation (Policies) included within ATDP to address these potential impacts.
<b>Chapter 4 - Economic development</b>		
P-EC6 To facilitate and encourage the development of the alternative energy sector and to recognise its potential in the creation of enterprise and employment opportunities including the building of research capacity.	<p>Energy developments, particularly those that use natural resources such as wind, hydro and fossil fuels can be located in sensitive locations and give rise to potential likely significant effects.</p> <p>There is potential for renewable energy developments and related infrastructure to negatively impact on hydrology, water quality and groundwater resources in Natura 2000 sites.</p> <p>All Natura 2000 site have the potential to be affected depending on the scale and the location of developments.</p>	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17
P-EC7 To continue to support and facilitate the development of start-up enterprise units for local indigenous enterprises in Athlone.	<p>Economic development along with associated infrastructure could potentially impact upon Natura 2000 sites, due to disturbance of species, fragmentation of habitats and habitat loss if land is developed within or adjacent to Natura site/s.</p> <p>Pollution of watercourses may occur during construction. Development exceeding the environmental carrying capacity of any particular area may result in pollution of watercourses from increased discharge from WWTPs/septic tanks depending on the location. This is of particular concern to surface/ground water sensitive Natura sites.</p>	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17

Policy/Objective giving rise to potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites.	Potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites (in the absence of mitigation).	Specific Mitigation (Policies) included within ATDP to address these potential impacts.
<b>P-EC13</b> To promote, protect, improve, encourage and facilitate the development of tourism in Athlone as an important contributor to job creation in the town.	<p>Development of rural tourism could result in an increase in recreational and amenity use of lands close to natura 2000 sites. This may result in habitat disturbance.</p> <p>An increase in tourism and industry and their associated infrastructure could cause a variety of construction and development-related impacts on water quality. Development exceeding the environmental carrying capacity of any particular settlement may result in pollution of watercourses from increased discharge from WWTPs/septic tanks depending on the location.</p>	<p>P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17</p>
<b>O-EC1</b> To identify and progress the establishment of a Strategic Development Zone, to the east of Athlone.	<p>The location of the SDZ has not been determined and will be subject to full Environmental and Ecological Assessment. It is acknowledged that physical development together with associated infrastructure could potentially impact upon Natura 2000 sites, due to disturbance of species, fragmentation of habitats and habitat loss if land is developed within or adjacent to Natura site/s. Pollution of watercourses may occur during construction.</p> <p>Development exceeding the environmental carrying capacity of any particular settlement may result in pollution of watercourses from increased discharge from WWTPs/septic tanks depending on the location. This is of particular concern to surface/ground water sensitive Natura sites.</p>	<p>P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17</p>

Policy/Objective giving rise to potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites.	Potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites (in the absence of mitigation).	Specific Mitigation (Policies) included within ATDP to address these potential impacts.
<b>O-EC2</b> To support the implementation of the Creggan LAP and Strategic Gateway Zone.	<p>The following issues were outlined in the Appropriate Assessment of the Creggan Local Area Plan carried out by Natura Ecological Consultants in 2010.</p> <p>The implementation of the Creggan LAP could impact upon Crosswood Bog cSAC. The potential for surface water runoff to enter the groundwater leading to contamination during the construction and operation phase is high. Any contamination of groundwater aquifers in the surrounding area has the potential to negatively impact on the Natura 2000 site. Because of the proximity of the development to the Natura 2000 site, there is potential for roads and other infrastructure to be routed adjacent to or within the site resulting in direct habitat loss and fragmentation.</p> <p>Development within the area could attract people for recreation and amenity purposes. Certain habitats within the bog, for example active raised bog, are highly susceptible to trampling and could be adversely impacted.</p> <p>Indirect impacts to River Shannon Callows cSAC and Middle Shannon Callows SPA via surface water hydrology are possible as the proposed LAP is linked by two surface water features the River AI and the Cloonbonny/Fardrum Stream to the Natura 2000 sites. The proposed development will result in a</p>	<p>P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, O-WW4, P-NH17</p>

Policy/Objective giving rise to potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites.	Potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites (in the absence of mitigation).	Specific Mitigation (Policies) included within ATDP to address these potential impacts.
	significant increase in the area of hardstanding and the potential for surface water runoff to enter surface water features leading to contamination during the construction and operation phase is high.	
<b>P-RET7</b>  To promote and facilitate the development of appropriately located local markets devoted to the sale of local agricultural and craft produce and support their role as visitor attractions	Impacts of this policy on Natura 2000 sites are unclear as specific locations are not identified. Depending on the location, any developments along with associated infrastructure could potentially impact upon Natura 2000 sites, due to disturbance of species, fragmentation of habitats and habitat loss if land is developed within or adjacent to Natura site/s. Pollution of watercourses may occur during construction. Development exceeding the environmental carrying capacity of any particular settlement may result in pollution of watercourses from increased discharge from WWTPs/septic tanks depending on the location. This is of particular concern to surface/ground water sensitive Natura sites.	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17
<b>Chapter 5 – Town Centre</b>		
<b>P-CA5</b>  To promote development along the river in accordance with the Athlone Waterfront Study 2011 for tourism and amenity related uses and undertake Flood Risk Assessment.	Any development along the river may have negative effects on Middle Shannon Callows SPA and River Shannon Callows SAC. Development may have implications for the Natura 2000 sites during any construction works such as pollution of waterbodies due to run off and sedimentation from site. There is potential for disturbance to designated bird species of the Middle Shannon Callows SPA due to increased amenity use.	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2,



Policy/Objective giving rise to potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites.	Potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites (in the absence of mitigation).	Specific Mitigation (Policies) included within ATDP to address these potential impacts.
		P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, O-WW4, P-NH17
<b>O-CA1</b>	<p>To examine the potential to construct a new bridge across the River Shannon linking the east and west areas of the town for pedestrians and cyclists.</p> <p>Any development along the river may have negative effects on Middle Shannon Callows SPA and River Shannon Callows SAC.</p> <p>Development of any associated park may have implications for the Natura 2000 sites during the construction stage such as pollution of waterbodies due to run off and sedimentation from site. There is potential for disturbance to designated bird species of the Middle Shannon Callows SPA due to increased amenity use.</p> <p>There is potential for <i>Cygnus Cygnus</i>, a qualifying species of the Middle Shannon Callows SPA to collide with the bridge.</p>	<p>P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, O-WW4, P-NH17</p>
<b>Chapter 6 - Transportation</b> <b>P-PT6</b>	<p>To actively promote the re-opening of the Mullingar to Athlone rail line, thereby increasing connectivity between these gateway towns.</p>	<p>P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2,</p> <p>Any construction related developments could lead to pollution due to run off and sedimentation with potentially negative effects to hydrologically sensitive habitats such as Crosswood Bog and the River AI, which flows into the River Shannon and may lead to deterioration in habitat quality of River Shannon Callows cSAC and Middle Shannon Callows SPA.</p>

Policy/Objective giving rise to potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites.		Potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites (in the absence of mitigation).	Specific Mitigation (Policies) included within ATDP to address these potential impacts.
			P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17
<b>P-PT7</b>	To support public transport improvements by reserving corridors for any such improvements free of development, including provision of setbacks along public transport corridors.	Impact on Natura 2000 sites is unclear as specific locations for new transport routes have not been identified. Development may cause disturbance to designated species vulnerable to noise and deterioration in habitat quality due to pollution caused by run off and sedimentation depending on the location of improvements.	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, P-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17
<b>P-PT8</b>	To encourage and facilitate the development of a sustainable river-based transport system on the River Shannon, including the development of ferry and waterbus services.	Promotion of increased amenity use could lead to disturbance and habitat loss at River Shannon Callows SAC, Middle Shannon Callows SPA, Lough Ree SPA and Lough Ree SAC, depending on the scale and the location of associated infrastructure.	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17
<b>O-PT2</b>	To provide for new transport routes by public and private operators	Impact on Natura 2000 sites is unclear as specific	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, O-WW4, P-NH17

Policy/Objective giving rise to potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites.	Potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites (in the absence of mitigation).	Specific Mitigation (Policies) included within ATDP to address these potential impacts.
	throughout Athlone and its environs.	P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17
<b>O-PT10</b>	To encourage and facilitate the development of a Mid-Shannon Waterbus from Athlone to Portumna.	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, O-WW4, P-NH17
<b>O-PT11</b>	To Investigate the feasibility of a seasonal float trip operation between Athlone and Shannonbridge/Clonmacnoise.	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, O-WW4, P-NH17

Policy/Objective giving rise to potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites.	Potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites (in the absence of mitigation).	Specific Mitigation (Policies) included within ATDP to address these potential impacts.
		WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, O-WW4, P-NH17
<b>O-WC3</b> To provide a greenway incorporating a walking/cycling route along the entirety of the Athlone Mullingar railway line.	<p>Development of pathways and cycle tracks may have negative implications for the Crosswood cSAC as it borders the railway line. Promotion of cycleways and pedestrian linkages could attract people to the bog and cause habitat loss due to trampling of this sensitive habitat.</p> <p>There is the possibility of pollution of waterbodies due to run off and sedimentation from site during construction of pathways and tracks. This may pollute surface waters of the River AI, which flows into the Shannon and therefore may negatively impact upon the Middle Shannon Callows SPA and River Shannon Callows SAC.</p>	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, O-WW4, P-NH17
<b>O-PT12</b> To provide pedestrian and cycle linkages across the River Shannon and Canal.	<p>Any development along the river may have negative effects on Middle Shannon Callows SPA and River Shannon Callows SAC.</p> <p>Development of the park may have implications for the Natura 2000 sites during the construction stage such as pollution of waterbodies due to run off and</p>	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-

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	<p>sedimentation from site. There is potential for disturbance to designated bird species of the Middle Shannon Callows SPA due to increased amenity use.</p> <p>There is potential for <i>Cygnus Cygnus</i>, a qualifying species of the Middle Shannon Callows SPA to collide with the bridge.</p>	WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, O-WW4, P-NH17
<b>O-WC8</b>	<p>To encourage and facilitate the provision of a walkway/cycle route along the course of the AI River to the south of the town, to the River Shannon, thus providing an alternative off-road link to the town centre for pedestrians and cyclists.</p> <p>Development of pathways and cycle tracks may have negative implications for the habitat.</p> <p>Promotion of cycleways and pedestrian linkages could cause habitat damage or loss.</p> <p>There is the possibility of pollution of waterbodies due to run off and sedimentation from site during construction of pathways and tracks. This may pollute surface waters of the River AI, which flows into the Shannon and therefore may negatively impact upon the Middle Shannon Callows SPA and River Shannon Callows SAC.</p>	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, O-WW4, P-NH17
<b>O-NR2</b>	<p>To reinforce linkages between Athlone and the Northern Development Area/ Border Region/ Northern Ireland by strengthening the N55 route.</p> <p>Promotion of future national roads and other road based projects could have potential adverse impacts on Natura 2000 sites.</p> <p>The proposed realignment of the N55 route may impact indirectly on Lough Ree SAC and Lough Ree SPA as it crosses the Tang River which discharges to Lough Ree.</p> <p>Cumulative impacts of road developments on these sites are particularly relevant.</p>	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2,

Policy/Objective giving rise to potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites.	Potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites (in the absence of mitigation).	Specific Mitigation (Policies) included within ATDP to address these potential impacts.
		P-GW3, P- GW5, P- WST2, P-CS10, P- WST3, P-NH17
<b>O-NR3</b> To upgrade the N62 route, thereby increasing connectivity between the M6 and M8.	Promotion of future National roads and other road based projects could have potential adverse impacts on Natura 2000 sites depending on the location of the route. River Shannon Callows SAC, Middle Shannon Callows SPA and Crosswood Bog SAC could be negatively impacted due to construction related development involving the M6, including disturbance to designated bird species vulnerable to noise and deterioration in habitat quality due to pollution caused by run off and sedimentation. Cumulative impacts of road developments on Natura 2000 are of particular concern.	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14 , P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P- GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17
<b>P-TM4</b> To manage the provision of on street parking and to promote the provision of off-street car parks at edge of town centre locations and to reduce on street parking in the town centre.	Impact on Natura 2000 sites is unclear as the specific location of car parks has not been identified.  Development may cause disturbance to designated species vulnerable to noise and deterioration in habitat quality due to pollution caused by run off and sedimentation depending on the location of improvements.	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14 , P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P- GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17
<b>O-TM14</b> To improve existing junctions between the R446 and the L5414/L40215 and the R446 and the L40212.	Impact on Natura 2000 sites is unclear as locations for improvement works have not been identified.	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-



Policy/Objective giving rise to potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites.	Potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites (in the absence of mitigation).	Specific Mitigation (Policies) included within ATDP to address these potential impacts.
		<p>NH12, P-NH14 , P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17</p>
<b>O-TM15</b>	<p>To realign the L5414/L40215 and increase the capacity thereof.</p> <p>Development may cause disturbance to designated species vulnerable to noise and deterioration in habitat quality due to pollution caused by run off and sedimentation depending on the location of improvements.</p>	<p>P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14 , P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17</p>
<b>Chapter 7 – Water, Drainage and Environmental services</b>		
P-FL3	<p>To implement the recommendations of the Shannon CFRAM study, when published by the Office of Public Works.</p>	<p>P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14 , P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17</p>

Policy/Objective giving rise to potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites.	Potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites (in the absence of mitigation).	Specific Mitigation (Policies) included within ATDP to address these potential impacts.
O-WST1	To implement wastewater projects in accordance with the Water Services Investment Programme 2010 - 2013 and all subsequent Water Services Investment Programmes.	WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17
O-WT5	To implement the South Westmeath Water Supply Scheme, subject to ecological requirements.	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17
	This scheme involves water extraction from Killinure Lough which forms part of Lough Ree cSAC/ SPA. Abstraction from Killinure Lough has the potential to alter the water table of hydrologically dependent Natura 2000 sites. Extraction may affect designated habitats of Lough Ree cSAC including degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration and alkaline fen. The scheme has been environmentally assessed and approved by An Bord Pleanála.	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17

Policy/Objective giving rise to potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites.	Potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites (in the absence of mitigation).	Specific Mitigation (Policies) included within ATDP to address these potential impacts.
	Any construction associated with the plan may cause pollution caused by run off and sedimentation depending on the location.	WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17
O-WT1  To implement the Water Services Investment Programme 2010 - 2013 and all subsequent Water Services Investment Programmes, subject to ecological requirements.	<p>Any developments carried out to upgrade wastewater Infrastructure and water supply infrastructure have the potential to pollute by run off and sedimentation depending on the location.</p> <p>The South Westmeath Water Supply Scheme forms part of the Water Services Investment Programme 2010 – 2013. This scheme involves water extraction from Killinure Lough which forms part of Lough Ree cSAC/ SPA. Abstraction from Killinure Lough has the potential to alter the water table of hydrologically dependent Natura 2000 sites. Extraction may affect designated habitats of Lough Ree cSAC including degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration and alkaline fen.</p>	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14 , P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17
O-FL1  To improve and extend the surface water disposal infrastructure to serve the planned levels of growth, during the lifetime of this plan, in order to facilitate development.	Any developments carried out to improve and extend the surface water disposal infrastructure has the potential to pollute by run off and sedimentation depending on the location.	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14 , P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-

Policy/Objective giving rise to potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites.	Potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites (in the absence of mitigation).	Specific Mitigation (Policies) included within ATDP to address these potential impacts.
		WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17
O-FL3  To carry out improvements to surface water drainage on the AI River.	<p>Indirect impacts to River Shannon Callows cSAC and Middle Shannon Callows SPA via surface water hydrology are possible. Any increase in drainage capacity of the River AI has the potential to increase flow rates entering the Natura 2000 site.</p> <p>There is potential for alterations to surface water quantity entering the Natura 2000 sites as a result of the proposed development. While an alteration in the flow rates and discharge is likely to be small in relation to the overall volume of the river, there is potential for localized effects on the habitats and species within the area. The composition and distribution of qualifying features, such as lowland hay meadows and Molinia meadows, is dependant on flooding regimes.</p> <p>White-Clawed Crayfish, River Lamprey and Brook Lamprey have been recorded in the area and are protected under the Habitats Directive. Parts of the River AI are also recorded as being suitable spawning habitats for salmonoids. Otter, freshwater crayfish, lamprey, trout and kingfishers have been identified in or adjacent to the River AI. Any improvements to Drainage on the River AI could have a negative impact on these designated species.</p>	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, O-WW4, P-NH17

Policy/Objective giving rise to potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites.		Potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites (in the absence of mitigation).	Specific Mitigation (Policies) included within ATDP to address these potential impacts.
<b>Chapter 8 - Energy and Communications</b>			
P-EN1	To support initiatives to limit emissions of greenhouse gases through energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy sources which make use of the natural resources in an environmentally acceptable manner.	<p>Impact on Natura 2000 sites is unclear as the specific location of renewable energy developments and the nature of renewable energy sources has not been identified.</p> <p>There is potential for construction related impacts for any development/construction works due to potential for silt and/or pollutants to enter the surface water network during works.</p>	<p>P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17</p>
P-EN3	To support the sustainable development of the infrastructure required to support the Midland Region in the delivery of renewable energy and the need to make a transition from peat to renewable energy.	<p>There is potential for construction related impacts for any development/construction works due to potential for silt and/or pollutants to enter the surface water network during works.</p>	<p>P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17</p>

Policy/Objective giving rise to potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites.	Potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites (in the absence of mitigation).	Specific Mitigation (Policies) included within ATDP to address these potential impacts.
P-REN1 To encourage the development of small-scale wind energy development and single turbines within industrial parks provided they do not negatively impact upon environmental quality, landscape, wildlife and habitats or residential amenity.	Impact on Natura 2000 sites is unclear as the scale and specific locations of small scale wind energy development have not been identified. There is potential for construction related impacts for any development/construction works due to potential for silt and/or pollutants to enter the surface water network during works. There may also be potential for bat collision incidences, depending on the location of development.	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17
P-REN3 To promote, encourage and facilitate the provision of micro-renewable energy consistent with the proper planning and development of the area.	Impact on Natura 2000 sites is unclear as the specific location of micro-renewable energy developments and the nature of micro-renewable energy sources has not been identified.  There is potential for construction related impacts for any development/construction works due to potential for silt and/or pollutants to enter the surface water network during works.	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17
P-ELE1 To provide an electricity transmission network to the linked gateway of Athlone that will provide for the medium to long-term future needs of the town.	Impact on Natura 2000 sites is unclear as the specific location of electricity transmission network and the nature of development associated with this has not	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-



Policy/Objective giving rise to potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites.	Potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites (in the absence of mitigation).	Specific Mitigation (Policies) included within ATDP to address these potential impacts.
	<p>been identified.</p> <p>There is potential for construction related impacts for any development/construction works due to potential for silt and/or pollutants to enter the surface water network during works.</p>	<p>NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17</p>
P-ELE2 To support and promote the improvement and extension of gas infrastructure to serve Athlone.	<p>Impact on Natura 2000 sites is unclear as the specific location of the extension of the gas infrastructure network and the nature of development associated with this has not been identified.</p> <p>There is potential for construction related impacts for any development/construction works due to potential for silt and/or pollutants to enter the surface water network during works.</p>	<p>P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17</p>
P-ELE3 To co-operate 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 the town.	<p>There is potential for construction related impacts for any development/construction works due to potential for silt and/or pollutants to enter the surface water network during works.</p>	<p>P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-</p>

Policy/Objective giving rise to potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites.	Potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites (in the absence of mitigation).	Specific Mitigation (Policies) included within ATDP to address these potential impacts.
		WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17
<b>Chapter 9 – Arts, Culture and Tourism</b>		
P-AC5 To encourage the development of concert and exhibition facilities along the Shannon Waterfront.	<p>Development of new festival and concert venues and associated infrastructure could indirectly impact on the Natura 2000 network through fragmentation of habitats or habitat loss and disturbance of species depending on the scale and location of any such development.</p> <p>Pollution of watercourses may occur during construction and through the discharge of treated wastewater. This in turn may lead to cumulative and indirect impacts on Natura sites downstream of the discharge point.</p>	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, O-WW4, P-NH17
P-AC8 To support events and festivals which promote Arts and Cultural endeavors of the town.	Development of new festival and concert venues and associated infrastructure could indirectly impact on the Natura 2000 network through fragmentation of habitats or habitat loss and disturbance of species depending on the scale and location of any such development. Pollution of watercourses may occur during construction and through the discharge of treated wastewater. This in turn may lead to	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-

Policy/Objective giving rise to potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites.	Potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites (in the absence of mitigation).	Specific Mitigation (Policies) included within ATDP to address these potential impacts.
	cumulative and indirect impacts on Natura sites downstream of the discharge point.	WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17
O-AC4  To promote the development of the Left Bank as a culture quarter and actively promote the development of specialist shops, including Arts and Crafts.	Economic development along with associated infrastructure could potentially impact upon Natura 2000 sites. Increased amenity use may lead to disturbance of species. Fragmentation of habitats and habitat loss may occur if land is developed within or adjacent to Natura site/s. Pollution of watercourses may occur during construction due to on site run off and sedimentation. Development exceeding the environmental carrying capacity of any particular area may result in pollution of watercourses from increased discharge from WWTPs/septic tanks depending on the location. This is of particular concern to surface/ground water sensitive Natura sites.	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14 , P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, O-WW4, P-NH17
P-TRM1  To promote the linked gateway town of Athlone as an urban tourism destination in its own right and as an access point to a collection of wider county tourist attractions.	Economic development along with associated infrastructure could potentially impact upon Natura 2000 sites. Increased tourist numbers may lead to an increase in visitor numbers to Natura 2000 sites and lead to disturbance of species. Development of tourism and its associated infrastructure may lead to fragmentation of habitats and habitat loss may occur if land is developed within or adjacent to Natura site/s. Pollution of watercourses may occur during	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14 , P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2,

Policy/Objective giving rise to potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites.	Potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites (in the absence of mitigation).	Specific Mitigation (Policies) included within ATDP to address these potential impacts.
	construction due to on site run off and sedimentation. Development exceeding the environmental carrying capacity of any particular area may result in pollution of watercourses from increased discharge from WWTPs/septic tanks depending on the location. This is of particular concern to surface/ground water sensitive Natura sites.	P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17
P-TRM3 To continue to encourage and promote the development of a range of quality tourism facilities, attractions and accommodation within the town.	Development of new tourist facilities and associated infrastructure could indirectly impact on the Natura 2000 network through fragmentation of habitats or habitat loss and disturbance of species depending on the scale and location of any such development. Pollution of watercourses may occur during construction and through the discharge of treated wastewater. This in turn may lead to cumulative and indirect impacts on Natura sites downstream of the discharge point.	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14 , P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17
P-TRM7 To promote festivals and sporting events, such as Triathlon, to increase the profile of Athlone, and to promote the development of additional events in Athlone.	Development of new festival and concert venues and associated infrastructure could indirectly impact on the Natura 2000 network through fragmentation of habitats or habitat loss and disturbance of species depending on the scale and location of any such development. Pollution of watercourses may occur during construction and through the discharge of treated wastewater. This in turn may lead to	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14 , P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-

Policy/Objective giving rise to potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites.	Potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites (in the absence of mitigation).	Specific Mitigation (Policies) included within ATDP to address these potential impacts.
	cumulative and indirect impacts on Natura sites downstream of the discharge point.	WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17
P-TRM10	<p>To reserve where feasible, land adjacent to river banks and lakes for public access and to facilitate the creation of linear parks to accommodate walking/cycling routes.</p> <p>Promotion of cycleways and pedestrian linkages could potentially lead to disturbance and habitat loss at riverside and lakeside Natura 2000 sites, depending on the scale and the location of such features.</p> <p>Bird species of SPA's are particularly vulnerable to disturbance as well as otters on riverbanks.</p>	<p>P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, O-WW4, P-NH17</p>
P-TRM11	<p>To develop and manage the tourism of the River Shannon and Lough Ree, in a sustainable manner, so as to upgrade facilities, promote diversity, reduce seasonality and improve access, whilst retaining the natural character of the area, and taking into consideration issues of capacity and environmental sensitivity.</p> <p>Any construction related development near Natura 2000 sites has the potential to pollute due to run off and sedimentation.</p> <p>There is potential for direct habitat loss and species disturbance due to increased amenity use.</p>	<p>P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-CS10, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-NH17</p>

Policy/Objective giving rise to potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites.	Potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites (in the absence of mitigation).	Specific Mitigation (Policies) included within ATDP to address these potential impacts.
P-TRM12	<p>To support the development of cruise line tourism in Athlone and acknowledge the significant contribution and diversity it could add to the local and regional tourist economy.</p>	<p>WST3, O-WW4, P-NH17</p> <p>P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, O-WW4, P-NH17</p>
O-TRM1	<p>To support and implement the actions contained in the Athlone Waterfront Study 2011.</p>	<p>P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, O-WW4, P-NH17</p>



Policy/Objective giving rise to potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites.	Potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites (in the absence of mitigation).	Specific Mitigation (Policies) included within ATDP to address these potential impacts.
O-TRM4	To explore the provision of sustainable medium- and long-distance walking routes, focusing on the River Shannon and Lough Ree, in co-operation with Roscommon County Council.	<p>NH17</p> <p>P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, O-WW4, P-NH17</p>
O-TRM8	To promote the development of Heritage Trails/walks within the town and its environs.	<p>P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, O-WW4, P-NH17</p>

Policy/Objective giving rise to potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites.		Potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites (in the absence of mitigation).	Specific Mitigation (Policies) included within ATDP to address these potential impacts.
P-TI1	To facilitate the development of high-quality tourist accommodation such as hotels, hostels, B & Bs / Guesthouses, etc. at suitable locations, in Athlone, subject to attaining a high standard of design, the provision of adequate infrastructure and compliance with normal planning considerations.	Any development could indirectly impact on the Natura 2000 network through fragmentation of habitats or habitat loss and disturbance of species. Pollution of watercourses may occur during construction and through the discharge of treated wastewater.	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, P-NH17
O-TI1	To facilitate infrastructure for water related activities such as boating, canoeing, angling, and cruising and other sustainable water based activities.	Promotion of increased amenity use could lead to disturbance and habitat loss at River Shannon Callows SAC, Middle Shannon Callows SPA, Lough Ree SPA and Lough Ree SAC, depending on the scale and the location of associated infrastructure.  Sources of disturbance include noise, vibration, light, construction and operation activities or other sources of disturbance arising from recreation and amenity or from the inappropriate timing of works.	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, O-WW4, P-NH17

Policy/Objective giving rise to potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites.		Potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites (in the absence of mitigation).	Specific Mitigation (Policies) included within ATDP to address these potential impacts.
O-T12	To investigate the potential of and opportunities for the funding of walking and cycling trails in the town; and for the development of linkages between existing trails such as the Tain Trail and others in adjoining counties.	<p>Promotion of cycleways and pedestrian linkages could potentially lead to disturbance and habitat loss at riverside and lakeside Natura 2000 sites, depending on the scale and the location of such features.</p> <p>Bird species of SPA's are particularly vulnerable to disturbance as well as otters on riverbanks. Sources of disturbance include noise, vibration, light, construction and operation activities or other sources of disturbance arising from recreation and amenity or from the inappropriate timing of works.</p>	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, O-WW4, P-NH17
<b>Chapter 10 - Social, Community, Education and recreation</b>			
P-CMT3	To ensure that applications for new residential developments make suitable provision for the social, community and recreational needs of the future residents of such schemes, unless it can be established that the needs of the new residential development can be adequately served by existing community facilities in the area.	<p>Any new residential developments along with associated infrastructure could potentially impact upon Natura 2000 sites, due to disturbance of species, fragmentation of habitats and habitat loss if land is developed within or adjacent to Natura site/s.</p> <p>Pollution of watercourses may occur during construction. Development exceeding the environmental carrying capacity of any particular area may result in pollution of watercourses from increased discharge from WWTPs/septic tanks depending on the location.</p> <p>This is of particular concern to surface/ground water</p>	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, O-WW4, P-NH17

	Policy/Objective giving rise to potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites.	Potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites (in the absence of mitigation).	Specific Mitigation (Policies) included within ATDP to address these potential impacts.
P-CMT5	To encourage shared use of community facilities, in new and existing premises and the clustering of such facilities with educational, recreational and open space facilities where practicable, so as to maximise the sustainable use of such infrastructure and promote community cohesion.	<p>sensitive Natura sites.</p> <p>Any development of community facilities along with associated infrastructure could potentially impact upon Natura 2000 sites, due to disturbance of species, fragmentation of habitats and habitat loss if land is developed within or adjacent to Natura site/s.</p> <p>Pollution of watercourses may occur during construction.</p> <p>Development exceeding the environmental carrying capacity of any particular area may result in pollution of watercourses from increased discharge from WWTPs/septic tanks depending on the location. This is of particular concern to surface/ground water sensitive Natura sites.</p>	<p>P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14 , P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, O-WW4, P-NH17</p>
O-CMT5	To support the provision of facilities in Athlone in conjunction with the RAPID Programme.	<p>Any development of community facilities along with associated infrastructure could potentially impact upon Natura 2000 sites, due to disturbance of species, fragmentation of habitats and habitat loss if land is developed within or adjacent to Natura site/s.</p> <p>Pollution of watercourses may occur during construction.</p> <p>Development exceeding the environmental carrying capacity of any particular area may result in pollution of watercourses from increased discharge from WWTPs/septic tanks depending on the location. This is of particular concern to surface/ground water</p>	<p>P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14 , P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, O-WW4, P-NH17</p>

Policy/Objective giving rise to potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites.		Potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites (in the absence of mitigation).	Specific Mitigation (Policies) included within ATDP to address these potential impacts.
P-AOR7	To provide for and facilitate the expansion and development of Burgess Park, in accordance with the Athlone Waterfront Study 2011.	<p>sensitive Natura sites.</p> <p>Any construction related development along the boundary of River Shannon Callows cSAC/SPA has the potential to pollute the river due to run off and sedimentation.</p> <p>There is potential for direct habitat loss and species disturbance due to increased amenity use. Sources of disturbance include noise, vibration, light, construction and operation activities or other sources of disturbance arising from recreation and amenity or from the inappropriate timing of works.</p>	<p>P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, O-WW4, P-NH17</p>
P-AOR10	To integrate and link open space amenities within the town to the surrounding countryside.	<p>There is potential for direct habitat loss, species disturbance and pollution due to any construction carried out to link open space amenities.</p> <p>Sources of disturbance include noise, vibration, light, construction and operation activities or other sources of disturbance arising from recreation and amenity or from the inappropriate timing of works.</p>	<p>P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, O-WW4, P-NH17</p>

Policy/Objective giving rise to potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites.	Potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites (in the absence of mitigation).	Specific Mitigation (Policies) included within ATDP to address these potential impacts.
O-AOR11	To extend and further develop Burgess Park.	<p>Burgess Park borders Middle Shannon Callows SPA and River Shannon Callows SAC. Any extension of the park may lead to direct habitat loss and there is potential for disturbance to designated bird species of the Middle Shannon Callows SPA due to increased amenity use.</p> <p>Development of the park may have implications for the Natura 2000 sites during the construction stage such as pollution of waterbodies due to run off and sedimentation from site.</p>
O-AOR12	To promote the development of a public park and playing fields at Bogganafin along both sides of the canal.	<p>Any development at this site may lead to runoff to watercourses and it may negatively impact downstream on the River Shannon.</p>



Policy/Objective giving rise to potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites.	Potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites (in the absence of mitigation).	Specific Mitigation (Policies) included within ATDP to address these potential impacts.
P-PROW1  To preserve and protect existing public rights of way for the common good and undertake to create new public rights of way, where it is considered desirable and possible.	Impacts of this policy on Natura 2000 sites are unclear as specific locations are not identified. Depending on the location there is potential for disturbance to designated wildlife and direct habitat loss depending on the location of new rights of way. Sources of disturbance include noise, vibration, light, construction and operation activities or other sources of disturbance arising from recreation and amenity or from the inappropriate timing of works.	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14 , P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, O-WW4, P-NH17
<b>Chapter 11 – Natural Heritage, Built Heritage &amp; Archaeology</b>		
P-NH8  To preserve and enhance the scenic amenity of the River Shannon and continue to protect the vistas available from designated views.	Any construction related developments carried out in order to enhance the scenic amenity may impact upon designated habitats or species due to pollution, site run off or disturbance.	P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14 , P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, O-WW4, P-

Policy/Objective giving rise to potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites.	Potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites (in the absence of mitigation).	Specific Mitigation (Policies) included within ATDP to address these potential impacts.
P-NH16	To promote the provision, maintenance and conservation of green infrastructure in Athlone, in the form of linear parks, nature trails, wildlife corridors and urban woodlands.	<p>NH17</p> <p>P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-NH17 P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, O-WW4.</p>
P-VB1	To encourage the rehabilitation, renovation and reuse of existing older buildings were appropriate.	<p>P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14, P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, O-WW4, P-NH17</p>

Policy/Objective giving rise to potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites.	Potential impacts on the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 sites (in the absence of mitigation).	Specific Mitigation (Policies) included within ATDP to address these potential impacts.
O-IH4	To promote public use of the canals, lakes and rivers where feasible and appropriate.	<p>There is potential for disturbance to wildlife in the vicinity of designated lakes and rivers, due to increased amenity use.</p> <p>P-NH3, P-NH4, P-NH5, P-NH9, P-NH10, P-NH12, P-NH14 , P-NH15, P-GW4, P-CS6, P-NH13, P-NH16, P-WW2, P-WW3, O-WW2, O-WW3, O-WW6, O-WW7, P-WT2, P-GW1, P-GW2, P-GW3, P-GW5, P-WST2, P-CS10, P-WST3, O-WW4, P-NH17</p>

There is currently insufficient information on the exact nature of the location as regards the Loughandonning Link Road, which affects the AI River habitat for protected species, eg lamprey eel. The addition of a qualification requiring further ecological assessment of this proposal is recommended. The plan states *“The route identified is indicative only and does not directly impact upon any Natura 2000 sites. Potential to impact upon the River AI ecosystem is acknowledged and must be fully assessed before a final route can be selected”*.

- The zoning of Greenfield lands on the north-western edge of the town for residential development adjacent to Lough Ree SAC has potential for significant adverse effects on the Lough Ree SAC/SPA. Concerns have been previously raised with regard to these potential impacts due to construction activity or flood events.

### **6.3 Appropriate Assessment Conclusion**

With the implementation of the mitigating policies, the draft Athlone Town Plan will not result in any significant long-term impacts on Natura 2000 sites. Where the necessary capacity or infrastructure has not been provided, future development will not be progressed until the necessary upgrades have been completed. The ATDP will include the necessary policy safeguards and standards to ensure that no negative significant environmental effects will arise singularly or in a cumulative manner.

Any in combination effects with the other Local Area Plans are unlikely to have a potential significant adverse impacts on Natura 2000 sites. Therefore it is concluded that with the inclusion of relevant mitigating policies in the ATDP there is no potential for significant effects arising from the draft Plan either alone or in combination with other Plans.

## 7 REFERENCES AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION

In preparing this Appropriate Assessment Screening regard has been had to the following documents:

- National Parks & Wildlife Service (2008) The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland
- European Commission (2000) Managing Natura 2000 Sites. The provision of Article 6, of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC
- European Commission (2001) Assessment of Plans and Projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites, Methodological guidance on the provision of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC
- Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08 , dated 15.2.2008
- Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland, Guidance for Planning Authorities 2009, Updated and published in February 2010
- Environmental report for the SEA for draft Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020.
- Westmeath County Development Plan 2008 – 2014
- Shannon and Eastern River Basin Management Plans.
- EPA Licensing process for Waste Water Discharge Authorisations for Waste Water treatment Plants ([www.epa.ie](http://www.epa.ie))
- Online data available on Natura 2000 sites as held by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) from [www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie) including Natura 2000 Standard Data Form and Site Synopsis documents.
- Information on biodiversity data in the area available from [www.biodiversityireland.ie](http://www.biodiversityireland.ie)
- Information on water quality in the area available from [www.epa.ie](http://www.epa.ie)
- Information on the River Basin Districts from [www.wfdireland.ie](http://www.wfdireland.ie)

- Information on soils, geology and hydrogeology in the area available from [www.gsi.ie](http://www.gsi.ie)
- Relevant Development Plans and Local Area Plans in neighbouring areas.
- *NRA National Secondary Roads Needs Study, Network Options Needs study.* (2011), RPS.
- *Natura Impact Statement in Support of the Appropriate Assessment of Draft Grid25 Implementation Programme,* (2011) Environmental Impact Services.



## **8. Appropriate Assessment NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT**

### **ADDENDUM**

**Addendum arising from proposed amendments to the Draft Athlone Town Development Plan  
2014-2020.**

## 8. INTRODUCTION

### AMENDMENTS TO ATHLONE DRAFT DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2014-2020

Further to presentation of the County Manager's Report on submissions and observations received during the display period and consideration by the Elected Members, amendments are proposed to the Draft Athlone Town Development Plan 2014-2020. This report has been prepared for the purposes of assessing proposed material amendments as to how they interact/ impact on the relevant provisions of the Natura Impact Report for the Draft Athlone Town Development Plan 2014-2020. The report considers material amendments made in the County Manager's Report under Section 12(4) of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2011 and amendments proposed by resolution of the Members under Section 12(6) thereof. Comments in relation to the AA are presented in italic text. The amendments are annotated to correspond with the chapter and paragraph numbering in the Draft Athlone Town Development Plan 2014-2020. The proposed amendments are cross-referenced to the issues identified in the Natura Impact Report; followed by Recommendation/ Comment as to consequences for AA. This report constitutes an addendum to the Natura Impact Report previously prepared for the Draft Athlone Town Development Plan 2014-2020.

#### Amendment No. 1

### 8.1 LINKED GATEWAY TOWN OF ATHLONE

The Midland Gateway, the fifth largest Gateway in terms of population, is unique among the Gateways designated by the National Spatial Strategy in 2002, in that it comprises the three linked towns of Athlone, Mullingar and Tullamore, from the neighbouring counties of Westmeath and Offaly. All three towns have developed around the traditional east-west transport axis that traverses the Irish Midlands.

The three towns that form the Midland Gateway have different natural functional areas (hinterlands). Athlone has a wide catchment area which extends westward into Roscommon and East Galway.

Athlone is marginally the largest of Midland Gateways towns, with a population of 20,153. The town features an extensive industrial base, which supports a number of pharmaceutical, medical devices and information technology companies (both manufacturing and service support related). The town also plays host to the Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT), an important third level education institution for the Midland Gateway with more than 4,800 enrolled students and which offers programmes in Business, Humanities, Engineering and Science. In addition the Midlands Innovation and Research Centre which is based at AIT, is a hub for research and innovation and enterprise development in the Midland Region. Also present within Athlone is Georgia Tech Ireland, which operates an applied research centre based in the IDA campus since 2006 and a joint initiative between Georgia Tech (USA) and the Irish State.

All three towns, individually, have proved to be successful at attracting both FDI and indigenous companies to establish operations within their functional areas. Examples of the types of companies which Athlone has been successful in attracting include Ericsson (ICT), Covidien KCI and Alkermes (formerly Elan pharmaceuticals).

The Gateways Hubs Development Summary Report 2012 noted the following:

- The Midland Gateway population has grown by 9.01% between 2006 and 2011, which is ahead of the Gateway average of 8.44%.
- Third level research and development funding in the Athlone Gateway (€722 per enrolled student) is below the Gateway average (€2,405 per enrolled student) in 2010. This has however increased 63.05% since 2006.
- The overall percentage of people within the Midland Gateway (Zones 1 and 2) who walk, cycle or use public transport to get to and from work had fallen slightly to 11.56% in 2011.
- IT connectivity has grown by 43.8% across the gateway to 56.27%.
- In comparison to the National Gateway average, the Midland Gateway is relatively deprived (the 6<sup>th</sup> most affluent of the nine Gateways), within negative ratings on the Affluence and Deprivation Index for both Zone 1 and Zone 2.

**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*The proposed amendment elaborates upon Athlone's role in the linked Gateway and the context for future economic and employment growth. The amendment does not affect the overall assessment and conclusion contained in the Natura Impact Report which identifies Environmental Carrying Capacity constraints to Athlone achieving critical mass.*

Amendment No. 2

## 8.2 MONITORING, REVIEW & IMPLEMENTATION

In accordance with the SEA Environmental Report, it is the intention of the Council to establish a monitoring programme based on the indicators selected to track progress towards achieving strategic environmental objectives and reaching targets, enabling positive and negative impacts on the environment to be measured.

**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*Monitoring programme should relate to key environmental indicators set out in the Environmental Report. Frequency of monitoring and department for monitoring should be stated.*

## Amendment No. 3

### 8.3 CORE STRATEGY

#### 8.3.1 INTRODUCTION

The Guidelines provide for the establishment of a Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) for employment generating uses to the east of Athlone (given the presence of AIT), between Athlone and Tullamore with linkages to Mullingar and the principal towns via high capacity road links, enhanced public transport options and world-class communications networks.

Athlone is marginally the largest of the Midland Gateways towns, with a population of 20,153. The town features an extensive industrial base, which supports a number of pharmaceutical, medical devices and information technology companies (both manufacturing and service support related). Athlone Institute of Technology is an important third level institution for the Midland Gateway with more than 4,800 enrolled students and which offers programmes in business, humanities, engineering and science. In addition the Midlands Innovation and Research Centre which is based in AIT, is a hub for research and innovation and enterprise development in the Midland Region. Also present within Athlone is Georgia Tech Ireland, which operates an applied research centre based in the IDA campus since 2006 and a joint initiative between Georgia Tech (USA) and the Irish State. In addition to its hinterland in County Westmeath, Athlone has strong socio-economic linkages with Longford and Roscommon and its environs including Monksland. As a commercial centre it has a sphere of influence, which also impacts upon the West Region. The environs of Athlone in County Roscommon (Monksland) fall within the remit of the RPGs for the West Regional Authority.

The Core Strategy has been drafted for the duration of the plan and population targets and lands use zoning objectives relate to that period. The Core Strategy should be read in conjunction with the Core Strategy Map and Table contained in this chapter. The Core Strategy Map also identifies major employment areas and development nodes which are zoned in the Monksland Bellanmullia Local Area Plan 2010-2016, in addition to those in Co. Westmeath.

The Local Planning Framework for Athlone is also to be considered in the context of the Monksland Bellanmullia Local Area Plan 2010-2016, which covers the Athlone West Area located in County Roscommon. This LAP shows in a population change table that the population increased from 4035 in 2002 to 5013 in 2006 representing a 23.7% increase. Core Strategy population allocations from the Draft Roscommon CDP 2014-2020 set a population increase for the area of 538 persons and a housing allocation of 215 units. The plan strongly supports continued employment expansion in the area of medical and pharmaceutical businesses, financial services, logistics, tourism and the strengthening of links with third level institutions. Financial support for enterprise development will be sought through the Western Investment Fund (WIF). The LAP has reserved an area of approximately 130Ha for business enterprise and industrial uses in the Monksland/ Bealnamullia area.

Key objectives for the town's western environs within County Roscommon relating to economic development and population growth adjacent to the linked Gateway require greater co-ordination

with those for Athlone town. In order to ensure the coordinated development of the Midland Gateway it remains a Strategic Objective of Westmeath County Council and Athlone Town Council to secure the preparation and adoption of a unitary plan to be prepared in collaboration with Roscommon County Council.

This process will provide the framework for meaningful collaboration in relation to the scale of population growth for the Gateway consistent with Regional targets, economic development, transportation and land use including the preparation of LUTS, housing strategy, flood risk appraisal and management, recreational, tourism and river environs management.

#### 8.3.2 STRATEGIC AIMS

- Prioritising sustainable development of the Gateway
- Promoting sustainable economic development and employment creation, within defined economic clusters in established Business Parks such as Garrycastle, Blyry, Athlone Business Park and the Strategic Gateway Zone
- Supporting and promoting the sustainable development of Athlone as an international tourist destination through the continued advancement of the “Destination Athlone” initiative.
- Securing the preparation of a unitary plan for Athlone in collaboration with Roscommon County Council in order to ensure co-ordinated development of the Gateway.

#### **Recommendation/ Comment:**

*The amendment expands upon the Core Strategy in the Draft Plan, by more fully describing the Towns Economic and Employment profile, and in referring to detailed planning objectives for development of Athlone West area in County Roscommon as described in the Monksland/ Beallanmulla LAP 2010-2016. The amendment emphasises the need for a co-ordinated development framework to guide future development of the Gateway, by means of a unitary plan in collaboration with Roscommon County Council. Strategic Environmental Issues raised in the SEA Environmental Report in relation to Gateway status and growth, environmental carrying capacity, flood risk and nature conservation apply.*

Amendment No. 4

#### 8.3.3 HOUSING REQUIREMENT

It is estimated that 3,310 housing units will be required up to 2020 to meet projected population targets.

**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*The amendment provides an estimate of the quantum of housing units which would be required to meet RPG population targets. Concerns in relation to environmental carrying capacity raised in the Natura Impact Report (Section 5 Screening Assessment) apply.*

Amendment No. 5

#### 8.3.4 Employment Policy

The Midland Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 to 2022, which emphasise the importance of building critical mass of population, services and infrastructure point to particular potential of employment creation in the following sectors:

- ICT
- Pharmaceuticals and related activities
- Education
- International Trading
- Shared Services (multi-lingual)
- R&D

**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*The amendment prescribes, on the basis of R.P.G. appraisal of employment sector, those areas of particular potential for growth. Issues in relation to environmental carrying capacity referred to in the Natura Impact Report required to meet future demand continue to apply.*

Amendment No. 6

Fig. 2.4 Land Use Zoning for Athlone 2014-2020

Land Use	Ha
Commercial	49.5
Enterprise & Employment	115.5
Agricultural	4.7
Innovation Technology	41.4
Mixed Use	74.6
Open Space	164.3
Existing Residential	287.4
Proposed Residential	139.1
Retail Warehousing	10.9
Sporting Recreational	48.5
Strategic Gateway Zone	112.9
Comm, Educational, Institutional	85.4
Agricultural	4.7
Total Amount of Zoned Land	1139Ha



**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*Table 2.4 sets out quantum of lands zoned in the Draft Development Plan for the various use categories including 139.1ha for new residential. Environmental Carrying Capacity constraints of Athlone in achieving critical mass has been identified in the Natura Impact Report. Key environmental issues raised in the Environmental Report in relation to infrastructural capacity, environmental carrying capacity, nature conservation apply to consideration of impacts on implementation of developments provided for up to 2020. The conclusions of the Natura Impact Report remain unaltered.*

Amendment No. 7

**CORE STRATEGY POLICIES**

<b>P-CS3</b>	To promote and facilitate sustainable economic development and employment creation in the town, commensurate with Athlone's status as a Linked Gateway Town.
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**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*The policy has been responsible to include reference to term "sustainable" and does not alter conclusions of Natura Impact Report.*

Amendment No. 8

<b>P-CS7</b>	To ensure a sequential approach to development and promote residential development, prioritisation of infill sites / developments and the occupation of residential units in the town core, in order to promote the achievement of critical mass and protect and enhance town centre function.
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**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*Policy is contingent upon adherence to environmental carrying capacity requirements raised in the Environmental Report. The proposed amendment does not affect conclusions of Natura Impact Report.*

## Amendment No. 9

It is the objective of the Council:

O-CS1	To secure the preparation of a unitary plan for Athlone and in collaboration with Roscommon County Council in order to provide for the co-ordinated development of the Gateway town recognising its importance as a key driver of growth in the region.
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**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*The unitary plan should be subject to AA and SFRA to ensure consistency in identification, assessment and mitigation of likely significant effects on Natura 2000 Sites and policy should be amended accordingly.*

## Amendment No. 10

O-CS2	To monitor Plans and development trends in the Roscommon environs of Athlone in the interests of securing co-ordinated development of the Gateway.
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**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*Methodology for and frequency of monitoring (in combination with programme referred to in Amendment No. 2) shall be stated. The Environmental indicators should encompass matters which preserve the conservation status of Natura Sites as described in Section 5 of the Natura Impact Report.*

## Amendment No. 11

## 8.4 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

- To facilitate sustainable economic development and regeneration.
- To promote and expand knowledge-based enterprise and innovation economy, capitalising on strong linkages between industry, AIT and existing research institutions.

- To enhance the range of functions and services, retail offer and facilities in the town, in order to support economic activity and maintenance of a suitable workforce.

**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*The Strategy is consistent with Midland Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 (MRPG) framework for economic development of the Gateway. Strategy is contingent upon environmental carrying capacity requirements raised in Environmental Report as an area of concern. Recommendations of Natura Impact Report are unaltered.*

Amendment No. 12

**It is an objective of the Councils:**

<b>O-EC1</b>	To identify and progress the establishment of a Strategic Development Zone, to the east of Athlone, subject to environmental constraints and Habitats assessment, particularly in relation to Crosswood Bog and Carn Park Bog.
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**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*Environmental and Ecological risks to the conservation status of habitats associated with the proposal to establish an SDZ which were raised in the Natura Impact Report apply.*

#### 8.4.1 GENERAL RETAILING POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

Amendment No. 13

**It is a policy of the Councils:**

<b>P-RET2</b>	To promote retail development as a fundamental element and a potential catalyst for the promotion and enhancement of broader town centre functions. New development proposals shall protect the retail function of the core shopping area, contribute positively to the public realm and display high quality urban design and place-making attributes.
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**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*The amendment seeks consolidation of the underpinning of the Town Centre Retail function; and promotion of higher quality design. The proposed amendment does not affect conclusions of the Natura Impact Report.*

Amendment No. 14

<b>P-RET5</b>	To support the vitality and viability of existing designated centres and facilitate a competitive and healthy environment for the retailing industry into the future by ensuring that future growth in retail floorspace is in keeping with the Retail hierarchy, as prescribed in the Retail Strategy.
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**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*Retail projections in terms of floor space requirements should be evidence based taking account of Regional Development Strategies, vacancy and current trends in retailing. The Policy is contingent upon addressing of Environmental Carrying Capacity constraints issues identified in the Natura Impact Report.*

Amendment No. 15

<b>P-RET6</b>	To adhere to the provisions of the Sequential Approach in the consideration of retail applications located outside of core retail area, as identified in Fig. 4.2.
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**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*The proposed amendment does not affect conclusions of the Natura Impact Report.*

## Amendment No. 16

It is an objective of the Councils:

O-RET1	To prepare and implement a Joint Retail Strategy for the Linked Gateway Towns of Athlone, Mullingar and Tullamore, in conjunction with Offaly and Roscommon County Councils in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012.
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**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*Retail projections in terms of floor space requirements should be evidence based taking account of Regional Development Strategies, vacancy and current trends in retailing. Achievement of the objective is contingent upon addressing of Strategic Environmental issues identified in the Environmental Report. Conclusions of the Natura Impact Report remain unaltered.*

## Amendment No. 17

O-RET3	To promote higher order and comparison goods retail activity in the town centre and resist the loss of retail units, to non-retail use, at pedestrian level, particularly in the primary shopping streets in Athlone which are defined as follows:  Connaught Street, O'Connell St., High St., Main St., Castle St., Pearse St., Church St., Mardyke St., and Irishtown Upper.
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**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*The objective aligns with policies to underpin the vitality and viability of the town centre through promotion of retailing function and non-retail uses. The Objective does not impact upon conclusions of the Natura Impact Report.*

## Amendment No. 18

## Chapter 5

## 8.5 CHARACTER AREAS POLICIES &amp; OBJECTIVE

It is an objective of the Councils:

O-CA1	To examine the potential to construct a new bridge across the River Shannon linking the east and west areas of the town for pedestrians and cyclists, subject to the requirements of the Habitats Directive, Water Framework Directive, EIA Directive and other relevant EU Directives.
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**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*The objective repeats proposed amendment to Athlone Town Development Plan 2008-2014 (Variation No. 4) for which Natura Impact Report has been undertaken. Environmental sensitivities attaching to the development which have been identified remain.*

## Amendment No. 19

## (Opportunity Site No. 7) – Ranelagh Site

Having regard to the risk of flooding on this site, it has been reserved in the plan for low vulnerability uses including open space and enterprise and employment, reflecting established uses. Any further development or intensification of use proposed on these lands shall be subject to a site specific flood risk assessment.

**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*The Natura Impact Report refers to Flood Risk as a significant environmental issue for Athlone and environmental sensitivities associated with flood mitigation measures. In this connection any Mitigation of Flood Risk proposed in policy/ objective requires assessment of Habitats Impact, given the location of the site. The amendment should include reference to this affect.*

## Chapter 6

## Amendment No. 20

## 8.6 INTEGRATION OF LAND USE PLANNING &amp; TRANSPORTATION

It is therefore Council policy to prepare a coordinated Transportation/ LUTS Plan for Athlone in conjunction with Roscommon County Council. The Council is committed to preparing a LUTS for Athlone and to the continued incorporation of the traffic model in conjunction with Roscommon County Council. The Plan shall in addition provide policy and a coordinated consistent approach to development affecting the M6/N6 strategic corridor.

**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*A timeframe for completion of this study, which will promote and facilitate the integration of land use and transportation policy within the town and its environs (including those in County Roscommon) should be stated in the Plan. The proposed amendment does not affect conclusions of the Natura Impact Report.*

## 8.6.1 WALKING &amp; CYCLING POLICIES &amp; OBJECTIVES

## Amendment No. 21

## It is the policy of the Councils:

P-WC6	To support and facilitate the development through Athlone of the National Cycle Route between Dublin and Galway, including the construction of a new pedestrian and cycle Bridge across the River Shannon.
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**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*Scoping of Environmental Report for Variation No. 4 to Athlone Town Development Plan 2008-2014 has been completed. Particular Environmental sensitivities attaching to the development have been identified and should be incorporated into the Plan.*



## Amendment No. 22

P-WC7	To support and facilitate the provision of a Cycleway and Walkway in Athlone within the corridor of the disused Mullingar to Athlone railway line, pending the re-opening of this line as a railway.
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**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*Scoping of Environmental Report for Variation No. 4 to Athlone Town Development Plan 2008-2014 has been completed. Particular Environmental sensitivities attaching to the development have been identified and should be fully addressed in Plan policy.*

## Amendment No. 23

It is an objective of the Councils:

O-WC3	To provide a cycleway and walkway in the town within the corridor of the Mullingar to Athlone disused railway together with a pedestrian and cycleway link to the Roscommon County Boundary, including all related signage, waymarking and all associated site works and connections.
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**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*Potential impacts of Leisure activities including walking and infrastructure such as paths, cycle routes, bridge are referred to in the Natura Impact Report (reference sites 000216 and 004096). The objective repeats proposed amendment to Athlone Town Development Plan 2008-2014 (Variation No. 4) for which Natura Impact Report has been undertaken. Environmental sensitivities attaching to the development which have been identified remain.*

## Amendment No. 24

O-WC15	To provide a new pedestrian and cycleway bridge across the River Shannon, in conjunction with the development of the Dublin- Galway national cycle route, subject to habitat protection requirements.
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**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*The objective repeats proposed amendment to Athlone Town Development Plan 2008-2014 (Variation No. 4) for which Natura Impact Report has been undertaken. Environmental sensitivities attaching to the development which have been identified remain*

## Amendment No. 25

O-WC16	To provide a walking/cycling route from the Athlone Mullingar railway line in Athlone, to the River Shannon, via a new bridge over the Shannon to the west bank and onwards to the Roscommon county boundary, with the potential to connect to Athlone Castle and southwards around the town.
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**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*Potential impacts of Leisure activities including walking and infrastructure such as paths, cyclerroutes, bridge are referred to in the Natura Impact Report (reference sites 000216 and 004096). The objective repeats proposed amendment to Athlone Town Development Plan 2008-2014 (Variation No. 4) for which Natura Impact Report has been undertaken. Environmental sensitivities attaching to the development which have been identified remain.*

## Amendment No. 26

O-WC17	To provide a network of pedestrian and cycle routes within the town in conjunction with the development of the Dublin -Galway national cycle route, subject to habitat protection requirements.
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**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*Potential impacts of Leisure activities including walking and infrastructure such as paths, cycle routes, bridge are referred to in the Natura Impact Report (reference sites 000216 and 004096). The objective repeats proposed amendment to Athlone Town Development Plan 2008-2014 (Variation No. 4) for which Natura Impact Report has been undertaken. Environmental sensitivities attaching to the development which have been identified remain.*

## Amendment No. 27

It is an objective of the Council:

O-TM17	To require that any new/existing mammal mitigation measures installed during road construction /upgrades shall be managed and repairs carried out where necessary.
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**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*The proposed amendment does not affect conclusions of the Natura Impact Report. Reference to consultations with N.P.W.S. in regard to design and management should be added to the objective.*

## Chapter 8

## 9 RENEWABLE ENERGY POLICIES &amp; OBJECTIVES

## Amendment No. 28

It is an objective of the Councils:

O-REN6	To consider local and migrating bat and bird populations in the assessment of applications for Small-Scale Wind Turbines in the town.
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**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*The proposed amendment does not affect conclusions of the Natura Impact Report.*

Amendment No. 29

### 9.1 ICT POLICIES & OBJECTIVE

P-ICT6	To facilitate the provision of telecommunications infrastructure in Athlone in accordance with the requirements of the “Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures – Guidelines for Planning Authorities” July 1996 and Circular Letter PL 07/12.
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**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*The proposed amendment does not affect conclusions of the Natura Impact Report.*

## Chapter 9

### 10 TOURISM POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

Amendment No. 30

P-TRM3	To continue to encourage and promote the sustainable development of a range of quality tourism facilities, attractions and accommodation within the town.
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**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*The policy was assessed in the Natura Impact Report; and should be qualified by reference to environmental and habitat protection compliance requirements. The conclusions of the Natura Impact Report remain unaltered.*

## Amendment No. 31

It is an objective of the Councils:

O-TRM5	To explore the provision of sustainable medium- and long-distance walking routes, focusing on the River Shannon and Lough Ree, in co-operation with Roscommon County Council, subject to environmental constraints and the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
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**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*The requirement for Habitat Management Plan preparation to proceed significant development should be appended to this objective.*

## Chapter 11

## 11 NATURAL HERITAGE POLICIES &amp; OBJECTIVES

## Amendment No. 32

It is a policy of the Councils:

P-NH10	To require Appropriate Assessment (Habitats Directive Assessment) and where relevant appropriate environmental assessment such as EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment), or ecological appraisal for developments not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site, and which are likely to have significant effects on the integrity of the site individually or cumulatively.
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**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*The proposed amendment does not alter conclusions of the Natura Impact Report.*

Amendment No. 33

It is an objective of the Councils:

O-WW4	To assess development proposals which involve lighting along water courses, rivers, streams and canal corridors, tree lines and urban woodland, in order to mitigate impacts of lighting on bats and other species.
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**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*The proposed amendment does not affect conclusions of the Natura Impact Report.*

Amendment No. 34

## 12 ENERGY

Wind energy development proposals will be considered in designated industrial, enterprise and research areas within the plan boundary.

**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*Potential for construction related impacts and/or bat collisions is raised in Natura Impact Report with respect to Wind Energy impacts on Natura Sites. The statement shall include Reference to the need for habitats assessment which arises.*

## 13 LAND USE ZONING CATEGORIES

Amendment No. 35

The following categories are to be included in the Land Use Zoning Matrix

10. Innovation & Technology

11. Strategic Gateway Zone

**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*The proposed amendment does not affect conclusions of the Natura Impact Report.*

Amendment No. 36/ 37

Amendments made by resolution of the elected members supported by mapped proposals.

1. 2 units in Arcadia to be zoned for commercial use. (Amendment 36)

**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*The amendment introduces commercial uses into an area predominantly in use for retail warehousing and zoned as such and was not recommended in County Manager's Report for the purposes of clarity the amendment should include reference to the requirement for adherence to policies in the Retail Strategy for Athlone. The amendment does not affect conclusions of the Natura Impact Report.*

2. Lands to the west of L4022 at Hillquarter to be de-zoned from residential and Lands to the east of L4022 to be zoned as residential (Amendment 37)

**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*The amendment involves 5.69 hectares located on the eastern side of L4022. Concerns raised in the Natura Impact Report regarding proximity to SAC, and SPA during construction, and use; still apply. Recommendations of the Natura Impact Report which recommends removal of zoning at Hill Quarter remains unaltered.*

Amendment No. 38

3. Parcel of land on Dublin Road opposite AIT to be zoned for commercial use.(County Manager's Recommendation)

**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*The amendment seeks to reflect in zoning objectives established commercial usage at this location. The proposed amendment does not affect conclusions of the environmental report.*

Amendment No. 39

Proposal to remove the following structures from the Draft Record of Protected Structures:

15007075 Regional Gateway

15007076 Regional Gate Lodge } Associated with New Court House, Ballymahon Road, Athlone

15007077 Regional House

Additional Structures to be deleted



15000158, 15000337, 15007055 and 15009222. 15000206 and  
15000209. 15000261 15003024 15003051 15003060 15007097 and 15007098

**Recommendation/ Comment:**

*Removal of these structures from the draft record of protected structures would conflict with a number of the strategic environmental objectives of the SEA Environmental Report, including risk of loss of items of architectural heritage and/or erosion of distinctive character.*

