Planning and Environmental Consultants

Non-Technical Summary Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment Report

Draft Spatial Framework for Sandy Quarter, Galway City

DOCUMENT DETAILS

Client:	**Land Development Agency**
Project Title:	**Draft Spatial Framework for Sandy Quarter, Galway City**
Project Number:	**220132-a**
Document Title:	**Non-Technical Summary Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment Report**
Document File Name:	**Sandy Quarter SEA NTS F - 2023.03.15 - 220132a**
Prepared By:	**MKO** **Tuam Road** **Galway** **Ireland** **H91 VW84**

Planning and Environmental Consultants

Rev	Status	Date	Author(s)	Approved By
01	Draft	01/03/2023	SND	MW
02	Final	15/03/2023	SND	MW

Table of Contents

TABLE OF TABLES

TABLE OF FIGURES

1. INTRODUCTION

The Land Development Agency (LDA), in partnership with Galway City Council (GCC), is beginning the process of preparing a Spatial Framework for lands bounding Sandy Road, Galway City, which will deliver on the transformative potential of the Sandy Road area. The objective of the Sandy Quarter Spatial Framework (SQSF) is to develop a comprehensive vision for the future development of these lands, with a particular focus on optimising brownfield and underutilised areas.

The Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 outlines a vision for Galway City's transition to a low carbon, climate-resilient city centred around a strategy for compact growth, increased integration between land-use transportation, increased sustainability mobility opportunities, and the sustainable use and management of environmental resources. To accommodate projected population growth in Galway City, the plan proposes the growth and enhancement of the existing network of suburban neighbourhoods through consolidation and appropriate levels of densification. In order to achieve this, the City Council has identified and designated Regeneration and Opportunity Sites, which are sites with consolidation potential to support the 15-minute city concept.

The GCDP states that all of the major Regeneration and Opportunity Sites will be required to be the subject of a masterplan or spatial framework plans, which will facilitate the clear strategy for the development and set the context for more detailed design elements relating to the use, buildings, spaces and their interrelationships.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, before a decision is made to adopt it. Under the requirements of the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC), certain plans or programmes are subject to SEA prior to their adoption and implementation.

The SEA Directive is transposed onto Irish legislation by the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 – 2011 and the Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations 2004 – 2011.

The main stages of the SEA process are:

- Screening: determining whether or not SEA is required;
- Scoping (current stage): determining the range of environmental issues to be covered by the SEA – includes consultation with statutory consultees;
- Identification, evaluation and mitigation of potential impacts and preparation of the Environmental Report;
- Consultation, revision and post-adoption activities, including:
    - Public consultation on the Draft Plan/Programme and associated Environmental Report;
    - Integration of environmental considerations into the final Plan/Programme;
    - Issuing the SEA Statement: describes the rationale for decisions taken and extent to which environmental considerations and consultation have been integrated into the final Plan/Programme.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE DRAFT SANDY QUARTER SPATIAL FRAMEWORK

Under Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the LDA, in partnership with Galway City Council (GCC) is in the process of preparing a Spatial Framework for lands bounding Sandy Road, Galway. The LDA is a commercial, State-sponsored body whose objective is to ensure the delivery of housing and supporting development on underused state land. The Vision Statement prepared by the LDA intends to achieve following:

> *"The objective of the Spatial Framework is to develop a comprehensive vision, themes, principles and guidelines for the future development of a new mixed-use neighbourhood at Sandy Road, with a particular focus on optimising brownfield and underutilised areas to deliver on the vision established in the Design Review."*

The Spatial Framework will link the analysis of the existing conditions of the site to assess the key issues, challenges and opportunities to develop a set of design principles to guide the development of the site. It will focus on themes such as green and blue infrastructure, surface water management, mobility, urban design and placemaking, supporting communities, and providing affordable, quality housing.

The Spatial Framework intends to transform the lands from a car-dominated, 'Edge of Town' development to a self-sustaining pedestrian and cycle-friendly district. Its proximity to the city centre will be strengthened and new linkages will be created to improve pedestrian and cycling facilities. The neighbourhood will also form a gateway to the Terryland Forest Park and River. The transformation of the Sandy Quarter lands is expected to eventually initiate regeneration in the adjacent Liosbán area.

The overall site comprises an area of approximately 10ha (24.5 acres) with a number of land ownerships and existing and operational uses, including ESB depot, GCC Municipal Recycling Centre, Galway County Council Depot, education lands, Galway Bay FM premises and an area of land in private ownership. The site includes recreational and amenity zoned lands, forming part of the Terryland City Park. The site commands extensive street frontage along Sandy Road and Sean Mulvoy Road, and to a lesser extent onto the Tuam Road. The site, however, has poor access, lacks permeability, has low footfall and a characterless form. The site is dissected by Sandy Road with Sean Mulvoy Road to the south and Liosbaun to the north, and is flanked by the Liosbán Industrial Estate, Gort na Glaise and Gleann na Trá housing developments.

3. SEA METHODOLOGY

The purpose of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is to facilitate environmental protection and ensure the integration of environmental considerations into the adoption of a proposed plan or programme, or amendment to a plan or programme.

The SEA of the Sandy Quarter Spatial Framework will be carried out in line with best practice guidelines and methodology, having regard to the following:

- 'SEA of Local Authority Land Use Plans – EPA Recommendations and Resources' (EPA, 2022)
- 'SEA Pack' (EPA, 2018)
- 'Developing and Assessing Alternatives in Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)' (EPA, 2015)
- 'Integrating Climate Change into Strategic Environmental Assessment in Ireland - A Guidance Note' (EPA, 2015)
- 'Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment – Guidelines for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities' (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2004)
- 'Development of Strategic Environmental Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland' (EPA, 2003)

The Environmental Report has been prepared in accordance with Article 8 (14D) of the Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations 2004, as amended by the Planning and Development (SEA) (Amendment) Regulations 2011, which sets out the required contents of the Environmental Report.

As part of the overall process of environmental assessment, an Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening has also been carried out in accordance with the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and S.I. No. 477/2011 (the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011). Where there is potential for significant or indeterminate effects on the conservation objectives of any European site(s) as a result of implementation of a proposed Plan/Programme or amendment to a Plan/Programme, a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment must be conducted by the competent authority, based on objective scientific information. This information is presented in a Natura Impact Report (NIR).

The Natura Impact Report concluded that the Spatial Framework will not have any detrimental effects on any Designated Sites. However, to ensure this, further mitigation measures will need to be proposed and implemented at each phase of development.

4. RELEVANT PLANS AND PROGRAMMES

The Draft Sandy Quarter Spatial Framework is nestled within a hierarchy of legislation, plans, programmes, strategies, including international, European, national, regional, and local levels. The Framework must comply with relevant higher-level legislation, plans and strategic actions and may, in turn, guide lower-level strategic actions.

The draft Framework was prepared with cognisance of the relevant spatial planning policies and objectives of the Galway City Development 2023-2029, which was subject to SEA prior to its adoption. Other Plans, Programmes, and Strategies of key relevance to the Framework include:

- SEA Directive (2001/42/EC)
- EIA Directive (2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU)
- Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)
- Birds Directive (2009/147/EC)
- Project 2040 National Planning Framework (2018)
- Northern and Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy
- Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029

5. DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL BASELINE

5.1 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna

Preliminary ecological studies were undertaken for the Sandy Quarter site by MKO ecologists. No Annex I Habitats were identified within the site boundary, and grassland habitats within the site itself were found to be of low biodiversity value. Some of the buildings on site have Potential Roosting Features for bats, with the Terryland River acting as an ecological corridor. Records of the Lesser Horseshoe Bat, known for their light sensitivity, have been reported in the area.

The closest European Designated Sites to the Sandy Quarter subject lands are the Lough Corrib SAC, Galway Bay Complex SAC and Inner Galway Bay SPA. The closest Nationally Protected Areas is the Galway Bay Complex pNHA and Lough Corrib pNHA.

Where a plan or project is likely to have a significant effect upon a European Site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects), an Appropriate Assessment is required and under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora). A Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment of the Sandy Quarter Spatial Framework has been undertaken, the results of which are presented in a Natura Impact Report, forming part of the proposed Spatial Framework for public display and consideration.

5.2 Population and Human Health

The proposed Sandy Quarter is located in Galway City and is under the jurisdiction of Galway City Council. For the purposes of the SEA ER, the Study Area for Population has been defined as the District Electoral Divisions where the subject lands are situated, i.e., Castlegar, St. Nicholas, and Wellpark. The Study Area has a population of 8,115 as of 2016 and comprises an area of 5.6km^2. The analysis of population trends over time indicates that there has been a depopulation from the Study Area.

5.3 Air and Climate (including Noise)

The EPA have installed a number of air quality monitoring stations through Ireland, including at Rahoon in Galway City. The index rating for Sandy Quarter is for overall air quality in Zone C, which comprise 16 urban areas with a population greater than 15,000.

Galway City, like most of Ireland, has a temperate oceanic climate which results in mild winters and cool summers. Ireland is a Party to the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement, which are international agreements that set limitations and reduction targets for greenhouse gases for developed countries.

Galway City Council prepared a Noise Action Plan for the period of 2019 to 2023 to address environmental noise from major roads with vehicular traffic of more than three million per annum. The Action Planning Areas of relevance to Sandy Quarter include National Road N6 and Regional Roads R336 and R338.

5.4 Soil and Geology

The majority of the soils and subsoils for Galway City and its suburbs are classified as ‘Made’, which are soils that have been distributed, transported or manipulated by urban activities. Similarly, much of

the Sandy Quarter subject lands comprise Made soils and subsoils, with pockets of Alluvium undifferentiated and Alluvial (mineral) to the north-west of the site. Bedrock geology (at 1:100,000 scale) at the subject lands is Burren Formation, which is a pale grey clean skeletal limestone.

The closest County Geological Site is the Terryland River (Sink/Rising), located approximately 900m north-east from the site, and is described as a '*river with an unusual flow regime, which either flows out of the River Corrib and disappears underground, or rises and flows to the Corrib, via two estavelles*'. The unusual bi-directional flow of the Terryland River and associated karst features are exemplary of a County Geological Site.

5.5 Water

Since 2000, Water Management in the European Union has been directed by the Water Framework Directive (WFD), which establishes a common framework for the sustainable and integrated management of all waters, including groundwater inland surface waters, transitional waters, and coastal waters. The subject lands are split between the Corrib Catchment and Galway Bay South East Catchment. The closest surface water body is the Terryland River or the Sandy River, which has been identified to be under pressure from urban runoff. The WFD Risk Status for the Terryland River was recorded to be 'At Risk', and its Ecological Status was noted to be 'Moderate' over the monitoring period of 2016-2021.

The groundwater bodies underlaying the subject lands are Clare-Corrib and Clarinbridge. The WFD groundwater status (2013-2018) for both was 'Good'. Groundwater vulnerability at the site was classified to be of 'High' vulnerability across the majority of the site. The bedrock aquifer underlying the site is classified as Regionally Important Aquifer – Karstified.

The Flood Risk Statement undertaken for the Sandy Quarter lands identifies that the parts of the site are located in the following zones:

- **Flood Zones A** (where the probability of flooding from rivers and the sea is highest; greater than 1% or 1 in 100 for river flooding or 0.5% or 1 in 200 for coastal flooding): Across the north-western end of the site, comprising lands currently under private ownership and part of the Local Authority lands
- **Flood Zone B** (where the probability of flooding from rivers and the sea is moderate; between 0.1% or 1 in 1000 and 1% or 1 in 100 for river flooding and between 0.1% or 1 in 1000 year and 0.5% or 1 in 200 for coastal flooding): Across the eastern section of the lands under the ownership of the Local Authority

The rest of the site, comprising the lands under the ownership of ESB and Galway Diocese, is located in **Flood Zone C**, where the probability of flooding from rivers and the sea is low (less than 0.1% or 1 in 1000).

5.6 Material Assets

Transportation

Galway City has a compact and walkable core, and surrounding suburbs have developed with the progression of residential and employment areas. This has resulted in the dependence on private car as a means of travel. Galway City Council and Galway County Council have jointly with the National Transport Authority prepared the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS), which sets out the infrastructural, operational and policy measures to provide Galway City and its environs with transportation strategies over a period of twenty years. The GTS proposes walking and cycling infrastructure and public transport at the forefront by supporting the objectives of the current Galway City Development Plan (2017-2023) and the upcoming plan (2023-2029), which will continue to promote the achievement of a

sustainable integrated transportation system by facilitating the modal shift away from private car to reduce traffic congestion in the city.

A number of regional bus services operate within the City, with the principal bus station located within the Ceannt Railway Station enclosure, located approximately 2km south-west of the Sandy Quarter lands. Galway City is served by the existing single-track, heavy line from the east, terminating in the city centre at Ceannt Station. The Galway Port is located approximately 2.5km south-west of the subject lands and is an important transport facility on the west coast of Ireland.

Sandy Road itself is a single carriageway, connecting to the N6 and the N84 at the north-western end and to the R336 and R338 at the Joyce Roundabout to the south-east.

Waste Management

The City Council provides a recycling service for Galway residents at the Galway City Council Recycling Centre, located at Sandy Road. This recycling facility is proposed to be relocated as part of the Sandy Quarter Spatial Framework.

Other waste facilities include:

- Barna Recycling at Carrowbrowne, Headford Road
- The City Bin Company, Oranmore
- Walsh Waste, Oranmore

Water Supply

Irish Water's Galway City Water Supply Scheme covers the city-wide water supply network from the Terryland Water Treatment Plant, which draws water from the Terryland River. The city is currently supplied by the Galway City Public Water Supply (PWS) at Terryland and supplemented by the Tuam Regional Water Supply. These water supplies form the Corrib Water Resource Zone.

Wastewater Management

The City's wastewater collection system feeds into the Mutton Island Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP), which is designed to meet the requirements of the EU Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive, and serves the city and its environs. The Northern and Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy projects a growth of 35,000 persons over the period 2016 to 2031. While it is expected that the Mutton Island WWTP will face additional strain, it is anticipated within the SEA ER of the Galway City Development Plan (2023-2029) that the WWTP has the capacity to accommodate the population growth over its plan period.

Energy

In a clear spatial pattern that can be viewed in Figure 5-19 of the SEA ER, it can be observed that the city core and the older suburbs are more energy intensive, with BER ratings of up to E. This is suggestive of poor heating systems and/or poor insultation.

5.7 Cultural Heritage

The Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs), together with policies pertaining to the protection of vernacular and industrial architecture, cover the architectural heritage of Galway City. There are no Architectural Conservation Area in the immediate vicinity of the Sandy Quarter Lands, the nearest one being the Eyre Square ACA, which is located approximately 1.2km to the south-west of the subject lands.

The subject site itself is of low heritage value, with the five National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) sites to the south of the subject lands.

The protection of archaeological areas and sites is covered by the legislation contained in the National Monuments Acts 1930 to 1994 (as amended), and covers man-made structures built prior to the year 1700AB, with a few exceptions. The site boundaries do not contain any archaeological heritage, however, there are five features recorded within close proximity to the subject lands.

5.8 Landscape

The Spatial Framework lands are located in Galway City, therefore, the Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 was consulted to identify relevant landscape designations and policies. Chapter 5 Natural Heritage, Recreation and Amenity of the GCDP 2023-2029 accounts for a green network approach which seeks to manage and protect the environment to ensure the necessary balance between the preservation of the city's natural heritage and recreation and amenity requirements.

The features within the Green Network (as listed in the GCDP) of relevance to the Sandy Quarter lands include:

- The Terryland River
- Terryland Forest Park

Land-use at the subject site is classified as *Industrial or Commercial Units,* surrounded by *Discontinuous Urban Fabric* to the north-west and south and *Pastures* to the north-west. *Industrial or Commercial Units* are defined as

> *"Buildings, other built-up structures and artificial surfaces (with concrete, asphalt, tarmacadam, or stabilised like e.g. beaten earth) occupy most of the area. It can also contain vegetation (most likely grass) or other non-sealed surfaces. This class is assigned for land units that are under industrial or commercial use or serve for public service facilities."*

6. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES

Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) are methodological measures against which the environmental effects of a proposed plan or programme can be assessed. The use of SEOs allows for the identification of areas in which the potential adverse impacts are likely to occur as a result of implementing the plan or programme. As part of the SEA process, measures can then be identified to avoid, reduce or mitigate such impacts.

The proposed Sandy Quarter Spatial Framework has been assessed against a set of SEOs that were developed with in-house expertise, best practice guidelines and where relevant, aligned with the SEOs for the City Development Plan 2023-2029. The SEOs for the assessment of the draft Spatial Framework have been set out under the following headings:

- Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna
- Population and Human Health
- Air and Climate
- Soil and Geology
- Water
- Material Assets
- Cultural Heritage
- Landscape
- Interrelationships

Table 6-1 below presents the SEOs that were developed to test and assess the potential environmental effects of the draft Spatial Framework.

Table 6-1 Proposed Strategic Environmental Objectives for Sandy Quarter Spatial Framework

SEA Topic	Strategic Environmental Objectives	
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	B1	Protect, conserve and promote the enhancement of any European Site with regards to its qualifying interests and prevent adverse impacts (direct, indirect and cumulative) from development within or adjacent to these sites.
	B2	Protect and conserve rare and threatened habitats and species, including those listed in the Habitats Directive and the Wildlife Acts.
	B3	Protect and conserve the marine environment and promote the appropriate sustainable management of the coastal zone taking cognisance of potential direct, indirect and cumulative impacts on European sites.
	B4	Support measures to control and manage alien/invasive species.
	B5	Protect areas of local biodiversity value and ecological corridors which provide connectivity for species and prevent wildlife habitat fragmentation.
	B6	Promote ecological awareness and biodiversity.

Population and Human Health	PHH1	Promote good quality of life based on high-quality residential, working and recreational environments and on sustainable travel patterns, land uses, including potential adverse noise quality impacts.
	PHH2	Promote social inclusion and wellbeing/healthy living in the city.
	PHH3	Minimise noise, vibration and emissions from traffic and minimise impact on residential amenities.
Air and Climate	C1	Promote climate adaption and mitigation measures in line with the Galway City Climate Change Adaption Strategy and any future plans.
	C2	Meet Air Quality Directive standards for the protection of human health – Air Quality Directive
	C3	Enable sustainable development by encouraging new and existing development to reduce carbon emissions and build climate resilience.
	C4	Improve air quality within the city and masterplan area.
	C5	Comply as appropriate with the provisions of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2009).
Water	W1	Maintain and improve, where possible, the quality of surface water and groundwater to meet the requirements of the National River Basin Management Plan.
	W2	Support the promotion of water conservation.
	W3	Integrate sustainable water management solutions (such as SuDS, porous surfacing and green roofs) into development proposals
Soils and Geology	S1	Protect soils against pollution, and prevent degradation of the soil resource
	S2	Maximise the sustainable re- use of brownfield lands, and the existing built environment.
	S3	Minimise the consumption of non-renewable sand, gravel and rock deposits.
Material Assets	MA1	Maximise use of the built environment in a sustainable and efficient manner. Encourage the transition to a zero-carbon economy by facilitating the development of a grid infrastructure to support renewables and international connectivity. Reduce the average energy consumption per capita including promoting energy efficient buildings, retrofitting, smart-buildings, towns and grids Optimise existing infrastructure and provide new infrastructure to match population distribution proposals
	MA2	Maximise and support sustainable modes of transport.

	MA3	Ensure water and wastewater are planned for and provided as critical services infrastructure
	MA4	Facilitate measures to reduce all forms of air pollution.
Cultural Heritage	CH1	Promote the protection and conservation of the cultural, built archaeological and linguistic heritage, and where appropriate enhance character.
Landscape	L1	Conserve and enhance the built heritage and landscape features of the masterplan area.
Interrelationships	IR1	Maintain and improve the health of people, ecosystems and natural processes

7. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The results of the impact assessment are set out in matrix format and use the following scale rating system to indicate potential environmental effects:

Table 7-1 Impact Assessment Ratings and Descriptions

Rating	Description
Likely to improve status of SEOs	Reflects a potential positive effect
Probable conflict with SEOs (mitigation unlikely)	Reflects a potential negative effect that is unlikely to be mitigated
Mitigated conflicts	Reflects a potential negative effect that will be mitigated
No likely interactions with SEOs	Reflects a neutral or uncertain effect

Overall, it has been assessed that the effects on the environment of implementing the proposed Spatial Framework are predominantly positive and likely to improve the status of the SEOs, i.e. a change that will improve the quality of the environment.

7.1 Consideration of Alternatives

The SEA process is also required to account for reasonable alternatives, having regard to the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme under assessment. With regards to the proposed Sandy Quarter Spatial Framework, the purpose of the Framework is to develop a comprehensive vision, themes, principles and guidelines for the future development of a new, mixed-use neighbourhood at Sandy Road, with a particular focus on optimising brownfield and underutilised areas to deliver on the vision established from the design review.

The following four key alternative development strategies for the Spatial Framework were evaluated to achieve the best sustainable development option. These alternatives were assessed against the set of SEOs with a quantitative scoring system, outlined in Figure 7-1.

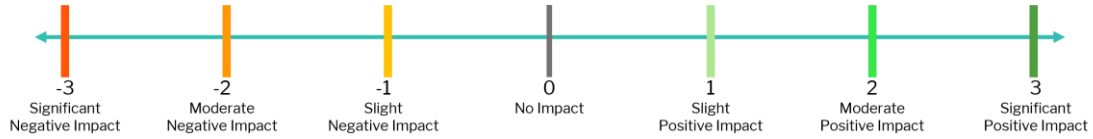

Figure 7-1 Impact Score Descriptions

Alternatives to the Preparation of a Framework

- **Alternative 1.1: Do not prepare a Framework or 'Do Nothing'**: This scenario is used as the baseline in land-use planning, and in this case, the Sandy Quarter lands continue their current operations and land-use. There is a possibility that applications for development would be made on an ad-hoc basis and without the benefits of a design-led planned and coordinated approach. This approach does not benefit or enhance any of the SEOs and possibly presents a threat to the long-term viability of the subject lands.
- **Alternative 1.2 Prepare a Framework to inform future decision-making**: Within this alternative, with the provision of a Framework in addition to the City-wide provisions of

the City Development Plan will enable detailed and specific guidance and design principles in support of how the Sandy Quarter lands could evolve and be developed within the context of an overall vision for proposed planning and sustainable development. This would provide developers and the public with streamlined guidance that will lead to coherent and complementary individual developments across the lands. The Framework allows for cohesion through careful design to deliver on housing needs in Galway City, whilst being mindful of the constraints at the site, and introduces environmental and sustainability ambitions.

Alternatives by Density/Quantum of Residential Development

- **Alternative 2.1: Highest Quantum of Residential Development within the limits of the City Development Plan**: This alternative would see the maximisation of the amount of housing units to be developed on site and minimisation of all other uses. However, this is likely to result in an imbalance through the lack of other amenities and result in needing to travel longer distances for employment, education and other services. Despite this alternative being within the carrying capacity of the subject lands, it is not expected to achieve the same degree of sustainable modal options.
- **Alternative 2.2: Medium Quantum of Residential Development, complemented by Mixed-Use Developments**: This alternative would seek to balance new residential developments and other complementary mixed-use developments, including employment, commercial, education, community and cultural, health and wellbeing, and sports and recreation. This alternative is within the carrying capacity of the subject lands and would be successful in delivering greater improvements in sustainability mobility. Necessary journeys to employment locations and service outlets would be shorter and therefore more likely to be taken on foot or by bicycles.

Based on the evaluation of the alternatives against the Strategic Environmental Objectives, Alternatives **1.2 Prepare a Framework to inform future-decision making** and **2.2 Medium Quantum of Residential Development, complemented by Mixed-Use Developments** were the preferred choices.

8. MITIGATION MEASURES

The SEA Directive requires that where significant adverse environmental effects associated with the implementation of a proposed Plan/Programme are identified, a clear link should be presented with relevant and appropriate mitigation measures(s). Mitigation measures are required to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible, offset any significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme.

No significant adverse environmental effects have been identified during the assessment of the draft Sandy Quarter Spatial Framework. However, in order to facilitate the consideration of environmental resources in any future developments associated with the Framework, mitigation measures have been included. These mitigation measures have been derived from the SEA ER of the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029, the overall strategy of which is to protect and improve the environment of the city and its various aspects, including Designated Sites, air and water quality, waste management and biodiversity.

9. MONITORING

As set out in the SEA ER on the Spatial Framework, the LDA will be responsible for monitoring implementation of the Spatial Framework. This includes:

- Collating existing relevant monitored data
- Devising a monitoring programme
- Preparation and publication of a monitoring report
- Ensuring all relevant agencies are aware of their involvement
- Ensuring all arrangement are in place for the timely collection of monitoring data
- Evaluating the results of monitoring and/or the execution of corrective action, if necessary

Where the Framework becomes part of Galway City Council's Development Plan, reporting on monitoring will be undertaken as part of the programme set out by the Development Plan's SEA. Reporting on environmental monitoring will address the indicators, or their equivalents, as set out in the following Table 10-1. Future monitoring reports will be prepared taking into account monitoring reports prepared for the Northern and Western RSES, the existing City Development Plan and any upcoming City Development Plans.

Monitoring will focus on the aspects of the environment that are likely to be significantly impacted upon by the implementation of the Spatial Framework and is outlined in Section 10 Monitoring of the Proposed Sandy Quarter Spatial Framework. Monitoring is to be undertaken on an ongoing basis through the assessment of planning applications within the Framework area and environmental monitoring programmes. A review of the monitoring programme is integrated into the Spatial Framework review process.

10. NEXT STEPS

The proposed Sandy Quarter Spatial Framework, along with the SEA ER and NIR, will be made available on www.thesandyquarter.ie. Copies of the above documentation will also be forwarded to the prescribed environmental bodies listed, as recommended by the EPA:

- The Environmental Protection Agency
- Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- Department of Environment, Climate and Communications
- Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- Any adjoining authority whose area is contiguous to the area of the planning authority

Submissions or observations in respect of the Environmental Report will be invited to be made to the Land Development Agency during the specified period, which will not be less than four weeks from the date of notice from the proposed Spatial Framework. Following this consultation period, any submissions or observations received will be reviewed and incorporated into the Environmental Report and the draft Spatial Framework where appropriate.