Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report
For Proposed Variation (October 2017)

Planning Department
Galway City Council
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1. Purpose of Report

Galway City Council proposes a variation to the Galway City Development Plan (GCDP) 2017-2023 under Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

The Proposed Variation is to amend Section 11.2.2 Natural Heritage, Recreation and Amenity RA Land Use Zoning Objectives by adding the specific development objective Figure 11.5 Kirwan Junction Headford Road and to amend Figure 11.2 Menlo Park Hotel. The Plan includes supporting the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) and the proposed Kirwan junction upgrade is one of a number of road infrastructure measures in the GTS. Chapter 3 Transportation, Section 3.10 Specific Objectives includes the traffic and road network specific objective to ‘Continue to implement junction upgrades as part of the N6 Multi Modal Corridor Improvement Scheme’ to improve the functioning of the junctions, provide for pedestrian and cycle movements and to facilitate public transport’. The Proposed Variation facilitates the implementation of the Plan’s transport policy, the traffic and road network specific objective and road and junction improvements.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening is the process for determining whether the Proposed Variation would warrant a SEA. Such a determination is required to take account of relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A ‘Criteria for determining whether a plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment’ of the SEA Regulations, as amended, and submissions or observations from Environmental Authorities.

The assessment presented in this SEA Screening Report considers the Proposed Variation within the framework of the Development Plan, the GCDP 2017-2023 SEA Statement and its accompanying SEA Environmental Report. It is also informed by the Article 6(3) Appropriate Assessment Screening Report: Proposed Variation to the Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 (October 2017) which concluded that the Proposed Variation, by itself or in combination with other plans and projects, in light of best scientific knowledge in the field, will not, in view of the sites’ conservation objectives, have significant effects on any European Site.

This report is divided into these six sections:
1 Purpose of Report
2 Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023
3 Proposed Variation to GCDP 2017-2023
4 Assessment in terms of Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (as amended)
5 Consultation
6 Determination

Having considered the Proposed Variation in accordance with the criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (as amended) and the observation received from the Environmental Authority, it is considered that the Proposed Variation to the Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 would not be likely to have such significant effects on the environment to warrant a full Strategic Environmental Assessment. The determination considers the Proposed Variation within the framework of the overall City Development Plan, taking account of the policies and objectives set out in the Plan and the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report of the Proposed Variation.
2. **Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023**

The *GCDP 2017-2023 SEA Statement* and accompanying SEA Environmental Report outlined that the SEA process was integrated throughout the preparation of the GCDP 2017-2023 and guided the preparation of development scenarios for the city. The overarching core strategy of the Plan supports the strategies, policies and objectives for the protection of the city’s environment. It also facilitates sustainable co-ordinated development in line with national planning and transport policy.

The Plan includes supporting the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) and the proposed Kirwan junction upgrade is one of a number of road infrastructure measures in the GTS. Chapter 3 Transportation outlines that the road and motorway network provides vital inter-urban and inter-regional connectivity, critical to the cities Gateway development and to maintain its competitiveness, at local level the *N6 Multi Modal Corridor Improvement Scheme* has made improvements to the road network. Section 3.10 Specific Objectives includes the traffic and road network specific objective to ‘Continue to implement junction upgrades as part of the *N6 Multi Modal Corridor Improvement Scheme* to improve the functioning of the junctions, provide for pedestrian and cycle movements and to facilitate public transport’. The Proposed Variation facilitates the implementation of the Plan’s transport policy, the traffic and road network specific objective and road and junction improvements.

3. **Proposed Variation to GCDP 2017-2023**

The Proposed Variation is presented in the *Proposed Variation to the Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023* document (October 2017). The Proposed Variation is as follows:

**Amend Section 11.2.2 Natural Heritage, Recreation and Amenity RA Land Use Zoning Objectives by adding the following Specific Development Objective:**

*Figure 11.5 Kirwan Junction Headford Road*

RA lands located to the front of the Menlo Park Hotel, flanking Tirellan Heights residential development on the Headford Road and RA lands located to the north east of the Maldron Hotel. The Council will consider the use of these lands to facilitate revisions to the Kirwan Junction. These revisions will include the replacement of the existing access from the Menlo Road onto the Kirwan Junction by facilitating the construction of a link road from the Menlo Road connecting onto the Headford Road and will also facilitate a re-design of the existing junction through use of some portions of RA zoned lands located adjacent to the existing junction. These revisions will facilitate improvements to the functioning of the Kirwan Junction and provide for better opportunities for pedestrian and cycle movements and public transport.
Amend the existing Specific Development Objective in Section 11.2.2 Natural Heritage, Recreation and Amenity RA Land Use Zoning Objectives - Fig. 11.2 Menlo Park Hotel as follows:

RA lands in front of the Menlo Park Hotel adjacent to the Kirwan Roundabout. The Council will consider the development of a leisure centre and swimming pool, both located underground with minimal effect overground, as part of the overall hotel development but only where such development satisfactorily takes into consideration the requirements to deliver the works associated with Section 11.2.2 Specific development objective as provided for in Fig. 11.5.

(Map illustrating the context of the Proposed Variation.)
4. Assessment in terms of Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 as amended

The Planning Authority is required to determine whether or not the Proposed Variation would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, taking account of criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the Regulations. This assessment is set out below.

Proposed Variation - Amend Section 11.2.2 Natural Heritage, Recreation and Amenity RA Land Use Zoning Objectives

1.0 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PLAN HAVING REGARD IN PARTICULAR TO:

1.1 The degree to which the plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions, or by allocating resources;

The Proposed Variation to the Plan is to amend Section 11.2.2 Natural Heritage, Recreation and Amenity RA Land Use Zoning Objectives by adding the specific development objective Figure 11.5 Kirwan Junction Headford Road and to amend Figure 11.2 Menlo Park Hotel. It has been brought about to support a junction upgrade at the Kirwan Roundabout, which is included in the N6 Multi Modal Corridor Improvement Scheme. The Proposed Variation also provides for better opportunities for pedestrian and cycle movements and public transport. The Proposed Variation facilitates the implementation of a traffic and road network specific objective of the Development Plan to continue to implement junction upgrades as part of the N6 Multi Modal Corridor Improvement Scheme. The Plan also includes supporting the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) and the proposed Kirwan junction upgrade is one of a number of road infrastructure measures in the GTS. The Proposed Variation is consistent with the Plan’s transport policy, the traffic and road network specific objective and the requirements for sustainable development within the Plan.

1.2 The degree to which the plan influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy.

The Proposed Variation will not significantly influence other plans including regional/national plans. The Plan influences local plans and projects within the city boundary. The Proposed Variation facilitates the implementation of a traffic and road network specific objective within the Plan to ‘Continue to implement junction upgrades as part of the N6 Multi Modal Corridor Improvement Scheme to improve the functioning of the junctions, provide for pedestrian and cycle movements and to facilitate public transport’. The Plan also includes supporting the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) and the proposed Kirwan junction upgrade is one of a number of road infrastructure measures in the GTS. The Proposed Variation is consistent with the Plan’s transport policy, the traffic and road network specific objective and the requirements for sustainable development within the Plan.

1.3 The relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.

The SEA of the Development Plan previously considered potential environmental impacts of Development Plan strategy, policy and objectives and the integration of environmental considerations, in consultation with the relevant environmental authorities. Protective policy and mitigation measures are included into the Development Plan, for example within Chapter 4 Natural Heritage, Recreation and Amenity, Chapter 8 Built Heritage and Urban Design and Chapter 9 Environment and Infrastructure.

The Proposed Variation will incorporate into the Development Plan a land use zoning objective to facilitate road and junction improvements that will significantly reduce traffic congestion and enhance public safety. This is consistent with the Plan’s strategy which supports the need to improve accessibility, reduce congestion and promotes sustainable transport solutions. The integration of environmental considerations, in particular promoting sustainable transport measures (including walking, cycling and
public transport measures) will be achieved through the implementation of all relevant policies and objectives within the Plan.

### 1.4 Environmental problems relevant to the plan.

Environmental problems relevant to the Plan were considered under the SEA and AA of the Development Plan, and the Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) Report of the Proposed Variation.

The SEA and AA of the Development Plan previously considered potential environmental impacts and ensured that where potential uncertain or negative environmental affects arose they would be balanced by mitigation and monitoring measures. The SEA of the Development Plan identified for all specific objectives listed in Section 3.10 Specific Objectives, including the specific objective to which the Proposed Variation relates, that there may be a potential for likely significant direct negative impact on biodiversity flora and fauna, soil and geology, water, air and climate and on landscape environmental indicators. Unknown potential environmental effects on cultural heritage were also identified. The Development Plan incorporates mitigation measures to reduce, avoid or eliminate potential environmental effects and ensure that any potential impacts are addressed at project level detailed design stage. They include the following listed below:

#### Mitigation Measures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biodiversity, Flora &amp; Fauna, Soils &amp; Geology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- 4.1 Aim, Context and Strategy – Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Policy 4.2 Protected Spaces: Sites of European, National and Local Ecological Importance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water</td>
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<td>- Policy 9.3 Flood Risk Assessment</td>
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<td>- Policy 9.6 Water Quality</td>
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<td>- Policy 9.8 Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Air Quality</td>
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<tr>
<td>- 3.1 Aim Context and Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Policy 9.10 Air Quality &amp; Noise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural Heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Policy 8.5 Archaeology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Landscape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Policy 4.4.1 Green Spaces: Urban Woodlands and Trees</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Policy 8.7 Urban Design</td>
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</table>

With regard to the Proposed Variation, the proposal is consistent with transport policy and the requirements for sustainable development within the Development Plan and does not impact on designed sites. The accompanying Screening for AA Report states that the Proposed Variation, by itself or in combination with other plans and projects, in light of best scientific knowledge in the field, will not, in view of the sites’ conservation objectives, have significant effects on any European Site.

The location of the Proposed Variation is on the outskirts of Flood Zone A and to a small extent in Flood Zone B of flood zones identified at potential risk of flooding in the SFRA of the Plan. Policy 9.3 Flood Risk Assessment includes policy requiring site specific flood risk assessment in areas identified at potential risk of flooding. No additional significant impact would be expected to result from the Proposed Variation.

There are no known or protected areas of archaeological potential or significant in the immediate area of the Proposed Variation. There are no protected views in proximity to the Proposed Variation. There are trees in the area however Policy 4.4.1 Green Spaces: Urban Woodlands and Trees includes policy to
integrate existing trees where appropriate and require tree planting as part of landscaping schemes. No additional significant impact would be expected to result from the Proposed Variation.

Any development proposal resulting from the Proposed Variation must consider policies in the Plan including environmental mitigation measures.

### 1.5 The relevance of the plan for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans linked to waste management or water protection).

These plans and programmes are addressed in the Development Plan and the SEA and AA of the Plan. The Proposed Variation has been subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) as required under Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive. The Proposed Variation does not conflict with any European Union legislation on the environment.

### 2.0 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EFFECTS AND OF THE AREA LIKELY TO BE AFFECTED, HAVING REGARD, IN PARTICULAR TO:

#### 2.1 The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.

The location of the Proposed Variation is within a developed urban environment. The Proposed Variation facilitates a junction upgrade in the area and improvements to public safety are likely to arise from the implementation of proposed improvements works. The duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects of any such improvements are likely to be dependent upon longer term changes relating to the demand for travel that may affect the operations capacity of the road and street network.

Any development proposal resulting from the Proposed Variation must consider policies in the Plan including mitigation measures to reduce, avoid or eliminate any potential environmental effects. It is considered that the Proposed Variation is not likely to have significant effects on the environment.

#### 2.2 The cumulative nature of the effects.

The nature of effects has been considered under the SEA and AA of the Development Plan and the Screening for AA Report of the Proposed Variation.

The Proposed Variation aligns with transport policy and specific objectives in the Development Plan, it does not materially alter the strategy in the Plan and is not likely to have significant effects on the environment subject to the protective measures in the Plan to reduce, avoid or eliminate potential environmental effects. The accompanying Screening for AA Report states that the Proposed Variation, by itself or in combination with other plans and projects, will not have significant effects on any European Site.

#### 2.3 The transboundary nature of the effects.

The Development Plan applies to Galway City. The Proposed Variation is consistent with policy and specific objectives of the Development Plan which were previously assessed under the SEA and AA process. No transboundary nature of effects identified.

#### 2.4 The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents).

The Proposed Variation facilitates the implementation of a traffic and road network specific objective of the Plan to ‘Continue to implement junction upgrades as part of the N6 Multi Modal Corridor Improvement Scheme to improve the functioning of the junctions, provide for pedestrian and cycle movements and to facilitate public transport.’ The SEA of the Development Plan identified potential positive benefits on the population and on air and climate and landscape indicators for this specific objective. Potential negative or unknown environmental impacts were also identified depending on the
sensitivity of local environment. The overall strategy of the Development Plan is to protect and improve the environment of the city and the Plan incorporates mitigation measures to reduce, avoid or eliminate potential environmental effects and ensure that any potential impacts are addressed at project level detailed design stage (See also Section 1.4 above).

The Proposed Variation has the potential to influence the overall quality of life of people living/working in or/and visiting Galway Gateway and Environs. Improvements to public safety arising from the implementation of the proposed junction improvements are predicted. The junction upgrade also provides for better opportunities for pedestrian and cycle movements and public transport. The Proposed Variation is consistent with existing transport policy and the requirements for sustainable development within the Plan.

2.5 The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of population likely to be affected).

The Development Plan applies to Galway City and the Proposed Variation relates to the Kirwan Roundabout area of the city. It is likely that the implementation of the Proposed Variation will have positive effects on the overall operational performance of the traffic and road network affecting local traffic flow, daily commuter flow and longer distance traffic. Improvements to the junction also provide for better opportunities for pedestrian and cycle movements and public transport.

2.6 The value, and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:
(a) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;
(b) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values;
(c) intensive land use

The Development Plan includes existing policies to facilitate sustainable development and growth of the city in line with EU and national legislation. Policy is included in the Development Plan to ensure that special natural characteristics and cultural heritage are protected. Mitigation measures are included in the Plan to reduce, avoid or eliminate potential environmental effects. The Proposed Variation will not alter these safeguards.

The Screening for AA Report concludes that the Proposed Variation, by itself or in combination with other plans and projects, in light of best scientific knowledge in the field, will not, in view of the sites’ conservation objectives, have significant effects on any European Site.

Any development proposal resulting from the Proposed Variation will be assessed against policy including environmental protection policies set out in the Development Plan and in line with the requirements of EU and national legislation.

2.7 The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status.

The Development Plan includes existing policies that protect areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status. The Screening for AA Report concludes that the Proposed Variation, by itself or in combination with other plans and projects, in light of best scientific knowledge in the field, will not, in view of the sites’ conservation objectives, have significant effects on any European Site.

Any plan or project will be assessed against policy including environmental protection policies set out in the Plan and in line with EU and national legislation.
5. Consultation

An assessment of the criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) 2004 Regulations (as amended) and consideration of the conclusion of the AA Screening Report recommended that the Proposed Variation is not likely to have such a significant effect on the environment to warrant a Strategic Environmental Assessment. As part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment screening process, consultation is required with Environmental Authorities as set out in the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011. Any submissions received are taken into consideration by the City Council in determining whether or not the Proposed Variation would be likely to have significant effects on the environment. The relevant authorities notified were:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Consultee</th>
<th>Observation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Protection Agency</td>
<td>Observation received</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment</td>
<td>No comment received</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government</td>
<td>No comment received</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht</td>
<td>No comment received</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine</td>
<td>No comment received</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galway County Council</td>
<td>No comment received</td>
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</table>

A summary of observations made by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are detailed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of Observations made on Proposed Variation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>EPA</td>
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The comments from the EPA are noted. The SEA process is being carried out in consultation with the relevant bodies and legislative requirements of the SEA Directive and national legislation are being adhered to. It is noted that the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report concludes that the Proposed Variation, by itself or in combination with other plans and projects, in light of best scientific knowledge in the field, will not, in view of the sites’ conservation objectives, have significant effects on any European Site. The Proposed Variation does not materially alter the strategy in the Development Plan and the Plan contains existing environmental protection policies and mitigation measures to reduce, avoid or eliminate potential environmental effects. These include the mitigation measures listed in Section 1.4 of the assessment under Schedule 2A of the Regulations, which would apply to the Proposed Variation and ensure that any potential impacts are addressed at project level detailed design stage. Monitoring measures identified for the Development Plan would also apply to the Proposed Variation.
6. **Determination**

Having considered the Proposed Variation in accordance with the criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (as amended) and the observation received from the Environmental Authority, it is considered that the Proposed Variation to the Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 would not be likely to have such significant effects on the environment to warrant a full Strategic Environmental Assessment. The determination considers the Proposed Variation within the framework of the overall City Development Plan, taking account of the policies and objectives set out in the Plan and the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report of the Proposed Variation.

It is considered that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required in respect of the Proposed Variation of the Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023.

*Planning Department*

*October 2017*