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with Mayo, Galway and Limrick. Any development that occurs through the implementation of this policy shall be subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.	
<b>Public transport objectives</b>	
It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:	
<b>O-PT-2</b> Examine the feasibility of a rail link between Sligo and Derry via Manorhamilton and Enniskillen, and the integration of such a rail link with new national road alignments and designs, i.e. N16 (Enniskillen Road). Any development that occurs through the implementation of this policy shall be subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive	
<b>Policies for roads and other linear infrastructure crossing Natura 2000 sites</b>	
It is a policy of Sligo County Council to require any road project which involves crossing a Natura 2000 site to:	
<b>P-N2000-1</b>	Demonstrate the need for the project in light of a "do nothing" context.
<b>P-N2000-2</b>	Examine the potential for intensifying or upgrading existing roads as an alternative to carrying out new road development affecting a Natura 2000 site.
<b>P-N2000-3</b>	Develop and evaluate a comprehensive series of plausible alternative routes and design strategies (to include long-span and tunnel options).
<b>P-N2000-4</b>	Demonstrate how each route has taken due account of, and accommodated ecological considerations and legislative requirements.
<b>P-N2000-5</b>	Demonstrate that the chosen route will not cause any incursions onto or significant adverse effects on habitats in Natura 2000 sites.
<b>National roads objectives</b>	
It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:	
<b>O-NR-1</b> Facilitate programmed improvements to the National Road network including the programme of realignments and upgrades, as set out in Table 8.B, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive	
<b>Non-national roads and bridges objectives</b>	
It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:	
<b>O-NNR-3</b>	Improve road access to Sligo Regional Airport, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive
<b>O-NNR-5</b>	Carry out improvement works on regional and local roads, and in particular to the regional road network as set out in Table 8.C, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive
<b>O-NNR-6</b>	Continue to maintain, repair, replace and preserve the considerable bridge stock of the county, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive
<b>Cycling and walking objectives</b>	
It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:	
<b>O-CW-1</b> Provide, improve and extend cycle routes on existing roads, proposed roads, roads being upgraded and green corridors, where feasible, practical and subject to compliance with Habitats Directive	
<b>O-CW-2</b> Develop cycle routes from Strandhill, Rosses Point, Ballysadare and Collooney to Sligo City, subject to compliance with Habitats Directive	
<b>Airports objective</b>	
It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:	
<b>O-A-1</b> Promote and support improved access to and expansion of Sligo Regional and Knock International Airports, so as to secure a better level and frequency of service and promote Sligo's accessibility to tourists and businesses, both nationally and internationally. Any development that occurs through the implementation of this policy shall be subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive	
<b>Water supply policies</b>	
It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:	
<b>P-WS-1</b> Ensure an adequate, sustainable and economic supply of good quality water for domestic, commercial and industrial use, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive	
<b>Water supply objectives</b>	
It is the objective of Sligo County Council to:	
<b>O-WS-1</b> Complete the construction of the new water treatment plant at Kilsellagh subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive	
<b>O-WS-2</b> Complete the planning and construction of the new water treatment plant at Lough Talt subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive	
<b>O-WS-3</b> Extend the existing water treatment plant at Foxes Den (depending on future growth in the Sligo and Environs area) subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive	
<b>O-WS-4</b> Carry out a strategic review of both North Sligo and Lough Easky Regional Water Supply Schemes. Any development that occurs through the implementation of this policy shall be subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive	
<b>O-WS-9</b> Continue to implement the annual Rural Water Programme. Any development that occurs through the implementation of this policy shall be subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive	
<b>O-WS-10</b> Advance all the schemes listed on the Water Services Investment Programmes, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive	
<b>Wastewater objectives</b>	
It is the objective of Sligo County Council to:	
<b>O-WW-2</b> Complete the planning and construction of the new water treatment plant at Ballintogher, Bunnadden, Clifony, Ballinacarrow, Mullaghmore and Ballygawley, subject to necessary approvals and compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive	
<b>O-WW-4</b> Complete the planning stage for upgrade works to Collooney and Ballymote WWTPs, subject to necessary approvals and compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive	
<b>Objectives for coastal protection</b>	
<b>O-CP-3</b> Monitor existing dune management schemes on an ongoing basis and effect appropriate repairs, improvements and extensions, subject to the availability of resources and compliance with the Habitats Directive	
<b>Policies for the provision of electricity</b>	
<b>P-REN-2</b> Encourage and facilitate the production of energy from renewable sources, energy conversion and capture in forms such	

**Objectives and Policies**

as wind power, hydro-power, wave-generated energy, biomass, solar technology and energy-efficient building design/servicing. All such development proposals will be assessed for their potential impact on Natura 2000 sites their compliance with the Habitats Directive, potential impact on designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes, Visually Vulnerable Areas, Scenic Routes and scenic views, as well as in accordance with strict location, siting and design criteria.

## 5.2 Screening the Mini-plans

### 5.2.1 Objectives

The Sligo County Development Plan contains thirty mini-plans. A mini-plan is a short document that indicates the specific policies and objectives applying to a settlement in addition to the strategic and general policies and objectives contained in the development plan. A mini-plan also contains a zoning map and a second map showing specific objectives for its area. General policies governing the Mini-plans are included in Section 13 of the development plan.

The settlements subject to mini-plans are:

Aclare, Ballinacarrow, Ballinafad, Ballincar, Ballintogher, Ballygawley, Ballysadare, Banada, Bunnanadden, Carney, Castlebaldwin, Clifffony, Cloonacool, Collonee, Coolaney, Culfadda, Curry, Dromore West, Drumcliff, Easkey, Geevagh, Gorteen, Grange, Monasteraden, Mullaghmore, Ransboro, Rathcormack, Riverstown, Rosses Point, and Tourlestrane.

These mini-plans, along with the accompanying maps have been screened for compliance with the Habitats Directive. A number of the mini-plans contain objectives that may lead to potential impacts on the Natura 2000 network such as the provision of riverwalks, construction of WWTPs adjacent to rivers and recreational facilities adjacent to the coast. In order to ensure that individual projects that may arise through implementation of the mini-plans are screened for compliance with the Habitats Directive, the following policy has been added to **Section 13.1 (Landscape, natural heritage, open space) policies** of the Development Plan, which outlines the General Policies relating to the mini-plans:

*F. When considering any proposed development within the mini-plan areas, the planning authority must comply fully with Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive (as transposed into Irish Law by the EU Habitats Regulations 1997 and subsequent amendments) and assess whether the proposed development is likely to have a significant impact upon the integrity, conservation objectives and qualifying interests of any Natura 2000 site, notwithstanding any particular mini-plan objective that may apply to the relevant lands.*

### 5.2.2 Zoning

The purpose of land use zoning is to indicate the intended uses of all lands within the zoned settlements – in accordance with the policies and objectives of the Plan – to promote orderly development and to prevent the co-location of incompatible or conflicting uses. The Zoning Strategy for County Sligo seeks to ensure that adequate amounts of land are reserved at appropriate locations in order to allow the location of particular types of development as required to fulfil the aspirations outlined in this Plan.

A number of the mini-plan zoning maps show an overlap between the boundaries of Natura 2000 sites and zoned land, particularly where zoned land occurs adjacent to designated rivers. Where this occurs, it generally reflects current land use and would not necessarily lead to development within a designated site. Where zoning does not reflect current land use, but would in principle allow for development within or adjacent to a Natura 2000 site, any such development must comply with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, as outlined in Section 5.2.1 above.

In addition, all watercourses are protected by a buffer zone. The following policies, included in Section 13 of the Plan, outline how these buffer zones will be protected.

#### 13.1 Landscape, natural heritage, open space policies

*A. Protect and enhance all river banks as wildlife corridors. In order to assist in this regard, the planning authority will establish a 20-metre wide river buffer zone along both sides of all rivers.*

*B. Require development proposals to maintain the river buffer zone free from development (apart from river bank enhancement works). Exceptions may also be considered in the case of brownfield sites*

*and in cases where the maintenance of the zone is not practically achievable. In such cases, a reduced buffer width may be accepted. Any such cases will be assessed on an individual basis.*

*C. Ensure that river bank enhancement works and any other development along rivers are undertaken only after consultation with the North Western Regional Fisheries Board and the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.*

### **13.3 Transport, circulation and parking policies**

*G. Any proposal for the provision of pedestrian/cycle links along riverside areas shall be screened for the requirement of an appropriate assessment in compliance with Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive (as transposed into Irish Law by the EU Habitats Regulations 1997 and subsequent amendments), and in accordance with the policies outlined in Section 7.1 of this Plan.*

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## Section 6 Conclusions

The requirement for a Stage Two AA would arise if the draft Plan were likely to have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site. This screening report evaluates the draft Plan to see if it needs to be the subject of a Stage Two AA. It finds that the draft Plan has been formulated to ensure that uses, developments and effects arising from permissions based upon the draft Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) shall not give rise to significant effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, in accordance with the *Methodological guidance on the provision of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*, it is concluded that the draft Plan does not require any further assessment to demonstrate compliance with the Directive.

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<sup>1</sup> Except as provided for in Section 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be:

- (a) no alternative solution available,
- (b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the plan to proceed; and
- (c) adequate compensatory measures in place.