

**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE
GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Ceantar Bardasach Bhaile Locha Riach
Municipal District of Loughrea**

**Minutes of Special Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea
held in the Council Chamber, Loughrea on 29th July 2025 at 11.00 a.m.**

I LÁTHAIR:

Cathaoirleach

Cllr. P. Killilea

Baill:

Cllr's. M. Maher, G. Finnerty, J. McClearn, L. Harney, G. Donohue, I. Canning, D. Kelly

Remote:

Cllr. M. Kinane

Oifigigh:

Ms. A. Dolan, A/Director of Services
Ms. V. Loughnane, Senior Planner
Ms. E. Murphy, Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. B. Corcoran, Senior Executive Planner
Mr. D. O'Loughlin, Executive Engineer
Mr. M. Kerrigan, Executive Engineer
Mr. M. Mafunga, Assistant Engineer
Ms. D. Feeney, Administrative Officer
Ms. M. McGann, Administrative Officer
Ms. A. Power, Senior Staff Officer
Ms. S. Cleary, Staff Officer

Apologies:

Cllr. Michael Regan, Mr. G. Haugh, Senior Executive Engineer, Mr. N. Kennedy, Executive Engineer

Remote:

Mr. Damien Mitchell, Director of Services, Ms. Mary McGann, Administrative Officer, Ms. Ciara Cosgrove, Senior Executive Planner

Application for Planning Permission (via Part 8 process) - Part 8 Planning applications for St. Joseph's Rd., Portumna – Eithne Murphy, Senior Executive Engineer, Housing Section

LMD2439

Ms. Murphy made a presentation to the Members on the Part 8 Planning applications for St. Joseph's Road, Portumna. She advised the subject lands are located to the West of Portumna Town in the townland of Portumna approximately 300m from the centre of the town. She explained that there are the following adjacent to the proposed development: two bungalows on the East, a 2-storey detached house in the west and large agricultural fields to the north.

Ms. Murphy advised there is a social housing need in Portumna and environs for 132 households. She explained the application (Reference LA/10/25 Part 8 for 39-unit housing development at St. Joseph's Road, Portumna) was lodged on 23rd May 2025, viewing ended on 24th June 2025, and

submissions ended on 8th July 2025. She stated the proposal comprises 10 No. 2-bed units, 26 x 3-bed units and 2 x 4-bed units. Ms. Murphy added an AA Screening Assessment was carried out by Delichon Ecology and determined that “there are no likely potential impacts, whether direct, indirect or cumulative/in combination, which could give rise to significant effects on the qualifying interests or special conservation interests of any designated European Site, in view of their conservation objectives. Consequently, this proposal does not require Appropriate Assessment process and can be screened out.” She further advised an EIA screening assessment was also carried out by Delichon Ecology and determined that “the context and character of the site and the receiving environment, as well as the nature, extent, form and character of the proposed development, the proposed development works are not considered likely to have significant effects on the environment and consequently do not require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report as prescribed under the EIA Directive 2014/52/EU.”

Ms. Murphy explained there were seven submissions/observations received; five were from members of the public and two were from statutory consultations. She added the 5 public submissions referred to Density, Infrastructure Capacity, Road and Traffic Safety, Privacy/overlooking, Tenure – too many social houses/no affordable houses, devalue existing houses, Retention of stone wall, Effect on wildlife and Flooding. She provided the members with responses to each topic raised.

The Cathaoirleach and Members thanked Ms. Murphy for her informative presentation.

Cllr. McClearn referred to a table Ms. Murphy presented which showed the social housing need of 132 housing units for Portumna, adding it is a big geographic area taking in Tynagh, Killimor and Eyrecourt. He queried whether the houses will be allocated to local people.

Cllr. McClearn enquired if it is possible to allocate some of the houses as affordable houses, and requested an undertaking in this regard, he added the scheme being proposed is essentially a social housing scheme. In this regard, he stated he would be happy to **PROPOSE** the scheme.

Cllr. Maher enquired if any of the properties will be allocated by Cluid or any other Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs). He agreed with Cllr. McClearn with respect to the provision of affordable housing.

Cllr. Maher enquired if there is an update on the costing for the 11 Part 8 Social Houses at St. Bridget’s Road, Portumna. He enquired if it would be cheaper to knock and rebuild the houses instead of renovating the properties. He stated, if the properties were rebuilt there could be provision for additional housing units which could include affordable housing units. He enquired, how many of the 132 on the Social Housing List would benefit from the Part 8 developments. Ms. Murphy responded the cost to build each unit at St. Bridget’s Road costs approx. €277,000. She added, the overall cost is just over €3million for the overall project.

Cllr. Canning stated, he cannot see how the Council can build 49 houses without any provision for affordable housing. He stated, numerous constituents approach him stating they do not want social housing but need help in purchasing a home through an affordable housing scheme. He stated it is concerning that agencies could be involved in distributing the social houses. Cllr. Canning further stated, it has to be people from ‘our own area’ who benefit from these houses. He

stated, it appears to be easier for the Council to get planning than anybody else. He stated, he supports the Part 8 but emphasised affordable housing is necessary.

Cllr. Kelly stated, he welcomes the development adding he supports what his colleagues have said. He requested a completion date for the works. He repeated the need for affordable housing units and asked the Director for clarification on the provision of affordable housing units for Portumna next year.

In response, Mr. Mitchell stated the units will be allocated to local people adding it is necessary to work with the Housing Allocation Scheme adding there is no specific priority outside of this. He added, many of the 132 people on the Social Housing list should be allocated a property adding he doesn't know if they are people from Portumna. He stated, with respect to affordable housing, he did give a commitment in this regard. He added, the issue is viability in county towns having consideration to open market values. He stated, there must be a 15% saving on the open market value of the property. Mr. Mitchell stated that the Housing Team will engage with the Department with respect to affordable housing units being included in the St. Joseph's Road site but could not guarantee that the houses would not remain as Social Housing Units.

Mr. Mitchell stated, the estate will be a Council managed estate and AHBs will not be availing of the units.

With respect to costings for St. Bridget's Road, he stated the costing is not available at present as the project has not yet gone to tender. He stated the entire project is being funded by the Department. He added, it is hoped to have the units available as soon as possible with a target date of quarter 4 of 2026.

Ms. Murphy stated the project will be a Design Build Project to expediate the project with a completion date in 2026.

The Cathaoirleach and Members thanked the Housing Team for the work and Ms. Murphy for her presentation. They wished Ms. Murphy well in her new role in Galway City Council and thanked her for her service to Galway County Council.

To discuss the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031 Chief Executive's Report on Material Alterations (Report circulated on 15/07/2025) in accordance with the provisions outlined in Section 20 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended) and subsequently consider the proposal to make, amend or revoke the Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031. LMD2440

1. Applications for Planning Permission (via Part 8 process) - Part 8 Planning applications for St. Jospeh's Rd., Portumna

Proposed by Cllr. McClearn, seconded by Cllr. Canning and agreed by the Members.

2. To discuss the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031 Chief Executive's Report on submissions received on the Material Alterations (Report circulated on 15/07/2025) in accordance with the provisions outlined in Section 20 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended) and subsequently consider the proposal to make, amend or revoke the Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031

Cllr. Killilea advised the Members that a member of the public has requested to attend the meeting while this item was being discussed. He referred to No. 60 of the Standing Orders under heading **Attendance of Public and Media** and read it out to Members. It was agreed by the Members to allow Mr. O'Hara to sit in on Meeting while this item was being discussed. Cllr. Killilea clarified that Mr. O'Hara could not speak or take part in the meeting. Mr. O'Hara then joined the Meeting.

Cllr. Killilea then asked Ms. Loughnane to address the Members in relation to the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031.

Ms. Loughnane advised the Members that the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031 went on public display from Thursday 9th January 2025 until Thursday 20th February 2025. The CE Report was circulated to the Elected Members on 3rd April 2025. The Elected Members of the Loughrea Municipal District held a Special Meeting on the 6th May 2025 and agreed to Material Alterations to the Local Area Plan, thereby necessitating a further public display period. A copy of the proposed Material Alterations and associated environmental reports, were available for inspection from 22nd May – 20th June 2025. During the public consultation period, 11 no. submissions were received, which are listed on Page 5 of the CE Report. She advised that there was additional information received outside the statutory period which was treated as a late submission. That submitter had made submissions on the Draft Plan. The full contents of each submission have been considered in the preparation of the CE Report. She stated that the Members would be asked to either accept or reject the recommendations of the Executive. If rejected, a motion must be submitted by the Members. She then noted that dependent on the outcomes of the Members regarding the Office of the Planning Regulator's (OPR) recommendations, that a Report must be prepared within 5 no. working days to be sent to the OPR explaining the Councillors' rationale for any recommendations made by the OPR which were subsequently rejected by the Members. She stated that following the OPR's receipt of that Report, that it was possible that there may be a Draft Ministerial Direction issued on foot of the OPR's Report to the Minister regarding these rejections. She then stated that should it be the case that a Draft Ministerial Direction were to be issued, that the Draft Direction

must be put on public display for public consultation. She stated that any parts of the Local Area Plan that were not subject to a Ministerial Direction, in the instance that such a direction was to be issued, would come into effect six weeks following the ratification of the resolution to adopt the Local Area Plan today.

She advised that the sequence of the Report would be examination of the OPR's submission firstly, followed by those made by Prescribed Authorities, followed by other submissions received from the General Public, making for 11 submissions received in total. She advised that three of the Material Alterations namely: MA36, MA37 and MA38 required SEA consideration.

Ms. Loughnane noted that the Elected Members had received a copy of the CE's Report and received a link to view the full submissions on-line at consult.galway.ie. It was agreed by the Members that the CE Report on the submissions received on Material Alterations to the Draft Gort LAP 2025-2031 were taken as read.

Ms. Loughnane then commenced discussions on the CE Report. She stated that the first submission to be discussed was from OPR which includes one Recommendation and one Observation under Two Themes.

GLW-C169-11 – OFFICE OF PLANNING REGULATOR

Ms. Loughnane went through Recommendation 1 – Core Strategy and Residential Zoned Lands and read CE Response and Recommendation.

The Office of the Planning Regulator acknowledges the local authority's work in preparing the Proposed Material Alterations to the Draft Gort LAP 2025-2031.

It is a core function of the OPR to assess and make submissions on statutory plans to ensure consistency with legislative and policy requirements relating to planning. This includes raising recommendations and observations the OPR considers necessary to ensure the effective co-ordination of national, regional and local planning requirements.

The OPR made 4 no. recommendations and 4 no. observations on the Draft Gort LAP. The submission outlines that the OPR is generally satisfied with the response to the recommendations, including several changes that have provided more clarity. The OPR welcomes a number of specific material alterations including MA2 and MA7. The OPR also notes and welcomes MA1 in response to Recommendation 1(i) of its submission on the Draft Plan. The submission notes that whilst the Infrastructure Assessment has not been reviewed at this stage, the OPR welcomes the Planning Authority's acknowledgement that the existing assessments are not sufficient and its commitment to review such matters on a county wide basis in collaboration with Uisce Éireann (UÉ) for future local area plans. The Planning Authority's commitment to county wide housing capacity review on Town Centre/Mixed Use areas in response to Recommendation 1 on the Draft Plan submission is also noted by the OPR. The Planning Authority is advised to also include information on housing yield on R1 and R2 zoned lands in the capacity reviews.

The submission notes the CE response and reasoning with regard to recommendation 1(v) and (vi) of the OPR submission to the draft Local Area Plan. However, it raises that additional R2 lands have been introduced in the Material Alterations which are more peripherally located and are not required to ensure a sufficient supply of zoned land consistent with the GCDP 2022-2028.

The Planning Authority is commended for its response to Recommendation 2 (Employment Zoned Lands) of the OPR submission on the Draft Plan, the submission notes the inclusion of a draft infrastructure assessment table in the CE Report and requests the inclusion of this draft table in adopted LAP.

The submission also welcomes the clarity regarding policy objective GSST 6 and notes the need for consistency with other local area plans.

With regard to Recommendation 3 (Integrated transport and land use planning) from the OPRs submission on the Draft Plan, the submission commends a number of MAs including public realm initiatives and short-term measures for active travel under MA 3, MA4, MA6 within the LTP. The inclusion of MA8 which includes text to support improving safety policies, safe routes for schools, including policy objective NNR5 and Travel Plans for schools is also welcomed. The submission also notes and welcomes the inclusion of MA 26 regarding the provision of additional bus stops to support a modal shift to sustainable travel and MA 17 which includes additional text to the LTP to support reference to Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2025 and relevant national and regional plans. However, with regard to Recommendation 3(ii), the OPR considers that consideration should be given to setting modal share targets for towns of this scale in future plans in order to address the mandatory climate action targets in the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended.

In terms of Recommendation 4 (Flood Risk Management) of the OPR submission on the Draft Plan, the submission welcomes MA10 and MA11. However, while the OPR acknowledges MA14 and MA15, the submission raises concerns regarding the reliance on GSST 25 to limit inappropriate development on Opportunity Site 4 (Recommendation 4(i)) and Existing Residential at Tubber Road (Recommendation 4(ii)). It considers that this matter could be addressed by referencing section 3.0 of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009), which defines water compatible uses.

The submission notes that this matter should be highlighted in your authority's notice letter upon adoption as per section 31AO(5) of the Act and will be fully considered by the Office at that stage. In relation to Recommendation 4(iii) (Business & Technology Park at Glenbrack Road) of the Office's submission to the draft Local Area Plan, the Planning Authority is advised to provide details in that notice letter to provide clarity where there are particular characteristics that affect the nature of the flood risk identified in the SFRA mapping.

With the exception of the recommendation and observation set out below, the OPR considers that the approach taken to the material alterations has been robust and evidence based.

It is within this context the submission below sets out **One Recommendation and One Observation under Two Themes:**

1. Core strategy and Residential Land Use Zoning – MA Recommendation 1
2. Integrated Transport and Land Use Planning – MA Observation 1

1. Core Strategy and Residential Zoned Lands

The submission outlines the OPRs concerns regarding MA33 and MA34 which proposes to amend lands from Existing Residential and Residential Phase 1, respectively, to Town Centre. The OPR is concerned with the loss of potential supply of such key residential lands, in a spatially sequential and sustainable location. It also notes MA33 and 34 could likely undermine and restrict the access options to the lower part of the Ennis Road, closer to the town centre. It concludes that the lands should be retained as Residential Phase 1 and Existing Residential, respectively.

The OPR raises concerns regarding MA42 which proposes to rezone lands from Residential Phase 2 to Agriculture, it notes that the site is strategically located within Residential Phase 2 lands. It raises concerns about the loss of residential zoned land at a centrally located site and concludes that the lands should be retained as Residential Phase 2.

The submission notes that a number of substantial new zonings have been included as material alterations to the south-east of the town which are unserviced and peripherally located, and which have the potential to undermine the core strategy of the County Development Plan and the sustainable and compact growth of the town.

MA36 amends lands from land outside the plan boundary to Residential Phase 2 lands (c.4.9 ha). The lands are in a non-sequential location to the south of the town, Uisce Eireann also advised that a sewer extension may be required, there are also concerns regarding a further individual access on the lower part of Ennis Road.

The submission notes that MA 37 (1.1 ha) to rezone land from Business and Enterprise to Residential Phase 2 and MA38 (0.2 ha) to rezone land from outside the plan boundary to Residential Phase 2, do not support compact growth and are not spatially sequential. Uisce Eireann also advised that third-party lands may be required to link with the sewerage system 300m away and upgrades may be required. It also notes that the remaining Business and Enterprise lands would be piecemeal in scale, nature and accessibility for future development.

The submission notes that the Draft Gort LAP included 12.8ha Residential Phase 1 lands, and c.28.6 ha of Residential Phase 2. It considers that the draft Local Area Plan includes a significant quantum of Residential Phase 2 lands which, together with the material alterations which are not subject of the MA Recommendation 1, are better located than MA36, MA37 and MA38 to support the longer-

term growth needs of Gort. In respect of MA36, MA37 and MA38, the SEA Environmental report identifies that the proposed MAs are likely to give rise to significant environmental effects and would not provide the most evidence-based framework for development and has the potential to undermine sustainable development and proper planning.

The OPR concludes that the MA36, MA37 and MA38 lands should revert to the zoning objectives in the draft LAP consistent with the core strategy of the GCDP 2022-2028 and the objectives of the RSES and GCDP for compact growth and the sequential approach to zoning and accessibility to infrastructure capacity.

1. MA Recommendation 1 – Core Strategy and Residential Zoned Lands

Having regard to the provision of new residential homes at locations that support compact and sustainable development and the coordination of housing delivery and infrastructure, and in particular to:

- RPO 3.2, RPO 3.4 of the RSES for compact growth;
- the core strategy of the Galway County Development Plan 2023- 2028 (the County Development Plan);
- Policy Objectives CS1, CS2, CS3 of the County Development Plan regarding sequential and compact development;
- Policy Objectives WS1, WW1 and WW2 of the County Development Plan regarding infrastructure capacity and delivery;
- the policy and objective that planning authorities adopt a sequential approach when zoning lands for development under section 6.2.3 of the Development Plans, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022) (the Development Plans Guidelines); and
- the policy and objective for zoned land to be informed by a settlement Capacity Audit under section 6.2.1 of the Development Plans Guidelines,

the Office recommends that the Planning Authority:

- (i) review the Infrastructure Assessment which accompanies the draft Local Area Plan to include the new residential zoning material alterations to include the site area, density, potential housing yield and up to date information in respect of water and wastewater capacity;
- (ii) omit zoning objectives if they cannot be reasonably or cost effectively serviced within the plan period;
- (iii) make the Local Area Plan without MA33 to rezone the lands from Existing Residential to Town Centre;
- (iv) make the Local Area Plan without MA34 to rezone the lands from Residential Phase 1 to Town Centre;

- (v) make the Local Area Plan without MA42 to rezone the lands from Residential Phase 2 lands to Agriculture,
- (vi) make the Local Area Plan without MA36 to rezone from lands outside the plan boundary to Residential Phase 2;
- (vii) make the Local Area Plan without MA37 to rezone the lands from Business and Enterprise to Residential Phase 2; and
- (viii) make the plan without MA38 to rezone from lands outside the plan boundary to Residential Phase 2.

Chief Executive's Response

The Planning Authority note the contents of the OPR submission.

It is proposed to modify MA14 text to address the OPR' remaining concerns as set out in the introduction above. It is proposed to modify text from the "Overall Result" column of land use zonings that failed the Justification Test as follows:

As detailed under Policy Objective GSST 25, the limitation provided (related to water-compatible uses in Flood Zone A, and less vulnerable or water compatible uses in Flood Zone B – for more information refer to Section 3 of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines) "shall take primacy over any other provision relating to land use zoning objectives".

(i) The Planning authority confirm that the Infrastructure Assessment shall be updated to include the new residential zoning material alterations as necessary. However, the Planning Authority note that the structure and content of the draft Infrastructure Assessment proposed as part of the Gort LAP aligns with that of the other LAP's in County Galway and shall remain as such. This is considered appropriate to ensure consistency. The Planning Authority highlight that additional detail shall be added to Infrastructure Assessments which are to be carried out on a County wide basis ahead of the Galway County Development plan review.

(ii) See Chief Executive Response to OPR Recommendation 1 (vi), (vii) and (viii)

(iii) , (iv) In relation to MA33 (Existing Residential to Town Centre and MA34 (Residential Phase 1 to Town Centre), these Material Alterations were a consequence of the reallocation of Residential Phase 1 lands from Phase 2 under MA35. If the zoning under MA33 and MA34 reverts to that in the Draft Plan, the Residential Phase 1 zoned lands would exceed the Core Strategy Quantum of Greenfield Land Required for Residential Development in Gort which is 12.9ha. In addition, MA33 and MA34 were considered to be acceptable given the recent favourable planning permission at the subject site.

Further, the Planning Authority note that the Town Centre zoning more closely aligns with the development permitted under planning reference 24/60115, therefore, it is considered appropriate to retain MA33 and MA34 as Town Centre.

(v) In terms of MA42, the Planning Authority note that the land is in Agricultural use, therefore it is considered unlikely that the site would be developed for residential use in the future if zoned Residential Phase 2. Therefore, it is considered appropriate to retain MA42 as Agriculture.

(vi) The Planning Authority has also raised concerned with zoning these additional Residential Phase 2 lands which are in a peripheral location and within the transition speed zoned of the town. It is considered that the Plan should be made without MA 36.

(vii) The Planning Authority note the view of the OPR with respect to MA 37 and concur with same. The addition of Business and Enterprise zoned land would be welcomed at this location.

(viii) The Planning Authority note the view of the OPR with regard to Material Alterations MA38. The lands subject to these Material Alterations should revert as per the Draft Gort LAP 2025-2031.

Chief Executive's Recommendation

Modify text from the "Overall Result" column of land use zonings that failed the Justification Test as follows:

As detailed under Policy Objective GSST 25, the limitation provided (related to water-compatible uses in Flood Zone A, and less vulnerable or water compatible uses in Flood Zone B – for more information refer to Section 3 of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines) "shall take primacy over any other provision relating to land use zoning objectives".

The Chief Executive Recommendation was proposed by Cllr. Finnerty, seconded by Cllr. Killilea and agreed by the Members.

Cllr. Maher advised that there was a typo on Page 8 of the CE Report, under 1. MA Recommendation 1. In the second bullet point, it referenced Galway County Development Plan 2023-2028 whereas it should be Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028. This was noted.

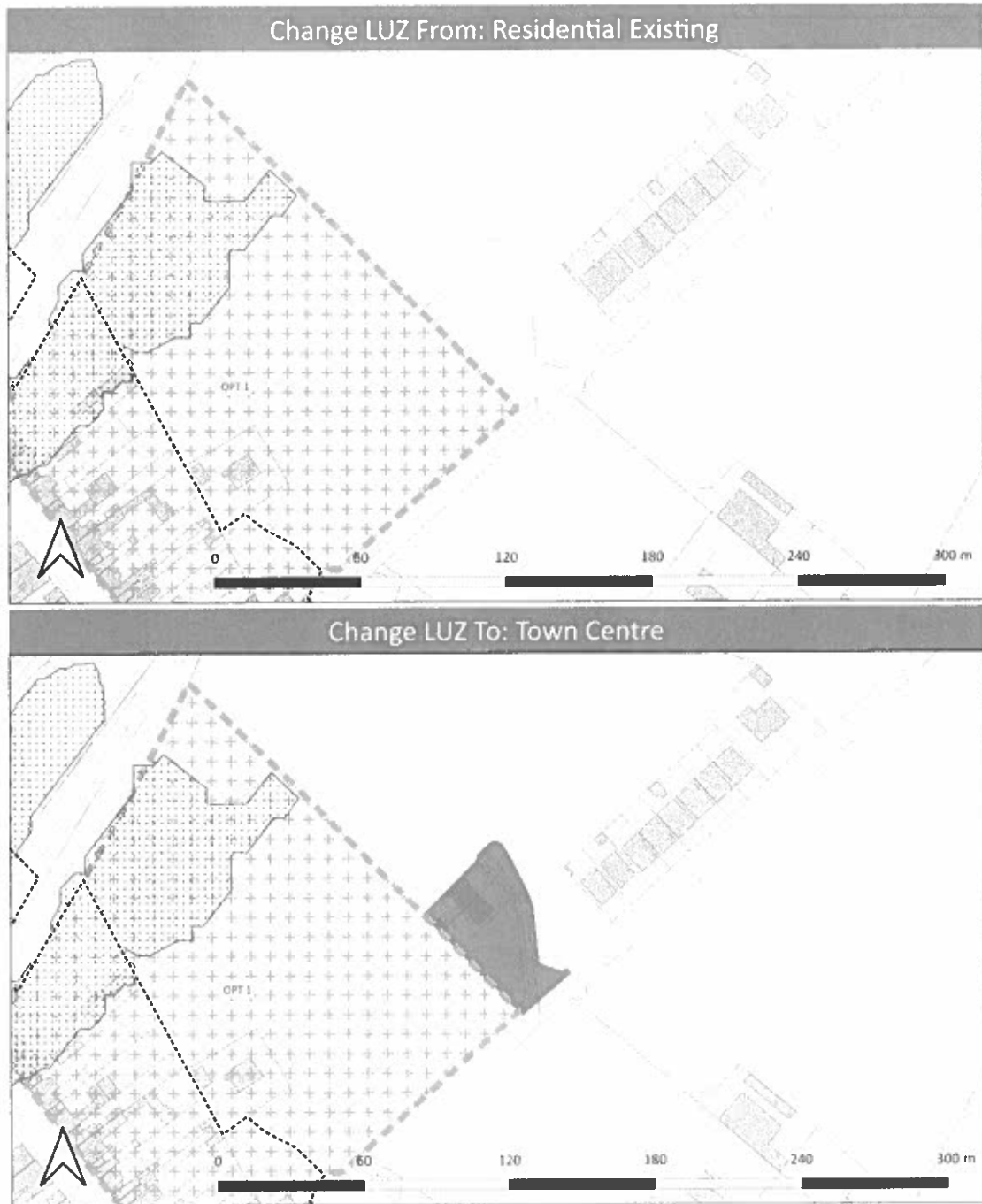
Cllr. Donohue raised a query regarding proposal to revert back to what was in Draft Plan and queried whether this was discussed with the relevant landowners and what implications this decision would have. In response, Ms. Loughnane explained that MA33 & MA34 were a consequence of the reallocation of Residential Phase 1 lands from Phase 2 under MA35. She explained that if the zoning under MA33 and MA34 reverts to that in the Draft Plan, the Residential Phase 1 zoned lands would exceed the Core Strategy quantum of land required for Gort. She suggested that there may be an opportunity for extra zoning of lands at specific locations at some point when the Minister issues proposed Circular but would have to await Ministerial direction on that.

In response to query from Cllr. Kinane, Ms. Loughnane explained that OPR had just referenced MA33 and MA34, but Galway County Council were trying to keep within core strategy and being consistent in what was done in previous local area plans. Cllr. Kinane stated that it was important to note that they were being consistent in their approach.

In response to a query from Cllr. Donohue, Ms. Loughnane clarified that there was no mechanism within the process/legislation to allow amendments to submissions after the closing date.

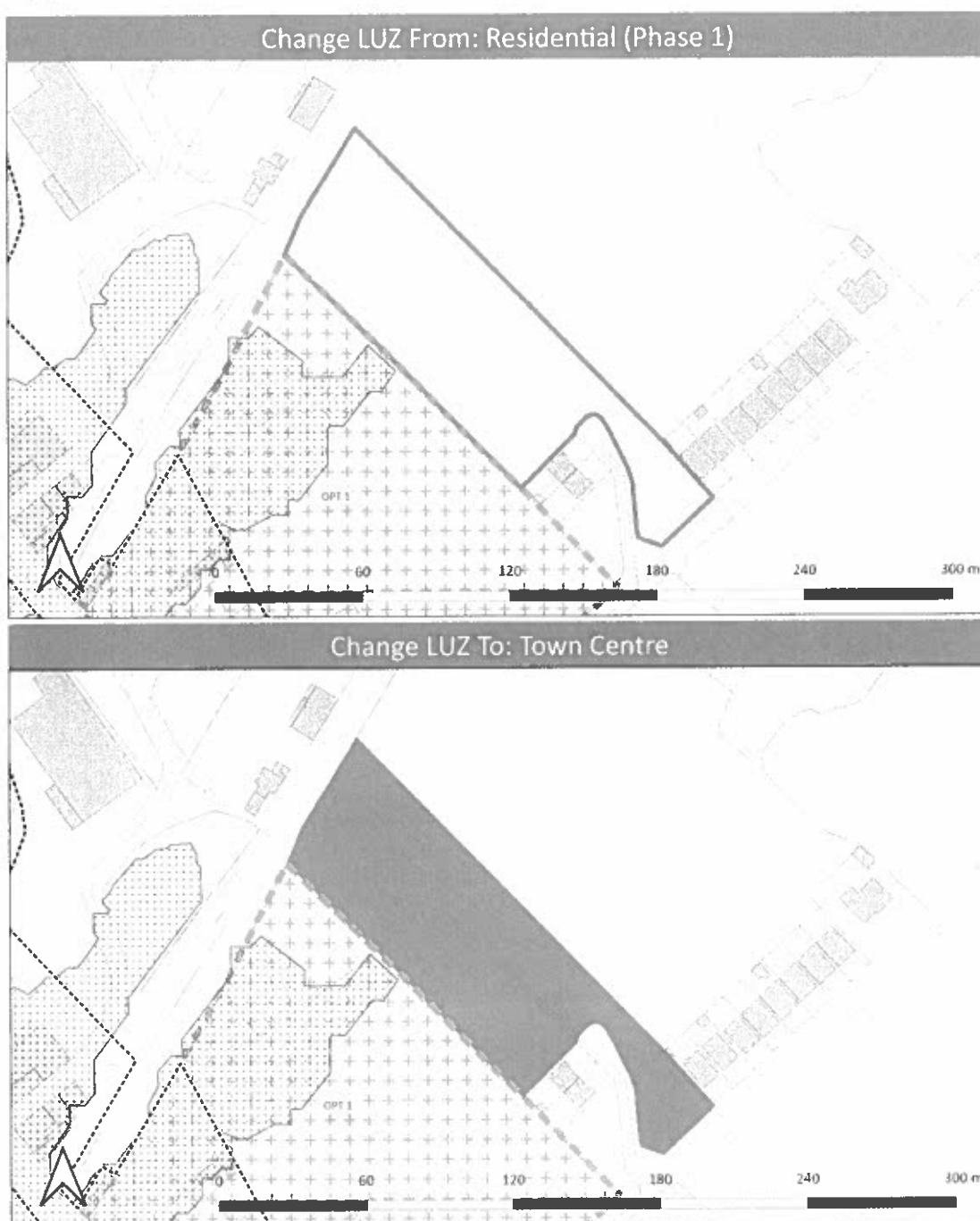
It was agreed by the Members to defer decisions on (i) & (ii) as there were motions in on some of the proposed Material Alterations.

- (iii) Retain Town Centre Zoning as per MA33



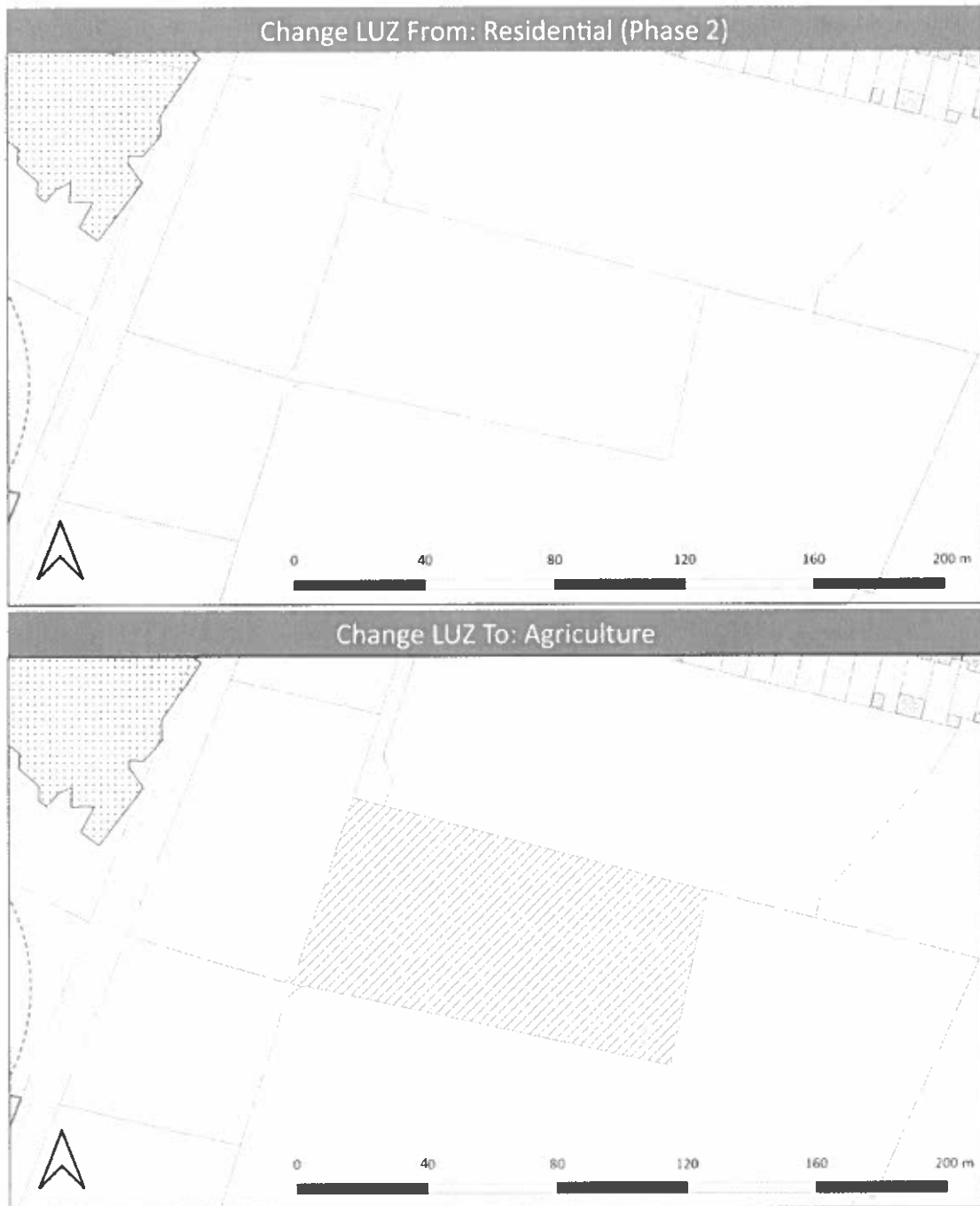
The Chief Executive Recommendation was proposed by Cllr. Finnerty, seconded by Cllr. Killilea and agreed by the Members.

(iv) Retain Town Centre Zoning as per MA34



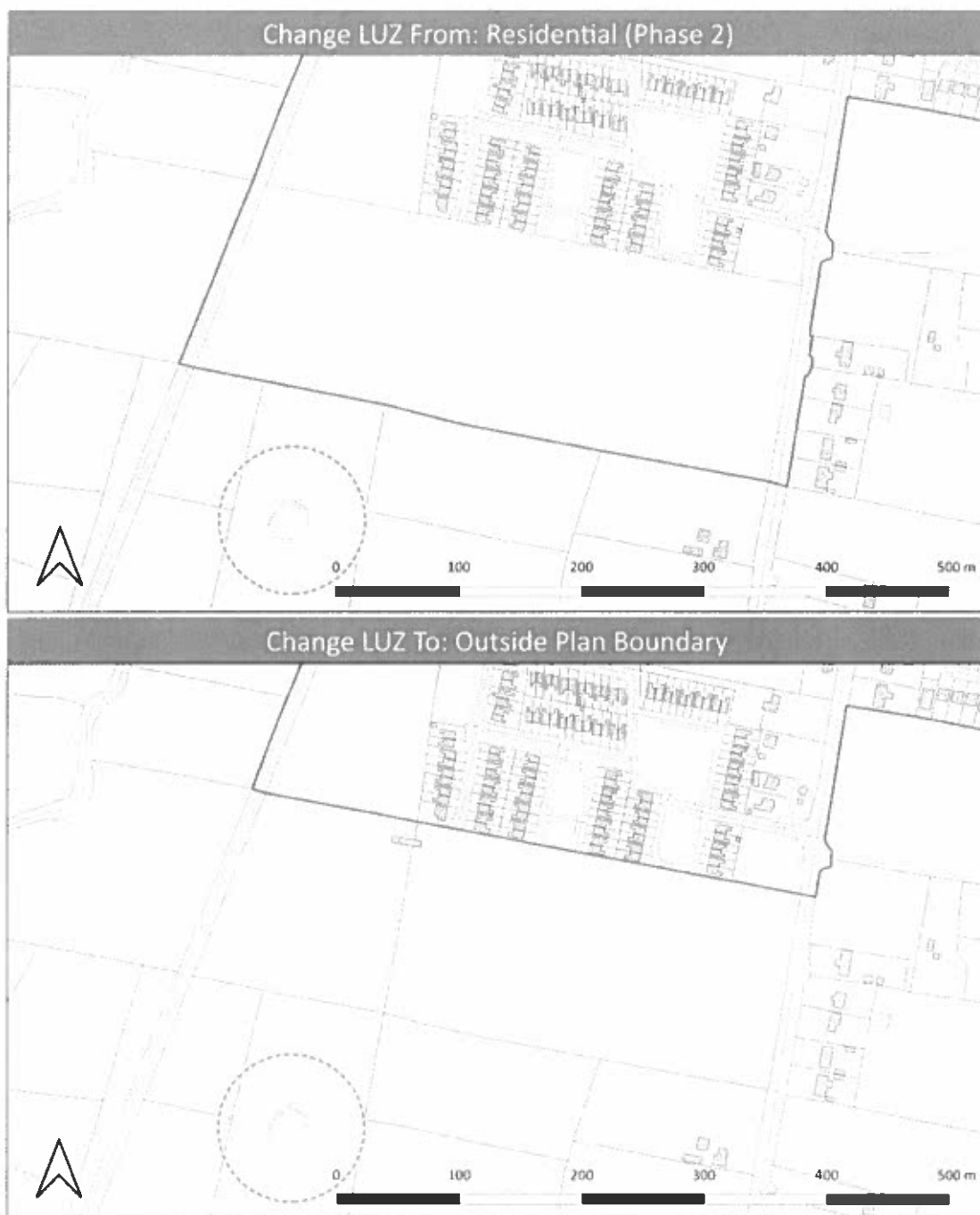
The Chief Executive Recommendation was proposed by Cllr. Finnerty, seconded by Cllr. Maher and agreed by the Members.

- (v) Retain Agriculture Zoning as per MA42.



The Chief Executive Recommendation was proposed by Cllr. Maher, seconded by Cllr. Finnerty and agreed by the Members.

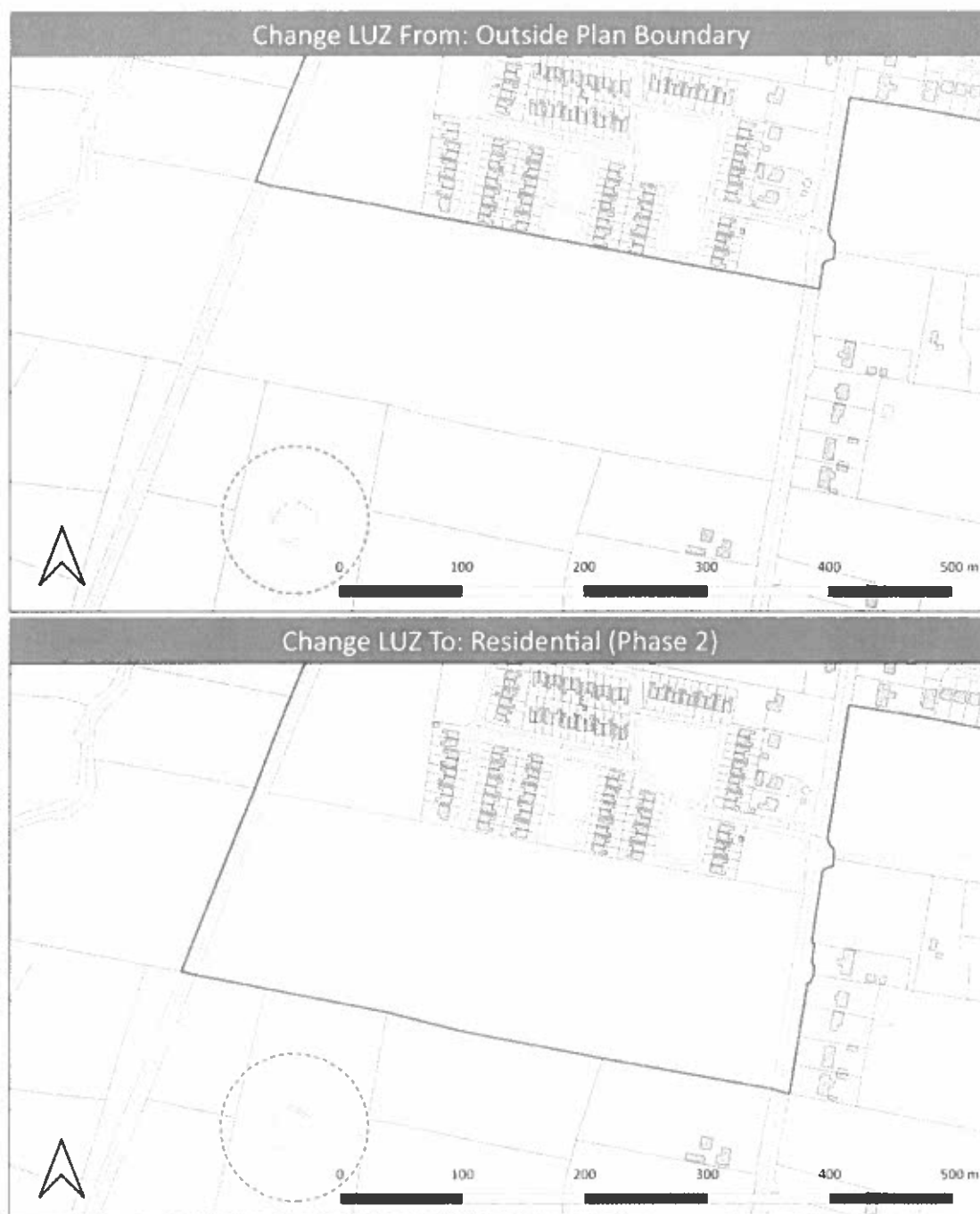
- (vi) MA36 - Revert to the provisions of the Draft Gort LAP where these lands were not zoned.



The following Motion was submitted by Cllr. Finnerty:

I propose to reject CE Recommendation and revert to Material Alterations.

Reason: *The lands are adjacent to existing development and will be the next parcels of land to be developed in the future and are adjacent to existing services.*

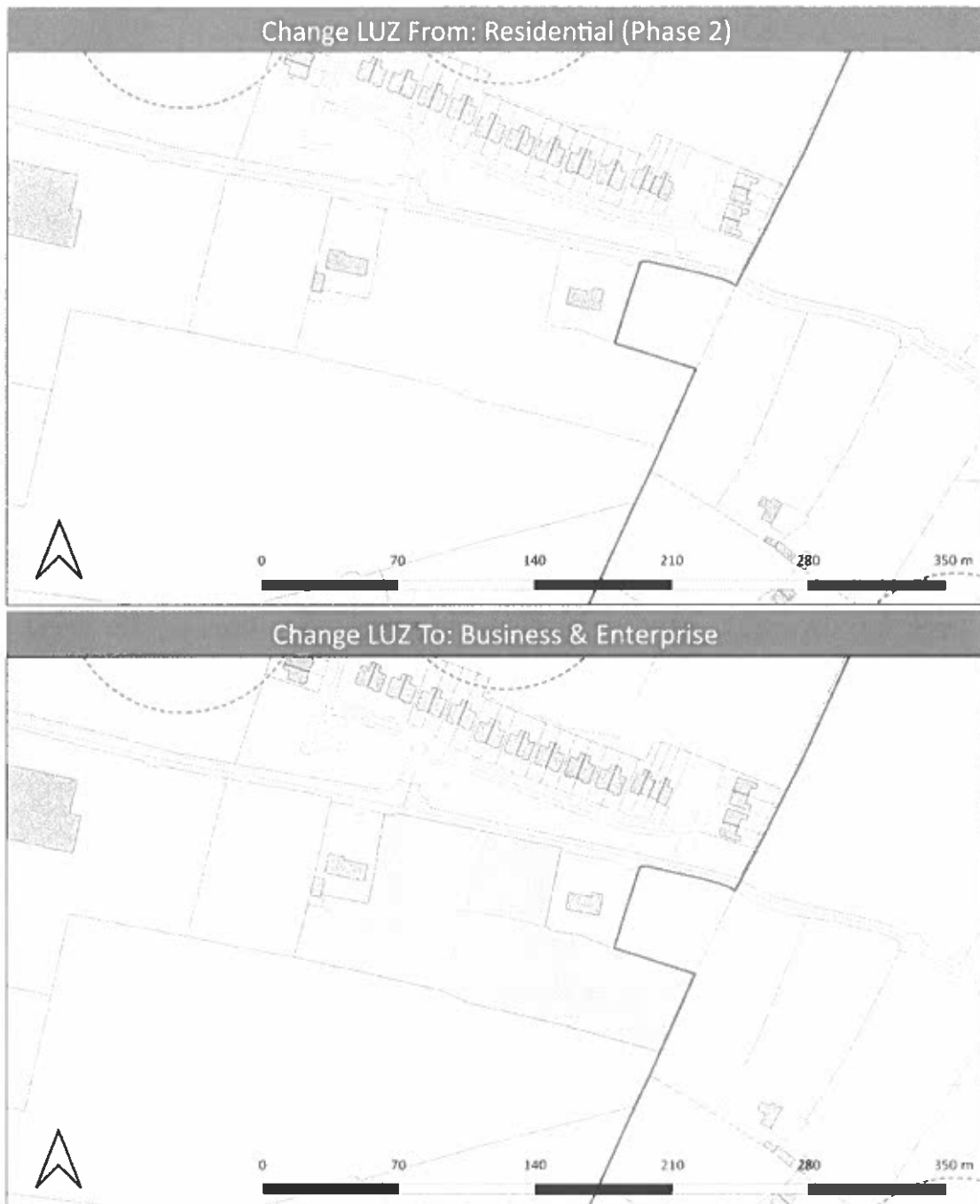


Ms.

Loughnane advised the Members that this land is not subject to RZLT.

The Motion was proposed by Cllr. Finnerty, seconded by Cllr. Killilea and agreed by the Members.

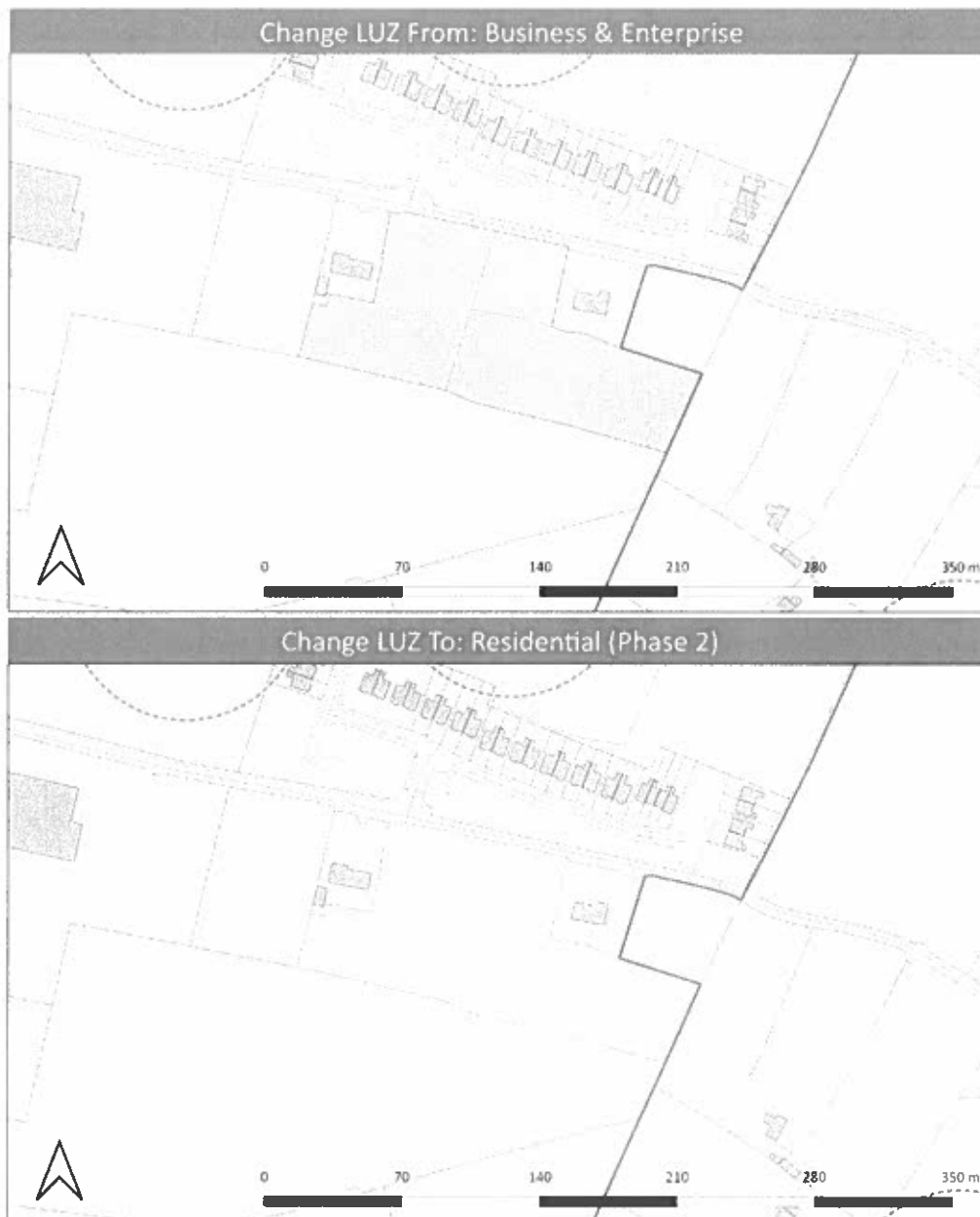
- (vii) MA37 - Revert to the provisions of the Draft Gort LAP where these lands were zoned Business and Enterprise.



The following Motion was submitted by Cllr. Finnerty:

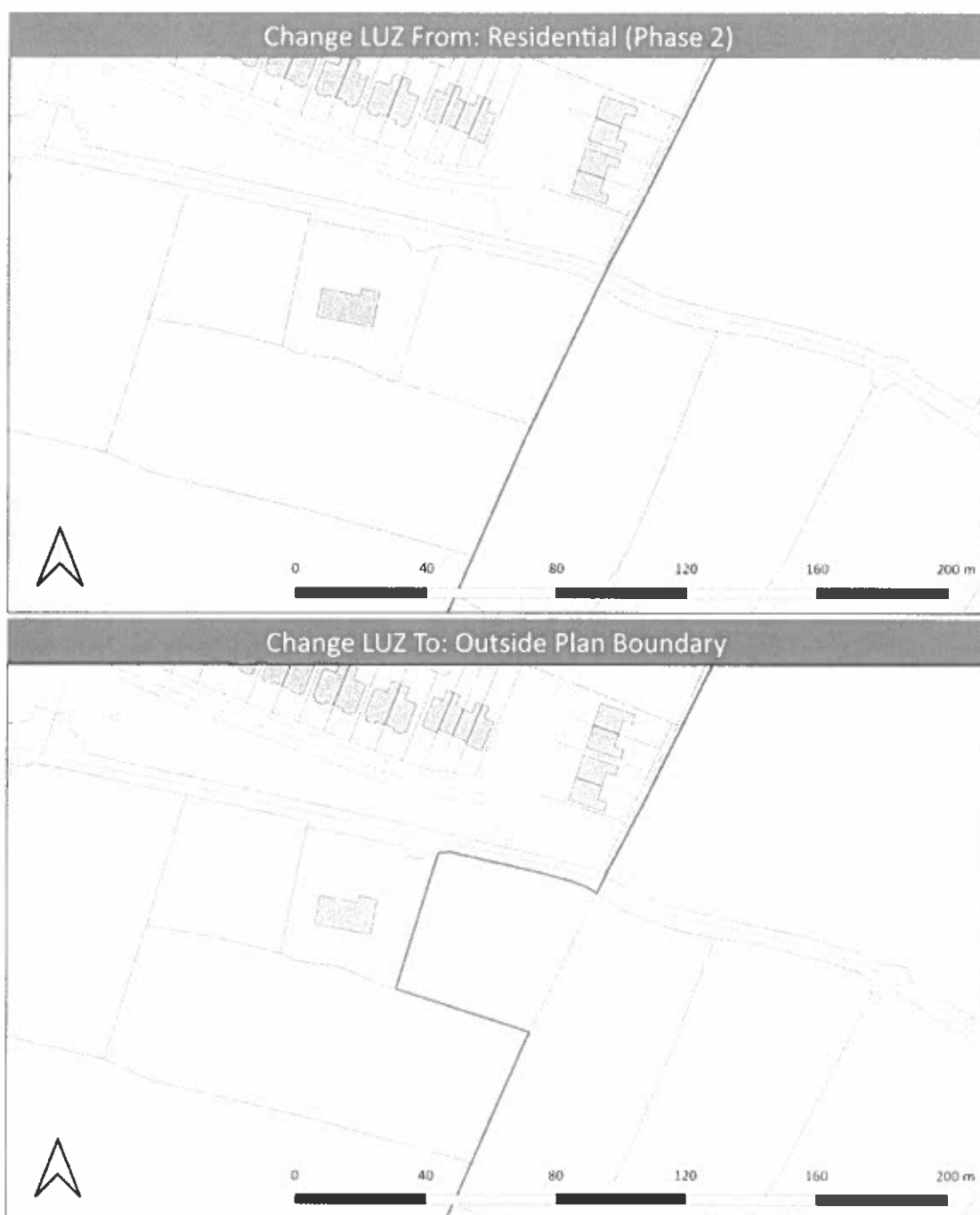
I propose to reject CE Recommendation and revert to Material Alterations.

Reason: *The lands are adjacent to existing development and will be the next parcels of land to be developed in the future and are adjacent to existing services.*



The Motion was proposed by Cllr. Finnerty, seconded by Cllr. Killilea and agreed by the Members.

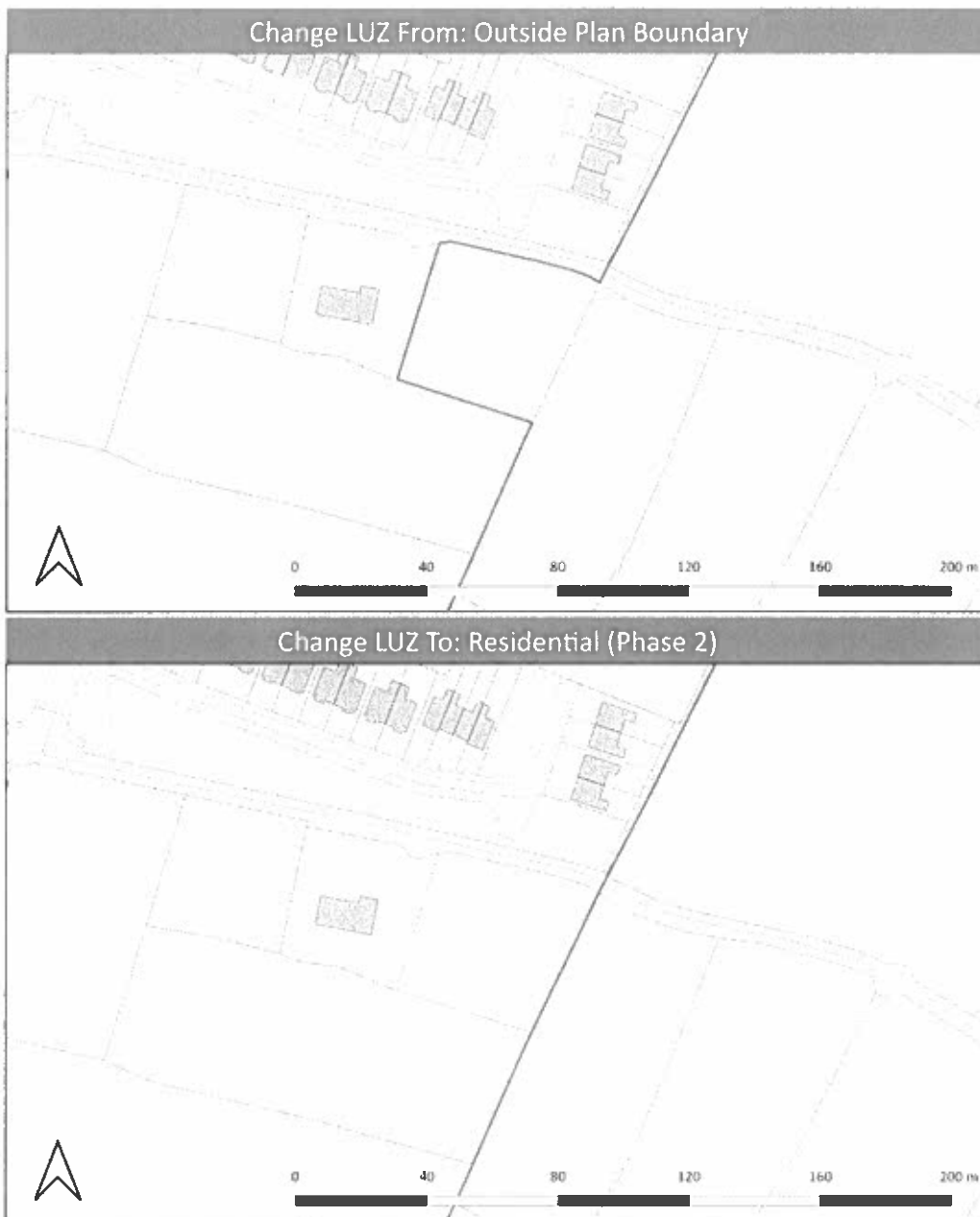
- (viii) MA38 - Revert to the provisions of the Draft Gort LAP where these lands were not zoned.



The following Motion was submitted by Cllr. Finnerty:

I propose to reject CE Recommendation. I propose to return to R2 and keep Material Alteration.

Reason: The lands are adjacent to existing development and will be the next parcels of land to be developed in the future and are adjacent to existing services.



The Motion was proposed by Cllr. Finnerty, seconded by Cllr. Killilea and agreed by the Members.

In response to a query from Cllr. Maher, Ms. Loughnane explained that in the event of the Members going against the Office of the Planning Regulator's (OPR) recommendations, that a Report must be prepared within 5 no. working days to be sent to the OPR explaining the Councillors' rationale for any recommendations made by the OPR which were subsequently rejected by the Members. She advised that they were not over-zoned presently.

It was agreed to go back to (i) & (ii)

- (i) Update the infrastructure Assessment to identify updates to sites as per the final plan. The format and content of the Infrastructure Assessment will remain consistent with that of previous Local Area Plans.

The Chief Executive Recommendation was proposed by Cllr. Kinane, seconded by Cllr. Maher and agreed by the Members.

- (ii) See Chief Executive Recommendation to OPR Recommendation 1 (vi), (vii) and (viii)

The Chief Executive Recommendation was proposed by Cllr. Kinane, seconded by Cllr. Maher and agreed by the Members.

Ms. Loughnane went through Observation 1 – Integrated Transport and Land Use Planning and read CE Response and Recommendation.

In terms of MA5 and MA29 which sought to address Recommendation 3(iv) in the OPR's submission on the Draft LAP, the submission outlines that there has been an overall increase of 72 car parking spaces in the town centre. The submission notes that there is an anomaly at MA5, as the legend has not been transferred over to new diagram to clarify the actual figures of existing and proposed for on street and off-street parking. The OPR advises that this anomaly should be amended. The submission also advises that MA29 should be modified to strengthen the Planning Authority's commitment in the LAP to rationalise the car parking and support an overall reduction in car parking and private vehicle usage.

Having regard to the integration of land use and sustainable transport and in particular to:

- RPO 6.26, RPO 6.27, RPO 6.28, RPO 6.29 of the RSES;
- Policy Objectives GCTPS3, ILUTP 1, ILUTP 3, PT1, NNR 8 of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028; and
- the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended, mandatory target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 51%, the Climate Action Plan 2024, and associated actions including the National Sustainable Mobility Policy (2022) targets to reduce vehicle kilometres travelled per year and the National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (2021),

the Planning Authority is advised to:

- (i) modify MA5 at figure at section 2.3.4 of appendix C, Local Transport Plan to include the existing and proposed on street and off-street parking figures and the subsequent overall change of car

parking spaces as a result of town centre public realm improvements and proposals; and

- (ii) modify MA29 to add additional text to clarify and strengthen the town centre management strategy to include a stronger commitment to establishing modal share targets for the town and the reduction of the overall number of car parking spaces commensurate with those targets

Chief Executive's Response

- (i) The Planning Authority note that, the TCF proposed public realm scheme has not gone through the Part 10 Development Management Process. Therefore, the overall car parking figures proposed for Gort Town Centre cannot be confirmed. With this in mind the Planning Authority consider that it would not be appropriate to include proposed car parking figures within the LTP at this time.
- (ii) To address the OPR concerns regarding the town centre management strategy and to strengthen the commitment towards a modal shift in Gort, the Planning Authority propose the inclusion of additional text in the Draft Gort LTP, as follows;

Add additional text to Section 7 Monitoring and Evaluation (addition to bullet point - 'Sustainable Travel Mode Share':

"This evaluation will be done in line with Climate Action Plan 2024 targets for a 50% increase in active travel and 130% increase in public transport journeys by 2030. For mode shares, CAP 2024 targets a daily mode share of 53% for car journeys, 19% for public transport, and 28% for active travel."

Add additional text to Section 6.5 Supporting Measures (sub bullet point added to third bullet point):

"This parking strategy will be drafted to support the delivery of the mode share targets as laid out in CAP 2024."

Add additional text to Appendix B Section 1.4 (Addition to Option Ref DM-P5):

"This parking strategy will be drafted to support the delivery of the mode share targets as laid out in CAP 2024."

Chief Executive's Recommendation

- (i) No Change

The Chief Executive Recommendation was proposed by Cllr. Maher, seconded by Cllr. Finnerty and agreed by the Members.

- (ii) To add the following text to the Draft Gort LTP;
Add additional text to Section 7 Monitoring and Evaluation (addition to bullet point - 'Sustainable Travel Mode Share':

"This evaluation will be done in line with Climate Action Plan 2024 targets for a 50% increase in active travel and 130% increase in public transport journeys by 2030. For mode shares, CAP 2024 targets a daily mode share of 53% for car journeys, 19% for public transport, and 28% for active travel."

Add additional text to Section 6.5 Supporting Measures (sub bullet point added to third bullet point):

"This parking strategy will be drafted to support the delivery of the mode share targets as laid out in CAP 2024."

Add additional text to Appendix B Section 1.4 (Addition to Option Ref DM-P5):

"This parking strategy will be drafted to support the delivery of the mode share targets as laid out in CAP 2024."

The Chief Executive Recommendation was proposed by Cllr. Finnerty, seconded by Cllr. Killilea and agreed by the Members.

Cllr. Harney opined that the Climate Action Plan 2024 targets were not achievable and were designed more so for metropolitan areas rather than county towns such as Gort. In relation to parking in Gort town, he stated that there was inadequate provision of bus services and that there was a wish out there to have a proper bus service in Gort town. He stated the proposals in place were not accommodating local county people. Ms. Loughnane explained that the overall targets were national targets and advised that as part of the LTP, the NTA were going to provide additional bus stops. She further advised that the Town First Plan - Part 10 which was a separate planning process, was currently on public display and submissions can be made on this aspect until 29th August 2025.

Commenting on proposed additional text "This evaluation will be done in line with Climate Action Plan 2024 targets for a 50% increase in active travel and 130% increase in public transport journeys by 2030" – Cllr. Donohue referred to the footpath on the Gort Road which was not actively being maintained and was overgrown and stated that this was not being recognised as an active travel route. In response, Ms. Loughnane advised that the section within the plan boundary was being recommended as an active travel route.

PRESCRIBED AUTHORITIES

GLW–C169-10 – OFFICE OF PUBLIC WORKS (OPW)

Ms. Loughnane went through submission received from the Office of Public works and read CE Response and Recommendation.

The submission welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Proposed MAs to the Draft LAP. The submission specifically concerns flood risk management.

The OPW welcome MA10 and MA11. The submission goes on to make the following observations;

Constrained Land Use.

The submission references the commentary the OPW made in the submission at the draft stage regarding the use of constrained land use zoning in conjunction with objectives to restrict any further development inappropriate to the level of flood risk identified located within such a zoning. It notes that this can be appropriate where already developed land overlaps with areas of identified flood risk, where all criteria of the plan making justification test cannot be satisfied, however the zoning is retained to reflect existing usage. Where lands are undeveloped it is preferable, following the sequential approach in the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities that if zoning in such areas cannot be avoided, land use zoning which allows usage of vulnerability appropriate to the level of flood risk identified in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment is substituted.

Agricultural Zoned Lands

The submission notes that MA12 added Agricultural land use zonings to the Justification Test Table in the SFRA report appended to the Material Alterations report. However, highlighting the text included in Part 3 of the Justification Test that states *“A precautionary approach has been applied to the zoning of lands with undeveloped lands that is liable to flood generally zoned for “Open Space & Amenity” and “Agriculture”*”, it considers that whilst the Open Space and Amenity zoning is a water compatible zoning and therefore appropriate to zone in lands liable to flood, zoning of lands located in a flood zone for less vulnerable development such as Agriculture would not be appropriate, unless it is zoning objective retained to reflect active usage, in conjunction with a suitable objective to restrict any inappropriate development in flood risk areas.

Supplied Justification Tests

The submission outlines that at the Draft Plan stage, the OPW noted that Part 3 of the Plan-making Justification Tests should show that zoning lands at risk of flooding for usage of a vulnerability type inappropriate to the level of flood risk identified can be justified on the basis that it can be demonstrated that risk to the lands can be mitigated sufficiently to justify proceeding with a zoning decision that would otherwise be inappropriate.

At the draft plan stage, the OPW highlighted that “Lands zoned Town Centre in the north of the town centre” which includes undeveloped lands in areas identified as being at risk of flooding where deemed to have satisfied the Justification Test, it requested that Part 3 of the Justification test to set out how risk can be mitigated sufficiently to allow development permitted under this zoning type. The OPW notes that MA13 amends Justification Test footnotes to list potentially applicable flood risk management related provisions, including structural and non-structural measures. However, it considers that this is generalised, and does not address how the above mentioned development can safely proceed in an area of identified flood risk.

Chief Executive’s Response

Noted. As identified in the SFRA and under policy objective GSST 25, the limitation provided by GSST 25 “shall take primacy over any other provision relating to land use zoning objectives.

As identified in the SFRA and under PO GSST 25, the limitation provided by PO GSST 25 “shall take primacy over any other provision relating to land use zoning objectives”.

Noted. The degree to which mitigation measures can be fully identified at Plan level with a project level of specificity is limited. However, details on measures that will help to ensure risks are mitigated can be provided. Therefore, it is proposed to further modify the proposed MA text from the footnote in the SFRA’s Justification Test table as follows;

The degree to which mitigation measures can be fully identified at Plan level with a project level of specificity is limited. However, details on measures that will help to ensure risks are mitigated can be provided.

General flood risk management measures would include those from the County Development Plan (FL 4 Flood Relief Schemes, FL 5 Catchment Planning, FL 6 Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems and FL 10 SFRA/FRA and Climate Change) and the Local Area Plan (GSST 59 Flood Risk Management and Assessment, GSST 61 Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems, GSST 63 Flood Risk Assessment for Planning Applications and CFRAMS and GSST 64 Flood Risk Assessment and Climate Change). ~~X from the County Development Plan and Y from the Local Area Plan would apply.~~ FL 14 Flood Vulnerable Zones from the County Development Plan and GSST 66 Flood Vulnerable Zones from the Local Area Plan identify structural and non-structural measures to mitigate risks. Measures that could be used at this site to mitigate risk comprise floor levels, internal layout, flood resilient construction, flood resistant construction, emergency response planning and access and egress during flood events. Furthermore, this site would be benefitted by the Gort Flood Relief Scheme, which provides protection from a 1% AEP event as indicated in the map above.

Proposed development at this site with Flood Zones A and B will be subject to site-specific Flood Risk Assessment, which shall identify how flood risk has been mitigated and managed through the location, lay-out and/or design of the development to reduce risks to an acceptable level.

The residual risks to the proposed development should be considered carefully, taking into account the type of development and its vulnerability, how flood risks to the occupants will be managed, insurance provision, scale of the risks and the provision of flood defence works.

A precautionary approach would be to set floor levels above the 1% flood level ignoring the moderating effects of flood defences.

However, within the existing built-up area the approach above may not produce an appropriate streetscape and therefore for proposed developments with a lower vulnerability, flood resistant and flood resilient construction methods to reduce the impact of flooding would be appropriate. Site flood risk assessment to be undertaken at this site shall be thorough and measures to manage these residual risks should be carefully detailed.

In all cases, a precautionary approach should be taken to allow for uncertainties in data and risk assessment procedures and to enable adaptability to future changes in risk, including the effects of climate change.

Chief Executive's Recommendation

Modify the proposed MA text from the footnote in the SFRA's Justification Test table as follows

The degree to which mitigation measures can be fully identified at Plan level with a project level of specificity is limited. However, details on measures that will help to ensure risks are mitigated can be provided.

General flood risk management measures would include those from the County Development Plan (FL 4 Flood Relief Schemes, FL 5 Catchment Planning, FL 6 Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems and FL 10 SFRA/FRA and Climate Change) and the Local Area Plan (GSST 59 Flood Risk Management and Assessment, GSST 61 Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems, GSST 63 Flood Risk Assessment for Planning Applications and CFRAMS and GSST 64 Flood Risk Assessment and Climate Change). ~~X from the County Development Plan and Y from the Local Area Plan would apply.~~ FL 14 Flood Vulnerable Zones from the County Development Plan and GSST 66 Flood Vulnerable Zones from the Local Area Plan identify structural and non-structural measures to mitigate risks. Measures that could be used at this site to mitigate risk comprise floor levels, internal layout, flood resilient construction, flood resistant construction, emergency response planning and access and egress during flood events. Furthermore, this site would be benefitted by the Gort Flood Relief Scheme, which provides protection from a 1% AEP event as indicated in the map above.

Proposed development at this site with Flood Zones A and B will be subject to site-specific Flood Risk Assessment, which shall identify how flood risk has been mitigated and managed through the location, lay-out and/or design of the development to reduce risks to an acceptable level.

The residual risks to the proposed development should be considered carefully, taking into account the type of development and its vulnerability, how flood risks to the occupants will be managed, insurance provision, scale of the risks and the provision of flood defence works.

A precautionary approach would be to set floor levels above the 1% flood level ignoring the moderating effects of flood defences.

However, within the existing built-up area the approach above may not produce an appropriate streetscape and therefore for proposed developments with a lower vulnerability, flood resistant and flood resilient construction methods to reduce the impact of flooding would be appropriate. Site flood risk assessment to be undertaken at this site shall be thorough and measures to manage these residual risks should be carefully detailed.

In all cases, a precautionary approach should be taken to allow for uncertainties in data and risk assessment procedures and to enable adaptability to future changes in risk, including the effects of climate change.

The Chief Executive Recommendation was proposed by Cllr. Finnerty, seconded by Cllr. Maher and agreed by the Members.

GLW – C169- 6 – NATIONAL TRANSPORT AUTHORITY (NTA)

Mr. Corcoran went through submission received from National Transport Authority and read CE Response and Recommendation.

The submission welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Proposed MAs to the Draft Plan and Draft LTP. It sets out a number of observations in relation to the Material Alterations detailed below.

1. Material Amendments relating to Transport and Movement & the LTP

In the initial submission on the Draft Gort LAP, the NTA raised a number of issues relating to the integration between the Draft LTP and the Gort Town Centre First Plan.

MA2

The NTA supports the creation of a working group to ensure an integrated approach to transport planning and design within the town centre.

MA3

The NTA supports the statement - *“The TCF Plan and proposed public realm improvements shall complement the objectives of the LTP”* included under Section 2.8 of the LAP

MA4 and MA26

MA4 provides for changes to Figure 5 ‘Draft LTP Emerging Preferred Strategy for Gort’ (Section 2.8 of the LAP also MA23 Figure 6-1, 6-2 of Appendix C in LTP) to include text that supports the creation of a safe environment for active travel. The NTA supports this statement. The submission notes that it was a key recommendation by the NTA on the Draft Plan that it *‘should include networks by mode of the full plan area.’* It considers that sufficient clarity has been added in conjunction with MA3 and in the context for further decisions around the public realm area.

MA5

MA5 relates to proposed changes to the Figure in Section 2.3.4 relating to on and off-street car parking provision. It notes that the overall number of parking spaces in the town centre has not changed from that in the draft Plan. The submission considers that carparking rationalisation and management should be investigated as part of the progression of the TCF public realm scheme with the development of Car Parking Management Strategy (MA29), and recommends the inclusion of a statement detailing this as part of MA5.

MA6

The submission supports the identification of the short term priority measures outlined in MA6. It recommends that any proposed new development areas are reviewed and prioritised in terms of providing connectivity to the town centre by sustainable modes.

MA26

The NTA supports MA26 which has removed the proposal to remove the town centre bus stop and has included the need to provide additional bus stops and potential turning facility in the LTP.

MA 28, 29, and 30

The NTA also supports proposed MA's No. 28, 29 and 30 which relate to the inclusion of several broader measures to support sustainable transport. The NTA supports this broader more holistic approach to measures development and implementation which is reflective of higher-level transport policy.

Recommendations

The submission sets out the following recommendations relating to Transport and Movement & the LTP;

- The NTA notes the proposed overall increase in town-centre car parking provision. Further opportunities for car parking rationalisation and management should be investigated as part of the progression of the town centre first public realm scheme and the development of a 'Car Parking Management Strategy' It is recommended that MA5 would benefit from the inclusion of a statement committing to this.
- New development areas should be reviewed and prioritised in terms of providing connectivity to the town centre by sustainable modes. (MA6)

2. Material Amendments to Land Use Zoning

The NTA considers the proposed rezoning under MA 36 - rezoning from outside the Plan Boundary to Residential Phase 2 and MA 42 - rezoning from Residential Phase 2 to Agriculture, do not support the principles of compact and sequential development by facilitating development outside of the

existing settlement boundary while removing an opportunity for residential development within the existing boundary.

Recommendations

The NTA recommends ;

In the interests of compact and sequential development, the NTA recommends that MA36 and 42 should be reconsidered.

Chief Executive's Response

The Planning Authority note and welcome the submission by the National Transport Authority.

Noted.

Noted.

Noted.

Noted.

Noted. The Planning Authority propose the following modifications to the Draft Gort LTP.

Add additional text to Section 6.5 Supporting Measures (added to third bullet point):

"The parking management strategy will investigate opportunities for car parking rationalisation."

Add additional text to Appendix B Section 1.4 (Addition to Option Ref DM-P5):

"The parking management strategy will investigate opportunities for car parking rationalisation."

Noted. Additional text is proposed to section 7 of the LTP which states:

"Additionally, as new development areas are due to be developed, active travel connections serving these areas will be brought forward for design and delivery."

Noted.

Noted.

The Planning Authority note that any proposed Town Centre First public realm scheme will be subject a Part 10 Application through the development management process. Any specific development proposals including car parking provision will be duly considered on a case-by-case basis at this stage.

Noted. Additional text is proposed to section 7 of the LTP which states:

"Additionally, as new development areas are due to be developed, active travel connections serving these areas will be brought forward for design and delivery."

Noted.

See Chief Executive's response to GLW-C196-11 with regard to MA36.

See Chief Executive's response to GLW-C196-11 with regard to MA42.

Chief Executive's Recommendation

MA5

Add additional text to Section 6.5 Supporting Measures (added to third bullet point):

"The parking management strategy will investigate opportunities for car parking rationalisation ."

Add additional text to Appendix B Section 1.4 (Addition to Option Ref DM-P5):

"The parking management strategy will investigate opportunities for car parking rationalisation."

MA6

Add additional text to Section 7 Monitoring and Evaluation:

"Additionally, as new development areas are due to be developed, active travel connections serving these areas will be brought forward for design and delivery."

MA36

See Chief Executive's recommendation to GLW-C196-11 with regard to MA36.

MA42

See Chief Executive's recommendation to GLW-C196-11 with regard to MA42.

The Chief Executive Recommendation was proposed by Cllr. Finnerty, seconded by Cllr. Maher and agreed by the Members.

GLW – C169- 1 – DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND YOUTH

Mr. Corcoran went through submission received from the Department of Education and Youth and read CE Response and Recommendation.

The Department's submission notes that no alterations have been made to the population projections outlined in the Draft LAP and reaffirms the Department's projected school requirements as per the submission made on the 18th February 2025.

The submission goes on to reference Material Alterations 1, 6 and 8.

Proposed Material Alteration No. 1

The Department notes that the housing allocation for Gort is already referenced in Section 1.2.3 of the Galway County Development Plan 2022 – 2028.

Proposed Material Alteration No. 6

The Department notes the proposed amendment to the Local Transport Plan, which includes additional text in relation to upgrading school zones and WC35 -Traffic Calming along Tubber Road to provide a safe route to Gort Boys National School.

Proposed Material Alteration No. 8

The submission notes the proposed amendment to LTP including additional text relating to improving the safety of children at schools, and specifically references NNR5: 'Increase the safety of children at school by assessing safe routes to schools for school children and by the installation of traffic management measures.

The submission acknowledges the role of the Local Authority in ensuring sufficient and appropriate land is zoned for educational needs and concludes with thanks to Galway County Council for consideration given to the Department's submission on the Draft LAP.

Chief Executive's Response

The Planning Authority notes and welcomes the submission received by the Department of Education and Youth.

Noted.

Noted.

Noted.

Noted. Galway County Council will continue to actively engage with the Department of Education and Youth.

Chief Executive's Recommendation

No Change.

The Chief Executive Recommendation was proposed by Cllr. Finnerty, seconded by Cllr. Killilea and agreed by the Members.

GLW – C169- 2 – ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Mr. Corcoran went through submission received from the Environmental Protection Agency and read CE Response and Recommendation.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) advises that it has a focus on promoting the full and transparent integration of the findings of the Environmental Assessment into the Plan and advocates that the key environmental challenges for Ireland are addressed as relevant and appropriate to the Plan.

Proposed SEA Determination

The EPA notes the proposed determination regarding the need for SEA of the Material Alterations and that the SEA is not required.

The submission references the 'SEA of Local Authority Land Use Plan – EPA Recommendation and Resources' guidance document which sets out key recommendation for integrating environmental consideration in the Local Authority Land Use Plans. The guidance should be considered as appropriate and relevant to the Material Alterations.

Sustainable Development

The EPA notes the Materials Alterations should be consistent with proper planning and sustainable development. Adequate and appropriate critical service infrastructure should be put in place or required to be put in place, to service any development proposed and authorised during the lifetime of the LAP.

It is noted the Material Alterations need to align with national commitments on climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as incorporating any relevant recommendation in sectoral, regional and local climate adaptation plans.

The submission further notes that the LAP should be consistent with key relevant higher-level plans and programmes.

Future Modifications to the Draft Plan

The submission notes that where further changes to the Draft LAP are proposed, they should be screened for likely significant effects in accordance with SEA Regulation and should be subject to the same method of assessment applied in the "environmental assessment" of the Plan.

SEA Statement – "Information on the Decision"

The EPA suggest once the Final LAP is adopted to prepare an SEA Statement that summaries the following:

- How environmental consideration have been integrated into the LAP;
- How the Environmental Report, submissions observations and consultation have been taken into account during the preparation of the LAP;
- The reasons for choosing the LAP adopted in the light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with, and;
- The measures decided upon to monitor the significant environmental effects of implementation of the LAP.

The submission notes a copy of the SEA Statement should be sent to any environmental authority consulted during the SEA process and notes that their guidance on preparing SEA Statements is available on their website.

Environmental Authorities

The EPA notes that under the SEA Regulations, the following authorities should be consulted:

- Environmental Protection Agency;
- Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage;
- Minister for Environment, Climate and Communication; and,
- Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine.
- Any adjoining Planning Authority whose area is contiguous to the area of a Planning Authority which prepared a Draft Plan, proposed variation or LAP.

Chief Executive's Response

The Planning Authority welcomes the submission received from the EPA. The SEA process will consider these issues and ensure that all requirements are met until and following the adoption of the Plan.

Noted.

Noted.

Noted

Noted.

Noted.

Noted.

Chief Executive's Recommendation

No Change.

The Chief Executive Recommendation was proposed by Cllr. Finnerty, seconded by Cllr. Maher and agreed by the Members.

As the Meeting had gone over the agreed two-hour duration, the Chair proposed to revoke Standing Orders and continue the Meeting. It was proposed by Cllr. Killilea, seconded by Cllr. Finnerty and agreed by the Members.

GLW – C169- 3 – TII (TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE IRELAND)

Ms. Loughnane went through submission received from Transport Infrastructure Ireland and read CE Response and Recommendation.

The submission acknowledges and welcomes the Proposed Material Alterations arising from consideration of the Authority's initial submission on the Draft LAP and LTP.

In relation to other Proposed Material Alterations on display, TII advises that the Authority has no specific observations.

Chief Executive's Response

The Planning Authority welcomes the submission received from the TII.

Chief Executive's Recommendation

No Change.

The Chief Executive Recommendation was proposed by Cllr. Finnerty, seconded by Cllr. Harney and agreed by the Members.

GLW-C169-5 – UISCE ÉIREANN

Ms. Loughnane went through submission received from Uisce Éireann and read CE Response and Recommendation.

The submission welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Proposed MAs to the Draft Plan. The submission outlines a number of observations in relation to public water services.

Planned Road and Public Realm Projects.

The submission observes that MA2 provides for the identification of synergies between the Town Centre First and the Local Transport Plan. It welcomes the initiatives but notes the impact the proposals may have on Uisce Éireann assets and projects. The submission states that where planned development may impact on Uisce Éireann assets, early engagement is requested to ensure public

water services are protected and access is maintained, and to enable Uisce Éireann to plan works accordingly and ultimately minimise disruption to the public.

Inclusion of Housing Allocation in the Core Strategy Table

The submission welcomes the inclusion of the number of housing units' allocation in the Core Strategy Table under MA1.

Zoning Changes

The submission includes a high level review of the zoning changes in the proposed Material Alterations in terms of access to public water infrastructure.

The submission determines that localised network extensions may be required to service some zoned sites. The submission provided comment on some site specific MAs detailed below;

MA32

100mm water main on Station Road. Unclear if existing building is sewerred. GIS data may be missing. Further investigation required.

MA33 & 34

100mm water main on Loughrea Road. Localised upgrades may be required depending on the scale of development. Potential upsizing of the sewer on George's Street may be needed depending on the scale of development realised. 225mm sewer within the sites, would need to be protected/diverted.

MA35

100mm diameter water main in the road along the southwest boundary of the site. Capacity assessment may be required.

MA36

100mm diameter water main in Ennis Road along eastern boundary of site. Capacity assessment required. 250mm gravity sewer in Ennis Road, northeast of the site. Extension between 50m and 250m required. Third party access may be required. Local upgrades may be required. Capacity assessment required

MA37 and MA38

225mm diameter gravity sewer, 300m away in public roadway to the west of the site (Ennis Rd). Capacity assessment required. Third party agreement required. This development on its own would not trigger an upgrade. However multiple developments in this area will potentially require upsizing of main sewer on George's Street, including river crossing.

MA41

Localised upgrades may be required – 80mm water main in roadway to the west of the site. Long extension >400m to connect to 225mm gravity sewer Crowe Street or via third party lands to 450mm gravity sewer on Kinnincha Road.

Chief Executive's Response

The Planning Authority welcomes the submission received by Uisce Eireann

Noted.

Noted.

Noted.

Noted

Noted.

Noted.

Noted

Noted

Noted

Noted.

Chief Executive's Recommendation

No Change.

The Chief Executive Recommendation was proposed by Cllr. Finnerty, seconded by Cllr. Maher and agreed by the Members.

GLW – C169- 7 – DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING, LOCAL GOVERNMENT, AND HERITAGE – DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS UNIT

Ms. Loughnane went through submission received from the Department of Housing, Local Government, and Heritage – Development Applications Unit and read CE Response and Recommendation.

The submission outlines a number of observations and recommendations relating to heritage.

Architectural Conservation

The submission notes that Section 3.3 of the Draft LTP does not make reference to Protected Structures or the architectural Conservation Area which are subject to statutory protection. In this regard the submission sets out the following recommendations;

1. Revise Section 3.3 of the LTP to reference Protected Structures and the Architectural Conservation Area as statutory designations that are relevant to 'environmental conditions and physical constraints'.
2. To include a map of the study area denoting the architectural conservation areas and protected structures overlaid with the proposed transport routes is included in this plan.
3. The plan shall have regard to Ministerial Guidelines 'Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities' issued under Sections 28 and 52 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

Chief Executive's Response

Noted.

The Planning Authority note that the Draft Gort LAP includes several policy objectives that seek to protect and conserve the architectural heritage in Gort, including, GSST 39 Architectural Heritage, GSST 40 Architectural Conservation Areas, GSST 41 Development /Works relating to Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Area. The GCDP 2022-2028 also addresses Architectural, Archaeological and Cultural Heritage and includes a number of supporting policy objectives that seek to protect and conserve Architectural Heritage.

It is noted that Map 2 Archaeological and Built Heritage in the Draft Gort LAP clearly delineates the architectural conservation areas and protected structures within Gort. Any specific proposed transport routes will be considered by the planning authority on a case-by-case basis and all planning considerations including those relating to Architectural Conservation would be taken into account accordingly.

Noted.

Chief Executive's Recommendation

No Change

The Chief Executive Recommendation was proposed by Cllr. Finnerty, seconded by Cllr. McClearn and agreed by the Members.

GENERAL SUBMISSIONS

GLW – C169- 4 – GORT HOMES DEVELOPMENTS LIMITED

Ms. Loughnane went through submission received from Gort Homes Developments Limited and read CE Response and Recommendation.

The submission relates to Material Alteration 33 and 34. These Material Amendments relate to the proposed rezoning of lands at the Loughrea Road from 'Existing Residential' (MA33) and 'Residential Phase 1' (MA34) to 'Town Centre'.

The submission opposes these Material Alterations and requests that the lands be rezoned to Residential Phase 1. The submission notes that the site is in a strategic location and is consistent with a sequential approach for zoning land for residential development.

The submission considers the population projections for Gort are outdated when considered against ESRI's publication "Population Projections, The Flow of New Households and Structural Housing Demand" which are incorporated into the First Revision of the National Planning Framework. The submission also references the correspondence issued by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH), outlining the urgency for housing delivery and the need to ensure there is sufficient zoned land for residential development. The submission reiterates the request for the subject lands to be rezoned Residential Phase 1.

The submission goes on to set out reasons why it considers the subject lands should be zoned Residential Phase 1.

Planning History

The submission notes that permission has been granted under planning reference 24/60115 for the development of 220 no. residential units, 1 no. café, 5 no. retail units and a co-working office, senior living communal area and a creche. It considers that the delivery of residential units is 'limited' as the 'Town Centre' zoning in the Gort LAP 2013-2023, as extended, required 17% of the gross floor area to be commercial development. The submission considers that zoning the land Residential Phase 1 would be appropriate to enable greater housing delivery. The submission suggests that the

site identified as Opportunity Site 1 which is 2.75ha enables a vibrant mix of uses and considers that there is sufficient Town Centre Zoned land at this location.

Sequential Development and Increased Residential Density

The submission considers that the site is consistent with the sequential approach given the close proximity to Gort Town Centre, Gort Railway Station and the M18. It notes that the site is serviced by physical and social infrastructure. The submission notes that the Core Strategy in the GCDP 2022-2028 sets out a standard density of 35 units per hectare for County Galway. It considers that zoning the subject lands Residential Phase 1 provides an opportunity to increase the quantum of residential development and achieve a higher density in line with national planning policy.

The submission concludes by reiterating the request to zone the land Residential Phase 1, citing the opportunity to increase the delivery of residential development in a strategic location.

Chief Executive's Response

Submission noted.

Noted. The Planning Authority confirm that the population allocation detailed in the Gort Local Area Plan must be consistent with the Core Strategy set out in the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028.

The planning history including the recent granted planning permission under pl. ref. 24/60115 are noted. The Planning Authority consider that the delivery of 220 residential units at this location would be significant to Gort and the supporting commercial element of the permitted development would contribute to the overall vitality of this part of Gort.

The Planning Authority confirm that the Core Strategy Table of the GCDP 2022-2028 recommends a density of 25 units per hectare in the Self-Sustaining Town of Gort. It is noted that planning permission was granted at a density of 28 units per hectare for the subject site under planning reference 24/60115. Having regard to the receiving environment and the density standard set out in the GCDP 2022-2028, the Planning authority considers this to be an acceptable density. The planning authority do not object to the provision of additional Town Centre zoning at this location as sought under MA 33 and MA 34.

Chief Executive's Recommendation

No Change

Ms. Loughnane advised that a decision on this was made on this earlier in the Meeting.

In response to a query from Cllr. Maher regarding density at this site, Ms. Loughnane advised that 25/ha density is recommended for Self-Sustaining towns, however there is some flexibility here given its location near the train station and the DM Standards allows for that.

Noted by the Members on the proposal of Cllr. Kinane, seconded by Cllr. Finnerty.

GLW – C169- 8 – EAMONN O'HARA

Ms. Loughnane went through submission received from Eamon O'Hara and read CE Response and Recommendation.

The submission outlines a number of observations relating to a site on Station Road which was addressed under MA32 and submission no. 136-7 (to the Draft Gort LAP.)

1. Policy Context and Compliance Requirement

The submission notes that GCC must ensure that the LAP is consistent with the following

- principles of proper planning and sustainable development
- National obligations regarding climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- sectoral, regional, and local climate adaptation plans
- Higher level policy documents including the NPF, RSES and GCDP 2022-2028
- Town Centre First Policy

The submission request is the Draft LAP is being developed in line with the NPF, as adopted in February 2025.

2. Zoning Request

The submission requests that the subject site is rezoned to Town Centre or Mixed use – including residential. The below map outlines the area of the site subject to the rezoning request and was included with the submission.



The submission notes that the site is brownfield and is adjacent to Gort Railway station. It considers that it could support a mix of uses including housing, employment and active travel infrastructure, and would be consistent with the LAP goals for sustainable regeneration, town centre connectivity and amenity enhancement.

3. Integrated Development Proposal and Planning Gain

The submission outlines planning gain components from their development proposal. This includes, transferring the riverside walkway to the local authority, provision of land for a footbridge crossing of Gort river, a cycle and pedestrian connection through the site and provision of land or Open Space/Amenity/Cycleway hub on the northern section of the site. It notes that the proposal would maintain a 10-metre setback along the Gort River, 30-metre setback from GCC land to the north of the site, dedication of land to widen Station Road and facilitate road widening through this site.

4. Policy Alignment and Sustainability Objectives

The submission sets out that their development proposal aligns with national and local policies, including, the Draft Gort LAP 2025-2031, GCDP 2022-2028, NPF (2025), compact growth, climate resilient infrastructure and sustainable mobility. It also outlines how it aligns with town centre first principles including, reuse of serviced urban land, vibrant mixed use communities and active travel and public realm enhancements.

It notes that the proposal would contribute to reduction in car dependency, redevelopment of a brownfield site, development of a sustainable, well-connected town core and alignment with climate action mitigation objectives through Brownfield regeneration adjacent to Gort Park and Ride train station.

It notes that planning authorities should adopt a sequential approach when zoning lands for development and it considers that the updated NPF objectives support the submission.

5. Reasonable Alternatives and Rezoning Justification

The submission sets out the following questions with respect to the zoning of the subject lands.

- Has the Council carried out a proper Reasonable Alternatives Assessment, under the SEA Directive, comparing this brownfield town centre site with peripheral greenfield alternatives?
- Has a robust planning rationale been provided for removing the previous Town Centre zoning designation?
- Given the newly offered open space, walkways, and road improvements, the zoning proposal should be revisited, as it delivers meaningful alignment with LAP and national objectives.

6. Zoning Maps and Site Reference

The submission includes a map outlining the site.

7. Conclusion.

The submission concludes by reiterating the request to zone the subject lands Town centre or Mixed Use (including residential), noting that it is in a strategic location and is consistent with local and national policies.

Chief Executive's Response

Submission noted.

The Planning Authority confirm that the Draft Gort Local Area Plan has been prepared to facilitate the growth of the town in line with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development. The LAP aligns with National, Regional and Local Policy, it is noted that the Office of the Planning Regulator reviews the Draft LAP and Material Alterations to ensure consistency with these higher level strategic documents and legislation.

It is noted that whilst the Town Centre First Plan is not a statutory document, the Planning Authority has had due regard to this Plan during the preparation of the Draft Gort LAP 2025-2031.

In the interest of clarity, the Planning Authority note that the subject site is zoned Open Space, Recreation and Amenity in the Draft Gort LAP 2025-31, and MA32 proposes rezoning the curtilage of Flowervale House from Open Space, Recreation and Amenity to Existing Residential.

The Planning Authority consider that the remaining Open Space/ Recreation & Amenity zoning in the Draft Gort LAP is appropriate in this location having regard to the receiving contextual environment, limited accessibility and the proper planning and sustainable development of Gort. It is noted that the Gort River Walk transverses the subject lands, the planning authority recognise that this is a significant green infrastructure asset for the community, and it is the intention of the Open Space/ Recreation & Amenity zoning to provide the opportunity to further develop this recreational asset whilst also protecting the biodiversity and wider environment. In addition, the request to rezone these lands is noted, however, due to the statutory provisions of the LAP plan making process, only minor modifications can take place at this stage of the process. The rezoning of land is not a minor modification.

Noted.

Noted. The Planning Authority highlight that any specific development proposals would be considered on a case -by-case basis during the development management process.

Noted. The Planning Authority highlight that any specific development proposals would be considered on a case -by-case basis during the development management process.

The Planning Authority has adopted a sequential approach to the zoning of land in Gort, and it is considered that there is sufficient lands zoned 'Town Centre' to support the sustainable growth of

Gort over the lifetime of the Plan. The subject site provides a significant green infrastructure amenity that can be protected and enhanced through the Open Space/Recreation and Amenity zoning.

The SEA included with the Draft LAP and Material Alterations to the Draft LAP has been carried in line with the requirements under Section 20 (3) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and Article 8 of the Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations 2004, as amended.

The Planning Authority has comprehensively reviewed the land use zonings for Gort during the preparation of the Draft Gort LAP 2025-2031. The subject site is located along Station Road with constrained access. Given the access restraints to the site, it is considered that a Town Centre or Mixed use Zoning would not be appropriate on the site. Furthermore, the Gort River Walk traverses the subject site, this is a significant community asset which can be protected and enhanced through the Open Space/Recreational and Amenity zoning.

The planning authority note that any specific development proposals would be considered on a case-by-case basis during the development management process.

Noted.

Noted.

Chief Executive's Recommendation

No change.

Cllr. Finnerty advised that the Members had spent considerable time considering this submission at Municipal Meeting held on 06th May 2025 and advised that they had visited the site the previous week. However, it was clear that they could not zone it as requested. Following careful consideration, the Members agreed to zone it Existing Residential on Flowervale House with the rest being left as Open Space/Recreation and Amenity. He stated he was aware that the Owner was not happy with that zoning and queried if it were possible to increase the boundary on the Residential Existing zoning area. Ms. Loughnane advised due to the statutory provisions of the LAP plan making process, only minor modifications can take place at this stage of the process and the rezoning of land was not a minor modification. Ms. Loughnane outlined the process to-date on this piece of land and explained that the Draft Plan went on public display, Members made Material Alterations to the Plan at Meeting held on 06/05/2025 and zoned a portion of it Residential Existing to accommodate the Flowervale House site. She advised that only minor alterations could be made to the plan at this point in the process as there was no facility to go back on public display.

Cllr. Harney asked about the size of the open space area and queried what kind of valuation was being accounted for on that property. In response, Ms. Loughnane advised that they were not experts in land valuation and therefore could not advise in relation to same. She explained that part of this area is zoned open space/recreation and amenity because it is within a flood zone. She

advised that expert consultants had prepared those maps and in the context of reviewing the Local Area Plan, it was reviewed in line with flooding guidelines etc.

Cllr. McClearn stated that while he was not present when this was discussed at Meeting on 06/05/2025, he was at a loss to understand why it went from being zoned Town Centre in previous plan to Open Space/Recreation and Amenity in the current plan. He stated that he was aware there was an issue around access restraints and queried if they were premature at referencing this planning issue at this point. He queried what would happen if they were to reject the CE Recommendation. Ms. Loughnane advised that it was zoned Open Space/Recreation and Amenity in the Draft Plan that went out on public display originally. She further advised that there was previous planning history on this site. Planning Application was refused by Galway County Council, and the refusal was also upheld on appeal. She explained that if they rejected CE Recommendation and reverted to zoning in the Draft Plan, the zoning would go back to Open Space/Recreation and Amenity. She again advised that if they rejected CE Recommendation, it would remove the Residential Existing Zoning on the site.

Cllr. Donohue stated that in her opinion, the site does not have constrained access. She highlighted the fact that Gort River Walk traverses these lands and the landowner in question has been so generous in allowing this and many people might not be aware of that. She stated that the Gort River Walk which has such recognition, would not be possible without the consent of the landowner who was now asking for amendment to zone subject lands Town Centre or Mixed Use. She again stated that it was beside the Train Station, and it made perfect sense for it to be zoned as requested by landowner. She referenced Ms. Loughnane's earlier comments that "only minor amendments could be made to the plan at this point of the process". She stated that "minor amendments" was not referenced on agenda and stated the proposal was to "make, amend or revoke the Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031".

Ms. Loughnane advised that the wording referenced by Cllr. Donohue was the wording on the agenda item but explained that the wording "minor amendments" is included within the legislation. She explained that changing the zoning without the possibility of going back on public display was not possible.

In response to query from Cllr. Finnerty, Ms. Loughnane advised that this land parcel was zoned Open Space/Recreation and Amenity in the Draft Gort LAP.

Cllr. Killilea stated that they had to abide by legislation and acknowledged that they did not have the ability or capacity to rezone the tract of land as requested.

Ms. Loughnane stated that at Meeting of 06/05/2025, they had adjourned the meeting to enable the Members to examine the maps, discuss it in detail and to give it due consideration. The final decision was with the Members, and it was agreed to rezone portion of lands (Flowervale House) Residential Existing with the remainder of it being zoned Open Space/Recreation and Amenity and that was what went out on public display.

Mr. O'Hara then attempted to address the Meeting but was advised that under Standing Orders Rules he was not allowed to do so. He proceeded to speak and stated that if the Members did not

amend Material Alteration as requested by him, he would be closing off access to the River Walk in the coming week and left the Meeting.

Cllr. McClearn stated that this was an unfortunate situation and said that there would be consequences in terms of access to the Town Walk because of this.

Cllr. Donohue queried if there was an opportunity to change this zoning on these lands.

Cllr. Killilea stated that Mr. O'Hara seemed to believe the tract of land was zoned Town Centre where in actual fact it was zoned Open Space/Recreation and Amenity.

Cllr. Kinane stated that she had received representation from Mr. O'Hara which she had acknowledged via email that morning. She sought clarity that the tract of land was zoned Open Space/Recreation and Amenity in the Draft Plan and not Town Centre and was advised by Ms. Loughnane that this was the case.

Ms. Loughnane reminded the Members that there was a previous planning application made on this site which was refused by Galway County Council and the refusal was also upheld on appeal in 2022. In response to Cllr. Donohue, she advised that they were eagerly awaiting notification from the Minister in relation to proposals for additional zonings which may possibly include a Variation to the County Development Plan.

Cllr. Maher advised that there were time constraints to be adhered to and the Members were required to decide on this Plan. He stated that he was disappointed with Mr. O'Hara's approach and decision. He stated that he had received no email from him and stated that he would be surprised that as funding has been allocated towards the River Walk, that access could be restricted as Mr. O'Hara had suggested.

Cllr. Finnerty stated that they had done the best they could do for him and advised that there were other access points that people could use if the main access was blocked as suggested by Mr. O'Hara. He stated that there was an agreement with the River Walk Committee to have use/access to River Walk and reminded the Members that they were here to do the best they could for the people of Gort.

Cllr. Donohue suggested as there was no directive from the Minister to-date, it was premature to decide on the plan at this stage. She queried if there would be an opportunity to vary this LAP based on the Minister's Section 28. In response, Ms. Loughnane stated that it depended on what was included in this Directive. She again reiterated to the Members that only minor modifications can be made to the plan at this point in the process. She stated that in the event of a motion being passed by the Members to change the zoning on this tract of land, it would not be possible to bring effect to this motion.

Cllr. Finnerty stated that he did not agree with tabling a motion on the matter. He stated that it would only be giving false hope to the landowner and may result in a worse outcome for him in the long-term. Cllr. Kinane concurred with Cllr. Finnerty's comments.

Cllr. Maher suggested that they move on as they have gotten solid advice from the Planning Team and they as Members had done everything they could in this case.

The Chief Executive Recommendation was proposed by Cllr. Maher, seconded by Cllr. Finnerty and agreed by the Members.

GLW – C169- 9 – EAMONN O'HARA

Ms. Loughnane went through submission received from Eamon O'Hara and read CE Response and Recommendation.

The submission relates to zoning for site on Station Rd, it provides details on how the site is brownfield and requests for site to be zoned Town Centre or Mixed use.

The submission sets out that the site is brownfield which was previously in use as Gort Mill and it also included the derelict Flowervale. The submission considers that the site would support a town centre or mixed use zoning.

It notes that retention planning permission was granted to O'Mahoney's Hardware outlet immediately adjoins the Station Road site.

The submission references that Aldi was part of this site and buildings relating to its previous use as a Cattle mart. It concludes by stating that these details show the brownfield nature of this site.

Chief Executive's Response

Submission noted.

The planning authority note the history of the site as detailed in the submission. However, the Planning Authority are of the opinion that Open Space / Recreation and Amenity is the most appropriate zoning for the site. In addition, the request to rezone these lands is noted, however, due to the statutory provisions of the LAP plan making process, only minor modifications can take place at this stage of the process. The rezoning of land is not a minor modification.

Noted. In the interest of clarity the O'Mahoney's Builders Merchants, Hardware & DIY Superstore is located to the east of Station Road and north of the train station, whereas the subject lands are located to the west of Station Road.

Noted.

Chief Executive's Recommendation

No change.

The Chief Executive Recommendation was proposed by Cllr. Finnerty, seconded by Cllr. Maher and agreed by the Members.

Ms. Loughnane advised that all submissions received on Material Alterations had been dealt with.

AA DETERMINATION

Ms. Loughnane brought up AA Determination on screen and read it to the Meeting. It was Noted by Members.

Ms. Loughnane advised it was now time for passing of the resolution to adopt the Plan with the amendments as decided by the Members. She advised that it was required of the Planning Authority to prepare a report for the OPR explaining the Councillors' rationale for any recommendations made by the OPR which were subsequently rejected by the Members. She again advised the Members that following the OPR's receipt of that Report, that it was possible that there may be a Draft Ministerial Direction issued on foot of the OPR's Report to the Minister regarding these rejections.

She then stated that should it be the case that a Draft Ministerial Direction were to be issued, that the Draft Direction must be put on public display for public consultation. She stated that any parts of the Local Area Plan that were not subject to a Ministerial Direction, in the instance that such a direction was to be issued, would come into effect six weeks following the ratification of the resolution to adopt the Local Area Plan today.

Ms. Loughnane then read to the Meeting the resolution to adopt the Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031.

RESOLUTION FOR MAKING OF GORT LOCAL AREA PLAN 2025-2031

Having considered the Local Area Plan, the Proposed Material Alterations, the CE Reports on submissions received (including that on the proposed material alterations) and the

- The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report for the Draft Plan
- The Appropriate Assessment (AA) Natura Impact Report for the Draft Plan
- The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for the Draft Plan
- The SEA Screening Determination for the Proposed Material Alterations and subsequent Environmental Report of the Material Alterations
- The AA Screening Determination for the Proposed Material Alterations and subsequent Natura Impact Report of the Material Alterations
- Written submissions relating to SEA, AA and SFRA made during the Plan preparation process
- Ongoing advice on SEA, AA and SFRA from the Council's agents
- The final, consolidated Natura Impact Report
- The final AA Determination

In accordance with the provisions of Section 20 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the Loughrea Municipal District Members agree, by resolution, to make the Gort Local Area Plan 2025 – 2031, as recommended by the Chief Executive at the Loughrea Municipal District

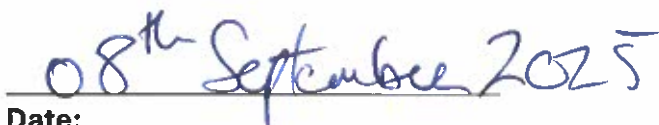
Meeting on 29th July 2025 and to proceed in accordance with Section 20 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) to publish notice of the making of the Local Area Plan.

The Resolution for making of the Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031 was proposed by Cllr. Finnerty, seconded by Cllr. Kinane and agreed by the Members.

CHRIOCHNAIGH AN CRUINNIU ANSIN.



Cathaoirleach:



Date: