

September 2024

Report

Draft Galway Wastewater Strategy

(Galway Metropolitan Area, Athenry, and Moycullen)

Issues Paper



Safeguarding our water for our future

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact us:

Contact details

Web:
www.water.ie

Twitter:
[@IWCare](https://twitter.com/IWCare)

Uisce Éireann
Galway Wastewater Strategy
1 Galway Business Park
Upper Newcastle Road
Dangan
Galway
H91 A3EF

Account information or account enquiries

9 AM – 5.30 PM, Mon–Fri

Phone:
0818 778 778 or **+353 1 707 2827**

ITRS:
1800 378 378 (for hard of hearing customers)

Water supply queries and emergencies

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Phone:
0818 778 778 or **+353 1 707 2827**

ITRS:
1800 378 378 (for hard of hearing customers)

This publication is available in Braille, in audio on CD and in large text format on request by calling **1800 278 278**.

Contents

Contents	3
1 Introduction	4
2 Galway Wastewater Strategy	5
2.1 Why do we need a Galway Wastewater Strategy?	6
2.2 What is the aim of the Galway Wastewater Strategy?	6
2.3 How will the Galway Wastewater Strategy be developed?	6
2.4 What consideration is given to the Recast Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive?	6
3 Legislative Context	7
4 This Issues Paper	8
5 What is happening now?	9
6 How to comment on this Issues Paper	10
7 Next Steps	11



1 Introduction

Uisce Éireann's responsibility is to ensure that all of its customers (households and businesses) receive a safe and reliable water supply and have their wastewater collected, appropriately treated, and returned safely to the environment. Uisce Éireann operates a network of wastewater treatment plants across Ireland with sole responsibility for cleaning and maintaining the public sewer network. These treatment plants vary in size due to the size and population of the area they serve.

There are stringent conditions attached to wastewater discharge licences to ensure the treated effluent is of good quality and does not negatively impact on the environment. All wastewater discharges (WWD) from areas served by Uisce Éireann sewer networks and discharging to the environment requires a wastewater discharge licence or certificate of authorisation from the Environment Protection Agency.

Uisce Éireann's investment in Ireland's wastewater infrastructure is benefiting communities around the country by supporting growth and development, enhancing water quality, and protecting the environment.



2 Galway Wastewater Strategy

As our population and economy grows, so does the volume of wastewater. We must collect and treat this wastewater so that the treated water can be safely returned to the environment. The purpose of a Wastewater Strategy is to assess wastewater treatment and network infrastructure in a defined geographic area to identify what future investment will be required in the medium and long term. Having adequate wastewater infrastructure is essential to facilitate housing provision and commercial development and to support sustainable growth.

The economic success of the Galway Metropolitan Area (GMA) and surrounding areas under the National Spatial Strategy and National Planning Framework has led to very significant growth in these areas. As a result of this growth, the wastewater infrastructure is challenged to keep pace with the increased demand for new serviced land for housing, commercial development, and industry. As a result of this, we have commissioned the Galway Wastewater Strategy.

The Galway Wastewater Strategy (GWS) study area, shown in Figure 1 below, comprises the Galway Metropolitan Area, Athenry, and Moycullen.



Figure 1 - Galway Wastewater Strategy Study Area

2.1 Why do we need a Galway Wastewater Strategy?

The Galway Wastewater Strategy study area is facing several challenges in relation to wastewater collection and treatment as detailed below:

- Increase in population
- Compliance challenges at existing wastewater treatment plants and sewerage networks
- Wastewater treatment and network capacity requirements to deal with current and future wastewater needs, and
- Pressures on the receiving waters from wastewater discharges.

2.2 What is the aim of the Galway Wastewater Strategy?

The aim of the Galway Wastewater Strategy is to assess wastewater treatment and network infrastructure in the study area to identify what future investment will be required in the medium and long term. The strategy will aim to identify sustainable wastewater management and treatment strategies and to develop a prioritised options list for the project horizon of 2030, 2055 and 2080.

The principals of the Galway Wastewater Strategy are to:

- Support the future development of the study area by providing the necessary capacity in wastewater drainage, management and treatment systems
- Enhance and protect the environment through effective wastewater management
- Prioritise sustainable options for effective wastewater management that deliver multiple benefits
- Identify key strategic options that will provide the necessary capacity in drainage, management and wastewater treatment systems up to 2080, including assessing scenarios to transfer wastewater from towns outside the study area to within the study area (such as Clarinbridge and Craughwell); and
- Ensure options developed account for climate change.

2.3 How will the Galway Wastewater Strategy be developed?

The strategy will include an analysis of the existing wastewater infrastructure along with data gathering, population and economic growth assessments, strategic environmental assessment, and consultation with interested stakeholders to identify medium and long-term solutions to the wastewater needs of the region.

The Galway Wastewater Strategy will deliver a sustainable drainage strategy that will address the needs of wastewater infrastructure. The strategy will offer achievable, strategic, and sustainable drainage, management, and treatment options, providing capacity to meet wastewater demand and support economic growth for the study area.

The sustainable drainage, management, or treatment solution will be consistent with statutory obligations and regulatory drivers designed to meet both national and international environmental objectives outlined in the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and Urban Wastewater Treatment Directives.

2.4 What consideration is given to the Recast Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive?

In 2022, the European Commission published its proposal for a revised Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (UWWTD). The revised or recast UWWTD is currently scheduled for agreement later in 2024 with implementation in Ireland likely sometime from 2026. While the updated directives may not come into effect before the completion of this strategy, the project team will make informed assumptions based on the most recent draft. The final strategy will incorporate structured review periods to ensure the plan meets Ireland's obligations under the revised directive. Each proposed project which may be an output of the strategy will undergo additional detailed design in compliance with relevant legislation at any given time.

3 Legislative Context

The Galway Wastewater Strategy is a regional level plan which provides the strategy for wastewater management between now and 2080. As part of this, the solutions necessary to facilitate provision of sustainable wastewater drainage systems and infrastructure for the study area will be identified. The Galway Wastewater Strategy will be influenced by Uisce Éireann national level plans and other relevant regional level plans including the National Wastewater Sludge Management Plan.

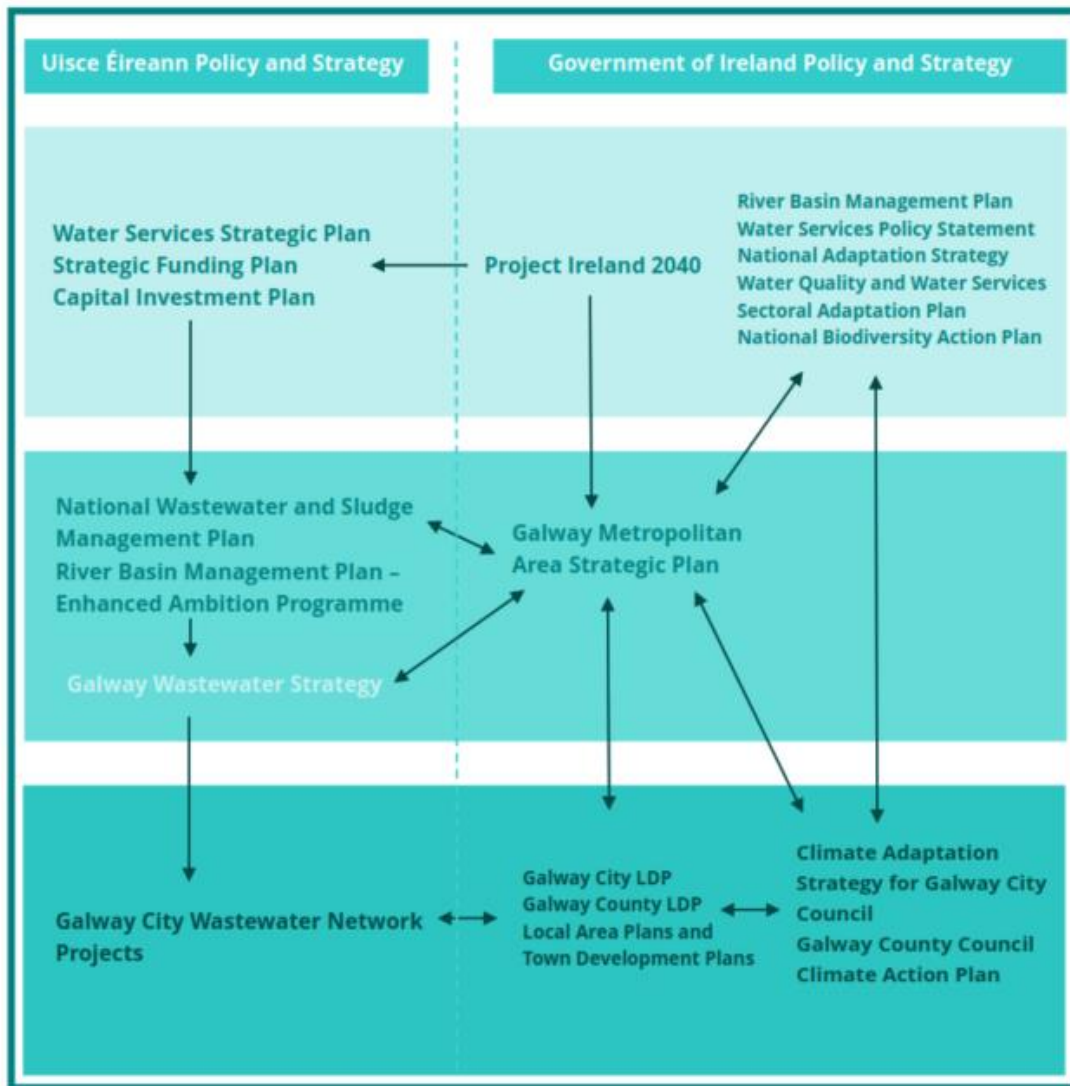


Figure 2 - Uisce Éireann plans and policies

The Galway Wastewater Strategy will identify the wastewater infrastructure required to align to the strategic objectives as set out in our Water Services Strategic Plan (WSSP) 2015 – 2040. These are:

- To meet customer expectations
- To provide effective management of wastewater
- Ensure a safe and reliable water supply, protect and enhance the environment, and
- Support social and economic growth and invest in our future.

The new WSSP 2050 is currently being updated and due to be adopted in early 2025. The Galway Wastewater Strategy will also inform future investment planning.

4 This Issues Paper

This Issues Paper has been drafted to support the development of the Galway Wastewater Strategy. It summarises the key issues influencing the study area and the approach taken to address the need for sustainable wastewater drainage options and wastewater infrastructure. In the draft Galway Wastewater Strategy, Uisce Éireann will present the strategy's long-term objectives and the broad delivery strategy for consultation. It will also outline how the strategy will be implemented and how Uisce Éireann will update the study.

The key objectives of the draft Galway Wastewater Strategy are as follows:

- Development of a sustainable wastewater drainage, management, and treatment strategy for the study area consistent with the EU Water Framework Directive and Urban Wastewater Treatment Regulations.
- Outlining of the requirements for wastewater drainage and treatment capacity capable of meeting the demands of the study area in the context of current Development Plans, the National Planning Framework (NPF), the RSES, and longer-term development potential of the area up to 2080. This includes Uisce Éireann asset planning requirements.
- Identification of alternative solutions for effective management of wastewater to protect and enhance the environment and to support social and economic growth aligning with Uisce Éireann Water Services Strategic Plan (WSSP) and the Government of Ireland Water Services Policy Statement (WSPS).
- Evaluation of alternative solutions and identification of the optimum wastewater drainage solutions having regard to whole-life cost and environmental performance.
- Identification of individual options/projects for implementing the recommendations of the Galway Wastewater Strategy together with the prioritisation of such implementation projects.
- Development of an adaptable strategy where outcomes are expected to be linked to volatile influences like climate and population change and confirming that strategy will achieve performance indicators and outcomes at least cost.

5 What is happening now?

In preparing the Galway Wastewater Strategy, Uisce Éireann needs to prepare some key environmental reports including a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report and Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report.

Uisce Éireann is seeking feedback on the Issues Paper, Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Scoping Report, and Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report for the Galway Wastewater Strategy.

The consultation will be undertaken for eight weeks from 26 September to 20 November 2024 during which time the consultation documents can be viewed and downloaded at www.water.ie/GWS.



6 How to comment on this Issues Paper

To make a submission please send it to us by email or post by 20 November 2024.

- Email: GWS@water.ie
- Post: Uisce Éireann Galway Wastewater Strategy, 1 Galway Business Park, Upper Newcastle Road, Dangan, Galway H91 A3EF

In order to assist stakeholders in making a submission as part of this consultation, we invite feedback on the following consultation questions; however, feedback is not limited to these questions.

1. Do you have any suggestions that you would like Uisce Éireann to consider in the preparation of its Galway Wastewater Strategy?
2. The Galway Wastewater Strategy study area comprises the Galway Metropolitan Area, Athenry, and Moycullen as well as receiving waters and Water Framework Directive waterbodies. Do you have any comments on this?
3. Do you have any comments on the approach to the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Galway Wastewater Strategy?
4. Section 2.1 in chapter 2 of the SEA Scoping Report outlines the objectives of the Galway Wastewater Strategy. Do you have any comments on these objectives?
5. Chapter 3 of the SEA Scoping Report sets out the current baseline environment conditions and future trends. The environmental issues are summarised in Table 3.20.1. Do you have any comments on these?
6. Uisce Éireann has reviewed plans, policies, and programmes relevant to the Galway Wastewater Strategy in chapter 4 of the SEA Scoping Report. Are there any others that should be considered?
7. Chapter 5 of the SEA Scoping Report sets out the environmental objectives that will be used to assess the Galway Wastewater Strategy and its potential effects on the environment. Table 5.2.1 summarises these objectives. Have you any comments on these?
8. Do you have any comments on the Appropriate Assessment Screening completed for the Galway Wastewater Strategy?
9. Do you have any comments on any key wastewater assets included within the Study Area including Wastewater Treatment Plants, Pumping Stations and Drainage Networks?
10. How would you like Uisce Éireann to communicate with you as the plan progresses?

All submissions made will be reviewed and relevant feedback incorporated into the environmental reports and the draft Galway Wastewater Strategy as appropriate. Submissions from individuals will be reported anonymously and feedback from organisations will be attributed to them.

7 Next Steps

Following the conclusion of this consultation, Uisce Éireann will review and consider feedback received from stakeholders. In Summer 2025, the draft Galway Wastewater Strategy will be published, and an eight-week public consultation will be undertaken.

The final Galway Wastewater Strategy will be published later in 2025. After this, Uisce Éireann will undertake periodical reviews of the Galway Wastewater Strategy. This will ensure the actions and objectives of the first Galway Wastewater Strategy are fit for purpose in the short, medium and long term and make recommendations for new or updated approaches.

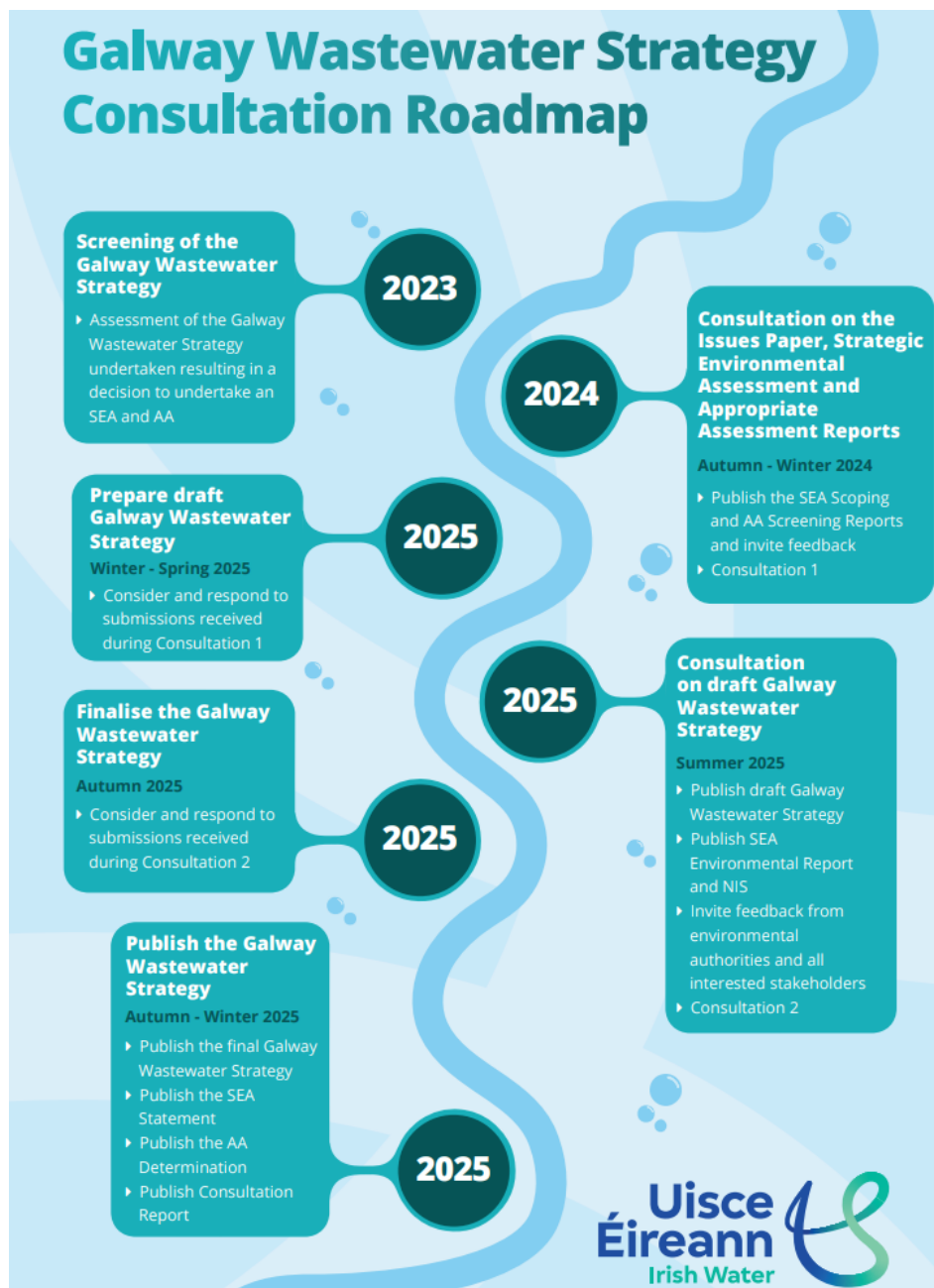


Figure 3 – Galway Wastewater Strategy Consultation Roadmap