



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

**Board Direction**  
**BD-005069-20**  
**ABP-305583-19**

The submissions on this file and the Inspector's report were considered at a Board meeting held on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

The Board decided to refuse permission, generally in accordance with the Inspector's recommendation, for the following reasons and considerations.

### **Reasons and Considerations**

1. Having regard to the location of the subject site, which is within an Area under Strong Urban Influence, as identified in the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities, issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in 2005 and having regard to National Policy Objective 19 in the National Planning Framework, which is "to facilitate the provision of single housing in the countryside based on the core consideration of demonstrable economic or social need to live in a rural area ... having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements", the Board is not satisfied, having regard to the documentation submitted with the application, that the applicants have established a demonstrable economic or social need to live at this site within this rural area, or that the applicants' housing need could not be satisfactorily met within an established smaller town or village/settlement centre (such as the nearby settlement of Ashbourne). It is therefore considered that the applicants do not come within the scope

of the housing need criteria as set out in national policy for a house at this location, notwithstanding the provisions of the current Meath County Development Plan. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to these Ministerial Guidelines and to the over-arching national policy, and be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. The site for the proposed development is in a rural area within the environs of the town of Ashbourne that is demonstrating, having regard to the existing pattern of development, pressure for individual dwellings, and where housing is restricted in accordance with the policies of the current Meath County Development Plan. Policy RD POL 3 of this Plan seeks “to protect areas falling within the environs of urban centres in this Area Type from urban generated and unsightly ribbon development and to maintain the identity of these urban areas”. This policy is considered reasonable. It is considered that, in the context of this pressure and pattern of development, the proposed development would contribute to the encroachment of random rural housing in the countryside, would represent backland development and would exacerbate this unsustainable pattern of haphazard development of individual dwellings in the rural area. The proposed development would, therefore, materially contravene this Development Plan policy and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

**Note:** In reaching its decision, the Board shared the concerns expressed by the Inspector in relation to public health, arising from the excessive concentration of development served by septic tanks and individual waste water treatment systems, particularly having regard to the site conditions as observed by the Inspector during her site inspection, and having regard to the high water table demonstrated by the documentation submitted by the applicants’ agent. The Board also concurred with the Inspector’s concern regarding the lack of ability of the applicants to improve the existing laneway serving the subject site, which the Board noted was confirmed by

the planning authority not to be a public road (but was outside the boundary of the subject site). However, the Board decided not to include these two issues as further reasons for refusal, as they would represent new issues in the context of the application and appeal, and in the light of the substantive reasons for refusal as outlined in its Order.

*[Secretariat - please issue a copy of this Direction to the parties with the Board Order.]*

**Board Member**

**Date:** 4<sup>th</sup> February 2020

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Philip Jones