

An
Bord
Pleanála

Board Direction
BD-009434-21
ABP-311030-21

The submissions on this file and the Inspector's report were considered at a Board meetings held on 14/09/2021 and 12/11/2021.

The Board decided to refuse permission, based on the following reasons and considerations.

Reasons and Considerations

The site of the proposed development is located within a “stronger rural area”, as identified in the Donegal County Development Plan 2018-2024, under which designation it is Council policy to consider proposals from prospective applicants in need of housing, provided that they can demonstrate compliance with other relevant policies in the County Development Plan. In this regard, Policy RH-P-2 states that proposals for new rural dwellings should integrate successfully into the landscape and not cause a detrimental change to, or further erode, the rural character of the area. Moreover, it is national policy, as set out in National Policy Objective 19 of the 2018 National Planning Framework and the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities, issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and local Government in April 2005, 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.

Having regard to the site location proximate to the large town of Letterkenny, to the extent of residential development in the vicinity which could be regarded as ribbon development in a unzoned rural area, and to the documentation submitted with the application and appeal, while the Board acknowledges that the applicants are

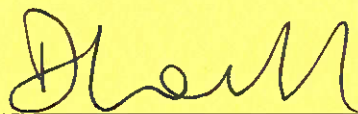
actively engaged in farming activity, the need to live in this location not sufficiently justified, having regard to the distance from the site to the farmholding at Glendowan. In the absence of an identified locally based, site- specific economic or social need to live in the area, it is considered that the proposed development would contribute to the development of random rural housing in the area, would exacerbate the existing pattern of ribbon development and would militate against the preservation of the rural environment and the efficient provision of public services and infrastructure. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

In deciding not to accept the Inspector's recommendation to grant permission, the Board considered that, notwithstanding the planning authority's assessment which was accepted by the Board's inspector that the applicant complied with rural housing policy as set out in the relevant policies and objectives of the Donegal County Development Plan 2018-2024, the proposed development at this location was not justified, taking account of the fact that:

- the applicants currently live within 1.8kms of the site within the Letterkenny town boundary,
- the proposed development is not close to the farmholding and it has not been demonstrated that living in this rural area is essential for the purposes of carrying out their agricultural profession,
- additional rural-generated housing in the area would further erode the rural character of the area, and
- it has not been demonstrated that an economic or social justification to live at this location has been provided.

In these circumstances, the Board considered that the proposed development would exacerbate urban sprawl in this rural area and would not accord with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

Board Member



Dave Walsh

Date: 12/11/2021