

An
Bord
Pleanála

Board Direction
BD-016230-24
ABP-318045-23

The submissions on this file and the Inspector's report were considered at a Board meeting held on 03/05/2024.

The Board decided to refuse permission for the following reasons and considerations.

Reasons and Considerations

The Board is not satisfied that the applicant has demonstrated that the deficiency in facilities for youth, which was identified in the Community and Social Infrastructure Audit that was submitted with the parent permission and addressed by the allocation of community floor space in the permitted Neighbourhood Centre, is no longer required. To permit a change of use is contrary to policy CPO 7.36 of the Wicklow County Council Development Plan 2022-2028 and therefore, 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 the sites planning history, specifically the Community and Social Infrastructure Audit report that accompanied the application for the Residential and Neighbourhood Centre, (An Bord Pleanála reference 305058-19). This report concluded that the only social infrastructure gap in the area was meeting rooms to be used by Wicklow Youth Services, the Audit states a provision of 260 square metres has been provided to facilitate this identified need. The Audit went on to state:

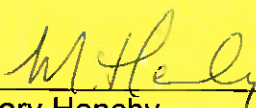
This audit did identify there is limited commercial medical facilities in the immediate area. While there are some within the wider area, the majority of these are outside the five minutes' drive distance of the catchment area. As a result, a medical suite is also proposed as part of this proposal. There are two other community units identified as part of development measuring circa 45 square metres and circa 59 square metres. It is envisaged that these will also be a small medical facility or else office/ meeting space to support Wicklow County Council youth services. The Board noted that Wicklow County Council Development Plan Policy, CPO 7.36 states:

In accordance with Objective CPO 7.5, where a deficiency in facilities for teenagers/young adults and/or indoor community space is identified in an area, the proposed development should include proposals to address this deficiency in consultation with young people and appropriate stakeholders.

The Board therefore considered that the change of use to medical, that reduces the available community space to 44.61 square metres, does not accord with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area as it is not demonstrated that a community space of this size adequately addresses the identified need for community space, and that the reduction in community space has not been substantiated by a social and community audit.

Neither has the applicant justified the scale of medical centre now proposed in what is a Neighbourhood Centre. The development plan (table 10.1) states the function of a Neighbourhood Centre is to provide a range of convenient and easily accessible retail outlets and services within walking distance for the local catchment population. The Board considered that this required further assessment, but due to the substantial reason for refusal did not pursue this issue.

Board Member



Mary Henchy

Date: 03/05/2024