

An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

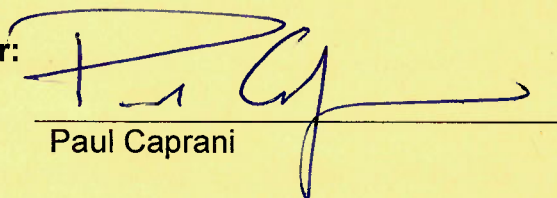
Direction
CD-021446-25
ACP-323365-25

The submissions on this file and the Inspector's report were considered at a meeting held on 02/12/2025.

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

Planning

Commissioner:


Paul Caprani

Date: 02/12/2025

DRAFT WORDING FOR ORDER

Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to the location of the proposed development in a rural area a significant distance from the existing GAA facility in Athlone Town, it is considered that the proposed development would be principally dependent on private car transport and would therefore facilitate and exacerbate unsustainable travel and commuting patterns to and from the site. The Commission is not satisfied that the applicant has demonstrated that there are not more suitable locations in closer proximity to Athlone which would adequately serve the needs of the GAA Club. The proposed development, accordingly, is not considered to comply with the criteria set out in Objective CPO 4.18 of the Westmeath County Council Development Plan

which sets out that proposals for new social and community infrastructure are located within existing settlement boundaries which are within walking distance of local services or in rural areas close to existing rural infrastructure where it is demonstrated that the development is intended to serve. It is also considered that the proposal is contrary to Objective CPO 7.9 which supports the planned provision of easily accessible social, community, cultural and recreational facilities. It is considered that the proposed development would therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Note: The Commission also had some concerns about the proximity of the floodlighting and playing activities in terms of stray footballs and sliotars (notwithstanding the use of 12m high ball stops), going beyond the confines of the site and onto the motorway thereby posing a significant risk and danger to motorway traffic. The Commission also noted that the proposal would intensify traffic to and from the site which is accessed from the Regional Road (R446), which is listed as a Strategic Road in the County Development Plan. CPO10.60 of the Development Plan seeks to protect strategic regional roads listed in Table 10.2, against development where a maximum speed limit applies, except in exceptional circumstances, in order to protect the carrying capacity and safety of such roads. The Commission decided not to pursue these matters further having regard to the substantive reason for refusal.