



Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2018

Planning Authority: Offaly County Council

Planning Register Reference Number: PL2/17/296

APPEAL by Birr Rugby Football Club (RFC) and BPI Investments care of Braniff Associates of 5 Windsor Avenue North, Malone Road, Belfast against the decision made on the 19th day of June, 2018 by Offaly County Council to refuse permission.

Proposed Development: (1) Construction of purpose built two storey and part three storey (staircase to roof area for maintenance) HSE Primary Care Unit and all associated siteworks incorporating on the ground floor a common entrance lobby, HSE Day Centre, an own door Pharmacy Unit, three number own door Doctor's Surgeries and ancillary accommodation. The first floor accommodation will comprise of a HSE Day Hospital with Treatment and Consulting Rooms for a range of health services together with Administration Offices and ancillary accommodation. (2) Provision of 94 car parking spaces within the Primary Care Unit site, together with the construction of a single storey Bin Store, ESB Substation and Client switchroom, ancillary services and siteworks and provision of a pedestrian access route from rear of Primary Care Unit to the adjacent County Arms Hotel. (3) Upgrade works to existing Birr Rugby Football Club training pitch adjoining the proposed Primary Care Unit to consist of raising and levelling training ground, provision of flood

lighting for night time training and new fencing to enclose training ground. (4) Provision of new flood lighting to two number existing Birr RFC rugby pitches located to south east of existing Birr RFC clubhouse. (5) Provision of new All-Weather Pitch located to south west of existing Birr RFC Clubhouse to include new flood lighting and fencing. (6) Construction of a new single storey Changing Rooms block for Birr RFC to south east of existing Clubhouse, provision of a new car park to incorporate 47 number parking spaces and all associated siteworks. (7) External upgrade works to existing access route to Birr RFC clubhouse. (8) Implementation of new traffic signal controls at existing Railway Road (N52)/Scurragh Road three arm priority junction. New works to include removal of existing Zebra controlled pedestrian crossing (as located opposite the Applegreen Service Station), its replacement with dedicated pedestrian crossing facilities on all three arms of new traffic controlled junction arrangement. The proposed junction works include provision of dropped kerbs, tactile paving and implementation of MOVA controller and associated ducting works at Scurragh, Townparks, Birr, County Offaly.

Decision

REFUSE permission for the above proposed development in accordance with the reasons and considerations set out below.

Matters Considered

In making its decision, the Board had regard to those matters to which, by virtue of the Planning and Development Acts and Regulations made thereunder, it was required to have regard. Such matters included any submissions and observations received by it in accordance with statutory provisions.

Reasons and Considerations

1. Having regard to the zoning provisions of the Birr Town and Environs Development Plan 2010 – 2016 (extended until 2020), in which the subject site for the primary care centre and associated retail development is zoned for Open Space/Sports/Recreational Amenity, and where such development is stated to be “not normally permitted”, it is considered that the proposed development would contravene materially objective BTEO 15-2 of the Development Plan, and would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
2. It is considered that the location of the proposed development, on a site outside of, and removed from, the town centre of Birr, is inappropriate, having regard to the overall provisions of the Birr Town and Environs Development Plan 2010 – 2016 (as extended), and the Board is not satisfied that alternative sites for such a facility, closer to or within the town centre, have been adequately investigated or discounted as not being suitable. Accordingly, the proposed development would be contrary to the aim of core strategy of the Development Plan, which seeks to support development within and adjoining the town centre in a sequential manner, and would be contrary to policy BTEP15-01, which specifies that a sequential approach is to be adopted to the development of the Birr and Environs plan area. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the orderly development of Birr Town, and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Philip Jones

**Member of An Bord Pleanála
duly authorised to authenticate
the seal of the Board.**

Dated this day of 2018.