

Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended

Planning Authority: Louth County Council

Planning Register Reference Number: 2560321

APPEAL by Bluemont Developments Limited care of the Planning Partnership against the decision made on the 3rd day of October 2025 by Louth County Council to refuse permission for the proposed development.

Proposed Development: Permission for development for a Large-Scale Residential Development (LRD) to modify a permitted (and under construction to be known as 'Gullion Park') Strategic Housing Development (SHD) permission (Ref: ABP-303891-19). The proposed development comprises the provision of two number one bed apartment units at ground floor level of Block 1, and all associated and ancillary (internal and external) works and development in lieu and a change of use / conversion of permitted Creche, at Gullion Park, Inner Relief Road and Dublin Road, Finnabair South, Dundalk, County Louth.

Decision

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



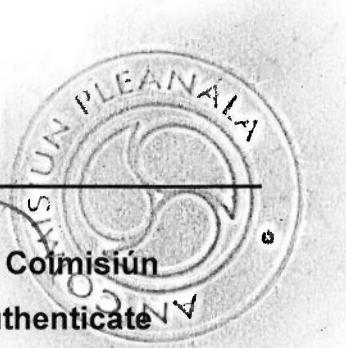
Reasons and Considerations

The proposed development, which seeks to omit the permitted childcare facility and replace it with two residential units, is considered to be contrary to the provisions of the Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001) and the Louth County Development Plan 2021–2027 (as varied). The application does not adequately justify the application of a 50% discount to the two-bedroom units in calculating childcare demand, nor does it provide sufficient site-specific demographic evidence to support this assumption. Furthermore, the submission fails to demonstrate, through verifiable capacity analysis or consultation with local service providers, that the demand for childcare places can be absorbed within existing facilities in the immediate area. Policy Objective SC 35 of the development plan requires that proposals for residential development facilitate the sustainable provision of childcare facilities, having regard to the 2001 Guidelines and in consultation with the Louth County Childcare Committee. In the absence of a robust evidence base, the proposed omission of the childcare facility is considered to 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 Commission considered the totality of the documentation on file, including the submissions from the Louth County Childcare Committee (LCCC), the planning authority and the applicant. Specifically, on the issue of the discount for two-bedroom units from the requirement to be counted for the purposes of contributing to childcare need generation, the Commission did not share the opinion of the Inspector that a 50% discount was reasonable on the facts as presented. This level of discount would require more detailed assessment, such as, for example, an indication of occupancy rates for comparable housing units in the local area, or further detail of the emerging demographic profile of the area, to enable a local, contextual judgement be made.

Furthermore, the Commission considered that, on the basis of the information on file, it is not demonstrated that there is compelling evidence of specific and adequate childcare resources in the immediate area such that the permitted facility on site can reasonably be removed in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The Commission also considered that the provision of such compelling evidence (either in this application or a subsequent application) should have the benefit of confirmed engagement with the LCCC. In the current case the engagement with the LCCC is such that the committee does not approve of the omission of the permitted creche. While LCCC is not the sole determinant of whether or not the permitted creche should be removed or otherwise kept, their opinion constitutes one material consideration as part of an overall planning assessment. This is supported by local statutory plan policy (Policy Objective SC35 refers).

To conclude, the Commission considered that it has not been satisfactorily demonstrated that the permitted childcare facility at the overall scheme would not be required, or not play an important role at this location, or that its omission is supportable, either in policy or in specific case details terms.



Chris McGarry
Planning Commissioner of An Coimisiún
Pleanála duly authorised to authenticate
the seal of the Commission.

Dated this 10th day of February 2026

