



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ABP 308160-20

Development

Construction of new single storey dwelling with a proprietary waste-water treatment system, replacement of neighbouring septic tank with a new proprietary waste-water treatment system and new entrance onto the public road.

Location

Rath Hill, Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath.

Planning Authority

Meath County Council

Planning Authority Reg. Ref.

RA 200809

Applicant(s)

Amy Ennis and Joe O'Connell

Type of Application

Permission

Planning Authority Decision

Refuse Permission

Type of Appeal

First Party

Appellant(s)

Amy Ennis and Joe O'Connell

Observer(s)

None

Date of Site Inspection

23rd February 2021

Inspector

Brendan Coyne

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1.0 Site Location and Description

1.1. This site (0.39 ha) is located on the southern side of a local road (L62081), in the rural townland known as Rath Hill, approx. 1.5 km to the south of Dunshaughlin town centre in County Meath. The site as outlined comprises, for the most part, an undeveloped agricultural field located between two detached dwellings to its either side. The remainder of the site as outlined, along its north-western side, comprises land within the curtilage of an existing dwelling with agricultural buildings to its rear. The ground level of the site is relatively flat. The site has a road frontage width of c. 50 metres and a depth of c.70 metres. Its roadside boundary is defined with a hedge and an agricultural entrance at its eastern end. The eastern side boundary is defined with hedging and a block wall and coniferous trees define the boundary between the greenfield part of the site and the existing dwelling to the north-west. The south-western boundary is defined with a timer post and wire fence. The immediate surrounding area is characterised by agricultural land and linear 'ribbon' type housing along the L62081 road serving the site. The M3 motorway is located c. 300m to the south, adjoining the south-western boundary of the applicant's family landholding, as outlined in blue. The L62081 local road is a cul-de-sac road subject to an 80kph speed.

2.0 Proposed Development

Permission sought for the following;

- Construction of a detached single storey 3-bedroom dwelling (198 sq.m.),
- New proprietary wastewater treatment system and percolation area,
- Replacement of a neighbouring septic tank with a new proprietary wastewater treatment system and percolation area,
- New entrance onto the public road,
- Associated site works.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

Meath County Council **REFUSED** permission for the proposed development. The 2 no. reasons for refusal were as follows;

1. The application site is located in a rural area outside any designated settlement and in a Rural Area under Strong Urban Influence as defined in the Meath County Development Plan 2013 - 2019 where development which is not rurally - generated should be more properly located in settlement centers. It is the policy of the Guidelines for Sustainable Rural Housing and the Meath County Development Plan 2013 - 2019 to restrict housing in this area to those who are intrinsically part of the rural community or who have an occupation predominantly based in the rural community. It is considered, based on the information submitted, that the applicant has not established a site specific rural generated housing need for a dwelling at this location. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the policies of the Guidelines for Sustainable Rural Housing and the Meath County Development Plan 2013 - 2019 and would establish an undesirable future precedent and be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
2. It is considered that taken in conjunction with existing development along a 250m stretch of country road in the immediate vicinity, the proposed development would constitute undesirable ribbon development in a rural area, contrary to the provisions of policy RD POL3 of the Meath County Development Plan 2013 - 2019 and the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines, 2005. The proposed development by itself and by the precedent it would establish for other relevant development would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Report

- The application site is located in a rural area under strong urban influence.

- The applicant resides in Dunshaughlin town and has done so since 1995.
- The applicant grew up and currently works in Dunshaughlin.
- The applicant currently stays 4/5 nights a week in Rath Hill with her grandparents. Documentary evidence has been submitted confirming same, including a letter from the applicant's grandfather, bank statements (dated 2013-2019) and invoices (dated 2016 – 2019).
- The applicant resided in Rath Hill from 1993 – 1995.
- Details are provided of the applicant's family links with the area.
- The applicant's circumstances have not changed from previous planning applications RA160909 and RA180103.
- The applicant has not demonstrated a rural generated housing need for the proposed dwelling.
- The proposed development would be contrary to policy RD POL 3 of the Meath County Development Plan 2013 – 2019.
- The proposed dwelling, if permitted, would constitute ribbon development within the definition of the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines.
- There are 8 no. existing detached houses located in a linear form along the road with two infill sites. The subject site is one of these infill sites.
- The area has come under significant development pressure in recent years.
- The design of the proposed dwelling is considered acceptable, in accordance with the Meath Rural House Design Guide.
- The proposed vehicular entrance was considered acceptable under previous application RA180103 and remains the same under the subject application.
- The Planning Authority's screening for Appropriate Assessment conclude the proposed development (entire project), by itself or in combination with other plans and developments in the vicinity, would not be likely to have a significant effect on European Site(s). On this basis, a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (Natura Impact Statement) is not required.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

None

4.0 Planning History

RA180103 Permission REFUSED in 2018 to Amy Ennis for the construction of a 1.5 storey dwelling with proprietary wastewater treatment system and percolation area, new entrance onto a public road, replacement of a neighbouring septic tank with a new wastewater treatment system and all associated site works. The Reasons for Refusal were as follows;

1. The application site is located in a rural area outside any designated settlement and in a Rural Area under Strong Urban Influence as defined in the Meath County Development Plan 2013 - 2019 where development which is not rurally-generated should be more properly located in settlement centres. It is the policy of the Guidelines for Sustainable Rural Housing and the Meath County Development Plan 2013 - 2019 to restrict housing in this area to those who are intrinsically part of the rural community or who have an occupation predominantly based in the rural community. It is considered, based on the information submitted, that the applicant has not established a site specific rural generated housing need for a dwelling at this location. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the policies of the Guidelines for Sustainable Rural Housing and the Meath County Development Plan 2013 - 2019 and would establish an undesirable future precedent and be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
2. It is considered that taken in conjunction with existing development along a 250m stretch of country road in the immediate vicinity, the proposed development would constitute undesirable ribbon development in a rural area, contrary to the provisions of policy RD POL3 of the Meath County Development Plan 2013 - 2019 and the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines, 2005. The proposed development by itself and by the precedent it would establish for other relevant development would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

RA160909 Permission REFUSED in 2016 to Amy Ennis for the construction of a 1.5 storey dwelling with proprietary wastewater treatment system and percolation area, new entrance onto public road, replacement of neighbouring septic tank with a new wastewater treatment system and all associated site works. The Reasons for Refusal were as follows;

1. The application site is located in a rural area outside any designated settlement and in a Rural Area under Strong Urban Influence as defined in the Meath County Development Plan 2013 - 2019 where development which is not rurally-generated should be more properly located in settlement centres. It is the policy of the Guidelines for Sustainable Rural Housing and the Meath County Development Plan 2013 - 2019 to restrict housing in this area to those who are intrinsically part of the rural community or who have an occupation predominantly based in the rural community. It is considered, based on the information submitted, that the applicant has not established a site specific rural generated housing need for a dwelling at this location. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the policies of the Guidelines for Sustainable Rural Housing and the Meath County Development Plan 2013 - 2019 and would establish an undesirable future precedent and be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
2. It is considered that taken in conjunction with existing development along a 250m stretch of country road in the immediate vicinity, the proposed development would constitute undesirable ribbon development in a rural area, contrary to the provisions of policy RD POL3 of the Meath County Development Plan 2013 - 2019 and the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines, 2005. The proposed development by itself and by the precedent it would establish for other relevant development would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

RA150850 Permission REFUSED in 2015 to Amy Ennis for the construction of a 1.5 storey dwelling with proprietary wastewater treatment system and percolation area, new entrance onto public road, replacement of neighbouring septic tank with a new

wastewater treatment system and all associated site works. The Reasons for Refusal were the same as those given under RA180103 and RA160909 detailed above.

DA60610 Permission REFUSED in 2006 to John Summerville for the construction of a two storey house, double garage, a wastewater treatment system and percolation area. The Reasons for Refusal (as stated in the Planning Report) related to ribbon development, local housing need and traffic.

5.0 Policy and Context

5.1. Development Plan

Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 is the statutory plan for the area. The following provisions are considered relevant:

Zoning: The site is located on un-zoned land, outside a zoned town.

Rural Area Type The application site is situated within a 'rural area under strong urban influence' – as indicated on Map 10.1 of the Development Plan.

Policies for **Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence** are set out in **Section 10.3** of the Development Plan as follows;

RD POL1 To ensure that individual house developments in rural areas satisfy the housing requirements of persons who are an intrinsic part of the rural community in which they are proposed, subject to compliance with normal planning criteria.

RD POL2 To facilitate the housing requirements of the rural community as identified while directing urban generated housing to areas zoned for new housing development in towns and villages in the area of the development plan.

RD POL3 To protect areas falling within the environs of urban centres in this Area Type from urban generated and unsightly ribbon development and to maintain the identity of these urban centres.

Section 10.2 Rural Settlement Strategy - Policies are as follows;

RUR DEV SP 1 To adopt a tailored approach to rural housing within County Meath as a whole, distinguishing between rural generated housing and urban generated housing in rural areas recognising the characteristics of the individual rural area types.

RUR DEV SP 2 To ensure that individual house developments in rural areas satisfy the housing requirements of persons who are an intrinsic part of the rural community in which they are proposed, subject to compliance with normal planning criteria. An assessment of individual rural development proposals including one-off houses shall have regard to other policies and objectives in this Development Plan.

Section 10.4 refers to 'Persons who are an Intrinsic Part of the Rural Community' and states that the Planning Authority recognises the interest of persons local to or linked to a rural area, who are not engaged in significant agricultural or rural resource related occupation, to live in rural areas. For the purposes of this policy section, persons local to an area are considered to include:

- Persons who have spent substantial periods of their lives, living in rural areas as members of the established rural community for a period in excess of five years and who do not possess a dwelling or who have not possessed a dwelling in the past in which they have resided or who possess a dwelling in which they do not currently reside;
- Persons who were originally from rural areas and who are in substandard or unacceptable housing scenario's and who have continuing close family ties with rural communities such as being a mother, father, brother, sister, son, daughter, son in law, or daughter in law of a long established member of the rural community being a person resident rurally for at least ten years;
- Returning emigrants who have lived for substantial parts of their lives in rural areas, then moved abroad and who now wish to return to reside near other family members, to work locally, to care for older members of their family or to retire, and;
- Persons, whose employment is rurally based, such as teachers in rural primary schools or whose work predominantly takes place within the rural area in which they are seeking to build their first home, or is suited to rural locations such as farm hands or trades-people and who have a housing need.

The Planning Authority also recognises that exceptional health circumstances may require a person to live in an environment or close to family support. In such cases, the exceptional health circumstances would require supporting documentation from a registered medical practitioner and a disability organisation supporting a planning application. In the absence of any significant environmental, access or traffic reasons for refusal and the proposal adheres to sensitive design and siting criteria, the

Planning Authority will consider granting planning permission, subject where appropriate to conditions regarding occupancy.

Section 10.5.2 Ribbon Development

Appendix 15 Rural Design Guide

5.2. Other Relevant Government Guidelines

5.2.1. Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2005)

The guidelines require a distinction to be made between 'Urban Generated' and 'Rural Generated' housing need. A number of rural area typologies are identified including rural areas under strong urban influence which are defined as those within proximity to the immediate environs or close commuting catchment of large cities and towns. Examples are given of the types of circumstances for which 'Rural Generated Housing Need' might apply. These include 'persons who are an intrinsic part of the rural community' and 'persons working full time or part time in rural areas'.

5.2.2. National Planning Framework – Project Ireland 2040

NPO19 Ensure, in providing for the development of rural housing, that a distinction is made between areas under urban influence, i.e. within the commuter catchment of cities and large towns and centres of employment, and elsewhere:

- In rural areas under urban influence, 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 and siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans, having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements;
- In rural areas elsewhere, facilitate the provision of single housing in the countryside based on siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans, having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements.

5.3. **Natural Heritage Designations**

The River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (Site Code 002299) and SPA (Site Code 004232) is located c. 12.2 km to the north-west of the site.

The Rye Water Valley/Cartron SAC (Site Code 001398) is located c. 13.5 km to the south of the site.

5.4. **EIA Screening**

- 5.4.1. Having regard to the limited nature and scale of the proposed development and the absence of any connectivity to any sensitive location, there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development. The need for environmental impact assessment can, therefore, be excluded at preliminary examination and a screening determination is not required.

6.0 **The Appeal**

6.1. **Grounds of Appeal**

- 6.1.1. A first-party appeal was received from Brendan English, Architectural Services Consultant, representing the appellants Amy Ennis and Joe O'Connell, against the decision made by the Planning Authority to refuse permission for the proposed development. The following is a summary of the grounds of appeal.

- The applicants are an intrinsic part of the rural community, do not own any property and have demonstrated a genuine need for a dwelling at the subject site.
- The applicant Amy Ennis was born and raised in her grandparents dwelling which adjoins the site and has spent a substantial period of her life living in this house.
- The subject site has been gifted to the applicant by her grandfather Patrick Summerville, who owns and operates a modest farm to the side/rear of the subject site.
- The applicant Amy Ennis currently resides 3-4 nights of the week in her grandparent's home, along with her partner and son, in order to assist on the farm and look after her grandparents.

- For the remaining part of the week, the applicants live with Amy's parents in Dunshaughlin, which is a stressful situation for all involved.
- The subject site is an infill site, on a cul-de-sac just 200m outside of Dunshaughlin town centre. The site is one of the last remaining infill sites on the cul-de-sac.
- There are c. 14 houses on the cul-de-sac, of which 5 of the houses are occupied by relatives of Amy Ennis. This highlights the applicant's close family ties with the area.
- While the area may be defined as 'rural', it essentially borders Dunshaughlin urban boundary, is an infill site and is suitable for the provision of a house.
- Reference made to the 'Sustainable Rural Housing - Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2005) with an emphasis on the need to make a balanced assessment for development in close proximity to large towns experiencing pressure for development.
- The proposed development, if permitted, would not set a precedent for ribbon development.
- There are countless examples within close proximity of the subject site where 5 or more dwellings exist within a 250m stretch.

6.1.2. Documentation submitted with the appeal includes;

- Aerial Photograph showing the application site, the location of the applicant's grandparents dwelling on the adjoining site to the north-west and neighbouring dwellings along the L62081 road serving the site.
- Copy of Meath County Council's decision to refuse permission.

6.2. **Planning Authority Response**

The Planning Authority is satisfied that all matters outlined in the grounds of appeal were considered in the course its assessment of the planning application, as detailed in the Planning Officer's report.

6.3. **Observations**

None

7.0 **Assessment**

7.1. Having examined the application details and all other documentation on file, and having regard to relevant local/regional/national policies and guidance, I consider that the main issues in this appeal are as follows;

- Rural Housing Need
- Ribbon Development
- Screening for Appropriate Assessment

I am satisfied that all other issues were fully addressed by the Planning Authority and that no other substantive issues arise. The issues for consideration are addressed below.

7.2. **Rural Housing Need**

7.2.1. The Planning Authority refused permission for the proposed development on the grounds that the application site is located in a rural area outside any designated settlement and in a Rural Area under Strong Urban Influence as defined in the Meath County Development Plan 2013 - 2019 where development which is not rurally - generated should be more properly located in settlement centers. The Planning Authority state that it is the policy of the Guidelines for Sustainable Rural Housing and the Meath County Development Plan 2013 - 2019 to restrict housing in this area to those who are intrinsically part of the rural community or who have an occupation predominantly based in the rural community. Based on the documentation submitted, the Planning Authority consider that the applicant has not established a site specific rural generated housing need for a dwelling in this location and as such would be contrary to the policy of the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities and the Meath County Development Plan 2013- 2019.

7.2.2. The appellants Grounds of Appeal regarding this Reason for Refusal is detailed in Section 6.1 above. In summary the appellants contend that;

- The applicant Amy Ennis is intrinsically linked to this part of the rural community.
- Amy Ennis was born and raised in her grandparents dwelling which adjoins the site to the north-west and has spent a substantial period of her life living in this house.
- The applicants live with Amy Ennis's grandparents 3-4 nights of the week in order to assist on the farm and look after Amy's grandparents.
- For the remaining part of the week, the applicants live with Amy's parents in Dunshaughlin, which is a stressful situation for all involved.
- The subject site has been gifted to the applicant by her grandfather Patrick Summerville, who owns and operates a modest farm to the side/rear of the subject site.
- The Applicants do not own a dwelling and have a genuine need for a dwelling at the subject site.

7.2.3. Policy RD POL 1 of the Development Plan states that it is policy of Meath County Council to ensure that individual house developments in rural areas satisfy the housing requirements of persons who are an intrinsic part of the rural community in which they are proposed. Section 10.4 of the Development Plan refers to 'persons who are an intrinsic part of the rural community' and sets out specific criteria whereby the Planning Authority will support proposals for individual dwellings on suitable sites in rural areas. These criteria are detailed in Section 5.1 above.

7.2.4. The site is located is located c. 1.5km to the south of Dunshaughlin town centre, on un-zoned rural lands. The site is located within a 'Rural Area Under Strong Urban Influence' as detailed on Map 10.1 of the Meath County Development Plan. The Planning Authority, in its Reasons for Refusal No. 1 incorrectly defines the area as a 'Strong Rural Area'. 'Rural Areas Under Strong Urban Influence' are defined in Section 2.7 of the Development Plan in accordance with Rural Area Types as set out Section 3.2 of the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2005).

7.2.5. 'Rural areas under strong urban influence' are defined in Section 3.2 of the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2005) as rural areas

exhibiting characteristics such as proximity to the immediate environs or close commuting catchment of large cities and towns, rapidly rising population, evidence of considerable pressure for development of housing due to proximity to such areas and pressures on infrastructure such as the local road network. The Guidelines distinguish between rural and urban generated housing. 'Rural generated housing' is described as housing needed in rural areas within the established rural community by persons working in rural areas or in nearby urban areas. 'Urban generated housing' is described as housing in rural locations sought by persons living and working in urban areas, including second homes.

- 7.2.6. For 'rural areas under strong urban influence', Policy RD POL 2 of the Meath County Development Plan seeks to facilitate the housing requirements of the rural community, as identified, while directing urban generated housing to areas zoned for new housing development in towns and villages in the area of the development plan. Policy Objective 19 of the National Planning Framework requires that, in rural areas under urban influence, the core consideration for the provision of a one-off rural house should be based on the demonstratable economic or social need to live in the rural area, having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements.
- 7.2.7. Having reviewed the documentation submitted with the application and appeal, I consider that the applicants do not come within the scope of the housing needs criteria as set out in Section 10.4 of the Development Plan and do not have a demonstrable economic or social need to live in this rural area, given the close proximity of the site to Dunshaughlin and the viability of this town.
- 7.2.8. Insufficient information has been submitted with the appeal demonstrating that the applicant Amy Ennis has spent a substantial period of her life living in the surrounding rural area or is originally from this rural area. As detailed in the documentation submitted, the applicants currently reside 3-4 days a week with Amy Ennis's grandparents on the adjoining site to the north-west and 3-4 days a week with her parents in Dunshaughlin town. The applicants have not provided details of their current place of employment. In the absence of this information, the applicants have not adequately demonstrated an economic need for a house at this location. I am not satisfied, therefore, that the applicants need for a house at this location is not urban generated.

- 7.2.9. I acknowledge the applicant's case put forward of their need for a house, given their living arrangements with Amy Ennis's parents and grandparents. Notwithstanding this, given the close proximity of the site c. 1.5km from Dunshaughlin town centre and having regard to the viability of this town, I am not satisfied that the applicant's need for a house could not be satisfactorily met in the nearby fully serviced, urban area of Dunshaughlin or other nearby established smaller towns or village/settlement centres.
- 7.2.10. Given that the applicants do not have a demonstrable economic or social need to live in this rural area, and given the close proximity of the site to Dunshaughlin, I am not satisfied that the provision of a dwelling at this location complies with Policy RD POL 2 of the Development Plan, which seeks to direct urban generated housing to areas zoned for new housing development in towns and villages. Such development would, therefore, be contrary to the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2005) and National Policy Objective 19 of the National Planning Framework. The proposed development would, therefore, contribute to the encroachment of random rural development in the area and would militate against the preservation of the rural environment and the efficient provision of public services and infrastructure. For this reason, I recommend that the proposed development be refused permission.

7.3. Ribbon Development

- 7.3.1. The Planning Authority Report refused permission for the proposed development on the grounds that taken in conjunction with existing development along a 250m stretch of country road in the immediate vicinity, the proposed development would constitute undesirable ribbon development in a rural area, contrary to the provisions of policy RD POL3 of the Meath County Development Plan 2013 - 2019 and the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines, 2005. The Planning Authority consider that such development, by itself and by the precedent it would establish for other relevant development, would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The appellants contest this reason for refusal as detailed in Section 6.1 above.
- 7.3.2. There are 5 no. dwellings located on adjoining sites to the south-east of the subject site and 2 no. dwellings on adjoining sites to the north-west. The proposed development would result in a 8th house in a row along a stretch of 260 metres of rural road. It is my view that the proposed development, taken in conjunction with existing

development in the vicinity of the site, would consolidate and contribute to the build-up of ribbon development in an open rural area. This would militate against the preservation of the rural environment and lead to demands for the provision of further public services and community facilities. Such development would be contrary to Section 10.5.2 of the County Development Plan and the Sustainable Rural Planning Guidelines 2005 which recommends against the creation of ribbon development. For this reason, I recommend that the Planning Authority's second reason for refusal should be upheld and that the proposed development be refused permission on these grounds.

7.4. Screening for Appropriate Assessment

- 7.4.1. The closest Natura 2000 site to the appeal site is the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (Site Code 004232) and SAC (Site Code 002299) which is located 12.2 km to the north-west of the site. The Rye Water Valley/Cartron SAC (Site Code 001398) is located c. 13.5 km to the south of the site. Taking into consideration the nature and scope of the proposed development, the wastewater treatment system proposed to serve the dwelling, the details provided on the site characterisation form and the existing residential and agricultural development in the immediate vicinity, I am of the opinion that no appropriate assessment issues arise and that the proposed development would not be likely to have a significant effect, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, on any Natura 2000 site.

8.0 Recommendation

- 8.1.1. I recommend that planning permission should be refused for the reasons and considerations set out below.

9.0 Reasons and Considerations

1. The site of the proposed development is located within a "Rural Area Under Strong Urban Influence" as set out in the "Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities" issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in April, 2005. Furthermore, the subject site is located in an area that is designated under urban

influence, where it is national policy, as set out in National Policy Objective 19 of the National Planning Framework, 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 documentation submitted with the planning application and the appeal, it is considered that the applicants do not have a demonstrable economic or social need to live at this site within this rural area. It is considered, therefore, that the applicants do not come within the scope of the housing need criteria as set out in the Guidelines and in national policy for a house at this location. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the Ministerial Guidelines and to the over-arching national policy, notwithstanding the provisions of the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. It is the policy of the planning authority as set out at section 10.5.2 of the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019, to control urban sprawl and ribbon development. This policy is considered to be reasonable. In addition, Appendix 4 of the Ministerial Guidelines, 'Sustainable Rural Housing, Guidelines for Planning Authorities', published in 2005 by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, recommend against the creation of ribbon development. It is considered that the proposed development would be in conflict with the development plan policy and with the Ministerial Guidelines because, when taken in conjunction with existing development in the vicinity of the site, it would consolidate and contribute to the build-up of ribbon development in an open rural area. This would militate against the preservation of the rural environment and lead to demands for the provision of further public services and community facilities. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Brendan Coyne
Planning Inspector

24th February 2021