



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report

ABP-308730-20

Development	Construction of two storey dwelling with single storey annex.
Location	Lismore, Newtownforbes, Co. Longford
Planning Authority	Longford County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	20179
Applicant(s)	Gearóid & Pamela Mac Con Charraige
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Permission
Type of Appeal	Third Party
Appellant(s)	Enda & Nicola Crossan
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	29 th of January 2021
Inspector	Angela Brereton

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The application site is located to the south of the town of Newtown Forbes and to the north of Longford town. It is a greenfield site in the rural area and is accessed via the local road network (L5004) to the west of the N4. The site is rectangular in shape and is to be taken off the larger field area to the south. There is a hedgerow along the northern, western and roadside site boundaries. There are a few trees interspersed in the hedgerow along the roadside frontage and along the northern site boundary.
- 1.2. There is a water filled ditch within the site to the rear of the roadside hedgerow and as shown on the map there are ditches along the northern and western site boundaries. The site while relatively flat, appears to be on the drier part of the field. On my site visit I noted the land to the south outside the site, within the greater field area had rushes growing thereon.
- 1.3. There is an existing detached two storey house and garage to the north of the site. This is a substantial stone faced house set back on the adjoining site. There is a stone wall and railings along the site frontage. The set back for the vehicular entrance is immediately to the north of the subject site and there is a set back area along the frontage. The road in this section is relatively straight. Sight lines are slightly more restricted in a northerly direction. The proposed access is shown adjacent to that of the existing house. There is a grass verge along the frontage of the subject site.
- 1.4. There are a number of one off houses along this road, these include single and two storey of varying design types.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. This proposal is for the construction of a two-storey dwelling with single-storey annex, roadside entrance, boundary fence, installation of a wastewater treatment system with percolation area, connection to existing services and all ancillary site works.
- 2.2. Drawings including a Site Layout Plan, Floor Plans and Elevations have been submitted.

2.3. A letter has been submitted from the landowner giving his consent for the applicants to apply for permission on his lands.

2.4. A letter has been included from Irish Water relative to pre-connection enquiry.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

On the 28th of October 2020, Longford County Council, granted permission for the proposed development subject to 12no. conditions. These include conditions providing for a restriction on occupation for the first 7years, design considerations and external finishes, wastewater treatment, disposal of surface water, diversion of overhead services (ESB/Eircom), construction of the proposed alternative entrance submitted as part of the F.I response on the 05/10/20, boundary treatment, landscaping and development contributions.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planner's Report

This has regard to the locational context of the site, planning history and policy and to the submissions made. They requested that Further information be sought to in summary include the following:

- To relocate the proposed dwelling in a southerly direction to increase the separation distance between the existing dwelling on the adjoining site and the proposed dwelling.
- To relocate their proposed entrance in a southerly direction ensuring sightlines can still be achieved.
- To indicate additional proposed landscaping, where necessary along the northern boundary to ensure the minimisation of visual impact from a northern direction.

Further Information Response

The Applicant's response includes the following:

- They have regard to the width of the site and the distance to the northern site boundary and from the neighbouring dwelling and consider that altering this would reduce the usable nature of the garden of the subject site a recreation area (Fig.1 refers).
- They provide details of the rationale behind the proposed entrance i.e to maximise the southern aspect of the site; to minimise the removal of existing boundary hedging ditches and stone walls; to retain an existing road side tree and improve visibility. The current proposed entrance is their preferred option.
- An alternative plan has been submitted showing the distance from the existing entrance increased in a southerly direction. This is to achieve the desirable sightlines without having to remove the roadside tree.
- They provide figures relative to visual impact and views from the site of the northern site boundary. They note screening provided by hedgerows along this boundary.
- They provide that if deemed necessary this hedgerow can be augmented.
- They do not consider that the proposed dwelling will cause overlooking in view of the distance between the existing and proposed dwellings and the screening provided by hedgerows.

Planner's Response

They had regard to the F.I response submitted and considered that the applicant has adequately addressed the issues raised to the satisfaction of the P.A. They noted that the applicants have indicated their connection to the area and that the proposed dwelling will be their permanent place of residence and recommended that permission be granted subject to conditions.

3.3. Other Technical Reports

None noted on file.

3.4. Prescribed Bodies

Irish Water - They have no objections subject to recommended conditions.

3.5. Third Party Observations

Submissions have been received from the adjoining residents to the north of the site. As these are the subsequent Third Party Appellants their concerns are considered further in the context of the Third Party Appeal below.

4.0 Planning History

The Planner's Report provides that there is no recent planning history associated with the subject site.

Appellants dwelling

Reg.Ref.04/325 – Permission granted subject to conditions to Enda & Nicola Crossan for a two storey type dwelling house with detached garage, entrance, boundary fence/wall, installation of onsite sewerage treatment system with percolation area and site works.

This has been constructed to the north of the subject site.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. National Planning Framework – Project Ireland 2040

This refers to the growth and development of rural areas and the role of the rural town as a catalyst for this. It is recognised that the Irish countryside is, and will continue to be, a living and lived-in landscape focusing on the requirements of rural economies and rural communities, based on agriculture, forestry, tourism and rural enterprise, while at the same time renewing and regenerating rural towns and avoiding ribbon and over-spill development from urban areas into the countryside and protecting environmental qualities. Objectives 18 and 19 refer.

5.2. Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2005

These guidelines seek to provide for the housing requirements of people who are part of the rural community in all rural areas, including those under strong urban based pressures. The principles set out in the guidelines also require that new

houses in rural areas be sited and designed to integrate well with their physical surroundings and generally be compatible with the protection of water quality, the provision of a safe means of access in relation to road and public safety and the conservation of sensitive areas.

5.3. Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021

Settlement Strategy

Section 2.1.6.2 provides the Key Aims of the Settlement Strategy and this includes strengthening the urban and village network in accordance with the Regional Planning Guidelines, the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines and the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines.

Newtownforbes is described as a Tier 5 Services Settlement and is to the north of the site. Longford town is a Tier 1 Settlement to the south east. Tier 6 refers to Rural Service Settlements & Hinterland. The site is located in an unserviced rural area.

Section 2.1.6.5 refers to Sustaining Rural Areas/Open Countryside and to the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines.

Policy CS11: Areas other than those defined as part of the settlement hierarchy and lands zoned as part of this plan, shall be designated as rural for the purposes of the plan.

This includes regard to people who are part of the rural community/rural generated housing need.

Policy CS12 provides (a) the categories of applicant to be considered for the development of housing in the rural area with a view towards sustaining rural communities. This includes that (b) *Speculative and unsustainable urban generated housing development will be discouraged in the rural area* and (c) *Occupancy Conditions may be attached in accordance with Ministerial Guidelines to protect the policy application and integrity.*

Rural areas include those under persistent and substantial decline and in the environs of urban areas.

Policy CS13 notes that the Council shall strictly apply policy CH12 in the vicinity of Designated Settlements in order to prevent over-proliferation of urban generated one

off housing in the rural area. This includes ribbon development along the approaches to Longford Town and the R194 and R198 in particular.

Development Standards – Rural Areas

Section 3.2.2.2 refers to Rural Areas – Requirements and Standards for Development. Policies HOU RUR 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10 are noted.

Policy HOU RUR 7 as designated under Section 3.2.2.1 of the Longford County Development Plan, which aims to protect water quality, provide a safe means of access and the conservation of sensitive areas and habitats.

Policy HOU RUR 8 provides for effluent disposal, drainage and water supply.

HOU RUR 9: refers to Access and Vehicular Circulation.

HOU RUR 10: refers to Design and Siting and notes that proposals should respect their location in terms of siting, design, material and landscaping.

Annex 3 of the said Plan sets out the rural design guidance.

5.4. Code of Practice Wastewater Treatment Disposal Systems serving Single Houses

This document (2009) by the EPA relevant to single houses (p.e <10) and replaces SR6:1991 and the EPA Manual 2000 for 'Treatment Systems for Single Houses'. The objective is to protect the environment and water quality from pollution and it is concerned with site suitability assessment. It is concerned with making a recommendation for selecting an appropriate on site domestic wastewater treatment and disposal system if the site is deemed appropriate subject to the site assessment and characterisation report. The implementation of the Code is a key element to ensure that the planning system is positioned to address the issue of protecting water quality in assessing development proposals for new housing in rural areas and meeting its obligations under Council Directive (75/442/EEC).

5.5. EU Water Framework Directive

The purpose of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) 'is to establish a framework for the protection of inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater.

5.6. Natural Heritage Designations

The site is c.2.5kms from the Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA and c.2kms from the Brown Bog SAC.

5.7. EIA Screening

Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development (a single dwelling) and the absence of any significant environmental sensitivity in the vicinity/ 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

David Mulcahy Planning Consultants Ltd has submitted a Third Party Appeal on behalf of Enda and Nicola Crossan, who reside in the adjacent dwelling house to the north. This includes the following in summary:

- The proposed development represents urban generated housing, is too close to the northern boundary of the site, breaches an established building line, will have a significant impact on residential amenity on the adjoining dwelling owner, involves a design which seriously injures the visual amenity of the local area and gives rise to serious concerns about the potential impact on a vulnerable regionally important aquifer.
- The site is owned by a third party not related to the applicant.
- They note that under the Draft Longford CDP 2021-2027 the site is located within a Rural Area under Strong Urban Influence (Fig.5.4 refers).
- They have some concerns that the use of the single storey annex as a granny flat was not advertised in the Public Notices.

- They note the applicants are not from the local area and consider that this is urban generated housing and does not comply with National Policy Objective 19 of the National Planning Framework 2020. They refer to other Board decisions to refuse relative to this issue.
- They highlight the Supreme Court decision in respect of the Balz judgement. They consider that the Planning Authority's assessment of the further information is inadequate.
- The dwelling should be moved in a southerly direction so that it is more centrally located within the site in order to be consistent with the established pattern of development in the area. It would also be further away from and have less of an impact on the Appellant's established residential amenity.
- There is ample space to move the dwelling whilst still retaining a decent sized garden to the site.
- They suggest a minimum distance of 15m distance off the northern boundary would be appropriate.
- The proposal does not respect the building line set by the Crossan's dwelling to the north. They submit that this is a severe breach of building line which is contrary to the established pattern of development in the area.
- The proposed dwelling should be set back in line with the front elevation of the Crossan dwelling to the north.
- They are concerned that the proposal particularly the first floor windows will cause overlooking to the Crossan property and have regard to the windows on the northern elevation.
- The 22m distance referred to by the applicant is not relevant as it relates to opposing first floor windows and normally only applies to back to back housing in an urban context.
- They submit that while the hedgerow along the northern site boundary provides some screening, this is less likely in the winter months.
- The design of the proposed dwelling is unorthodox based on the concept of trying to reflect a cluster of farm buildings.

- The proposed development will appear incongruous when set within the context of established one-off dwellings along this road.
- It does not harmonise with the built form or architecture of these dwellings, particularly the Appellant's dwelling.
- The visual impact will be more acute as the siting of the dwelling will be close to the road and no landscaping is proposed to screen it.
- The site is located over a regionally important aquifer with a vulnerability rating of high. They refer to poor permeability encountered on their site and note that site improvement works were carried out. These are not included as part of the proposed development and this raises serious concerns for the aquifer given the close proximity of the two sites.
- They note no assessment from the Council's Environment Department on the on-line planning system.
- They provide a conclusion and submit that the proposed development should be refused having regard to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

6.2. Applicant Response

The Applicants have submitted a First Party response to the Third Party appeal and this includes the following:

- They submit that the Third Party grounds of appeal are unsubstantiated and inaccurate. They consider the appeal vexatious in part.
- Longford County Council has reviewed the Applicant's connections to the local area and deemed them to satisfy the criteria to meet local needs.
- They note that the cases referred to by the Appellant's refer to other appeals made by their agent Mr Mulcahy to the Board. They do not consider them relevant to the subject case.
- They refer to other cases where a long distance commutes were justly considered by the planners.

- Since making this application Pamela Mac Con Charraige's job has become more community based and closer to the application site.
- They do not consider that this proposal is contrary to National Policy Objective 19 of the National Planning Framework 2020.
- The Appellant's dwelling is not centrally located, and they dispute that this dwelling establishes a building line.
- They consider that the Appellant's dwelling is atypical of the local built environment of the area.
- They have addressed the overlooking issue in detail in their F.I response.
- The architectural rational for their design has been clearly explained in their design statement that accompanied their original application, and this was accepted by the Council.
- They refer to pre-planning meetings held with the Council where the design concept was discussed.
- They provide that there are several examples of the local vernacular architecture that they are trying to reflect in their design.
- They note the Appellant's concerns about permeability and provide that the consulting engineer also compiled their Site Characterisation Report for their proposed dwelling. This offers adequate solutions to the issue of permeability.
- They submit that the Board can dismiss this appeal as vexatious, frivolous, without substance and lodged to delay the development. They request that the Board uphold the decision of Longford County Council and grant permission for the proposed development.

6.3. Planning Authority Response

There is no response noted on file from the Planning Authority to the Grounds of Appeal.

7.0 Assessment

7.1. Rural Settlement Strategy – Local Needs

- 7.1.1. The site is located in the rural area on an unserviced site. It is served by the local road network and is to the south of the Newtownforbes which is described in the Settlement Hierarchy in the Longford CDP 2015-2021 as a Tier 5 Serviced Settlement, and to the north of Longford which is described as the Tier 1 Principal Town in the County. It is noted that Policy HOU RUR 3 provides that outside designated settlements and development envelopes there shall be a presumption against extensive urban generated commuter development, ribbon development etc. It includes that applicants shall be required to submit a statement indicating the sustainability of the proposal which shall part of the assessment of the application.
- 7.1.2. Policy HOU RUR 4 requires the inclusion of an occupancy condition for development in rural areas under strong urban influence. It is noted that the Council's permission includes Condition no.2 which provides for such an occupancy condition. On site I noted a number of one-off houses along the local road, so while the site (in view of one house immediately to the north) would not comprise ribbon development, it is considered that this is an area under strong urban influence. Therefore, local needs Policies CS12 and CS13 as referenced in the Policy Section above apply.
- 7.1.3. Regard is also had to the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines 2005 where the strategy indicates that there should be a presumption against urban-generated one-off housing in rural areas adjacent to towns. It is put forward that if the applicant has a proven local need and there should not be a blanket ban on genuine applicants in the area. Details of the Applicant's local need have been submitted.
- 7.1.4. Details submitted with the application in the Design Statement provide that the Applicants currently live in the village of Newtownforbes and have done so for the past year. Gearóid grew up in the village and lived in the locality until going to college. His family home, where his family still reside, is c.2.9km from the location of the proposed site. Both applicants work within 30 miles of the site. The First Party response to the appeal provides that Pamela's HSE job has become community based and that she now covers an area which starts 10km from the site. Gearóid still works 20km from the site as stated in the original application.

7.1.5. Regard is also had to National Policy Objective 19 of Project Ireland 2040. This provides: *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 the 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.*

7.1.6. In this case I would consider that the applicants have not demonstrated that they have a particular need to reside on this site in the rural area. They appear to be urban based and that it has not been demonstrated that the applicants comply with the criteria relative to National Policy Objective 19, or to the local needs criteria as specified in Policy CS12 of the Longford CDP 2015-2021.

7.2. Design and Layout

7.2.1. Annex 3 of the Longford CDP 2015-2021 sets out the Rural Design Guidance for County Longford, for example, from site selection and layout to building design and orientation. The Guide recommends positioning a dwelling so it be integrated on a site having regard to existing shelter, topography and vegetation and design which draws from traditional forms of development and good design practice, efficiency and sustainability. This has regard to Detailed House Design, noting that simple shapes work best in the countryside. Also, that new developments should take their cues from vernacular architecture that exists in the area. They note that simple clean roof lines are preferable to fussy complicated shapes. Care should be taken to preserve the vertical emphasis on the front or visible elevation. They note that outbuildings were commonly grouped around the main dwelling, creating a courtyard or street like enclosure or grouping of buildings and the importance of this clustering effect. They also have regard to the use of traditional naturally and locally sourced materials such as wood, stone and to fenestration. The Guide notes that contemporary and inventive design is a welcome addition to the rural countryside, but that it is site specific and should be expertly and sensitively handled.

7.2.2. The Applicant has submitted a Design Statement with the application. This provides that the house has been sympathetically designed in the vernacular style following the guidance of the Longford CDP 2015-2021, with particular attention given to

Annex 3; Rural Design guidance and the 'Traditional buildings on Irish farms' book from the 'Built and Natural Heritage Series Two', published by the Heritage Council in conjunction with Teagasc. It is provided that Newtownforbes is a rural village in the Longford County with many farms, traditional farmhouses, cottages and farm buildings in its environs. The Applicants consider it important to reflect the vernacular architecture of the area in the design of 'An Scioból Támh'.

- 7.2.3. They provide that the dwelling has been designed to reflect a 19th century small holding, consisting of a cottage in the traditional style, an outbuilding and a haybarn similar to those built as a result of the 1948 Farm building scheme. All blocks centre around a 3/4 courtyard farmyard. It is submitted that the design is to look like a grouping of farm buildings and to sit into the landscape as opposed to dominating it. The highest part of the design is the ridge of the curved haybarn roof, which they submit is over 2m lower than the ridgeline of the adjacent neighbouring property. Fig. 3 provides a view from the L5004 looking north showing massing in relation to existing buildings.
- 7.2.4. It is provided that the proposal has been designed as a single family residence. The cottage to the east has been designed so that it may be used for accommodation for the applicant's elderly parents and will revert back to single family dwelling if and when the need is met.
- 7.2.5. They submit that in keeping with the design aesthetic of a grouping of farm buildings, the two-storey haybarn will be clad in corrugated metal on three sides with contemporary doors and glazing panels matching those of the southern façade. This façade will be finished in a nap plaster in a colour similar to hay. The cottage is to be furnished in roughcast render and will have raised concrete barges and a corrugated metal roof which they provide is reminiscent of the move from thatch to the newer roofing material of the early twentieth century. Wooden sash style windows and a traditional timber style door are to be used on the east elevation and contemporary glazing to the other elevations. The outbuilding/playroom is to be finished in a similar style, but is to be subordinate to the cottage by virtue of a setback and its lower roof level. It is provided that the project has been designed to a Passiv Haus standard, it will utilise a bank of solar panels for heating water and supplementing electricity and a rainwater harvesting system.

7.3. Impact on the Character and Amenities of the area

- 7.3.1. The Third Party concerns relative to the design and layout are noted. They consider that the proposal will impact adversely on their property, result in overlooking and loss of privacy and breach the building line set by their house. Also, that it will not integrate well into the site and will appear incongruous when set in the context of the established dwelling to the north. In addition, they submit that the proposed design will significantly detract from the visual amenity of the area, it will be a standalone house design that has been superimposed on the landscape rather than trying to integrate with the status quo.
- 7.3.2. I would consider that in this case it is preferable that the design of the proposed not be similar or reflect that of the existing house to the north and that a more traditional or contemporary design in accordance with the Council's Design Guide might be acceptable. However, I would be consider, that while the front elevation showing the single storey element would appear acceptable in form, the barn like structure connecting at the rear would appear overly large and out of character with the concept of a dwelling house and more like an agricultural building that is visually more dominant than the front element.
- 7.3.3. Therefore, the functionality/suitability and external finishes (including the use of agricultural corrugated metal sheeting) of the design of this type of building appearing as a dwelling house is questionable. It is neither contemporary nor traditional in form. If the site were larger and the proposal were well set back and screened from the road it might work better, but I would consider that it will appear overly dominant and out of context on the subject site. Therefore, the design and layout of the proposed house type would not comply with Policy HOU RUR 10 (relative to design and siting) or the Rural Design Guide as provided in Annex 3 of the Longford CDP 2015-2021.

7.4. Access issues

- 7.4.1. The Design Statement submitted also has regard to Access and Roadside frontage. It is noted that the site is to be accessed from the Local Road L5004. The building is to be set back 18m from the road edge to accord with standards. This notes that the road frontage boundary has been set back 3m from the road edge and the entrance

set back a further 2m with 45 degree splays to ensure that sightline requirements are met. As shown on the plans originally submitted, the proposed entrance is shown to be located close to the northern boundary of the site and that of the adjoining property to the north.

- 7.4.2. As part of the Council's F.I request, and in response to the submission from the neighbouring dwelling to the north, they requested that the entrance be moved back in a southerly direction so that it would not be adjacent to the Third Party entrance. The Applicant's response provides that their preference is for the proposed entrance at the northern corner of the site. They consider that this maximises the southern aspect of the site, minimises the removal of existing hedgerows, ditches, stone walls etc as per Annex 3 Design Guide of the Longford CDP 2015-2021. An alternative plan has been submitted with the distance increased to 21m from centreline to centreline of the existing and proposed entrances. It is provided, that this would achieve the required sightlines without the removal of the existing semi-mature sycamore located in the centre of the eastern road adjacent boundary of the site.
- 7.4.3. The Site Layout Plan submitted does not show full 90m sightlines, however I noted on site that this appears to be a straight stretch of road and the existence of the grass verge improves visibility at the setback from the road edge. It is noted that the Council have specified this alternative more southerly entrance as per Condition no.7 of their permission. If the Board decides to permit, I would recommend, that this alternative entrance be conditioned.

7.5. **Suitability of Site for Disposal of Waste Water**

- 7.5.1. Regard is had to the Code of Practice Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (p.e.< 10). Table 6.2 of this EPA Code of Practice provides the minimum depth requirements for on-site systems discharging to ground i.e.1.2m and at the base of polishing filter 0.9m.i.e minimum depth of unsaturated subsoil to bedrock and the water table. Table 6.3 provides an interpretation of percolation test results and "in cases where $3 < P < 75$ the site may be suitable for a secondary treatment system and polishing filter at ground surface or overground if the soil is classified as Clay..." The 'T' and 'P' test values given should be within this range.

- 7.5.2. A Site Characterisation Form has been submitted with the application. This notes that the site is within the area of a Regionally Important Aquifer and is of high vulnerability. The bedrock type is *Visean Limestones (undifferentiated)*. The Third Party concerns relative to any potential for impact on this aquifer are noted. It is provided that surface and ground water as a resource are potential targets as the Groundwater Response is R2 (1). Annex B of the CoP refers to Groundwater Protection Response – Table B.2 ‘Response Matrix for on-site Treatment Systems’ refers. However, the Site Characterisation Form provides that the proposal maybe acceptable subject to normal good practice (i.e. system selection, construction, operation and maintenance with CoP).
- 7.5.3. It is provided that the depth of the trial hole was 2.10 (tests were carried out 15/06/2020). The soil/subsoil is described as silt/clay. The Evaluation notes that after 48hours there was no water table level evident below ground surface. In addition, there was no mottling evident anywhere in the trial hole. They noted that a clay layer existing at the invert T Test Holes. They provide details referring to Table C.3 of the CoP ‘Subsoil Classification Against T Values for 400 T-Tests (Jackson 2005)’. They note that the likely T value is 60.00. Percolation tests carried out noted that the Average T_{100} of the 3no. test holes was 119.00. Step 4 provides the Standard Method (where $T_{100 < 210 \text{ MINUTES}}$). This notes that the T Test passed with an average of T value of 53.11mins/25mm. Also, that this result is within the range for the soil type described in Table C3 of the CoP where a Clay layer was encountered at the invert level of where the T Test was carried out i.e from Table C.3 the T value should be > 37mins/25mm. It is subsequently noted that the P Test passed with an average P value of 35.31mins/25mm.
- 7.5.4. It is noted that the Site Characterisation Form does not include a recommendation relative to the type of proprietary wastewater treatment system that would be appropriate for use on this site. The Planner’s Report provides that it is proposed to install a packaged wastewater treatment and polishing filter. The Site Layout Plan shows the location of the proposed waste water treatment system and percolation area is to be to the rear of the dwelling house.
- 7.5.5. The Site Characterisation Form notes that there are drainage ditches within 250m to the west of the site. However as noted on the mapping there are drainage ditches to the north, west and to the rear of the road frontage boundaries of the site which were

seen to be water filled on the day of the site visit in January. Table 6.1 of the CoP provides the Minimum Separation Distance in Metres of a pwwts from an open drain or stream is 10m. While the application site did not appear wet, I noted rushes growing on the wider field area to the south of the area for the subject site. It is noted that the location of the neighbouring wwts has not been shown. Having regard to the conditions on site and the proximity to these ditches, I would be concerned that a proliferation of private wwts in this area would not be desirable.

- 7.5.6. Details of the proposed water source have not been given, although the Site Notice mentions connection to existing services. It is also noted that a pre-connection enquiry with Irish Water has been submitted with the application. A Report from Irish Water provides that they have no objection subject to conditions.

7.6. **Screening for Appropriate Assessment**

Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development and the nature of the receiving environment and the distance to the nearest European site, no Appropriate Assessment issues arise and it is not considered that the proposed development would be likely to have a significant effect individually or in combination with other plans or projects on a European site.

8.0 **Recommendation**

- 8.1. I recommend that the proposed development be refused for the reasons and considerations below.

9.0 **Reasons and Considerations**

1. The subject site, given its location in proximity to the towns of Newtownforbes and Longford is considered to be located within an 'area under urban influence', which is an area under significant pressure for rural housing as set out in the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines and in the National Planning Framework – Framework Ireland 2040. In relation to the National Planning Framework, National Policy Objective 19 aims 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 documentation submitted with the application and appeal, the Board is not satisfied that the applicants have a demonstrable economic or social need to live in this rural area. It is, therefore, not considered that the applicants 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, if permitted, be contrary to the Ministerial Guidelines and to National Policy Objective 19 of the National Planning Framework. The proposed development would also be contrary to local planning provisions, in particular Section 3.2.2.1, Policies CS 12 and CS 13 of the Longford County Development Plan 2015 to 2021 and would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. It is considered that, by reason of its design and layout, form, bulk, and external finishes that the proposed dwelling would not enhance or reflect the traditional vernacular. It would not integrate well into the countryside and would be visually obtrusive on this site in the rural area which is in general characterised by more traditional rural housing. The proposed house would, therefore, be contrary to the Design Guidelines for Rural Housing, as set out in Annex 3 and to Policy HOU RUR 10 (design and siting) of the Longford County Development Plan 2015 to 2021 and to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
3. It is considered that, taken in conjunction with existing development in the vicinity, the proposed development would result in an excessive concentration of development served by septic tanks in the area. The proposed development would, therefore, be prejudicial to public health.

Angela Brereton
Planning Inspector

17th of February 2021