



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report

PL-500976-RN-26

Development	House with domestic garage, new treatment system and percolation area, and all ancillary site development works.
Location	Ardmullen, Kiltoom, Co. Roscommon.
Planning Authority	Roscommon County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	2560519
Applicant(s)	Shauna Francis
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Grant Permission + Conditions
Type of Appeal	Third Party Normal Planning Appeal
Appellant(s)	Joan Gilligan & Stuart McNamara
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	4 TH June 2026
Inspector	Bébhinn O'Shea

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The site is located c. 10km northwest of Athlone, c. 4.7 km west of Lough Ree and c. 2.6km west of the N61, in a rural area. The road is narrow with a grassed central spine and ultimately junctions with the L2017 which passes on the shores of Lough Funshinagh. The site is rectangular, set out within a larger field by post and wire fence, leaving a 'gap' site to the east between the site and the nearest dwelling. The site is within an stretch of medium density one off rural housing of about 1km, mostly focused on the northern side of the road. It is grassed and currently grazed by sheep. The surrounding landscaping rises gently to the west where it peaks, and falls away more dramatically to a basin to the northeast towards Lough Ree. There are expanses of natural stone walls and mature trees in the area, including at the site and boundary.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The proposed development is for a house, domestic WWTP and garage. The dwelling is single storey, comprised of two rectangular forms at right angles to each other, with a recessed link between the two elements containing the entrance. The larger part of the dwelling containing the living area extends to 22m in length. At its highest it is 5.2m and finishes are napp render and natural stone cladding at the entrance and natural slates to roof.
- 2.2. The proposed site entrance requires removal of a the expanse of stone wall along the entirety of the front boundary, and some mature trees to the east. A native hedgerow is proposed to the front boundary, and block walls at the entrance point.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

- 3.1.1. On 6th January 2026 the PA requested **Further Information** in relation to
1. How the applicants meet the requirements for rural housing in this area, i.e. Rural Policy Zone A' Areas under Urban Influence' with reference to Tables 3.1 and 3.2 of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028

including documentary evidence to substantiate that the applicant has spent a substantial period of their lives in the area where they are proposing to build and indication of location of this residence on a map.

2. Proposed domestic WWTS - Due to inaccuracies in Site Characterisation Assessment Report (karst outcrop not recorded, boulders present in excavated material suggesting silt clay recorded is not correct) revised details of the domestic WWTS were requested, to indicate compliance with EPA CoP in terms of minimum depth of unsaturated soil/subsoils, site layout plan showing that all required separation distance to site features including karst outcrop are met, and showing revised specific infiltration system with specific reference to extent of suitable material over bedrock.
3. Confirmation from adjacent landowner that they are willing to enter into a legal agreement under Section 47 of the Planning Act to ensure the removal of trees required to facilitate sight distance is carried out in the event of planning permission.

- 3.1.2. On 16th February 2026 the PA **granted permission** subject to 19 conditions. Conditions of note below:

C2: Occupancy condition – applicant S47 agreement

C3: Roadside boundary works - landowner S 47 agreement

C5/6/7: Vehicular entrance

C9/10: Wastewater treatment/system including

Prior to the commencement of development, a revised site layout plan shall be submitted for the written agreement of the Planning Authority (in conjunction with Roscommon County Council's Environment Department) to demonstrate the accurate measurement of all features identified in Section 3.1 (Visual Assessment) of the submitted Site Characterisation Report.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

3.2.1.1. The **first planning report** noted the following:

- Need for AA and EIA ruled out.
- Site is within Rural Policy Zone A of the RCDP. Additional information required to substantiate the applicant's claim for housing need.
- Proposed design acceptable in context of Roscommon Design Guidelines and development in the vicinity of the site.
- Sightlines traverse third party lands and willingness to enter legal agreement required.
- Confirmation of feasibility to connect to UE watermain provided.
- Wastewater – tertiary treatment proposed . Further details required in relation to accurate characteristics of the area and trial hole.
- Impact on natural heritage not considered undue
- Proposed development is not considered to constitute ribbon development
- No impact on residential amenity.

Further information was considered to be required and recommended as per 3.1.1 above.

3.2.1.2. The **second planning report** noted the following:

- The applicant had demonstrated long standing links to and origins in the area where she is proposing to build and these comply with the RCDP housing need criteria.
- Revised tertiary system and infiltration and section have been submitted. Applicant stated that there is no karst outcrop. A planning condition was considered appropriate to ensure compliance with EPA CoP in terms of separation distance
- The landowner had indicated willingness to submit S47 agreement.

A grant of permission was recommended.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

- Environment 15/12/2025

Noted that trial hole was observed with a depth of 1800mm, a karst outcrop was observed to the east of the site, and boulders were within excavated material.

The site characterisation for did not identify these and also stated silt clay is evident from 400mm to 1800mm which is not the case. It recommended that a revised site assessment report be submitted along with dimensioned site layout drawing and percolation area sectional drawing.

- Environment 11/02/2026

Noted that dimensions requested were not provided on site layout plan.

Otherwise recommended conditions in the event of a grant of permission.

- Roscommon NRDO:

Proposed development does not impact on any study area.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

- Uisce Éireann:

Confirms feasibility of connection to wastewater and recommends conditions.

3.4. Third Party Observations

One third party submission was received which I summarise as follows:

- No evidence of rural housing need
- Capacity of road network is limited. Sightlines achievable are less than those indicated on drawings. Trees will require to be felled which is objectionable. Road is busy and dangerous with blind corners.
- The proposed development is speculative
- The development constitutes ribbon development where there are other infill sites and reusable structures available.
- The development will place increased demands on water supply which will

require the system to be upgraded to be viable.

- The dwelling is located at the highest point in the landscape and its assimilation into the landscape will be problematic.
- The development will injure the amenities of property to the east by overlooking and overshadowing.

4.0 Planning History

No planning history evident on site.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Relevant National/ Regional Policy and Ministerial Guidelines

- National Planning Framework First Revision, April 2025
- Northern & Western Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032 (RSES)
- Sustainable Rural Housing Development Guidelines, 2005 (hereafter referred to as “the Rural Housing Guidelines”)
- EPA Code of Practice for Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems (Population Equivalent ≤ 10) (2021) (hereafter referred to as “the CoP”).

5.2. Development Plan

The relevant development plan is the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022 – 2028 (RCDP). The following sections are most relevant:

- Section 3.9 Rural Housing

PPH 3.13 Facilitate single houses in rural areas subject to appropriate siting and design criteria, including demonstration of adherence to the principles set out in the County Roscommon Rural Design Guidelines. In addition, in the case of proposals for single houses in defined Areas under Urban Influence, applicants will be required to demonstrate a social or economic link (as per Table 3.2) to the rural area in which they proposed to build

PPH 3.15 Promote cluster type layouts appropriate to the rural area, where more than one house is proposed on a landholding. Discourage proposals for single dwellings which give rise to or exacerbate patterns of ribbon development in the rural area.

- Section 7.7 Water Services

Policy Objective ITC 7.41 Ensure that private wastewater treatment plants, where permitted, are operated in compliance with EPA's Code of Practice Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (PE. ≤10) (2009), as may be amended.

- Chapter 12 Development Management Standards
- Volume 2 Landscape Character Assessment / Scenic Views.

The site is in Roscommon LCA 34: Lough Funshinagh, Stone Wall Grasslands and Esker Ridges. The landform is described as rolling from north to south and being primarily dry grassland farmland. This landscape is stated to be of Moderate Value. Housing proposals in particularly prominent locations between public roads and Lough Funshinagh should be accompanied by a Visual Impact Statement. Developments will be required to be sited and designed in accordance with the principles set out in the County Roscommon Rural Design Guidelines.

V22 Scenic View (to the north west of site) onto Lough Funshinagh is noted.

5.3. Build and Natural Heritage Designations

- The application site is located c. 1km from Lough Funshinagh SAC and 3.6 km from Lough Ree SAC and SPA.
- There are no building heritage designations (RPS/NIAH) in the vicinity.
- There are a number of archaeological features in the wider area, the nearest to the site are: RO048-24 Ringfort/Rath c. 279 m to southeast. RO048-23 Ringfort/Rath c. 380m to south. RO048-187 Ringfort/Rath c. 260m to north

6.0 EIA Screening

6.1. The proposed development has been subject to preliminary examination for

environmental impact assessment (refer to Form 1 and Form 2 in Appendices of this report). Having regard to the characteristics and location of the proposed development and the types and characteristics of potential impacts, it is considered that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment. The proposed development, therefore, does not trigger a requirement for environmental impact assessment screening and an EIAR is not required.

7.0 The Appeal

7.1. Grounds of Appeal

I summarise the appeal as follows:

- Inaccurate site investigation, poorly designed sewage system and risk to public health
- Traffic hazard – improperly designed entrance and substandard road network, topography impedes views. Roads in the locality flood and traffic is re-routed to this road.
- Ribbon development – 3 existing dwellings, site for sale, and proposed development constitute 5 dwellings.
- Uncertain case for rural housing need and alternatives available.
- Capacity of water supply without affecting other properties
- Non-compliance with rural design guidelines. Visual impact and failure to integrate into landscape
- Ecological impact – mammals, red squirrel, birds etc. Loss of trees.
- Potential effects on archaeology
- History of agreement not to develop or sell further sites.
- Loss of privacy/overlooking

7.2. Applicant Response

- The road condition may be sub-optimal but it is the responsibility of RCC. There

is no flooding at the proposed entrance location. Sightlines are achievable. The topographical dip is minor and does not impede visibility. Trees to be removed are not mature and are also damage the road. A comprehensive planting scheme will mitigate their removal in terms of natural heritage.

- The development is not ribbon development. The possible future sale of lands is not relevant. Ownership of the lands has changed since previous planning history and should have not have any weight in the assessment of the application. Sale of lands is not a material planning consideration.
- The wastewater arrangements meet the EPA CoP requirements. Concerns in relation to system capacity are unfounded. Other properties are closer to the historic well.
- The proposal does not entail the removal of 16 mature trees. 5 trees to be removed are not mature or of significant ecological value. There is no hedgerow at present. The proposed development represents net biodiversity gain.
- The house will sit naturally in the landscape. The land rises further to northwest, the dwelling is not situated on the highest point in the landscape. The site meets required site area standards
- The primary living spaces of the dwelling are oriented away from existing dwellings. Proposed bedrooms are 67.5m from the existing dwelling. Only two kitchen windows look towards the proposed dwelling. There is no over looking or overshadowing.
- Archaeological features within the vicinity are outside the 250m consultation threshold. The LA did not request Archaeological Impact Assessment. Additional features referenced by the appellants are not included in any register of protected archaeological sites. Applicant is willing to undertake archaeological assessment if required.
- Any deficiencies in the local water network would have been raised by UE in the pre-connection enquiry.
- Housing need was adequately demonstrated to the Local Authority (and information is re-submitted).

- Comments made in relation to alternative sites are not relevant.

7.3. **Planning Authority Response**

No response

7.4. **Observations**

None

8.0 **Assessment**

8.1. Having examined the application details and all other documentation on file, including all of the submissions received in relation to the appeal, the reports of the local authority, and having inspected the site, and having regard to the relevant local/regional/national policies and guidance, I consider that the substantive issues in this appeal to be considered are as follows:

- Principle of development and rural housing need
- Site selection, visual impact density and ribbon development
- Water and wastewater
- Traffic safety
- Built, natural, archaeological heritage
- Overlooking and overshadowing/loss of light.

8.2. **Principle of development and rural housing need**

8.2.1. There are no planning objectives specifically relevant to the site to preclude the principle of development of a rural house from the outset. I note the appellant refers to planning history on the original landholding and a letter of intent that no further sites would be sold/developed on the landholding. While in the past such sterilisation approaches were a tool to employed to regulate development in areas at risk of

becoming over developed, guidance in the Rural Housing Guidelines is that the planning authority should avoid the use of such agreements and should focus instead on deciding the merits of the individual proposal in terms of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. In this regard the case is assessed on its merits, i.e., the applicant's rural housing needs, and the capacity of the area to absorb the development, based on the considerations that follow at 8.3 to 8.6 below.

8.2.2. The site is within a rural area defined as being under strong urban influence. As per page 55 of the RCDP, those seeking planning permission for single dwellings in these areas must have a demonstrable economic or social need to live there, as detailed in Table 3.2. Table 3.2 describes economic need and social need. The applicant is relying on social need described as follows:

- Persons who were born within the local rural area, or who are living or have lived permanently in the local rural area for a substantial period of their life at any stage(s) prior to making the planning application. It therefore includes returning emigrants seeking a permanent home in their local rural area who meet this definition;
- Persons with a significant link to the Roscommon rural community in which they wish to reside, by reason of having lived in this community for a minimum period of five years prior to applying for planning permission or by the existence in this community of long established ties with immediate family members.

8.2.3. The applicant has submitted documentary evidence indicating that she grew up in the area and other than attending college has lived permanently in in the local rural area for a substantial period of her life. Information from church, clubs, doctor, bank details are provided and the location of the family home. I am satisfied that the applicant meets the housing need criterial of the RCDP. I note that the adjacent site has been advertised as for sale. However there is no indication that the proposed development is speculative and it should be noted RCDP requires successful applicants to enter into a Section 47 legal agreement restricting the occupancy of the dwelling and limiting its sale. The availability of other sites or disused properties is not relevant to this conclusion.

8.3. Site selection - Visual impact, density and ribbon development

- 8.3.1. The site is positioned near to the top of a locally elevated hill/ridge but the land rises slightly further beyond. Opposite, while the landscape falls away to Lough Ree to the east, there are a number of two storey dwellings which I consider would be the more dominant feature in the landscape viewed from that direction. The site is not within a scenic view or route. The dwelling is single storey. A landscaping plan accompanies the proposal which to a degree will aid its absorption into the wider landscape. The design is of simple formation and appropriate materiality, although it dominates the side in terms of extent. In terms of wider visual impact, and having regard to the Roscommon Rural Design Guidelines, I consider the design of the dwelling itself appropriate and that proposed development would not have a significant impact on visual amenity in the wider area.
- 8.3.2. At site level, I note the LA Planning Report states It is therefore considered that the proposed design solution is acceptable in the context of Roscommon Rural Design Guidelines, the site and development in the vicinity of the site . While I consider the dwelling design acceptable in itself, I do not otherwise agree with this statement. Having regard to the Roscommon Rural Design Guidelines, the site as created is suburban in format. The site is formed out of the centre of a larger field by post and wire fencing. The Roscommon Rural Design Guide states that the site “should be sheltered and in close proximity to infrastructure and characteristics such as contours, vegetation and site orientation should be to the fore”. It states that “elements such as the access and driveway should not have a greater impact than the dwelling itself”. It further states that “The pattern should reflect the character of the locality itself and at this stage it is important to differentiate between the rural and suburban pattern of development. In a traditional rural pattern, the dwelling is surrounded by the landscape and indeed forms part of the landscape as compared to the suburban pattern where dwellings occupy individual plots of land with the building form being the dominant object on the site.”
- 8.3.3. The landscape at the site and immediate area is typical of the Landscape Characterisation category LCA 34 Stone Wall Grasslands and Esker Ridge. It is open and rolling and the only characteristics are the natural stone field boundaries and 5 no. trees adjacent the entrance – proposed to be removed at the roadside as part of

this development, and detracting significantly from the character of the area. There are no vegetative features to lessen the visual dominance of the proposed dwelling. The landscaping plan consists of tree planting on the western boundary and two trees at the driveway – there are no clusters of trees or responsive positioning of planting. There is a large extent of hardstanding.

- 8.3.4. The proposed dwelling will be the dominant object on the site – the width of the dwelling and driveway occupy almost the full site width. In addition, while the site does not in itself constitute ribbon development as defined in the Rural Housing Guidelines, the site does result in the formation of a ‘gap’ site to the south east. In this regard I consider that the development would exacerbate patterns of ribbon development in the rural area, contrary to policy PPh3.15, and further erode the rural environment through the creation of suburban type development (as is present in ribbon form on the opposite side of the road).

8.4. Water and wastewater

- 8.4.1. In relation to water supply, the applicant has submitted Confirmation of Feasibility from Uisce Éireann to connect to local water supply which I consider sufficient in terms of demonstrating adequacy of water supply.
- 8.4.2. In terms of wastewater, the proposed development includes a domestic waste water treatment system, prepared in accordance with the EPA CoP for a design population of 6 persons. A Site Characterisation and Site Characterisation Assessment Report (SCAR) accompanied the application (dated 08/10/2025, hereafter referred to as SCAR1). An updated report was submitted in response to Further Information (dated 09/01/2026, hereafter referred to as SCAR2) . Please note trial hole photographs are within the first report, not the second report, for reference.
- 8.4.3. The site is relatively flat and grassed with no vegetative features suggesting wetter or drier conditions. The bedrock type is Undifferentiated Limestone. The subsoil Till derived from limestones. The Soil is Deep well drained mineral. The aquifer is a Regionally Important Aquifer (Rk Karstified Bedrock) of Extreme Vulnerability.
- 8.4.4. The depth of the trial hole was 1.8m as it is stated bedrock was encountered at 1.8m. The water table is stated not to have been encountered. Silt/clat was reported present with boulders. Subsurface percolation value 31.67min/25mm. Surface percolation 20.33min/25mm.

8.4.5. The CoP requires that if bedrock is met within 3 m of the surface in such cases, when the existing vulnerability classification is 'high', 'moderate' or 'low', this vulnerability classification must be considered at a site level to be 'extreme' and this new local GWPR relating to 'extreme' groundwater vulnerability adhered to for the site. An R2² GWPR is required.

R2² Acceptable subject to normal good practice and the following additional condition:

1. There is a minimum thickness of 2 m unsaturated soil/subsoil beneath the invert of the percolation trench of a septic tank system OR
2. A secondary treatment system as described in Chapters 8 and 9 is installed, with a minimum thickness of 0.3 m unsaturated soil/subsoil with percolation values from 3 to 75 (in addition to the polishing filter, which should be a minimum depth of 0.9 m), beneath the invert of the polishing filter (i.e. 1.2 m in total for a soil polishing filter).

8.4.6. A Tertiary Treatment System and Infiltration area are recommended in the SCAR. Distribution layer to be placed on 95sqm of imported soil 600mm depth with suitable percolation values. Imported soil to be tested for suitable percolation values as per EPA COP 2021. A section drawing accompanies the response.

8.4.7. I have concerns in terms of the reliability of the Site Characterisation Assessment report:

- Figure 6 (SCAR1) shows weathered limestone bedrock at 1m from the base of the trial hole, ie. 800/900mm beneath the surface. This means less there is actually less than a metre of material above the bedrock and the the tertiary filter.
- In all cases where regionally important aquifers underlie the site, or for GWPRs of R2², the trial hole depth should be at least 3m. The reports state that bedrock was encountered at 1.8m. It is not stated that this is impenetrable bedrock or otherwise.
- There were boulders within excavated material, some of which are rock and not clay.
- The photographs do not show the full height of trial hole and surrounding ground, only excerpts.

- Trial hole should be open for 48 hours before examination for water table to established itself. (CoP p. 22) The SCAR (p. 9) indicates only 24 hours between time of excavation and time of examination
- The report states the water table was not encountered. The section submitted with SCAR2 (Appendix 3) notes water table 0.6m below ground level.

8.4.8. Overall, the report contains inconsistencies in terms of the soil characterisation (compared to that in photographs) and the water table. While the report acknowledges there is insufficient subsoil depth owing to the presence of bedrock, the site improvement works proposed cannot be concluded to be appropriate, as they are based on bedrock at a lower point than that observed. There is also conflicting information in relation to the water table. The percolation would require to be raised if the water table is at 0.6 below ground, as shown in the cross section. Overall the proposed system does not provide the 2m minimum required above water table / bedrock as per Table 6.3 of the CoP. Saturated subsoils do not allow adequate treatment of waste water. Insufficient depth of subsoil means wastewater enters the groundwater too rapidly to allow for treatment. There is therefore a risk of pollution to groundwater which is exacerbated in karst environments with faster movement of water

8.4.9. In relation to separation distances, karst features require 15m separation distance which I consider applies to the significant mapped Karst features in the vicinity. This is achieved. Separation distances to wells can potentially be achieved in accordance with Table 6.2.

8.4.10. To conclude, it has not been demonstrated that the ground conditions within the site are suitable for the safe and adequate disposal of effluent in accordance with the EPA Code of Practice for Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems (PE <10) (EPA 2021), and would not give rise to a risk of groundwater pollution

8.5. **Traffic safety**

8.5.1. I inspected the road serving the site and wider area, including the location of the proposed entrance and vertical alignment at the location referenced in the appeal.

8.5.2. I do not consider the roads substandard, they are local rural roads, not by their

nature intended to cater for low density residential/suburban types of development. The proposed development would not contribute to flooding affecting other local roads in the vicinity, referenced in the appeal. The condition of road surfaces, or damage by agricultural activity, is not a matter for the proposed development to address; repair to roads is a matter for the local authority. The situation referred to in the appeal reflects a key consideration in terms of the sustainability of rural housing i.e. the cost of maintaining rural roads infrastructure to higher standards to serve the spread of low density rural dwellings.

- 8.5.3. Requirements for sightlines are set out in section 12.24 of the RCDP and typically require triangles of 2.4m x 90m. The RCDP also states “*Visibility splays for Local Roads will be determined on a site-specific basis subject to traffic safety. In general, only the minimum interference with existing roadside boundaries and hedges shall be permitted*”. I have inspected the site and area including location of proposed entrance. I consider the minor nature of this road and its alignment, naturally leads to reduced traffic speeds. I note the sightlines indicated on drawings and have no reason to conclude that sight distance cannot be achieved. I note the provisions of the RCDP which state “*Planning applications shall also include third party consent letters and accompanying Land Registry Maps for sight distance triangles, if applicable. A legally binding agreement shall be signed by both parties all parties where there is a transfer of land, or where the physical movement of a boundary is necessary to achieve the required sightlines.*” I therefore conclude that sightlines are achievable and that the requirement of a Section 47 agreement, as stipulated in condition 3 is provided for in the RCDP and acceptable in principle.
- 8.5.4. The achievement of sightlines requires removal of the entire front boundary of the site and trees adjacent. This in my view does not constitute ‘*the minimum interference with existing roadside boundaries*’ as per section 12.24 but is addressed at 8.3 above in terms of visual impact.
- 8.5.5. I note the appellants remark that the report from the NRDO recommended that the file should be referred to the LA Road Design section. I do not consider that this recommendation implies any particular technical concerns with the proposed development, rather it reflects that the proposal it is simply not relevant to the design and operation of the national road, and should be considered at local authority level.

8.6. Built, natural, archaeological heritage

- 8.6.1. Having regard to the nature of the site and limited vegetation within, I do not consider that the proposed development will result in significant damage or loss to natural heritage features or species within the site. I consider the loss of 5 trees at the roadside boundary while a negative impact, more significant in terms of visual impact and landscape character. The appeal refers to 16 mature trees removed to facilitate sightlines and wider tree clearance on the original landholding and in the area. This is not directly related to the proposed development. The potential impact on European Sites is addressed in the AA Screening at Section 8 below.
- 8.6.2. I note the appeal content in relation to possibility of unrecorded archaeological features in proximity to the site. While I accept the applicant's response that these features are not recorded or protected, and no Archaeological Impact Assessment was requested by the Planning Authority, the detail in the appeal did not form part of the initial submission by the appellant on file. Having reviewed the information in the appeal I find that it makes a compelling case in relation to the potential for an unrecorded archaeological monument. However I do not consider that this constitutes grounds for refusal. I consider that this matter may be addressed by a condition for archaeological monitoring, in the event of a grant of permission.

8.7. Overlooking and overshadowing/loss of light.

- 8.7.1. The proposed dwelling will not overshadow, or cause any undue loss of light to the nearest dwellings. It is single storey, modest in height, not at a significantly higher level or in proximity to other dwellings.
- 8.7.2. In terms of overlooking, what is expressed in the appeal might be more appropriately described as concern regarding reduced sense of privacy, and interrupted outlook from that dwelling, by the presence of an additional dwelling. This is different to actual overlooking arising from positioning and proximity of the proposed dwelling and its windows. The separation distance is c. 65m from the nearest house to the east and the house to the north. There is a mature tree on the intervening land to the east and the scale and massing of this split-level dwelling is oriented to the south

east. No undue overlooking of existing properties will occur from the proposed dwelling.

- 8.7.3. I note there are several windows to living areas on the western elevation of the proposed dwelling. Although it is only 7.7m to the boundary, there is no dwelling adjacent, the windows are ground floor windows, and planting of the boundary is proposed.

9.0 AA Screening

- 9.1. I have considered the proposed development in light of the requirements of S.177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The subject site is located within a rural area. The application site is located c. 1km from Lough Funshinagh SAC and 3.6 km from Lough Ree SAC and SPA The proposed development comprises the construction of dwelling, garage, WWTS and vehicular entrance.
- 9.2. No submissions relating to Appropriate Assessment were received.
- 9.3. Having considered the nature, scale and location of the project, I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because it could not have any effect on a European Site. The reason for this conclusion is as follows:
- The minor nature and scale of the works.
 - Distance from European sites and waterbodies and lack of any hydrological connectivity and intervening environment.
 - The screening comments of the Local Authority.
- 9.4. I conclude, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development would not have a likely significant effect on any European site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. Likely significant effects are excluded and therefore Appropriate Assessment (under Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended) is not required.

10.0 Water Framework Directive

- 10.1. An assessment of the proposed development has been undertaken in accordance

with Article 4 of the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), as transposed by the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003. See Appendix 3.

10.2. Having regard to the nature, scale, and location of the proposed development, and the mitigation measures incorporated into the design, it cannot be concluded that the proposed development will not result in deterioration of the ecological, chemical, or quantitative status of Funshinagh groundwater body. Residual risk remains. The proposed development is not considered to be in compliance with the requirements of Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive

10.3. The reason for this conclusion is as follows:

- Failure to demonstrate that the ground conditions within the site are suitable for the safe and adequate disposal of effluent in accordance with the EPA Code of Practice for Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems (PE <10) (EPA 2021).

11.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

11.1.1. Notwithstanding that the applicant has demonstrated a rural housing need, given the nature of the site and the landscape characteristics of the immediate area, the site lacks any significant features to enable the dwelling to be visually absorbed. In addition, the proposal removes the natural stone boundary wall characteristic of the area, and a number of trees within, increasing the visual impact of the development. The format of the proposal is suburban in nature, with the proposed dwelling dominating the site and, in and creating a 'gap' site adjacent it encourages ribbon development. I consider this contrary to the Roscommon Rural Design Guidelines and to PPH 3.13 and PPH 3.15 of the RCDP and to constitute reason for refusal.

11.1.2. There are inconsistencies and inaccuracies in the Site Characteristics Assessment Report which lead me to conclude that the WWTS does not demonstrate satisfactory proposals to treat wastewater for the ground conditions observed and as such would lead to pollution and be prejudicial to public health.

12.0 Recommendation

I recommend that permission be refused

13.0 Reasons and Considerations

1. The proposed development would constitute suburban-type development in a rural area, where the site and landscape is devoid of sufficient features to visually absorb the dwelling. When taken in conjunction with existing development in the area, it would also exacerbate patterns of ribbon development. This would detract from visual amenity and militate against the preservation of the rural environment. The foregoing would be contrary to the Roscommon Rural Design Guidelines, to policy objectives PPH 3.13 and PPH 3.15 of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028 and to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
2. Notwithstanding the proposal to use a tertiary treatment system and infiltration area, in the absence of consistent and accurate information in the Site Characterisation Assessment Reports it has not been demonstrated that the ground conditions within the site are suitable for the safe and adequate disposal of effluent in accordance with the EPA Code of Practice for Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems (PE <10) (EPA 2021), and would not give rise to a risk of groundwater pollution at a regionally important aquifer (Rk Karstified Bedrock) of extreme vulnerability. It is therefore considered that the proposed development would be at contrary to policy objective ITC 7.41 of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028, would be prejudicial to public health and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

I confirm that this report represents my professional planning assessment, judgement and opinion on the matter assigned to me and that no person has influenced or sought to influence me, directly or indirectly, following my professional assessment and recommendation set out in my report in an improper or inappropriate way.

Bébhinn O'Shea

Senior Planning Inspector

24th June 2026

Appendix 1: Form 1 EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	500976-RN
Proposed Development Summary	Construction of a house, garage, WWTS and all associated site works.
Development Address	Ardmullen Kiltoom Co. Roscommon
IN ALL CASES CHECK BOX / OR LEAVE BLANK	
1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'Project' for the purposes of EIA?	☒ Yes, it is a 'Project'. Proceed to Q.2.
	☐ No, No further action required.
(For the purposes of the Directive, "Project" means: - The execution of construction works or of other installations or schemes, - Other interventions in the natural surroundings and landscape including those involving the extraction of mineral resources)	
2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?	
☐ Yes, it is a Class specified in Part 1. EIA is mandatory. No Screening required. EIAR to be requested. Discuss with ADP.	State the Class here
☒ No, it is not a Class specified in Part 1. Proceed to Q3	
3. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 2, Schedule 5, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) OR a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of Roads Regulations 1994, AND does it meet/exceed the thresholds?	
☐ No, the development is not of a Class Specified in Part 2, Schedule 5 or a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994. No Screening required.	

☐ Yes, the proposed development is of a Class and meets/exceeds the threshold. EIA is Mandatory. No Screening Required	State the Class and state the relevant threshold
☒ Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is sub-threshold. Preliminary examination required. (Form 2) OR If Schedule 7A information submitted proceed to Q4. (Form 3 Required)	State the Class and state the relevant threshold Class 10 (b)(i) Construction of more than 500 dwelling units.
4. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted AND is the development a Class of Development for the purposes of the EIA Directive (as identified in Q3)?	
Yes ☐	
No ☒	Pre-screening determination conclusion remains as above (Q1 to Q3)

Inspector: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2: Form 2 - EIA Preliminary Examination

Case Reference	500976-RN
Proposed Development Summary	Construction of a house, garage, WWTS and all associated site works.
Development Address	Ardmullen Kiltoom Co. Roscommon
This preliminary examination should be read with, and in the light of, the rest of the Inspector's Report attached herewith.	
Characteristics of proposed development (In particular, the size, design, cumulation with existing/ proposed development, nature of demolition works, use of natural resources, production of waste, pollution and nuisance, risk of accidents/disasters and to human health).	The development is modest in scale, comes forward as a standalone project, does not require demolition works, does not require the use of substantial natural resources, or give rise to significant risk of pollution or nuisance. The development, by virtue of its type, does not pose a risk of major accident and/or disaster, or is vulnerable to climate change. It presents no risks to human health.
Location of development (The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the development in particular existing and approved land use, abundance/capacity of natural resources, absorption capacity of natural environment e.g. wetland, coastal zones, nature reserves, European sites, densely populated areas, landscapes, sites of historic, cultural or archaeological significance).	The development is situated in a rural area, agricultural with some rural housing. The development is removed from sensitive natural habitats, centres of population and designated sites and landscapes of identified significance in the County Development Plan. Potential impacts on European Sites and waterbodies are considered in the report above including in AA and WFD screening and are not considered in themselves significant such that EIA is warranted.
Types and characteristics of potential impacts (Likely significant effects on environmental parameters, magnitude and spatial extent, nature of impact,	Having regard to the modest nature of the proposed development, its location, normal construction practices, likely limited magnitude and spatial extent of effects, and absence of in combination effects, there is no potential for significant effects on the environmental factors listed in section 171A of the Act.

transboundary, intensity and complexity, duration, cumulative effects and opportunities for mitigation).	
Conclusion	
Likelihood of Significant Effects	Conclusion in respect of EIA
There is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	EIA is not required.
There is significant and realistic doubt regarding the likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	
There is a real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	

Inspector: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 3: WFD Screening

WFD IMPACT ASSESSMENT STAGE 1: SCREENING						
Step 1: Nature of the Project, the Site and Locality Single dwelling, garage, WWTS. Rural area.						
An Bord Pleanála ref. no.	500976	Townland, address	Ardmullen, Kiltoom, Co. Roscommon			
Description of project		Dwelling, garage, WWTS				
Brief site description, relevant to WFD Screening		Rural site .246 ha.2.2km to surface water feature. 3.6 km to Lough Ree. Grassland no drainage features.				
Proposed surface water details		Soakways				
Proposed water supply source & available capacity		Public – confirmation of feasibility submitted				
Proposed wastewater treatment system & available capacity, other issues		Proposed tertiary WWTS.				
Others?		Groundwater vulnerability in the area is classified as Extreme with Rock at or near Surface or Karst				
Step 2: Identification of relevant water bodies and Step 3: S-P-R connection						
Identified water body	Water body name(s) (code)	WFD Status	Risk of not achieving WFD Objective e.g.at	Identified pressures on that water body	Pathway linkage to water feature (e.g. surface run-	Is mitigation sufficient? Will there be any residual impact

			risk, review, not at risk		off, drainage, groundwater) Consider all phases.	
river	Cross (Roscommon)_010 is c. 2.2km west of the site	moderate	At risk	Agriculture Hydromorphology	None	No realistic pathway due to distance, no mitigation
river	SHANNON (Upper)_110 c 2.5	poor	At risk	Agriculture Hydromorphology Atmospheric	None	No realistic pathway due to distance, no mitigation
lake	Ree (IE_SH_26_75 0a)	good	Not at risk	-	None	No realistic pathway due to distance, no mitigation
Ground	Funshinagh (IE_SH_G_09 1)	good	Not at risk	-	Construction: Hydrocarbon spills infiltrating to ground.	Best practice during construction will mitigate standard risks.
					Operation: Drainage from WWTS to ground.	Due to flawed SCAR WWTS is not appropriately designed to adequately treat wastewater. Residual impact risk to ground water quality