



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report PL-500978-LD-26

Development	Construction of a bungalow.
Location	Knockatarry , Poynton , Kenagh, Co. Longford
Planning Authority	Longford County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	2660005
Applicant(s)	AJ Moorhead
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Refuse Permission
Type of Appeal	First Party Normal Planning Appeal
Appellant(s)	AJ Moorhead
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	
Inspector	Darragh Ryan

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The application site is located along the R-398 Ballinamore road, 3.5km from Kenagh village in the townland of Knockatarry, Poynton, Kenagh. The proposed site is an infill greenfield site with a large storage container unit located to the south west of the site. There are neighbouring properties to the east and west of the site.
- 1.2. The site is not within any settlement envelope as defined in the Longford County Development Plan 2021 – 2027. The site has an area of 0.270 hectares

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The proposed development is for the construction of a single dwelling, provision of a new entrance, boundary fence, septic tank with percolation area and all ancillary site works.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. The planning authority issued a Decision to refuse for the following reason:

It is the policy of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 as set out in Section 4.8.12, CPO 4.24 which identifies the criteria for applicants seeking permission in 'Rural Areas Under Strong Urban Influence' must satisfy. It is considered that the applicant has not demonstrated a rurally generated housing need at this location and where the proposed development has the potential to impact adversely on the area. As such, the proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

CPO4.24(1) identifies the following – The applicant was born within the local rural area or is living or has lived in the local rural area for a minimum of 5 years at any stage prior to making the planning application. It includes returning emigrants seeking a permanent home in their local rural area. The 'Local Rural Area' for the purpose of this policy is defined as the area generally within an 8km radius of where the applicant was born, living or has lived.

From the information supplied the applicant does meet the criteria specified in CPO4.24(1) as the family home and landholding is located in Ballybrannigan, Ballymahon which is approximately 10.5km (straight line) south-east of the subject site. This is identified to be above the 8km threshold for the defined local rural area

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. There is a single Planning Report on file. The issues raised can be summarised as follows:

3.2.2. Local Rural Housing Need

As the site is located within a designated Rural Area Under Strong Urban Influence, the proposal must comply with CPO 4.24, which requires the applicant to demonstrate a local housing need in accordance with the criteria set out for single rural dwellings, including residency and functional economic or social ties to the local rural area.

A Local Need form has been submitted, stating the applicant is living in rented accommodation in Kenagh, approx. 3.5km from the application site. The applicant has a family address of Brannigan, Ballymahon and has recently bought the family farm he intends to work. The family landholding is approx. 10.5km southeast of the subject site. CPO4.24(1) identifies the following – The applicant was born within the local rural area or is living or has lived in the local rural area for a minimum of 5 years at any stage prior to making the planning application. It includes returning emigrants seeking a permanent home in their local rural area. The ‘Local Rural Area’ for the purpose of this policy is defined as the area generally within an 8km radius of where the applicant was born, living or has lived.

Based on the information submitted, the applicant has therefore not demonstrated a strong rural housing need at this location as the application site is above the 8km threshold from the applicants family landholding.

3.2.3. The proposed scale and design are considered acceptable and to be in accordance with the Longford County Development Plan

3.2.4. Access - The site entrance is located along the R-398 Ballinamore road. The sightlines demonstrated on the

submitted site layout are not considered acceptable. There is a hedgerow to the east of the site, potentially restricting sightlines. The hedgerow is not on the application site and the neighbouring property does not give consent for the removal of the hedgerow.

3.2.5. It is considered that the proposed wastewater treatment system is acceptable subject to being constructed and commissioned in accordance with the submitted site characterisation report and the EPA Code of Practice, Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems (Population Equivalent ≤ 10), 2021.

3.2.6. The application site is not located within an identified flood risk area as shown on the OPW flooding maps- <https://www.floodinfo.ie/map/floodmaps>

A reason for refusal was recommended based on housing need

3.2.7. Other Technical Reports

- Road Design –

1. The applicant has provided sightlines, but these sightlines do not appear to be correct or taken from the correct location at the edge of the road R398. The applicant is required to submit a clearly detailed survey and dimensioned layout of the existing public roadway, private entrance, and existing buildings within the vicinity showing achievable sightlines. The applicant may use DN-GEO-03060 May 2023 and the Longford County Council Development Plan 2021-2027 for guidance.
2. Further to the above, it appears that sightlines from the development may be impeded by neighbouring property hedgerows. The applicant should provide confirmation that they have the necessary permissions to make the necessary alterations and future maintain hedgerows where required to achieve the appropriate sightlines

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

Uisce Éireann

It is Uisce Éireann's view that there is insufficient information submitted with the plans & particulars under Planning ref. 2660005. Therefore, to ensure adequate provision of public water and wastewater services and to assess feasibility of

connection(s) to the network, the applicant is requested to submit the following information to Longford County Council Planning Authority by way of Further Information. In order to assess feasibility of connection to the public water / wastewater infrastructure the applicant is required to engage with Uisce Éireann through the Pre-Connection Enquiry (PCE) process by submitting Further Information as follows: The applicant shall engage with Uisce Éireann by submitting a pre-Connection Enquiry (PCE) to assess feasibility of connection to the public water / wastewater infrastructure.

3.4. Third Party Observations

There is a single third party submission on file. The observer is a neighbour to the proposed site.

1. The proposal is replica of submitted documentation and refusal under historic permission which was refused permission under 25/26.
2. The site layout shows 2.4m to 90m vehicular sightlines achieved. However the sightlines are indicated to the far side of the road. Sightlines are supposed to show clear unobstructed sightlines to the near side of the road. To provide adequate sightlines maintenance of neighbouring hedgerow is required. This hedgerow is in the ownership of the observer and there is no consent to maintain or trim any hedgerows to achieve sightlines.
3. There is no locally generated need to construct a dwelling at this location.

4.0 Planning History

- PA reg Ref – PL25/26 - permission refused for the construction of bungalow type dwelling house, entrance, boundary fence, septic tank with percolation area and all ancillary site works.

The reason for refusal was based on rural housing need and failure to demonstrate same.

- PA reg ref- PL 07/441 - permission granted for the construction of dormer bungalow dwelling house with attached sun lounge, detached garage,

entrance, boundary fence/wall, proprietary wastewater treatment unit with percolation area and ancillary site works.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1 Longford County Development Plan 2021 – 2027

At the June Council meeting, held on Wednesday 10 June 2026, the Elected Members of Longford County Council resolved to make a Variation to Longford County Development Plan 2021 – 2027. Variation no. 1 consists of the amendment to the *Strategic Residential Reserve Zoning Objective* text contained in Volume 2: Appendices.

The Longford County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 is the relevant Development Plan for the subject site. The subject site is located within the open countryside as per the settlement hierarchy tier as per 4.8.5 of the Plan. The open countryside provides for rural economies and rural communities, based on agriculture, forestry, tourism and rural enterprise. This should be facilitated while avoiding over-spill development from urban areas and urban generated housing. The sustainable development of the open countryside will be supported.

5.1.1. Chapter 4: Core Settlement and Housing Strategies 4.8.12 Rural Settlement Strategy

CPO4.24 - Accommodate demand from individuals for permanent residential development in defined 'Rural Areas Under Strong Urban Influence', subject to good planning practice, environmental carrying capacity and landscape protection considerations.

Applicants seeking permission for the development of single dwelling rural housing in areas defined 'Rural Areas Under Strong Urban Influence' must satisfy the following criteria:

1. The applicant was born within the local rural area or is living or has lived in the local rural area for a minimum of 5 years at any stage prior to making the planning application. It includes returning emigrants seeking a permanent home in their local rural area. The 'Local Rural Area' for the purpose of this policy is defined as the area generally within an 8km radius of where the applicant was born, living or has lived. For the purpose of this policy, the rural

area is taken to include 'Rural Settlement Clusters' listed in the Settlement Hierarchy, but excludes the Key Town, Self-Sustaining Growth Town, Self-Sustaining Towns, Towns and Villages and Serviced Rural Villages listed in the Settlement Hierarchy.

2. The applicant has a functional economic or social requirement to reside in this particular rural area such as in any of the following 2 situations: (a) Economic requirements will normally encompass persons referred to in the revision to the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines 2005 and, if applicable, circulars. It includes persons involved in full-time farming, horticulture or forestry as well as similar rural-based part-time occupations where it can be demonstrated that it is the predominant occupation. (b) Social requirements will normally encompass persons referred to in the revision to the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines 2005 and, if applicable, circulars. Pending the making of the revised Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines by the Minister, a Functional Social Requirement in County Longford shall be taken as compliance with point 1 above. Special consideration shall be given in cases of exceptional health circumstances - supported by relevant documentation from a registered medical practitioner and a disability organisation proving that a person requires to live in a particular environment or close to family support or requires a close family member to live in close proximity to that person.
3. The applicant does not already own or has not owned a house in the open countryside.
4. If the site is located within an Area of Special Control, there is no alternative site outside of Areas of Special Control.
5. High quality siting and design.

5.1.2. Chapter 16: Development Management Standards 16.4.5.7 Rural Housing

5.4 Natural Heritage Designations

- Mount Jessop Bog SAC (002202) is located c.2.3km to the northeast of the site.
- Brown Bog SAC (002346) is located c.7.6km to the north of the site.

- Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (004101) is located c.8.2km to the north of the site.
- Lough Forbes Complex SAC (001818) is located c.8.2km to the north of the site.
- Lough Ree SPA (004064) is located c.8.8km to the west of the site.
- Lough Ree SAC (000440) is located c.8.8km to the west of the site.
- Fortwilliam Turlough SAC (000448) is located c.10km to the southwest of the site.

6.0 EIA Screening

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. This is a first party appeal against the decision to refuse by Longford County Council. The Grounds of Appeal address the single reason for refusal and can be summarised as follows:

- The reason for refusal as outlined by Longford County Council is fundamentally flawed in that the applicant was born within Kennagh Village and has lived Brannigan, Ballymahon as his parents had both properties. Kennagh Village is approximately 4km from the site.. The applicant therefore qualifies to live in the local rural area under Objective CPO 24.
- The applicant refutes the council claim that Brannigan, Ballymahon is 10.5km from the applicant's site. Even if such was close to that distance the guidelines state generally withing an 8km radius and not certainly within an 8km radius.
- The applicant has purchased a farm at Knockatarry, Poynton Kennagh and wishes to build a house there as it is only practical to live on the farm. He

doesn't own a home and fits all local housing need criteria required by the Council.

- None of the points made by the third parties are accurate. The planning authority were satisfied with all other matters relating to the file. It is considered that the planning process was rushed and planning application was not given care and attention required.

7.2. Planning Authority Response

- None

7.3. Observations

- None

7.4. Further Responses

- None

8.0 Assessment

8.1. Having examined the application details and all other documentation on the appeal file, including the appeal submission, and inspected the site, and having regard to relevant local, regional and national policies and guidance, I consider that the main issues in this appeal are those raised in the grounds of appeal. The issues can be addressed under the following headings:

- Principle of Development
- Sightlines
- Other Matters
- Appropriate Assessment

8.2. Principle of Development / Rural Housing Need

- 8.2.1. The proposal is for the construction of a single-storey dwellinghouse on a rural site located along the R-398 Ballinamore Road, approximately 3.5km from Keenagh village. The site is located within an area identified in the Longford County Development Plan 2021–2027 as ‘Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence’, being an area experiencing pressure for rural housing development due to its proximity to larger towns and settlements. The site is also located within an 80km/hr speed limit.
- 8.2.2. As the site is located within an area designated as “Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence”, the principle of the proposed dwelling falls to be considered against Chapter 4, Core Settlement and Housing Strategies, of the Longford County Development Plan 2021–2027, and in particular Policy Objective CPO4.24.
- 8.2.3. CPO4.24 establishes the circumstances in which an applicant may be considered eligible for a dwelling in this rural area. The policy provides for two principal routes to demonstrate a requirement to reside in the rural area.

The first is where the applicant:

- was born in the local rural area; or
- has lived in the local rural area for a minimum period of five years at any stage prior to making the planning application,

including returning emigrants seeking a permanent home in their local rural area. For the purposes of the policy, the Local Rural Area’ is defined as the area generally within an 8km radius of where the applicant was born, is living, or has lived.

- 8.2.4. Alternatively, the applicant may demonstrate a functional economic or social requirement to reside in the particular rural area. The economic requirement includes farming, horticulture, forestry or similar rural-based economic activities where it can be demonstrated that such activity constitutes the applicant's predominant occupation. The policy also provides for consideration of social requirements, with reference to the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines 2005 or any replacement guidelines. Pending the making of revised guidelines, the policy provides that a functional social requirement in County Longford shall be taken to comply with the first point above.

8.2.5. Assessment of Local Rural Connection

The Planning Authority considered that the applicant had not demonstrated that they qualified as a local rural person under CPO4.24 and therefore recommended refusal of permission. It was noted that, while the applicant was born in Brannigan, Ballymahon and has indicated their intention to acquire the family farm which they intend to work, the family landholding is approximately 10.5km southeast of the application site and therefore falls outside the 8km radius specified under CPO4.24.

- 8.2.6. In the appeal documentation, the applicant contends that the Planning Authority erred in its assessment. The applicant states that they were born in Keenagh Village, approximately 4.5km from the application site, and that they subsequently lived between properties in Keenagh and Brannigan, Ballymahon, as their parents owned properties at both locations. The applicant further argues that the reference within CPO4.24 to an area “generally” within an 8km radius should not be interpreted as an absolute limit and that, having regard to their ownership of the application site and intention to construct their first family home there, they should be considered eligible to reside at this location.

I note that no additional documentary evidence has been provided with the appeal to substantiate the applicant's claimed place of birth or periods of residence in Keenagh. The applicant has therefore not provided evidence such as a birth certificate, electoral records, utility records, school records or other documentary evidence which would allow me to verify the stated rural connection. Furthermore, I note that Keenagh Village is identified within the Settlement Hierarchy and Appendix 1D of the Development Plan as a town/village and is not identified as forming part of the ‘Local Rural Area’ for the purposes of CPO4.24. Accordingly, even if I were to accept the applicant's statement that they were born in Keenagh Village, I do not consider that this, of itself, establishes a qualifying local rural connection under the specific terms of CPO4.24. Policy CPO4.24 specifically discounts individuals who are born within Towns/villages as outlined within the CDP.

- 8.2.7. I also note that the applicant's stated family address is at Brannigan, Ballymahon, with the family landholding located approximately 10.5km from the application site. This is outside the 8km area specified by CPO4.24. While I acknowledge that the policy uses the term “generally” in describing the 8km radius, I do not consider that this wording can reasonably be interpreted as removing the requirement for an applicant to demonstrate a genuine and qualifying connection to the particular rural

area in which the dwelling is proposed. No exceptional circumstances or additional evidence have been submitted which would justify departing from the spatial parameters established by the Development Plan. In this regard, I do not consider that the applicant has demonstrated a Local Rural Connection to construct a dwelling at this location.

8.2.8. Economic Requirement

I have considered whether the applicant can qualify under the economic requirement provided for under CPO4.24. The applicant states that they are currently residing in Boston and are returning to County Longford with the intention of taking over the running of the family farm. The submitted local need/supplementary application form identifies the family address as Brannigan, Ballymahon, County Longford. The applicant has also submitted Land Registry documentation demonstrating ownership of the application site since December 2024.

I acknowledge that the applicant has acquired the application site and has stated an intention to return to County Longford and engage in agricultural activity at Brannigan Ballymahon. I do not consider that the information submitted sufficiently demonstrates an economic requirement to reside at this particular location, as required by CPO4.24. In particular, the family landholding which the applicant states they intend to take over is approximately 10.5km from the application site and therefore outside the 8km local rural area identified in the Development Plan. Furthermore, the applicant has not provided sufficient information regarding the nature, scale or extent of the agricultural enterprise which they intend to undertake, nor has it been demonstrated that the proposed dwelling is necessary for the operation of that enterprise.

I note from the Land Registry information that the applicant appears to have ownership of additional lands at or in the vicinity of the application site and that farm sheds are located adjacent to the site – ownership of these sheds are not clear from the submitted documentation. The applicant has not indicated agricultural activities will occur at the site, no substantive details have been provided regarding the agricultural activities currently undertaken, or proposed to be undertaken, on these lands. There is no supporting information regarding the nature of the farming enterprise, the scale of agricultural activity, the applicant's predominant occupation

or livestock or land management requirements. The application form relates specifically to taking over the family farm at Brannigan Ballymahon.

The applicant has provided a rural housing need form and a map identifying land ownership, but this information falls short of demonstrating that the applicant's predominant occupation will be a rural-based economic activity requiring residence at the application site. Accordingly, I am not satisfied that the applicant has demonstrated an economic requirement to reside at this location in accordance with CPO4.24.

8.2.9. Social Requirement

I have also considered whether the applicant can qualify on the basis of a functional social requirement. CPO4.24 provides that regard shall be had to the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines 2005, or any replacement guidelines, when considering social need. The policy further provides that, pending the adoption of revised national guidelines, a functional social requirement in County Longford shall be taken to comply with the first point of the policy, namely the requirement relating to a qualifying local rural connection. For completeness, I have also considered the principles contained within the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines 2005. These recognise, inter alia, circumstances involving persons who are intrinsically linked to a rural community, including persons seeking to return to or take over a family farm.

8.2.10. I acknowledge the applicant's stated intention to return from Boston and take over the running of the family farm. However, the application is not supported by sufficient documentary evidence to substantiate a social or community connection to the particular rural area in which the dwelling is proposed. As outlined above, the family landholding is approximately 10.5km from the application site and therefore outside the 8km area identified under CPO4.24. While the applicant may have a genuine intention to return to County Longford and may intend to engage in agricultural activity on the family landholding, I do not consider that these intentions, without further supporting evidence, demonstrate that the applicant is intrinsic to the local rural area in the manner envisioned by CPO4.24 and the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines.

I therefore consider that the applicant has not demonstrated a qualifying social requirement to reside at the application site.

8.2.11. I note that Chapter 16 of the Longford County Development Plan, relating to Development Management Standards, does not prescribe a specific list of documentary evidence that must accompany an application in order to demonstrate rural housing need. Nevertheless, where a development plan policy expressly requires an applicant to demonstrate a qualifying local, economic or social need, it is necessary for the applicant to provide sufficient information to allow the Commission to establish whether the relevant policy criteria have been met. In this case, the information submitted comprises principally the local need form, a map and Land Registry documentation confirming ownership of the site. While this establishes ownership and sets out the applicant's stated intention to return to County Longford and engage in farming, I consider that it does not adequately demonstrate the specific rural housing need required under CPO4.24.

In particular, the applicant has not provided sufficient evidence to establish:

- a qualifying local rural connection within the terms of CPO4.24;
- that the applicant was born or has lived within the qualifying local rural area;
- a functional economic requirement to reside at the application site;
- the nature and scale of the agricultural enterprise proposed;
- that agricultural activity constitutes, or will constitute, the applicant's predominant occupation;
- why residence at the application site is necessary for the operation of that enterprise; or
- a qualifying social requirement to reside at this particular rural location.

Accordingly, I consider that the applicant has failed to demonstrate an economic or social requirement, or other qualifying rural housing need, to reside at this particular location and that the proposed development would therefore be contrary to Policy Objective CPO4.24 of the Longford County Development Plan 2021–2027 and contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

8.3. Sightlines

8.3.1. A further matter arising from the assessment of the application, although not identified as a reason for refusal by the Planning Authority, relates to the adequacy

and accuracy of the sightline information submitted with the application. This issue was specifically identified as a concern by the Roads Design Office in its report to the Planning Authority and has not been addressed by the applicant as part of the appeal. The Roads Design Office considered that the sightline drawing submitted with the application did not appear to have been prepared from the correct location or accurately reflect the existing road geometry. The Roads Design Office advised that the applicant should submit a clearly detailed and dimensioned survey and layout showing the existing public roadway, private entrance and existing buildings within the vicinity of the site, together with the achievable sightlines. Reference was made to DN-GEO-03060 (May 2023) and the Longford County Development Plan 2021–2027 as relevant guidance.

The Roads Design Office also identified potential obstruction of the required sightlines by existing hedgerows associated with neighbouring property. In this regard, it was considered necessary for the applicant to provide confirmation that the appropriate permissions are available to undertake any alterations to, and subsequently maintain, adjoining hedgerows where this is necessary to achieve the required sight distance.

- 8.3.2. I note that an observer on file has also raised concerns regarding the accuracy of the submitted sightline drawing and, in particular, the absence of consent to maintain or modify the hedgerows to the east of the site. These matters have not been substantively addressed in the appeal documentation.
- 8.3.3. I have had regard to Chapter 16 of the Longford County Development Plan 2021–2027, which sets out the Development Management Standards applicable to development throughout the county. In particular, Objective DMS16.114 sets out requirements in relation to sightlines at vehicular entrances and requires the provision of a safe and unobstructed sight distance. The application site is located on the R-398 regional road, which is subject to an 80km/hr speed limit. Having regard to the speed limit and road classification, DMS16.114 requires a safe and unobstructed sight distance of 160 meters. I further note that Figure 15.2 of the County Development Plan indicates that the required sight distance is to be assessed from a setback of 3.0 meters from the edge of the public road. This is particularly relevant in the assessment of the proposed entrance given the speed environment and the classification of the R-398.

- 8.3.4. The applicant has submitted a sightline layout indicating that the sightlines have been assessed from the required 3.0 metre setback from the road edge. However, the drawing indicates a sightline of approximately 90 meters. I note also that the sightline shown in a westerly direction does not appear to be taken towards the nearside edge of the carriageway but instead extends towards the far side of the road. I therefore have concerns regarding both the adequacy of the sight distance shown and the manner in which the sightline assessment has been presented.
- 8.3.5. The approximately 90-meter sightlines indicated on the submitted drawing falls significantly short of the 160-meter unobstructed sight distance required for a regional road at this location under Objective DMS16.114. This is a material shortfall in the information submitted with the application. I also note that the R-398 is a regional road with an 80km/hr speed limit and that a single white line is present on the carriageway at the location of the proposed entrance. These characteristics further reinforce the importance of demonstrating that the required sight distance can be achieved in accordance with the Development Plan standards.
- 8.3.6. Furthermore, the potential obstruction of the required sightlines by existing hedgerows remains unresolved. The applicant has not provided confirmation that they have the necessary legal consent or permissions to remove, alter or maintain vegetation on adjoining lands where such works may be required to achieve and maintain the required sight distance. This is particularly relevant where the achievement of the required sightline may depend upon works outside the applicant's ownership or control.
- 8.3.7. Notwithstanding the above, I consider that the sightline issue may potentially be capable of being addressed through an appropriately detailed and accurate survey and revised entrance design. I do not, therefore, consider the inadequacy of the sightline information to necessarily constitute a standalone reason for refusal in this case. Nevertheless, I consider that the information submitted is insufficient to allow me to conclude that a safe and unobstructed sight distance can be achieved and maintained at the proposed entrance. In particular, the submitted drawing indicates only approximately 90 meters of sight distance, compared with the 160 meters required under Objective DMS16.114, and concerns remain regarding the accuracy of the sightline assessment, the direction in which the sightlines have been measured and the potential obstruction arising from neighbouring hedgerows.

- 8.3.8. I consider that the applicant would need to submit a fully dimensioned and accurate site and road survey, demonstrating the achievable sightlines from the required 3.0 metre setback in accordance with DMS16.114 and Figure 15.2 of the County Development Plan, together with confirmation that any necessary works to adjoining hedgerows can lawfully be undertaken and that the required sightlines can be maintained in perpetuity.
- 8.3.9. While I consider that the matter may be capable of resolution, I regard the absence of this information as a significant inadequacy in the application documentation. On the basis of the information currently before me, I cannot be satisfied that the proposed entrance would provide the safe and unobstructed sight distance required by Objective DMS16.114 of the Longford County Development Plan 2021–2027. The matter would therefore need to be satisfactorily addressed before permission could reasonably be considered.

8.4. Other Issues

Waste Water Treatment System

- 8.4.1. The applicant has completed a Site Characterisation Form that concludes the site is suitable for a secondary treatment system and soil polishing filter. A trial hole was dug to a depth of 2.1m. A winter water table was not located. Having consulted Geological Survey Ireland mapping for the area I note the area has a bedrock of Visean Limestone and calcareous shale, this is consistent with the Site Characterisation Form. The vulnerability of the site is Low R1 with a Locally Important Aquifer. The soil profile as described includes a clay/compact.
- 8.4.2. It is stated that a T test was conducted at depths between approximately 400mm and 1000mm below ground level, resulting in a value of 16.72. A surface test was not performed., The subsurface test results are within the parameters specified in the EPA Code of Practice document. The applicant proposes to install a standard septic tank system and discharge to ground. The bed must be laid flat so the runoff can filtrate to ground. There must be 900mm of unsaturated subsoil under the filtration bed. The percolation area is 36m² as per the EPA guidance.
- 8.4.3. This depth meets the requirements of minimum unsaturated soils as set out in Table 6.3 of the EPA code of practice. Based on the submitted information it has been demonstrated that the proposed wastewater treatment system, complies with EPA

Code of Practice guidance in terms of ground conditions and separation distance. I note the Planning Authority following receipt of further information concluded that the site is suitable for the treatment of wastewater. I consider the proposal to install a packaged wastewater treatment system in this instance to be acceptable.

9.0 AA Screening

- 9.1. I have considered the proposal for change of use of 7 individual apartments to short term tourist accommodation in light of the requirements S177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.

The subject site is located 2.3km from the nearest European Site Mount Jessop Bog SAC (002202).

Having considered the nature, scale, and location of the project, I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because there is no conceivable risk to any European Site. The reason for this conclusion is as follows:

- scale and nature of the development
- Lack of Hydrological pathways
- Location-distance from nearest European site and lack of connections

I conclude that 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 (stage 2) (under Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000) is not required.

10.0 Water Framework Directive

- 10.1. I have assessed the proposed development for the construction of a single residential dwelling and have considered the objectives as set out in Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive which seek to protect and, where necessary, restore surface & ground water waterbodies in order to reach good status (meaning both good chemical and good ecological status), and to prevent deterioration. Having considered the nature, scale and location of the project, I am satisfied that it can be

eliminated from further assessment because there is no conceivable risk to a surface water

The reason for this conclusion is as follows:

The best practice standard measures that will be employed to prevent groundwater and surface water pollution from the site.

I conclude that on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development will not result in a risk of deterioration on any water body (rivers, lakes, groundwaters, transitional and coastal) either qualitatively or quantitatively or on a temporary or permanent basis or otherwise jeopardise any water body in reaching its WFD objectives and consequently can be excluded from further assessment.

11.0 Recommendation

11.1. I recommend that planning permission be refused for the following reason:

12.0 Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to the location of the site within "Area Under Strong Urban Influence" as identified in Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in April 2005 and in an area where housing is restricted to persons demonstrating local need in accordance with Policy Objective CPO4.24 of the Longford County Development Plan 2021 -2027 (as varied) it is considered that the applicant does not come within the scope of the housing need criteria as set out in the Guidelines or the Development Plan for a house at this location. It is considered that the applicant failed to adequately demonstrate the specific rural housing need required under CPO4.24. In particular, the applicant has not provided sufficient evidence to establish: a qualifying local rural connection within the terms of CPO4.24 and/or an economic or social need to reside at this location. The proposed development, in the absence of any identified locally based need for the house, would 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. The proposed development would, therefore, 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.”

Darragh Ryan
Planning Inspector

19th of August 2026

Appendix 1: Form 1 EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	500978-LD-26
Proposed Development Summary	Construction of a dwelling
Development Address	Knockatarry , Poynton , Kenagh, Co. Longford
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	
☒ Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is sub-threshold. Preliminary examination required. (Form 2) OR	Class 10 (b)(i) Construction of more than 500 dwelling units - The proposed development is subthreshold as it relates to the construction of 4 no. dwellings.

If Schedule 7A information submitted proceed to Q4. (Form 3 Required)	
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) [Delete if not relevant]

Inspector: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 2: Form 2 - EIA Preliminary Examination

Case Reference	500978-LD-26
Proposed Development Summary	Construction of a dwelling
Development Address	Knockatarry , Poynton , Kenagh, Co. Longford
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).	Briefly comment on the key characteristics of the development, having regard to the criteria listed. The development has a modest footprint, 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	Briefly comment on the location of the development, having regard to the criteria listed The development is situated in a rural area on improved agricultural land which is abundant in the area. The development is removed from sensitive natural habitats, centres of population and designated

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).	sites and landscapes of identified significance in the County Development Plan.
Types and characteristics of potential impacts (Likely significant effects on environmental parameters, magnitude and spatial extent, nature of impact, transboundary, intensity and complexity, duration, cumulative effects and opportunities for mitigation).	Having regard to the characteristics of the development and the sensitivity of its location, consider the potential for SIGNIFICANT effects, not just effects. Having regard to the modest nature of the proposed development, its location removed from sensitive habitats/features, 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.
Conclusion [Delete Conclusions which are not relevant]	
Likelihood of Significant Effects	Conclusion in respect of EIA
There is no real likelihood of significant	EIA is not required.

effects on the environment.	
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Inspector: _____ **Date:** _____

DP/ADP: _____ **Date:** _____

(only where Schedule 7A information or EIAR required)