



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report PL-501634-CK-26

Development	Construct a house with wastewater treatment system and all associated site works.
Location	Currahoo, Ballinspittle, Kinsale, Co. Cork.
Planning Authority	Cork County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	26/1050
Applicant(s)	William Hosford
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Refuse Permission
Type of Appeal	First Party Normal Planning Appeal
Appellant	William Hosford
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	17 th September 2026
Inspector	Suzanne White

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1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The appeal site has a stated site area of 0.63ha and is located in the rural area of Currahoo, c. 2.5km northeast of the settlement of Ballinspittle and c. 3.7km southwest of the town of Kinsale, Co. Cork. The site is accessed via a single width local road which also serves a cluster of single dwellings, farmyards and the foreshore of an inlet of the River Bandon further north.
- 1.2. The site is located within the curtilage of the applicant's existing business, Salt of Kinsale, a sea salt processing facility. Permission for this enterprise was originally granted under PRR 24/4295 and structures associated with the business are in the process of being constructed under that permission, and a subsequent grant of permission, PRR 25/04690.
- 1.3. There is an existing entrance from the local road serving the site.
- 1.4. Levels on site rise significantly from c. 30.0m in the northwest corner to c. 45.0m in the southeast corner. The existing 2no. polytunnels, located within the northern portion of the site, have finished floor levels ranging from 34.0-35.0m. An existing office/store/toilet building, currently under construction and located on the western side of the site, has a permitted finished floor level of 39.0m.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. Permission is sought for the construction of a house with wastewater treatment system, polishing filter (52.50sqm) and all associated site works.
- 2.2. The proposed 4bed dwelling would be single storey in height (to a maximum of 6m) and have a floor area of 212sqm. The finished floor level would be 41.48m.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

Planning permission was refused by Cork County Council by order dated 18th June 2026 for two reasons as follows:

1. The site is located in a rural area under Strong Urban Influence, as designated in the Cork County Development Plan, 2022. Within this area,

applicants must demonstrate that their proposal constitutes a genuine rural generated housing need based on their social/ economic links to a particular local rural area and must demonstrate compliance with one of the categories of housing need set out in Objective RP 5-4. On the basis of the information supplied the applicant has failed to demonstrate compliance with any one of the categories of housing need set out in Objective RP 5-4. The proposed development would thus conflict with the settlement policy and Objective RP 5-4 of the Cork County Development Plan, 2022 and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. The proposed development for a dwelling within the confines of an existing and establishing business does not come within the scope of Plan Objective RP 5-9 in the County Development Plan 2022 that only relates to dual proposals relating to a proposed full-time home based business, and therefore conflicts with the County Development Plan 2022, and proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

The main points of the Area Planner's Report, dated 11/06/2026 may be summarised as follows:

- The site is located in a discreet and isolated valley.
- The site is located in a 'rural area of strong urban influence' and applicants must comply with specified categories of housing need in Plan Objective RP 5-4. The applicant does not comply with any of the criteria.
- The applicant is applying for a dwelling within the curtilage of their new establishing business. The business is set up and refining sea water into artisan table salt. The infrastructure to establish the business is not yet fully complete. Construction of the main business premises (foundations, groundworks done), services, internal drainage and additional polytunnel etc to be completed.

- The submission incorrectly seeks to come within the scope of Plan Objective RP 5-9. However, the applicant already has a rural business and the applicant is already living near to that rural business and its source of raw material. Pre-planning advice emphasised that any application for a house would be considered against Plan Objective 5-4. The justification for needing a residence for surveillance and maintaining security of foodstuff of the establishing business is not such a compelling argument that it could overcome established and fair rural housing controls as an exception. If the applicant's business continues to flourish and the applicant completes implementation of their salt business complex they would be nearer to being a qualifying application based on Supplementary Planning Form 1.
- The lands are located in a high value and sensitive coastal landscape. The dwelling would be the highest structure on the site. The proposal would not result in excessive density at this location. The surrounding topography shields the site and the visual impacts of the house would not be obtrusive.
- The need for an EIAR is excluded at preliminary stage and AA is screened out.

The main points of the Senior Executive Planner's Report, dated 16/06/2026 may be summarised as follows:

- Notes and concurs with the Case Planner.
- The Planning History is of note. Permissions relating to the business are currently being implemented and are not complete.
- Based on the information submitted it is considered that the applicant has not demonstrated compliance with Policy Objective RP 5-4.
- The applicant does not fall within the scope of Policy Objective RP 5-9. A key consideration is that the applicant already has a business and lives nearby.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

- Area Engineer: no objection subject to conditions.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

No reports received by the Planning Authority.

3.4. **Third Party Observations**

None received by the Planning Authority.

4.0 **Planning History**

25/4690 – permission granted to construct:- 1) Office / Packaging / Store / Toilet Building (change of plan to that permitted under Pl.Reg.No. 24/4295). 2) Store building. 3) Associated site works, all associated with a sea salt processing facility permitted under Pl.Reg.No. 24/4295.

24/4295 - permission granted to construct a sea salt processing facility consisting of (i) Four Polytunnels, (ii) Three herb areas, (iii) Office/store/toilet building, (iv) Entrance and roadway, (v) Install a treatment unit with polishing filter and (vi) All associated Site Works.

5.0 **Policy Context**

5.1 **Development Plan**

The operative Development Plan is the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028. Proposed Variation No.1 (NPF Implementation) to the Plan was adopted on the 31st July 2026. ■

Volume 1: Written Statement ■

In terms of rural settlement policy, the site is located within a Rural Area under Strong Urban Influence in the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028, which is described as one which is within easy commuting distance of Cork City. It is stated (Section 5.4.4) that these areas exhibit characteristics such as rapidly rising population, evidence of considerable pressure from the development of (urban generated) housing in the open countryside due to proximity to such urban areas / major transport corridors, pressures on infrastructure such as the local road network and higher levels of environmental and landscape sensitivity.

Objective RP 5-1: Urban Generated Housing Discourage urban-generated housing in rural areas, which should normally take place in the larger urban centres or the towns, villages and other settlements identified in the Settlement Network. Encourage the provision of a mix of house types in towns and villages to provide an alternative to individual housing in the open countryside.

Objective RP 5-2: Rural Generated Housing Sustain and renew established rural communities, by facilitating those with a rural generated housing need to live within their rural community. Encourage the provision of a mix of house types in towns and villages to provide an alternative to individual rural housing in the countryside.

Objective RP 5-4: Rural Area under Strong Urban Influence and Town Greenbelts (GB 1-1): The rural areas of the Greater Cork Area (outside Metropolitan Cork) and the Town Greenbelt areas are under significant urban pressure for rural housing. Therefore, applicants must satisfy the Planning Authority that their proposal constitutes a genuine rural generated housing need based on their social and / or economic links to a particular local rural area, and in this regard, must demonstrate that they comply with one of the following categories of housing need:

- (a) Farmers, their sons and daughters who wish to build a first home for their permanent occupation on the family farm.
- (b) Persons taking over the ownership and running of a farm on a full-time basis (or part – time basis where it can be demonstrated that it is the predominant occupation), who wish to build a first home on the farm for their permanent occupation, where no existing dwelling is available for their own use. The proposed dwelling must be associated with the working and active management of the farm.
- (c) Other persons working full-time in farming (or part – time basis where it can be demonstrated that it is the predominant occupation), forestry, inland waterway or marine related occupations, for a period of over seven years, in the local rural area where they work and in which they propose to build a first home for their permanent occupation.
- (d) Persons who have spent a substantial period of their lives (i.e. over seven years), living in the local rural area in which they propose to build a first home for their permanent occupation.

(e) Returning emigrants who spent a substantial period of their lives (i.e. over seven years), living in the local rural area in which they propose to build a first home for their permanent occupation, who now wish to return to reside near other immediate family members (mother, father, brother, sister, son, daughter or guardian), to care for elderly immediate family members, to work locally, or to retire. It is not necessary for the applicant to show that they have already returned to Cork, provided they can show that they genuinely intend taking up permanent residence.

- Section 5.6.3 states that the planning and sustainable development criteria, against which an application is assessed, would include:
 - Whether the siting, design and scale of the proposal is appropriate to the surroundings;
 - Whether the siting, design and scale of the proposal is appropriate to the surroundings (See Chapters 14, 15 and 16);
 - Whether the proposal involves excessive site excavation or mounding;
 - Whether the site is in an exposed or visually sensitive location
 - Whether any proposed vehicular entrance would endanger public safety or give rise to a traffic hazard;
 - Whether an excessive length of roadside hedgerow or trees need to be removed to provide an entrance.
 - Whether there are any sewage disposal, drainage, water supply or other environmental concerns;
 - Whether the proposal would unduly affect other properties in the area;
- Section 5.6.5 sets out that those intending to build houses in rural areas are advised to consult the Cork Rural Design Guide for advice on site choice, design, and landscaping at an early stage in their preparations.

Objective RP 5-9: Full-Time Home-Based Business in a Rural Area

Facilitate the housing needs of persons who can satisfy the Planning Authority of their long-term commitment to operate a “bona fide” full time business from their proposed home in the rural area.

- Applicants must satisfy the Planning Authority that the business will contribute to and enhance the rural community and that the nature of their employment or business is dependent on its location within the rural area.

And

- The applicant must demonstrate their commitment to the proposed business through the submission of a comprehensive and professional Business Plan, and through submission of legal documentation that they have sufficient funding committed to start and operate the business.

The Planning Authority will normally regulate the programme of development, occupancy and use of the full-time home-based business by either an appropriate planning condition and/or enforceable legal agreement.

This objective applies to all rural housing policy area types.

Objective RP 5-22: Design and Landscaping of New Dwelling Houses and Replacement Dwellings in Rural Areas

- a. Encourage new dwelling house design that respects the character, pattern and tradition of existing places, materials and built forms and that fit appropriately into the landscape.
- b. Promote sustainable approaches to dwelling design by encouraging proposals to be energy efficient in their design, layout and siting, finishes, heating, cooling, and energy systems having regard to the need to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and reduce carbon emissions.
- c. Foster an innovative approach to design that acknowledges the diversity of suitable design solutions in most cases, safeguards the potential for exceptional innovative design in appropriate locations and promotes the added economic, amenity and environmental value of good design.
- d. Require the appropriate landscaping and screen planting of proposed developments by retention of existing on-site trees hedgerows, historic boundaries, and natural features.

Section 5.6.3 All planning applications for houses in rural areas, regardless of the personal circumstances of the applicant or whether they qualify under specific social and economic need criteria, have to be tested against a range of site-specific planning and sustainable development criteria. Normally, the planning and sustainable development criteria, against which an application is assessed, would include the following (criteria relevant to the current scheme listed):

- How the proposal relates to the overall strategy, policies, and objectives of the County Development Plan;
- The settlement pattern of the area and whether the proposal would give rise to a ribbon of linear roadside frontage development or excessive concentration of development;
- Whether the siting, design and scale of the proposal is appropriate to the surroundings (See Chapters 14, 15 and 16);
- Whether the proposal involves excessive site excavation or mounding;
- Whether the site is in an exposed or visually sensitive location (Chapter 14);
- Whether it is in an important landscape or nature conservation area.

5.6.5 In particular, those intending to build houses in rural areas are advised to consult the Cork Rural Design Guide for advice on-site choice, design, and landscaping at an early stage in their preparations.

The site is located in a High Value Landscape where policy objective GI 14-9 is relevant:

GI 14-9: Landscape

- a) Protect the visual and scenic amenities of County Cork's built and natural environment.
- b) Landscape issues will be an important factor in all land-use proposals, ensuring that a pro-active view of development is undertaken while protecting the environment and heritage generally in line with the principle of sustainability.
- c) Ensure that new development meets high standards of siting and design.
- d) Protect skylines and ridgelines from development.
- e) Discourage proposals necessitating the removal of extensive amounts of trees, hedgerows and historic walls or other distinctive boundary treatments.

GI 14-10: Draft Landscape Strategy

Ensure that the management of development throughout the County will have regard for the value of the landscape, its character, distinctiveness and sensitivity as recognised in the Cork County Draft Landscape Strategy and its recommendations, in order to minimize the visual and environmental impact of development, particularly

in areas designated as High Value Landscapes where higher development standards (layout, design, landscaping, materials used) will be required.

Cork Rural Design Guide: Building a New House in the Countryside (December 2003)

5.2 National/Regional Plans/Policies

National Planning Framework National (2025)

National Policy Objective 24 -Support the sustainable development of rural areas by encouraging growth and arresting decline in areas that have experienced low population growth or decline in recent decades and by managing the growth of areas that are under strong urban influence to avoid over-development, while sustaining vibrant rural communities.

National Policy Objective 28 seeks to 'Ensure, in providing for the development of rural housing, that a distinction is made between areas under urban influence, i.e. within the commuter catchment of cities and large towns and centres of employment and elsewhere makes a distinction between areas under urban influence and elsewhere:

- In rural areas under urban influence, facilitate the provision of single housing in the countryside based on the core consideration of demonstrable economic or social need to live in a rural area and siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans, having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements;
- In rural areas elsewhere, facilitate the provision of single housing in the countryside based on siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans, having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements.'

National Policy Objective 30

Facilitate the development of the rural economy, in a manner consistent with the national climate objective, through supporting a sustainable and economically efficient agricultural and food sector, together with forestry, fishing and aquaculture, energy and extractive industries, the bio-economy and diversification into alternative on-farm

and off-farm activities, while at the same time noting the importance of maintaining and protecting biodiversity and the natural landscape and built heritage which are vital to rural tourism.

National Policy Objective 32

Enhance the competitiveness of rural areas by supporting innovation in rural economic development and enterprise through the diversification of the rural economy into new sectors and services, including ICT-based industries and those addressing climate change and sustainability.

5.3 National Guidance

Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities

These guidelines differentiate between urban generated housing and rural generated housing and directs urban generated housing to town and cities and lands zoned for such development. Urban generated housing has been identified as development which is haphazard and piecemeal and gives rise to much greater public infrastructure costs. Rural generated housing includes sons and daughters of families living in rural areas and having grown up in the area and are perhaps seeking to build their first home near their family place of residence. Appendix 4 sets out that these Guidelines recommend against the creation of ribbon development for a variety of reasons relating to road safety, future demands for the provision of public infrastructure as well as visual impacts.

Climate Action Plan (2024 & 2025) and National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) 2023-2030 – Outcome 2A protection of existing designated areas and protected species.

Our Rural Future Rural Development Policy 2021-2025.

5.4 Natural Heritage Designations

The appeal site is not located within a designated area. The nearest such areas are:

- Courtmacsherry Estuary SAC (001230) c. 6.91km to the southwest.
- Courtmacsherry Bay SPA (004219) c. 7.02km to the southwest.
- Old Head of Kinsale SPA (004021) c. 7.69km to the south.
- Sovereign Islands SPA (004024) and NHA (000105) c. 8.51km to the southeast.

- Seven Heads SPA (004191) c. 11.13km to the southwest.

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. Grounds of Appeal

The issues raised in the 1st party Appellant's grounds of appeal may be summarised as follows:

- The appellant seeks a dwelling on site to avoid commuting and resulting carbon emissions, cut rental costs and facilitate the production process of the sea salt processing business on site. The seawater evaporation process requires constant human monitoring to ensure correct drying rates. The funds released would allow for increased marketing of the business and, potentially, its expansion resulting in more employment. The salt farm has received a County Council Local Enterprise Grant.
- The Planning Authority has, in applying policy RP 5-9, erred in describing the refused scheme as 'dual proposals relating to a proposed fulltime home business'. The business is well established and the housing need arises directly from a permitted business that requires a location by the sea, and therefore complies with the objective. Permission for a new business is not applied for. A professional business plan was submitted with the application.
- The Planning Authority does not appear to have adequately considered the positive benefits of the scheme, particularly in relation to National policy on climate change but also in terms of employment.

- The applicant is not relying on Policy Objective 5-4 to establish the principle of development, instead they rely on Policy Objective 5-9. However, the applicant was born in Crosshaven, has been a permanent resident of the application site area for 6 years and has sisters living in the County.
- Policy Objectives EC 8-13, 8-14, 8-18 are also relevant, as is NPO 30 and 32.
- The Planning Authority raised no objection in respect of highways/access, neighbours/amenity, noise/light pollution and landscape.

7.2. Planning Authority Response

The Planning Authority states that it is of the opinion that all relevant issues have been covered in the technical reports already forwarded to the Coimisiún and has not further comment to make on the matter.

7.3. Observations

None received.

7.4. Further Responses

None received.

8.0 Assessment

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 and national policies and guidance, I consider that the substantive issues in this case to be considered are as follows:

- Housing Need
- Visual Impact – new issue

I note that consideration was given to other relevant matters as part of the planning authority's assessment of the application, including access and wastewater treatment. The Planner's Report considered that the proposed development was

acceptable in reference to the objectives of the Development Plan regarding these matters, subject to conditions, and I concur with that assessment.

8.1. Housing Need

- 8.1.1. The Planning Authority's two reasons for refusal relate to rural housing and business policy compliance. Refusal reason 1 states that the applicant has failed to demonstrate compliance with any of the categories of housing need set out in Objective RP 5-4, therefore the proposed development would conflict with the settlement policy of the County Development Plan. Refusal reason 2 states that the proposed development for a dwelling within the confines of an existing and establishing business does not come within the scope of Plan Objective RP 5-9 in the County Development Plan 2022 that only relates to dual proposals relating to a proposed full-time home based business.
- 8.1.2. The 1st party appellant's grounds of appeal state that they are not relying on Policy Objective RP5-4 to establish the principle of development, instead they rely on Policy Objective RP5-9. However, they add that the applicant was born in Crosshaven, has been a permanent resident of the application site area for 6 years and has sisters living in the County, therefore could be considered under Policy Objective RP 5-4.
- 8.1.3. The Planner's Report considered that the justification put forward by the applicant, of needing a residence on site for surveillance and maintaining security of foodstuff of the establishing business was not a sufficiently compelling argument in relation to Objective RP5-4.
- 8.1.4. Policy Objective RP 5-4 relates to rural areas under Strong Urban Influence, as designated by the Development Plan 2022-2028. According to the Objective wording, applicants must satisfy the Planning Authority that their proposal constitutes a genuine rural generated housing need based on their social and / or economic links to a particular local rural area, and in this regard, must demonstrate that they comply with one of the five categories of housing need listed. The categories primarily relate to applicants from farming families or wishing to take over a family farm and others who have spent a substantial period of their lives (i.e. over seven years) in the subject local area.

- 8.1.5. According to the Supplementary Form submitted with the application, the applicant has lived at their current address in a rural area c. 5km from the subject site since September 2021, a period of 5 years. The applicant states that they were born in Crosshaven, however no details have been provided as to whether this was within the settlement or rural area. The applicant would not qualify under categories (a) and (b), relating to farming, and has not demonstrated compliance with categories (d) & (e), relating to persons who have spent a substantial period of their lives in the subject local rural area, therefore. In this regard I note Section 5.4.10 of the Plan states that the meaning of 'local rural area' is generally defined by reference to the townland, parish, or catchment of the local rural school to which the applicant has a strong social and / or economic link.
- 8.1.6. I note category (c) relates to 'other persons working full-time in farming (or part-time basis where it is the predominant occupation) forestry, inland waterway or marine related occupations for a period of over seven years, in the local rural area where they work and in which they propose to build a first home for their permanent occupation. The applicant's business relates to the processing of seawater to produce a foodstuff. Although the raw material is sourced from the marine environment, the processing activity is not dependent on a location within a coastal area. Consequently, I do not consider that the applicant would qualify under part (c) of the Policy Objective.
- 8.1.7. Overall therefore, I do not consider that a genuine rural generated housing need based on the social and / or economic links of the applicant to the subject local rural area has been demonstrated in this case. The proposed development would not therefore be in accordance with Policy Objective RP 5-4 of the Development Plan.
- 8.1.8. In any case, the applicant is clear in their application and appeal statements that they consider that they would be in compliance with Policy Objective RP 5-9, primarily. Objective RP 5-9 relates to full-time home-based business in a rural area and applies to all rural housing policy area types.
- 8.1.9. The applicant states that permission for a new business is not applied for, instead the business is well established and the housing need arises directly from a permitted business that requires a location by the sea, and therefore complies with

the objective. They add that a professional business plan was submitted with the application, as stipulated by the Objective.

- 8.1.10. The applicant also states that the Planning Authority has, in applying policy RP 5-9, erred in describing the refused scheme as 'dual proposals relating to a proposed fulltime home business'. My understanding of the Planning Authority's second reason for refusal is that the proposed development is deemed contrary to Objective RP 5-9, in part at least, because it does not relate to a dual proposal.
- 8.1.11. Objective RP 5-9 seeks to facilitate the housing needs of persons who can satisfy the Planning Authority of their long-term commitment to operate a "bona fide" full time business from their proposed home in the rural area. The Objective includes two requirements for such proposals to be acceptable: first, that the business will contribute to and enhance the rural community and that the nature of their employment or business is dependent on its location within the rural area; and second, applicants must demonstrate their commitment to the proposed business through the submission of a comprehensive and professional business plan and through submission of legal documentation that they have sufficient funding committed to start and operate the business.
- 8.1.12. It is clear from the wording of the policy that it is intended to relate to a single development comprising a full-time home-based business. In my view, the proposed development falls outside the form of development to which the policy objective relates, as the business has been established ahead of, and separately to, the dwelling in this case. I conclude that the proposal falls outside the scope of Policy Objective RP 5-9 therefore, and should instead be considered against Policy Objective RP 5-4. However, in case the Commission should come to a different view on this point, I have proceeded to assess the proposal below against the criteria listed in Policy Objective RP 5-9.
- 8.1.13. At present, there are two polytunnels and three storage structures on site relating to the business, together with the office building under construction. Two further polytunnels, a storage shed, herb growing areas and a wastewater treatment system, as indicated on the plans approved under PRR 25/4690, have not yet been constructed. On this basis and having regard to the submitted Business Plan, I consider that the business is at an early stage in its establishment on site.

- 8.1.14. I note from the Planning Statement submitted at application stage that the business was originally envisaged to operate during the summer months only, but that the salt processing and herb growing now operate during 8 months of the year. The Statement indicates that marketing and packaging, maintenance and cultivation of the herbs occur during the remainder of the year.
- 8.1.15. The applicant's grounds of appeal state that a rural location, with space for polytunnels and herb beds and clean polluted air is required, not far from the sea. From the applicant's description of their business, I understand the main activity undertaken on site to be processing of the raw material of seawater to produce table salt. According to details submitted by the applicant under application PRR 24/4295, I note that the seawater used is abstracted from Dooneen Bay c. 6km to the south, once a week. As the activity does not need to be carried out at the source location of the raw material, I consider that there is a degree of flexibility in the location of the processing facility.
- 8.1.16. The applicant also states that herbs are grown on site to flavour the salt product. Herb growing areas are indicated on the site layout plan approved under PRR 25/4690, within the elevated area to the east of the proposed office building. I did not observe any herb beds in this location on the day of my site visit. In the proposed site layout for the subject application, the proposed wastewater treatment system and polishing filter are to be located in this location. No alternative location for herb growing is indicated in the proposed plans.
- 8.1.17. The applicant states that the seawater evaporation process requires constant human monitoring to ensure correct drying rates. They state that personnel will be on site from 6am to 8pm and then will make a final visit later in the evening each day. During my site visit I observed two polytunnels on site. One person was on site, engaged in the construction of the office building. I note the applicant's position that a human presence is required on site to monitor the production process and provide security for the food product. However, having regard to the limited extent of the operation on site at this time, and to the nature and duration of the process, involving evaporation of saltwater by natural means, I do not consider that the applicant has adequately demonstrated that some automation and alternative means of security provision is not feasible and that the activities would necessitate full-time habitation on site.

8.1.18. Overall, I consider that the proposed development does not fit within the scope of Policy Objective RP 5-9 as it relates to the addition of a dwelling to the site of an existing rural business rather than a proposal for a full-time home-based business. Furthermore, having regard to the nature of the business, which relates primarily to the processing of seawater, I consider that it is suitable for a rural area but not dependent on its rural location. In addition, having regard to the nature and extent of the operation on site at present, I do not consider that it has been demonstrated that the existing business is a full-time operation or requires human habitation/supervision on site. Consequently, I do not consider that the proposed development would meet the stated criteria of Policy Objective 5-9 of the Development Plan.

8.2. Visual impact - new issue

- 8.2.1. The site is located in an area which is designated in the County Development Plan as a High Value Landscape and the proposed development consists of a proposed dwelling. I observed during my site visit that the site of the proposed dwelling had been excavated to form a level site. I also observed that the elevations of the office building currently under construction under PRR 25/4690 differ from the approved drawings however, the matter of enforcement falls under the jurisdiction of the planning authority.
- 8.2.2. The visual impact of the proposed development did not form a reason for refusal in the Planning Authority's decision. On this matter, the Planner's Report concluded that the surrounding topography shields the site and the visual impacts of the house would not be obtrusive. They observed that the site is located in a discreet and isolated valley and that the proposal would not result in excessive density at this location.
- 8.2.3. The site is not visible from designated Scenic Route S65 to the south and east due to intervening topography. The site is visible within Scenic Route S62 - road between Kinsale and Ballythomas (Coast Road), though at a distance of c. 2.3km.
- 8.2.4. The dwelling site would not be easily visible from the local road bounding the site to the west due to the mature hedgerow on this side, the office building which is under construction and given the level difference between the road and site. The proposed

dwelling is to be located on an elevated part of the site, where, due to its elevation and the lack of existing screening to the north and east, it would be visible in wider views from the surrounding area to the north and east.

- 8.2.5. Policy Objective GI 14-10 Draft Landscape Strategy requires that regard is had to the Cork County Draft Landscape Strategy (2007) in development management. The site is located within the 'Indented Estuarine Coast' landscape type according to the Draft Strategy which is classified as having very high landscape sensitivity.
- 8.2.6. Policy Objective GI 14-9 seeks to protect the visual and scenic amenities of County Cork's built and natural environment, protect skylines and ridgelines from development and requires that new development meets high standards of siting and design.
- 8.2.7. The Cork Rural Design Guide (2003) advises in relation to siting that prominent, unsheltered hillside locations should be avoided and that new buildings should seek to utilise existing natural elements or features for shelter and integration.
- 8.2.8. In the Planning and Design Statement submitted with the application, the applicant states that the care has been taken to fit the design into the slope of the land and avoid breaking the ridgeline. A planting plan submitted with the application proposes double sided hedge row around the perimeter of the site.
- 8.2.9. Having regard to the existing pattern of development locally, I note that the dwellings to the north of the site are positioned at lower ground level, closer to the local road and existing hedge planting.
- 8.2.10. Although the proposed dwelling would be viewed against the backdrop of the hillside to the rear, it would be visible from a wide area to the north and east. Having regard to the designation of the site within a High Value Landscape and to the prominent, elevated position of the proposed dwelling site, unsheltered on the northern and eastern sides, and to the pattern of development locally whereby dwellings are positioned at lower level on the hillside and closer to existing mature hedgerows, I consider that the proposed development would appear obtrusive within this sensitive coastal rural landscape and would therefore be contrary to Policy Objective GI 14-9, which seeks to protect the visual and scenic amenities of the County, and Policy Objective RP5-22, which encourages new dwelling design that respects the character and pattern of existing places and that fit appropriately into the landscape,

and also would not be in accordance with the Cork Rural Design Guide (2003) which advises that the siting of new dwellings should avoid prominent, unsheltered hillside locations. A refusal is recommended on this basis.

9.0 AA Screening

9.1. In accordance with Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and on the basis of the information considered in this AA screening, I conclude that the proposed development individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to give rise to significant effects on any European Site, in view of the conservation objectives of the sites and is therefore excluded from further consideration. Appropriate Assessment is not required.

9.2. This determination is based on:

- The relatively minor scale of the development and lack of impact mechanisms that could significantly affect a European Site.
- The separation distance to the nearest European Sites and lack of hydrological or other pathways.
- The qualifying interests of the above identified European Sites.
- Taking into account the screening determination of the planning authority.

10.0 Water Framework Directive

10.1. An assessment of the proposed development has been undertaken with regard to the objectives set out in Article 4 of the EU Water Framework Directive.

10.2. Having considered the nature, scale, and location of the proposed development, it is concluded that the proposal will not result in any risk of deterioration in the status of any water body, including surface waters (rivers and lakes), groundwater, transitional waters, or coastal waters. This applies to both qualitative and quantitative status, and in respect of temporary and permanent effects. In addition, the proposed development will not adversely affect the achievement of established environmental objectives, including the protection, maintenance, and improvement of water body status, as required under the Directive.

10.3. Accordingly, the proposed development is considered to be compliant with the requirements of Article 4.

11.0 Recommendation

11.1. I recommend that permission is refused.

12.0 Reasons and Considerations

1. The site is located in a rural area which is identified in the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028, as a rural area under strong urban influence. Policy Objective RP 5-4 of the Development Plan states that applicants must satisfy the Planning Authority that their proposal constitutes a genuine rural generated housing need based on their social and / or economic links to a particular local rural area. This policy is consistent with National Policy Objective 28, as set out in the Revised National Planning Framework 2025, which requires that in areas under urban influence, applicants are required to demonstrate an economic or social need to live in the rural area. Having regard to the submissions made, it is considered that the applicant does not come within the scope of the housing need criteria for a house at this location. In the absence of an identified locally based need for a house, the proposed development would contribute to the encroachment of random rural development in the area, would militate against the conservation of the rural environment, the efficient provision of public services and infrastructure and the preservation of resources and amenities associated with this environment. The proposed development would contravene the policy objective and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
2. The site is located in an area where the landscape designation is High Value Landscape. Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 Policy Objective GI 14-9, seeks to protect the visual and scenic amenities of the County, Policy Objective RP 5-22 encourages new dwelling design that respects the character and pattern of existing places and that fit appropriately into the landscape and the Cork Rural Design Guide (2003) emphasises the importance of designing with the landscape and of siting development to minimise visual intrusion, are considered to be reasonable. Having regard to the elevated positioning of the proposed development

and the openness of the site to views from the north and east, it is considered that the proposed development would form a discordant and obtrusive feature on the landscape at this location, would seriously injure the visual amenities of the area, would fail to be adequately absorbed and integrated into the landscape, would militate against the preservation of the rural environment and would set an undesirable precedent for other such prominently located development in the vicinity. 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.

Suzanne White
Senior Planning Inspector

29th September 2026

Appendix 1: Form 1 EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	PL.501634-CK-26
Proposed Development Summary	Construct a house with wastewater treatment system and all associated site works.
Development Address	Currahoo, Ballinspittle, Kinsale, Co. Cork
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.	State the Class here

EIA is mandatory. No Screening required. EIAR to be requested. Discuss with ADP.	
☒ 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 If Schedule 7A information submitted proceed to Q4. (Form 3 Required)	Class 10(b)(i) Infrastructure projects. Threshold: 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: Suzanne White

Date: 29th September 2026

Appendix 2: Form 2 - EIA Preliminary Examination

Case Reference	PL.501634-CK-26
Proposed Development Summary	Construct a house with wastewater treatment system and all associated site works.
Development Address	Currahoo, Ballinspittle, Kinsale, Co. Cork
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 c.0.63ha greenfield site is located in a rural area, adjacent to the applicant's existing business premises and situated at the end of a local road which serves other existing dwellings in proximity. The proposed development would therefore not be exceptional in the context of the existing environment in terms of its nature. █ The development would not result in the production of any significant waste, emissions or pollutants due to the nature of the proposed uses. █ 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 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 on improved agricultural land which is abundant in the area. The development is removed from sensitive natural habitats, centres of population and designated sites and landscapes of identified significance in the County Development Plan. Given the nature of the development and the site/surroundings, it would not have the potential to significantly affect other significant environmental sensitivities in the area.
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 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	

Likelihood of Significant Effects	Conclusion in respect of EIA
There is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	EIA is not required.

Inspector: Suzanne White

Date: 29/09/2026