

To: An Bord Pleanála

Re: Observation on the Proposed Use of Academy House, Goff Street, Roscommon Town under Class 20F Exemption

To Whom It May Concern,

I wish to make an observation regarding the proposed use of Academy House, Goff Street, Roscommon Town, for temporary accommodation of international protection applicants under a Class 20F planning exemption. The application has been submitted by Mr. Noel Whelan.

I understand that this exemption allows temporary use of a property to house asylum seekers without the standard planning process. While I fully recognise the importance of supporting those in need of international protection, I have serious concerns about this proposal and its potential impacts on the local community and on the individuals being accommodated.

1. Lack of Proper Consultation and Planning Oversight:

By using the Class 20F exemption, this proposal bypasses the usual planning scrutiny that ensures developments are suitable, sustainable, and properly resourced. This location may not be appropriate for such use without comprehensive assessment, and the lack of a standard planning process limits transparency and community input.

2. Unsuitability of the Site and Infrastructure:

Academy House is not purpose-built for residential use and may not meet the specific needs required for safe and dignified accommodation. Concerns exist around fire safety standards, sanitation, accessibility, and capacity, particularly if the building is being retrofitted quickly under a temporary use clause.

3. Impact on the Local Community and Services:

There has been no clear communication on how local services — including health, education, and community support — will be equipped to manage the additional demand. Without proper integration planning, this proposal risks creating tension or misunderstanding in the community, especially given the rapid implementation timeline.

4. Duty of Care to Asylum Seekers:

The decision to house vulnerable people in a location that may not be properly assessed for long-term suitability undermines their dignity and welfare. A rushed or under-resourced facility could expose residents to isolation, poor conditions, or limited support, especially in a town with limited direct-access services.

I respectfully request that An Bord Pleanála consider these observations and seek a full planning application for any change of use at Academy House, rather than permitting a

temporary exemption that could result in long-term consequences for both the local community and the individuals placed there.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

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