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Meath County Council

Planning Report

1315/26

To: Gerard Kellett, Senior Executive Planner

From: Nathan Cooney, Executive Planner

File Number: 26/161

Applicant: Melissa Smyth & Gentian Agalliu

Development Address: Rathdrinagh, Navan, Co. Meath

Application Type: Permission

Date of Site Inspection: 30/07/2026

Date of Report: 04/08/2026

Date Decision Due: 11/08/2026

Development Description: The proposed development will consist of the construction of a single storey bungalow style dwelling (218.9m²), detached single storey domestic garage (69.9m²), installation of new waste water treatment system, new vehicular entrance from public road and all associated site works.

1.0 Site Location & Description:

The application site is located at Rathdrinagh, Navan, Co. Meath. The subject site is accessed via the L5056 local road branching off the N2 national road. The surrounding area is characterised by agricultural lands and one-off dwellings. There is a large landfill facility c. 0.6km to the southwest of the application site. The site has a stated area of 0.39589ha. The subject site is zoned 'RA – Rural Area' under the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.

The subject site is located within a development pressure area designated 'Rural Area under Strong Urban Influence' under the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027. The site is located within the Central Lowlands Landscape character area, which is of high value and moderate sensitivity. There are no protected structures or monuments on or near the subject site and it is not located within an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA).



Figure 1.0: Aerial image showing the approximate location of the application site.



Figure 2.0: Images of the subject site to which the application relates.

2.0 Proposed Development

The proposed development will consist of:

- The construction of a single storey bungalow style dwelling (218.8m²);
- Detached single storey domestic garage (69.9m²);
- Installation of new waste water treatment system;
- New vehicular entrance from public road; and
- All associated site works.

3.0 Planning History

No planning history.

4.0 National and Local Planning Policy

• National Policy

Project Ireland 2040, The National Planning Framework (NPF) was formally adopted on 29/05/2018 (Circular FPS06/2018). The NPF sets out the national planning policy context.

• Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2005)

These guidelines seek to:

1. Ensure that the needs of rural communities are identified in the development plan process and that policies are put in place to ensure that the type and scale of residential and other development in rural areas, at appropriate locations, necessary to sustain rural communities is accommodated.
2. Manage pressure for overspill development from urban areas in the rural areas closest to the main cities and towns such as the gateways, hubs, and other large towns.

The guidelines distinguish between different types of rural area, with differing policy responses identified for each. They also distinguish between rural generated housing and urban generated housing and set out development plan policy guidance for both.

• Regional Policy

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland (EMRA) for the period 2019-2031 came into force in June 2019 and is a strategic plan and investment framework to shape the future development of the Region to 2031 and beyond.

It highlights the importance of tailoring planning responses in rural areas to recognise the balance required between managing urban generated demand in the most accessible rural areas, typically in proximity to Dublin and other towns, whilst supporting the sustainable growth of rural communities and economies, including those facing decline.

• Local Policy

The Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 is the statutory development plan for the area. The Development Plan sets the local planning policy context including provisions for urban and rural development etc.

Chapter 9 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 sets out the Rural Development Context, with the goal *'To encourage the continued sustainable development of rural*

communities without compromising the physical, environmental, natural and heritage resources of the County'.

Section 9.3 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 sets out the Rural Settlement Strategy, with the stated goal 'To ensure that rural generated housing needs are accommodated in the areas they arise, subject to satisfying good practice in relation to site location, access, drainage and design requirements and that urban generated rural housing needs should be accommodated within built-up areas or land identified, through the development plan process.'

RD POL 1: To ensure that individual house developments in rural areas satisfy the housing requirements of persons who are an intrinsic part of the rural community in which they are proposed, subject to compliance with normal planning criteria.

RD POL 7: To attach an occupancy condition to all individual one-off rural dwellings, including those located in Nodes, and on unzoned land/rural area, pursuant to Section 47 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), restricting the use of the dwelling to the applicant, as a place of permanent residence. The period of occupancy will be limited to a period of 7 years from the date of first occupation. No such occupancy condition shall be imposed with respect to housing located in Rural Area Type 'Low Development Pressure Area'.

- Section 28 Guidelines

All other relevant Section 28 Planning Guidelines have been considered in this assessment of this application.

5.0 Submissions

None.

6.0 Representations

None.

7.0 External Referrals

None.

8.0 Internal Referrals

The application was referred to the following Internal Sections/Departments:

Transport Section	Report received, further information required.
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9.0 Pre-Planning Consultation

Section 19 of the planning application form confirms that a pre-planning consultation was undertaken in relation to the proposed development.

Pre-Application Consultation Reference No. PP810756703 (24/03/2026).

10.0 Planning Assessment

10.1 Principle of Development

The application site is zoned RA-Rural Area under the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, with the stated zoning objective 'To protect and promote in a balanced way, the development of agriculture, forestry and sustainable rural-related enterprise, community facilities, biodiversity, the rural landscape, and the built and cultural heritage. Accordingly, residential development is acceptable in principle subject to compliance with the Rural Development Strategy outlined in Chapter 9 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.

In relation to Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence, it is the policy of the council:

RD POL 1: *To ensure that individual house developments in rural area satisfy the housing requirements of persons who are an intrinsic part of the rural community in which they are proposed, subject to compliance with normal planning criteria.*

RD POL 2: *To facilitate the housing requirements of the rural community as identified while directing urban generated housing to areas zoned for new housing development in towns and villages in the area of the development plan.*

RD POL 3: *To protect areas falling within the environs of urban centres in this Area Type from urban generated and unsightly ribbon development and to maintain the identity of these urban centres.*

The planning policy framework for housing in rural areas requires a demonstration of a location-specific rural housing need. Section 9.4 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 enumerates several means by which this can be done.

The following documents have been submitted to meet the local needs assessment and to confirm residence:

- A completed local needs form signed and dated 27/02/2026.
- Family Land Proximity Map.
- Bank Statements dated 24/12/2025 - 30/12/25.
- Employment Detail Summary 2025 dated 19/01/2026.
- Motor Tax Document (undated).
- Eir Service bill dated 05/01/2026.
- Certificate of Motor Insurance dated 08/05/2025.
- Copy of driver's license confirming address.
- Copy of Residence Permit.
- Copy of Prepay Power document confirming place of address dated 19/01/2026.
- Attendance letter from Kentstown National School dated 15/01/2026.
- Attendance letter from Coláiste na Mí dated 20/01/2026.
- A letter of support from Balrath G/B Football Club dated 05/02/2026.
- A letter of support from Seneschalstown GAA dated 04/02/2026.
- A letter of support from Kentstown Parish Priest dated 08/02/2026.
- Copy of Certificate of Registration for Leo's Takeaway dated 05/04/2022.
- Invoices for delivery to Leo's Takeaway dated 16/02/2026.
- Reference from landlord from property that applicants resided in from 2016-2023, dated 02/02/2026.

On the submitted local needs form, the applicants state that they do not own a house and have lived at one of the applicant's mothers' house since 2023. Prior to this, the applicants had an address in Kentstown from 2016-2023. It is indicated on the local needs form submitted that both applicants have resided in Kentstown for the last 25 years.

Kentstown is a designated urban settlement in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, being designated a 'Village' in the Settlement Hierarchy. Accordingly, due to the applicant's home location within the urban settlement of Kentstown it is considered that the proposed development would constitute urban generated housing. The site in question is located in a rural area outside any designated settlement as defined in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, where development which is not rurally generated should be more properly located in settlement centres. The applicants therefore do not qualify based on the local needs criteria as outlined in Chapter 9 of the County Development Plan, and accordingly refusal is recommended.

10.2 Ribbon Development

The site of the proposed development is within 'an Area under Strong Urban Influence' as identified in the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2005) and in a 'Rural Area under Strong Urban Influence', which is demonstrating pressure for individual dwellings, and where housing is restricted in accordance with the policies set out in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (as varied). The proposed development, if permitted, would add to the pattern of linear housing along this section of public road and exacerbate the existing ribbon of development to the extent that it would represent an excessive concentration and density of residential development and in doing so create additional development opportunities that would further exacerbate the situation.

10.3 Siting, Design & Layout

The proposed development consists of permission for the construction of a single-storied bungalow-style dwelling house and a detached domestic garage.

The proposed dwelling would have a floor area of 219.8sqm, with a width of 22.285m, maximum depth of 13.848m, and consistent ridge height of 5.790m. The dwelling incorporates an asymmetrical stunted t-shaped layout, with a 6.525m wide portion of the dwelling to the south-east that extends 3.150m further back from the rest of the dwelling and c. 0.9m further to the front. There is also a proposed 2.485m wide porch protruding out to the front elevation. The proposed development includes a detached domestic garage, with a floor area of 69.9sqm. The proposed garage would be located to the south-west of the site, with a proposed width of 7.548m, depth of 11.035m, and height of 5.275m. The garage is proposed to have a vehicular garage door to the front elevation, with fenestration to the rear elevation and fenestration and a door to the left (east) elevation. On the balance, it is considered that the design and appearance of the proposed dwelling is considered to be in line with the Meath Rural Design Guide.

The proposed dwelling would be set back c. 34.2m from the roadside edge. It would be viewed in the context of other dwellings and owing to its siting, size and layout would not have any dominating impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area. There is a minimum distance of 20.154m from the proposed dwelling to the site boundary to the west, and 10.119m to the site boundary to the east. A comprehensive landscaping plan is incorporated, integrating indigenous trees and hedgerow with proposed indigenous hedging boundary treatment to the

west and post and rail fence with indigenous hedging for the site boundary to the east. Accordingly, it is considered that there would be a satisfactory separation distance between the proposed development and the neighbouring property – the sizing of the proposed development would not have any harmful impact on residential amenity in relation to overshadowing, loss of natural light, loss of privacy or overlooking.

Overall, the siting, design and layout of the proposed dwelling is considered acceptable, subject to other assessment criteria.

10.4 Flooding

The subject site is not located within a flood zone.

10.5 Access & Other Site Services-

Access

Access to the proposed dwelling is via a proposed new vehicular access onto the L5056. This local road accesses onto the R152. This application was referred to Meath County Council Transport Department, which returned the following comments:

The proposed development is located on the L-5056 inside the 60km/h speed limits. The applicant has proposed sightlines of 90 metres in both directions from a setback of 2.4 metres from the new entrance. The sightlines are drawn incorrectly and not to the nearside edge of the road as required.

The existing topographical details should accurately depict the position of the road edge together with the full extent of roadside boundaries, including the front and rear faces of hedgerows, in order to demonstrate the available sightlines.

The applicant shall amend the entrance layout to provide a minimum 10-meter separation distance with the existing entrance on the opposite side of the road.

Recommendation:

The applicant should be requested to submit the following further information:

- The applicant shall demonstrate unobstructed sightlines of 90 metres to the nearside edge of the road, in accordance with TII document DN-GEO-03060, from the entrance. The nearside road edge shall be visible over the entire sight distance. Where works are required to provide unobstructed sightlines, they shall be identified in a revised site layout and included within the redline boundary. Where works are required in third party lands, written consent from the land owner shall be submitted.*
- The existing topographical details including the road edges and the front and back face of the boundary hedges should be shown accurately.*
- The applicant shall amend the entrance layout to provide a minimum 10-meter separation distance with the existing entrance on the opposite side of the road.*

The comments from the Transport Department are noted and accordingly would need to be addressed.

Services

Surface Water Drainage

Section 20 of the Application Form indicates that surface water disposal is via a soakpit.

Water Supply

Section 20 of the Application Form indicates proposed source of water supply is via public mains.

Wastewater Treatment

Section 20 of the Application Form indicates that the proposed means of wastewater management/treatment is via a conventional septic tank system – this is wrong. The site characterisation report submitted as part of this application recommends the installation of a Tertiary Treatment System and Infiltration/treatment area, indicating in section 4.0 that a septic tank system is not a suitable option. The proposed means of wastewater treatment outlined in the site characterisation report is considered acceptable.

11.0 Appropriate Assessment

Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC (the Habitats Directive) compels competent authorities to undertake an appropriate assessment of any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects.

'Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects, Guidance for Planning Authorities' (2009) provide advice to planning authorities on their obligations under the Habitats Directive. The document, "Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities", states that where, from the nature, size and location of the development, it is unclear if the proposal will have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site(s), a Natura Impact Statement will be required.

The application site is not within or directly adjoining any designated Natura 2000 site. The following Natura 2000 sites are located within 15km of the application site:

- River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (Site Code IE 0002299) Location: 4.38km north/north-east.
- River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (Site Code IE 0004232) Location: 4.38km north/north-east.
- Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (Site Code IE 0001957) Location: 15km north-east
- Boyne Estuary SPA (Site Code IE 0004080) Location: 15km north-east

The Planning Authority considered the nature, scale and location of the proposed development and other plans and projects (where there could be potential for cumulative or in-combination effects), the conservation objectives/ qualifying interests of European Sites within the vicinity of the site and the distance to European Sites, any protected habitats or species, the WFD catchment location, the underlying aquifer type and vulnerability and the excavation works,

emissions, transportation requirements and duration of construction and operation and cumulative impacts associated with the proposal.

The Planning Authority's Screening for Appropriate Assessment has considered the potential effects including direct, indirect and in-combination effects of the proposed development, individually or in combination with the permitted developments and cumulatively with other plans or projects on European Sites. The Planning Authority concludes that the proposed development (entire project), by itself or in combination with other plans and developments in the vicinity, would not be likely to have a significant effect on European Site(s). In light of this, it is considered that a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (Natura Impact Statement) is not required in this instance.

12.0 Environmental Impact Assessment

The Planning Authority is required to determine if the proposed development requires an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). This determination is based on the requirements set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001-2026 that does not exceed the stated threshold (as per Article 92). A single dwelling is not listed in Schedule 5; therefore, a mandatory EIA is not required.

The Planning Authority must also determine if a sub-threshold EIAR is required. The proposed development is significantly below the relevant threshold for residential development and, will not by itself, or in combination with other developments, exceed the said threshold. Therefore, the Planning Authority is satisfied that a sub-threshold EIAR is not required.

13.0 Conclusion

It is not considered the applicant has provided an adequate planning justification to demonstrate a housing need, as required under section 9.4 of the plan. The

The applicant has failed to demonstrate visibility splays in accordance with the requirements, and as such the Planning Authority is not satisfied on the basis of the information submitted that safe visibility splays can be provided in each direction to the required standards.

Given the extent of density of development along this roadside it is considered that to permit the proposed development would by itself and by the 'infill' sites it would create, result in an undesirable extension and coalescence of a disorderly and regimental line of ribbon development.

It is acknowledged that further information could be sought in relation to a number of visibility issues however in accordance with best practice and the Development Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (paragraph 5.7 refers), it is considered unreasonable to request FI on these matters when there is a fundamental objection to the principle of development and regardless of same a refusal is likely to be forthcoming on the principle of the development.

In light of the foregoing, it is recommended the application be refused.

14.0 Recommendation

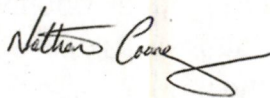
It is considered that the proposed development is not in keeping with the policies of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 and it is therefore recommended that permission for this development be **REFUSED** for the following reasons:

1. The site is located in a rural area outside any designated settlement as defined in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 where development which is not rurally generated should be more properly located in settlement centres. It is policy of the County Development Plan to restrict housing in this area to those who are intrinsically part of the rural community and do not currently own a property or who have an occupation predominantly based in the rural community. It is considered, based on the information submitted, that the applicant has not established a rural generated housing need for a dwelling in this location. The local need details submitted do not show the applicant's continuous connection to the rural area over a significant period of time – due to the applicant's home location within the urban settlement, it is considered that the proposed dwelling would be urban generated housing. The proposed development would accordingly be contrary to the policy of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 and the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities and would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and would establish a very undesirable future precedent.
2. The site of the proposed development is within an 'Area under Strong Urban Influence' as identified in the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2005) and in a 'Rural Area under Strong Urban Influence', which is demonstrating pressure for individual dwellings, and where housing is restricted in accordance with the policies set out in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.

The proposed development, if permitted, would add to the pattern of linear housing along this section of public road and exacerbate the existing ribbon of development to the extent that it would represent an excessive concentration and density of residential development and in doing so create additional development opportunities that would further exacerbate the situation. Bearing in mind the extent of development already permitted in this area, it is considered that the proposed development, if permitted, would be contrary to the aforementioned Ministerial Guidelines and contravene the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 RD POL 3, which seek to maintain the identity of surrounding towns, villages and rural settlements. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

3. It is a policy (RD POL 43) of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, "To ensure that the required standards for sight distances and stopping sight distances are in compliance with current road geometry standards as outlined in the NRA document Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) specifically Section TD 41-42/09 when assessing individual planning applications for individual houses in the countryside".

Having regard to the failure of the particulars submitted with the application to demonstrate visibility splays in accordance with the DMRB requirements and Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, the Planning Authority is not satisfied on the basis of the information submitted that safe visibility splays can be provided in each direction to the required standards. Accordingly, to permit the proposed development would endanger public safety by reason of a traffic hazard, contrary to the aforementioned policy provisions of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, and thereby contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.



Nathan Cooney
Executive Planner
Date: 04/08/2026



Gerard Kellett
Senior Executive Planner
Date: 07/08/2026

REFUSAL