

Meath County Council



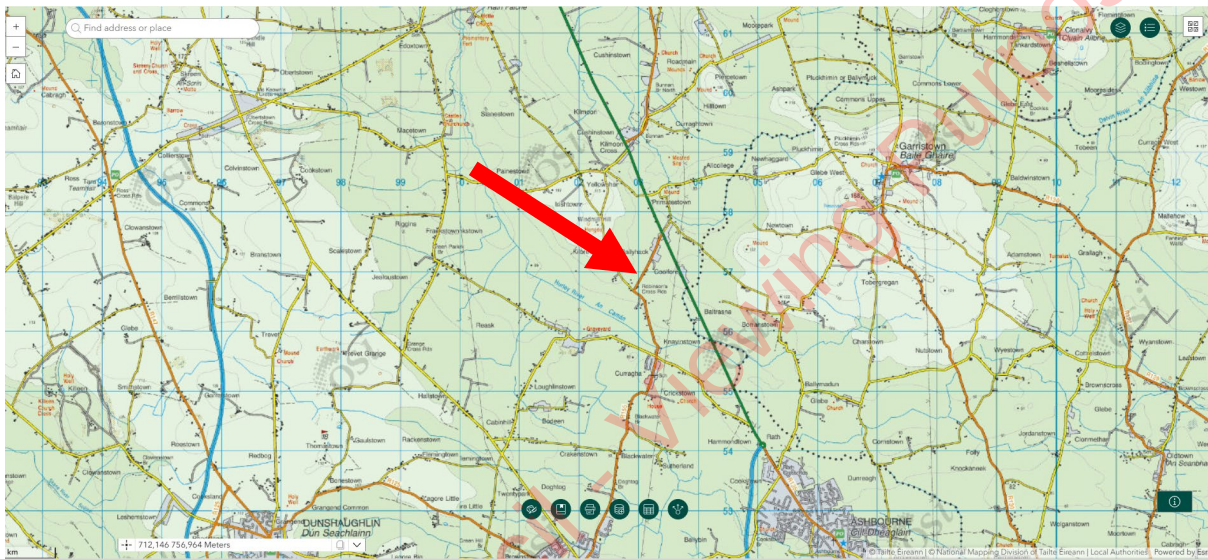
Planning Report

To	Peadar McQuaid, A/Senior Executive Planner
From:	Oisín Kerr
File Number:	2560126
Applicant:	Michael McGroary
Development Address:	Coolfore, Ashbourne, Co. Meath
Application Type:	Permission
Date of Site Inspection:	1/4/2025
Date of report:	3/4/2025
Date Decision Due:	7/4/2025.
Development Description:	<i>The development will consist of the following: 1. Construction of a new detached, 2-storey dwelling. 2. Construction of a new 1.5-storey garage & carport. 3. Existing agricultural entrance to be relocated and construction of proposed new vehicular entrance gates and piers. 4. New proprietary wastewater treatment system & percolation area. 5. All associated site works.</i>

1. Site Location & Description:

The site measures 0.730 ha and is located on the northwestern side of Ashbourne, 6.6 km away. The site is 817 metres south of the N2, whilst the site is located on a regional road R-155 and is located in the Transport Corridors of N2 Rath to Kilmoon. The site's boundary consists of an established hedge row and an empty field, i.e. no sign of crop or livestock. The topography is relatively flat, and the Landscape Character Area is listed as No. 6 *central lowlands*, with a landscape value of *high* in the LCA. The subject site is approaching ribbon development with residential dwellings on the same side of the road, amounting to 4, and this application resulting in the 5th. The area is zoned RA, rural area and is designated a *rural area under strong urban influence* in the CBD.

There are no Protected Structures or National Monuments within or around the subject site, and no protected views other than No. 73, which is 800 metres north of the site.



Google Maps 3/2023



2. Proposed Development

Permission is sought for a one-and-a-half-story to two-story 5-bed dwelling, including the garage, totalling **476.4 sqm**. The garage portion includes a storage area/garage and home office over the same and a carport. Permission is sought to create a new site entrance and to construct an onsite WWTS and percolation area.

3. Planning History

A review of the Meath County Council Planning Register indicates the following planning history at the subject site:

Subject Site

221382, Clive Dillon, "proposed revised site boundaries, revised existing agricultural entrance, new detached agricultural building with stables (2no.) toilet/shower room, canteen/camera room, storage barn & first floor hay storage over, proprietary effluent treatment system & soil polishing filter area, horse walker, sealed effluent tank and all associated works, to existing agricultural yard. Significant Further Information/revised plans submitted on this application".

Granted on 08/08/2023.

UD16234, closed.

4. National and Local Planning Policy

- Project Ireland 2040, The National Planning Framework (NPF)
- The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland (EMRA) 2019-2031.
- Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.
- All other relevant Section 28 Planning Guidelines have been considered in this assessment of this application.

5. Submissions

None.

6. Representations

No councillor representations have been received.

7. Prescribed Bodies

None.

8. Internal Referrals

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

Transportation Section	Further Information Required.
Environment Section (General)	No objection subject to conditions.
N2 Rath Roundabout to Kilmoon Cross Scheme	Comments noted

9. Pre-Application Consultation

A review of Section 19 of the submitted Application Form indicates that there was a pre-planning consultation meeting held in respect of the proposed development on 2023-07-23, but no PP number is given.

10 Planning Assessment

The main planning considerations in the determination of this application are:

- Principle of Development
- Siting, Layout & Design
- Landscaping
- Transportation/Access
- Flooding
- Water Services

10.1 Principal of Development

The application site has an RA, Rural Area land use zoning objective which states as follows: *'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.'* Residential use is permitted in this zoning subject to compliance with the rural settlement strategy.

The application site is located in a rural **Area under Strong Urban Influence**. 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 outlines a number of means by which this can be done. On the basis of the information submitted, it appears that the applicant is seeking permission based on the following criteria:

- *Persons who have spent substantial periods of their lives, living in rural areas as members of the established rural community for a period in excess of five years and who do not possess a dwelling or who have not possessed a dwelling in the past in which they have resided or who possess a dwelling in which they do not currently reside;*
- *Returning emigrants who have lived for substantial parts of their lives in rural areas, then moved abroad and who now wish to return to reside near other family members, to work locally, to care for older members of their family or to retire,*

The applicant has submitted the following as evidence of his local need:

- A completed Meath County Council Local Need Form.
- Family home location within 5km of the site.
- Various supporting documents, confirming the applicant's period of residence locally as required by the CDP, including the following:
 - School records submitted, and a letter of confirmation of attendance provided for primary and secondary school. Primary school was from 1992 to 1999, and secondary school was from August 2000 to 2004.
 - Landowners have consented to the use of the land in the form of a cover letter.
 - Voting card dated 2024.
 - Driving License dated 2012.
 - New Driving License dated 2022.
 - Bank statement from 2020 to 2025.
 - Revenue stating address at Coolfore, Ashbourne.
 - Invoice from Hertz UK LTD, 11 Vine Street, UK.
 - Motor Tax Online, Tax Disc.
 - Exemption Notification, Transfer of Residence from the UK to Ireland dated 2024.
 - Transfer of Residency from within the EU. Applicant resided in Scotland, United Kingdom
 - Application and Declaration for Relief from Vehicle Registration Tax (VRT).

On the basis of the documentary evidence submitted it is considered the applicant is a returning emigrant and has established a rural housing need in accordance with Meath County Council rural housing policy and therefore the principle of development is considered acceptable.

10.2 Sitting, Layout & Design

The subject development is located in the southeastern section of the existing agricultural field. The dwelling occupies an off-centred location on the application site with a c.60 metre set-back from the adjoining road. The proposed 5-bed dwelling has a stated floor area of 316.4 sq. m., the depth is 18 metres, the width is 15 metres, whilst the garage is 59.9 sq. m., the home office is 59.9 sq. m., and the carport is 40.5 sq. m. The house type is a one-and-a-half-story to two-story dwelling with a pitched roof. The submitted drawings indicate the proposed ridge height at 8.2 metres. The primary frontage facing the northwest (roadside) is indicated as 34.9 metres (including the garage and home office). The proposed dwelling is to have a render finish with a natural stone finish on the garage and part of the rear of the dwelling.

It is considered the overall size, scale and massing of the proposed dwelling and attached car port/garage is of concern which would appear quite bulky, with various roof types, projection/annex features and depth would be contrary to the Meath Rural Design Guide.

I consider it appropriate that the applicant be afforded the opportunity to revise the proposed development in order to comply with Meath Rural Design Guide by way of a request for Further Information.

The applicant shall submit a revised site layout plan to position the dwelling forward on the site to maintain the existing building line to the north. It must be noted that in order to comply with this request, the percolation area will need to be revised.

10.3 Ribbon Development

Ribbon Development as defined in the Meath County Development Plan 2021- 2027 and Rural Housing Guidelines, 2005 is considered to occur where there is a high density of almost continuous road frontage type development, for example *“where five or more houses exist on any one side of a given 250 metres of road frontage”*.

Section 9.5.2 of the County Development Plan notes inter alia whether a given proposal will exacerbate such ribbon development will depend on:

- The type of rural area and circumstances of the applicant.
- The degree to which the proposal might be considered infill development,
- The degree to which existing ribbon development would be extended or whether distinct areas of ribbon development would coalesce as a result of the development.

Meath County Council will endeavour to arrive at a balanced and reasonable view in the interpretation of the above criteria, taking account of local circumstances, including the planning history of the area and development pressures.

The proposed development is located in a Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence as defined in the Meath County Development Plan, 2021 – 2027. A review of the immediate surrounding area indicates that there is potential for ribbon development, but not at the specific location, as this dwelling is the 5th. Considering the above, the development is acceptable.

10.4 Landscaping

When considering the landscape and the siting, RD POL 9 applies.

To require all applications for rural houses to comply with the 'Meath Rural House Design Guide'. The determination of whether a new building integrates into the landscape is not a test of invisibility; rather it requires an assessment of the extent to which the development of the proposed site, including necessary site works, will blend in unobtrusively with its surroundings.

The main criteria against which the degree of visual impact will be considered include;

- The location of the site within the landscape, the position of the building within the site and its relationship with surrounding buildings. This will help determine whether the development will be a prominent feature in the landscape;*
- The attributes of the site and its landscape surroundings and whether these provide sufficient enclosure for the new building. This includes the existence or otherwise of natural boundaries and/or a visual backdrop, and whether there is any intervening vegetation or natural features between the site and critical views; and*
- The suitability of the design of the building for the site and its locality, including its form, scale and massing.*

The dwelling is well screened on all sides by existing natural vegetation along the wider field boundary. A review of the Site Layout Plan appears to indicate that the existing roadside hedgerow will be trimmed back or removed entirely. The applicant has provided a native hedge landscaping plan for the application site perimeter. The applicant shall preserve the existing hedge row where feasibly possible, say for conditions of complying with the site entrance.

10.5 Transportation/Access

The applicant is seeking permission for new vehicular access onto the existing R155 a Strategic Corridor. The applicant has submitted a Traffic and Transport Assessment, the contents of which are noted.

The following referral response has been received from MCC Transport Department.

The proposed development is located on the R-155 which is identified as a Strategic Corridor in the CDP. The applicant has proposed sightlines of 160 metres to the nearside edge of the road from a setback of 3.0 metres.

The proposed entrance is unacceptable as it would result in a hazard being introduced to the Clear Zone.

The applicant proposes to replace the existing agricultural entrance with a new access to the dwelling. It has not been demonstrated how the remaining agricultural lands are to be accessed.

Recommendation:

The applicant should be requested to submit further information.

The assessment of the Transportation Section is noted.

The applicant is seeking permission for new vehicular access onto the R155 a Strategic Corridor. RD POL 40 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 states the following

To restrict new accesses for one-off dwellings where the 80km per hour speed limit currently applies in order to safeguard the specific functions and to avoid the premature obsolescence of identified regional and important county link roads (see Map No 9.2.) through the creation of excessive levels of individual entrances and to secure the investment in non-national roads.

Section 9.15.3 Development Assessment Criteria of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 provides for a number of exceptions to the above policies relating to regional and county roads will be considered on their merits in the following circumstances:

- *For those who have a location specific rural housing need on family owned lands and cannot provide access onto any other non-identified regional or county road and therefore need to access one of the regional or county roads identified on Map No. 9.2. In this circumstance, the applicant will be encouraged to maximise the potential of an existing entrance. The onus shall be on the applicant to demonstrate that they have no other access or suitable sites within their landholding.*

The applicant in the documentation submitted has failed to address this issue in relation to the access arrangements for the subject site onto the R155 or demonstrated that they have no other access or suitable sites within their landholding. Further information is also recommended.

Regarding the N2 Rath Roundabout to Kilmoon Cross Scheme, a response from the Transportation development (N2 Rath Roundabout to Kilmoon Cross Scheme) has raised no objections to the proposed development.

The applicant is advised to “take due cognisance of the N2 Rath Roundabout to Kilmoon Cross Scheme as published, its proximity to the proposed preferred option corridor and the potential of the proposed scheme”. Document related to the project can be found at <https://n2rath2kilmoon.ie>.

10.6 Flooding

The application site is not located in a flood risk area.

10.7 Water Services

Wastewater

A site characterisation form has been submitted outlining details of the site assessment carried out by Hydrocare Environmental Ltd. The applicant is proposing septic tank system and percolation area. A trial hole was dug to 2.1 metres on the 15th of Dec 2024 and examined on the 17th Dec. Water table was encountered at 1.4 metres. Bedrock was not encountered. A Subsurface Percolation Value of 37.00/25mm and Surface Percolation Value of 33.78/25mm on site which is compliance with the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) Code of Practice 2021 - Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems (Population Equivalent ≤ 10).

Environment have made the following comments

Comments:

I have reviewed the Site characterisation form as submitted by the applicant having regard to the 2021 Code of Practice for Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (PE≤10). It is noted the Planning Application Form (Part 1) states the water supply to be from a private well and the Site Characterisation Form states the water supply to be public mains.

In this regard the Environment section is satisfied and has no objections to the proposed development, subject to conditions.

Water Supply

The applicant is proposing to serve the proposed development via a new private well.

Surface Water

The applicant is proposing a soak pit to deal with surface water.

11. Appropriate Assessment

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.

The site is not within or directly adjoining any Natura 2000 site. There are a number of Natura 2000 sites situated within a 15-kilometre (approximate) distance of the application site as set out below. There are no apparent direct hydrological links from the subject site to a Natura 2000 site.

- River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (Site Code 2299), 14.9 km northwest of the site.
- River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (Site Code 4232), 14.9 km northwest of the site.

12. 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 to 2022, 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 EIS is required. The proposed development is significantly below the relevant threshold for such 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 EIS is not required.

13. Development Contributions

The development will be subject to development contributions as per Meath County Development Plan 2024-2029.

14. Recommendation

In accordance with Section 34(8) of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2022, it is recommended that further information is required to adequately assess the subject development.

1. The Planning Authority has concerns that the design of the proposed dwelling, attached carport and garage, as presented, in relation to its size, scale and massing, would appear quite bulky, with various roof types, projection/annex features, height and depth, be contrary to the Meath Rural House Design Guide. The proposed design fails to respond to the attributes of the site, lacks suitable integration and would result in a prominent feature in the local landscape.

Therefore, the applicant is invited to submit a revised design to accord with the Meath Rural House Design Guide and Policy RD POL 9 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.

2. The applicant is advised of RD POL 40 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 states *"to restrict new accesses for one-off dwellings where the 80km per hour speed limit currently applies in order to safeguard the specific functions and to avoid the premature obsolescence of identified regional and important county link roads (see Map No 9.2.) through the creation of excessive levels of individual entrances and to secure the investment in non-national roads"*.

Having regard to the above policy and the proposed development to intensify an existing access off a Strategic Corridor, the applicant shall demonstrate how they satisfy the exceptions outlined in Section 9.15.3 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.

The applicant is requested to therefore submit full Land Registry details of all family land in County Meath including the applicant's parents in the form of a full file plan(s) and folio(s) and shall provide a full evaluation of such lands to ensure that there is no other suitable family land to accommodate the proposed development not located on the protected road.

3. The applicant should be requested to submit the following further information:
- The applicant shall submit a revised site layout demonstrating an entrance layout and roadside boundary treatment that does not result in a hazard being introduced into the Clear Zone, as per TII document DN-GEO-03036. The new roadside boundary shall be at least 1 metre behind the sightline.
 - The applicant shall demonstrate how the remaining agricultural lands are to be accessed. The entrance gates for access to agricultural lands shall be set back to accommodate the largest vehicle that will use the entrance and in any case be no less than 12 metres from the edge of the road.
4. The applicant shall submit a revised site layout plan to position the dwelling forward on the site in order to maintain the existing building line. In order to comply with this request, the wastewater treatment system and percolation area may need to be revised.
5. If any submission resulting from the above requires the submission of additional data which alters your original proposal and the Planning Authority on receipt of the submission consider it to be significant, you may be required to publish a notice in an approved newspaper in accordance with S.34(8) of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2023. You should not publish any notices unless and until such time as the Planning Authority issues you with a notification to do so.

Any response to a Further Information Request for an Online application should ONLY be made Online via the ePlanning Portal.



Oisín Kerr

Graduate Planner
RECOMMENDATION

ACCEPTED

04 April 2025

SIGNED: _____

**FURTHER
INFORMATION**

Peadar McQuaid

A/Senior Executive Planner

04/04/25