



Title of Report:	Planning Committee Report – LA01/2023/0667/F
Committee Report Submitted To:	Planning Committee
Date of Meeting:	26th February 2025
For Decision or For Information	For Decision – Referred Item by Cllr Maighr�ad Watson
To be discussed In Committee YES/NO	NO

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)	
Strategic Theme	Cohesive Leadership
Outcome	Council has agreed policies and procedures and decision making is consistent with them
Lead Officer	Senior Planning Officer

Estimated Timescale for Completion	
Date to be Completed	

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	Nil
Included in Current Year Estimates	N/A
Capital/Revenue	N/A
Code	N/A
Staffing Costs	N/A

Legal Considerations

Input of Legal Services Required	NO
Legal Opinion Obtained	NO

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	N/A	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	N/A	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	N/A	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	N/A	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	N/A	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	N/A	Date:

<u>App No:</u>	LA01/2023/0667/F	<u>Ward:</u>	Torr Head & Rathlin
<u>App Type:</u>	Full		
<u>Address:</u>	Approximately 220m NE of No. 148 Torr Road, Cushendun, BT44 0PU		
<u>Proposal:</u>	Proposed tourism amenity facility comprising of a viewing point with associated parking, seating areas and ancillary features.		
<u>Con Area:</u>	N/A	<u>Valid Date:</u>	29/06/2023
<u>Listed Building Grade:</u>	N/A	<u>Target Date:</u>	12/10/2023
<u>Agent:</u>	TC Town Planning, Unit C12 The Business Centre, 80-82 Rainey Street, Magherafelt, BT45 5AJ		
<u>Applicant:</u>	Liam Hamilton, 150 Torr Road, Cushendun, BT44 0PU		
<u>Objections:</u>	0	<u>Petitions of Objection:</u>	0

Executive Summary

- Full Planning Permission is sought for a proposed tourism amenity facility comprising of a viewing point with associated parking, seating areas and ancillary features.
- The site is located within a rural area and within Antrim Coast and Glens AONB as defined within the Northern Area Plan 2016.
- The application has been assessed against the relevant policies within the NAP, SPPS, PPS 2, PPS 3, PPS 6, PPS 15, PPS 16, PPS 21, Building on Tradition: A Sustainable Design Guide for the Northern Ireland Countryside, Antrim Coast & Glens AONB Design Guide, Causeway Coast and Glens Tourism and Destination Management Strategy, and Moyle Glens Landscape Character Assessment (LCA).
- The proposal fails to comply with Paragraphs 6.256, 6.262, 6.70, 6.172, and 6.187 of the SPPS for NI, Policy TSM 2, TSM 7, and TSM 8 of PPS 16, Policy CTY 1, and CTY 11 of PPS 21, Policy NH 6 of PPS 2 and Policy AMP 9, and AMP 10 of PPS 3.
- In summary, it has not been demonstrated that the proposed development: is in association with and requires a site at or close to a particular tourism attraction located in the countryside; or the type of tourist activity in itself requires a countryside location. It has not been demonstrated that the site layout, building design, associated infrastructure and landscaping arrangements are of a high quality; it does not adversely affect features of the natural and built heritage; or that it is compatible with the surrounding land uses. Appropriate boundary treatments and means of enclosure have not been provided. The proposed development would also have an adverse impact on and be visually detrimental to the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB and will detract from the landscape quality and character of the surrounding area.
- Consultation has been carried out with DfI Roads, NI Water, HED Historic Buildings, CCG Environmental Health, DAERA. No objections have been raised by consultees.
- No letters of objection or support have been received.
- Refusal is recommended.

Drawings and additional information are available to view on the Planning Portal-
<https://planningregister.planningsystemni.gov.uk/simple-search>

1 RECOMMENDATION

- 1.0 That the Committee has taken into consideration and agrees with the reasons for the recommendation set out in section 9 and the policies and guidance in sections 7 and 8 and resolves to **REFUSE** planning permission as set out in section 10.

2.0 SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The site is located on lands approximately 220m North-East of No. 148 Torr Road, Cushendun, within Antrim Coast and Glens AONB. The site comprises a portion/corner plot of an agricultural field. The site abuts the Torr Road along the northern boundary which is defined by post and wire fencing. The southern and western boundaries are undefined and open to the remainder of the agricultural field. To the eastern boundary runs an access lane which leads to no. 156 further south-east of the site. This eastern boundary is defined by stone pillars/wall and a hedgerow. The land beyond the southern boundary of the site falls significantly to it reaches the coastal cliffs. The surrounding landscape comprises views of the sea and coastal headlands. The topography rises and falls steeply on the surrounding road networks, with a number of detached properties and farm buildings dispersed throughout the landscape.
- 2.2 The site is located in the rural countryside outside any defined settlement limit and within Antrim Coast and Glens AONB. The site has no other zonings or designations.

3.0 RELEVANT HISTORY

No relevant planning history on the application site.

4.0 THE APPLICATION

- 2.3 Full planning permission is sought for a proposed tourism amenity facility comprising of a viewing point with associated parking, seating areas and ancillary features.

5.0 PUBLICITY & CONSULTATIONS

External

- 5.1 **Advertising:** Advertised on 19th July 2023

Neighbours: No letters of objection or support have been received.

Internal

- 5.2 **DFI Roads** – No objections
Environmental Health – No objections
NI Water – No objections
HED Historic Buildings – No objections
DAERA – No objections

6.0 MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 Section 45(1) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 requires that all applications must have regard to the local plan, so far as material to the application, and all other material considerations. Section 6(4) states that in making any determination where regard is to be had to the local development plan, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.2 The development plan is:
- Northern Area Plan 2016 (NAP)
- 6.3 The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) is a material consideration.
- 6.4 The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) is a material consideration. As set out in the SPPS, until

such times as a new local plan strategy is adopted, councils will apply specified retained operational policies.

- 6.5 Due weight should be given to the relevant policies in the development plan.
- 6.6 All material considerations and any policy conflicts are identified in the “Considerations and Assessment” section of the report.

7.0 RELEVANT POLICIES & GUIDANCE

- The Northern Area Plan 2016
- The Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) 2015
- Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 2 – Natural Heritage
- Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 3 – Access, Movement and Parking
- Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 6 – Planning, Archaeology and Built Heritage
- Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 15 – Planning & Flood Risk
- Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 16 – Tourism
- Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 21 – Sustainable Development in the Countryside
- Building on Tradition: A Sustainable Design Guide for the Northern Ireland Countryside
- Antrim Coast & Glens Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Design Guide
- Causeway Coast and Glens Tourism and Destination Management Strategy
- Moyle Glens Landscape Character Assessment (LCA)

8.0 CONSIDERATIONS & ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 The main considerations in the determination of this application relate to; the Principle of Development, Integration and Rural Character, Natural Heritage, Access and Parking, and Habitat Regulations Assessment.

Principle of development

- 8.2 Both the SPPS and Policy CTY 1 of PPS 21 outline the types of development which are considered acceptable in principle within the countryside.
- 8.3 There is no conflict between the SPPS and the policy provisions of Planning Policy Statement 21 – Sustainable development in the Countryside and Planning Policy Statement 16 - Tourism, which provide the relevant planning policy.
- 8.4 The SPPS discusses Tourism and notes, paragraph 6.251, ‘Tourism makes a vital contribution to the Northern Ireland economy in terms of the revenues it generates, the employment opportunities it provides, and the potential it creates for economic growth. As well as direct spending on holiday accommodation and use of tourist amenities, tourism plays an important role in helping to support the viability of many local suppliers, services and facilities. It can improve assets and provides infrastructure for local people and tourists, supporting the vibrancy of Northern Ireland’s culture and heritage, and sustaining communities.’ Paragraph 6.254 highlights the needs of balancing the needs of the tourist with conserving the tourism asset. The aim of the SPPS in relation to tourism development is to manage the provision of sustainable and high-quality tourism developments in appropriate locations within the built and natural environment.

PPS 16 – Tourism

TSM 2 - Tourist Amenities in the Countryside - New Proposals

- 8.5 Policy TSM 2 of PPS 16 applies and states that; *Planning permission will be granted for a tourist amenity in the countryside where it is demonstrated that:*
- a) *it is in association with and requires a site at or close to a particular tourism attraction located in the countryside, or*
 - b) *the type of tourist activity in itself requires a countryside location.*

All proposals that include buildings must make provision in existing or replacement buildings, where possible.

Where a proposed tourist amenity is of regional importance or is otherwise significant in terms of the extent of new build or the scale of engineering operations it must demonstrate substantial benefit to regional tourism as well as sustainable benefits to the locality. Such applications must be supported by a tourism benefit statement and a sustainable benefit statement.

8.6 A planning statement and addendum have been submitted in support of the planning application which includes information relating to Policy TSM 2 of PPS 16. The statement outlines that there is no definition of what a 'tourism attraction' or a 'tourist activity' is. It goes on to state that the traffic survey completed demonstrates that the site is frequented by visitors as cars stop there for a number of minutes at a time to take photographs of the view. It also refers to sightseeing as a typical tourism activity. A summary of the Agents response in relation to TSM 2 is outlined in the bullet points below.

- The policy provides for tourist amenities in the countryside where the tourism activity and associated facilities require a rural location in terms of their functional or site/area specific requirements.
- A traffic count was completed on the 28th August 2021 by Hoy Dorman on behalf of the applicant. This was completed to demonstrate how often the existing field gate (location of the proposed access) and the field gate on the other side of the road are used as informal laybys for visitors to the area to get out of their vehicle and take in the panoramic views. The results gathered by Hoy Dorman detailed that approximately 8 cars stopped per hour and remained on site for on average 3 minutes. The site would provide a welcome stop for tourists to appreciate the dramatic coastline.
- The site is within a location which is already a substantial tourism attraction in its own right due to the magnificent landscape, sea views and leading to a number of nearby attractions such as Torr Head, Murlough Bay, and connecting to further attractions such as Giants Causeway, Dunluce Castle etc

8.7 The application proposes a viewing point, to include a new gated entrance off the Torr Road finished in Bitmac, a parking area providing 10 car parking spaces and 3 minibus/van parking spaces finished in compacted stone and 7 picnic benches. It is not clear if or how the applicant would generate a revenue from the proposed development. The site will be enclosed by fencing to the western and southern boundaries. The existing hedgerow to the eastern boundary will be retained, with new retaining wall to the front/northern roadside boundary and part eastern boundary.

8.8 The 'Carpark feasibility study' undertaken by Hoy Dorman consultants was undertaken in 2021 and does not demonstrate a need for a car park of the scale provided. It also makes reference to a number of other planning applications outside our Council Area. Following a review of the Planning Register the details of these are:

- LA10/2017/1114/F (Gabbion wall, new footpath, seating, fencing, surfacing, outdoor classroom and toposcope viewpoint (Ederney. Fermanagh and Omagh district Council). This application is located within the settlement development limits of Ederney and is not comparable to the application site.
- L/2013/0670/F (Supply and build new public convenience block with associated services footpath and kerbing. Replacement of old timber fence (Shore Road, Enniskillen). This was a Council application for facilities associated with an existing picnic area and cliff path walk, not comparable to the application site.
- K/2012/0427/F (Boardwalks, footbridges and viewpoint at Lands surrounding AnCreagan Centre, Omagh). This application was associated with an existing cultural centre and not comparable to the application site.

8.9 This type of development is not in association with a tourism attraction, close to a tourism attraction and does not require a countryside location. There are various car parks and associated facilities within Cushendun itself, located approximately 2 km southwest of the application site, which can serve tourists and walkers and would be a more appropriate,

sustainable approach to tourism. There is also parking provision located at Torr Head approximately 6km north of the site and other surrounding tourist spots traditionally have areas of informal parking which have minimal impact on the surrounding landscape. The application fails to meet Policy TSM 2.

- 8.10 The application does not propose any new buildings and the development is not considered to be of regional importance.

TSM 7 - Criteria for Tourism Development

- 8.11 Policy TSM 7 of PPS 16 applies and states that; *A proposal for a tourism use, in addition to the other policy provisions of this Statement, will be subject to the following design criteria:*

Design Criteria

- (a) a movement pattern is provided that, insofar as possible, supports walking and cycling, meets the needs of people whose mobility is impaired, respects existing public rights of way and provides adequate and convenient access to public transport;*
- (b) the site layout, building design, associated infrastructure and landscaping arrangements (including flood lighting) are of high quality in accordance with the Department's published guidance and assist the promotion of sustainability and biodiversity;*
- (c) appropriate boundary treatment and means of enclosure are provided and any areas of outside storage proposed are screened from public view;*
- (d) utilisation of sustainable drainage systems where feasible and practicable to ensure that surface water run-off is managed in a sustainable way;*
- (e) is designed to deter crime and promote personal safety;*
- (f) development involving public art, where it is linked to a tourism development, needs to be of high quality, to complement the design of associated buildings and to respect the surrounding site context.*

In addition to the above design criteria, a proposal will also be subject to the following general criteria (g – o).

General Criteria

- (g) it is compatible with surrounding land uses and neither the use or built form will detract from the landscape quality and character of the surrounding area;*
- (h) it does not harm the amenities of nearby residents;*
- (i) it does not adversely affect features of the natural or built heritage;*
- (j) it is capable of dealing with any emission or effluent in accordance with legislative requirements. The safeguarding of water quality through adequate means of sewage disposal is of particular importance and accordingly mains sewerage and water supply services must be utilised where available and practicable;*
- (k) access arrangements must be in accordance with the Department's published guidance;*
- (l) access to the public road will not prejudice road safety or significantly inconvenience the flow of traffic;*
- (m) the existing road network can safely handle any extra vehicular traffic the proposal will generate;*
- (n) access onto a protected route for a tourism development in the countryside is in accordance with the amendment to Policy AMP 3 of PPS 3, as set out in Annex 1 of PPS 21.*
- (o) it does not extinguish or significantly constrain an existing or planned public access to the coastline or a tourism asset, unless a suitable alternative is provided;*

8.12 The application will provide vehicular access and parking for 10 cars and 3 minibuses/vans with turning space provided and outdoor seating for visitors. The ground will be level/no steps proposed encouraging accessibility at the site. The application meets criteria a.

8.13 The planning statement submitted with the planning application states that the proposed development will incorporate local and sensitive materials and building techniques where appropriate as shown on the accompanying plans. Native planting is also included as annotated on the drawings in the interest of biodiversity and means of enclosure for the development. The proposal includes a proof timber post and wire fence and a timber post and d-rail ranch style fence. A vehicle restraint barrier has been included on drawing no. 07 'Viewpoint 3'. This structure and material included is not appropriate to the scenic setting of the AONB. The application fails to meet criteria b.

- 8.14 Surface Water run-off is to be disposed via soakaway. NI Water have been consulted and raised no objections. The application meets criteria d.
- 8.15 The application will not promote crime and will promote personal safety and meets criteria e.
- 8.16 The development does not involve public art and meets criteria f.
- 8.17 The planning statement and addendum submitted in support of this planning application includes information from the Agent in relation to Policy TSM 7 of PPS 16, criteria c, g and i. A summary of the is outlined below:
- The proposal has been designed in sympathy with the levels and contours of the land while ensuring appropriate access and road safety standards are met and relatively flat surfaces are provided in the interest of accessibility.
 - Unobtrusive boundary treatments have been incorporated to respect the setting while providing adequate means of enclosure for the site. The proposed land use is compatible with the surrounding tourism and agricultural use.
 - It will provide a welcome facility that is needed at this location as currently, local and visitor traffic is disrupted by tourists stopping at this location to enjoy the remarkable views on offer from this particular beauty spot.
 - The development has been designed in a sympathetic manner to protect the landscape quality as this is the fundamental reason why the site is needed and being developed.
- 8.18 The site will be enclosed by fencing to the western and southern boundaries. The existing hedgerow to the eastern boundary will be retained, with a new retaining wall to the front/northern roadside boundary and part eastern boundary. New hedgerow planting and fencing is also required along the roadside boundary. The site is an extremely open roadside site with no existing natural screening or any degree of integration.

There will open views of the site when passing along Torr Road and longer ranging views when travelling along Torr Road further south. The site is elevated, skyline and open and the development of this site with the introduction of hard landscaping, parked cars/vans/buses and a retaining wall to the entire northern boundary is considered unacceptable. A vehicle restraint barrier (approx. 93m in length) has been included on drawing no. 07 'Viewpoint 3'. This structure and material included is not appropriate to the scenic setting of the AONB. This together with increases in ground levels (approx. 2.8m at the highest point), across the site will be detrimental to the landscape quality and character of the surrounding area. The existing undulating site levels are characteristic of the area and provide an open view when driving along Torr Road. The site is within Antrim Coast and Glens AONB and this type of development is not considered acceptable in this location. The application fails to meet criteria c, g and i.

- 8.19 The proposal will not harm the amenities of nearby residents. Environmental Health have been consulted and raised no objections. The application meets criteria h.
- 8.20 Surface Water run-off is to be disposed via soakaway. There will be no Foul Sewage as a result of the development. NI Water have been consulted and raised no objections. The application meets criteria j.
- 8.21 The proposed development will be accessed via the creation of a new access off the Torr Road. The proposal does not involve access to a protected route. DFI Roads have been consulted as part of the planning application and requested a number of changes be made to the Block Plan & Cross Sections. Following submission of amended plans DFI Roads are content with the access arrangements.

TSM 8 - Safeguarding of Tourism Assets

- 8.22 Policy TSM 8 of PPS 16 applies and states that; *Planning permission will not be granted for development that would in itself or in combination with existing and approved development in the locality have an adverse impact on a tourism asset (as defined in paragraph 7.39 of the J&A and in Appendix 1*

Glossary of Terms) such as to significantly compromise its tourism value.

- 8.23 This policy provides for the safeguarding of all tourism assets, including those which are subject to protection for other reasons under various legislative or policy instruments and those which are not subject to such protection.
- 8.24 For the purposes of this statement, a tourism asset is defined as any feature associated with the built or natural environment which is of intrinsic interest to tourists.
- 8.25 Para 7.41 notes there are many diverse features or combinations of features associated with the natural and built heritage in Northern Ireland which are of intrinsic interest to tourists. Some examples may include Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Conservation Areas and historical and archaeological sites. However, this is not an exhaustive list. As the application site is within the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB it is located within a Tourism Asset.
- 8.26 A planning statement and addendum have been submitted in support of this planning application. These documents have been assessed and make reference to relevant planning policies and legislation, the existing site and the surrounding environment. Additional photomontages were also provided to support the planning application. However, as considered above and further below under PPS 2 NH 6 it is considered that the development of this site will be detrimental to the character of this AONB and therefore detrimental to this Tourism asset. The development would adversely impact on the tourism asset, damaging its character which in turn could diminish its effectiveness of attracting tourists. The application fails Policy TSM 8 of PPS 16.

PPS 21- Sustainable Development in the Countryside

Policy CTY 1 – Development in the Countryside

- 8.27 Policy CTY 1 of PPS 21 applies and states that; *There are a range of types of development which in principle are considered to be acceptable in the countryside and that will contribute to the aims of sustainable development which*

include farm diversification proposals in accordance with Policy CTY 11.

Policy CTY 11 – Farm Diversification

- 8.28 Policy CTY 11 of PPS 21 applies and states that; *Planning permission will be granted for a farm or forestry diversification proposal where it has been demonstrated that it is to be run in conjunction with the agricultural operations on the farm. The following criteria will apply:*
- (a) the farm or forestry business is currently active and established;*
 - (b) in terms of character and scale it is appropriate to its location;*
 - (c) it will not have an adverse impact on the natural or built heritage; and*
 - (d) it will not result in detrimental impact on the amenity of nearby residential dwellings including potential problems arising from noise, smell and pollution.*

Proposals will only be acceptable where they involve the re-use or adaptation of existing farm buildings.

Exceptionally, a new building may be permitted where there is no existing building available to accommodate the proposed use, either because they are essential for the maintenance of the existing farm enterprise, are clearly unsuitable for adaptation and re-use or cannot be adapted to meeting the requirements of other statutory agencies.

Where a new building is justified it should be satisfactorily integrated with an existing group of buildings.

- 8.29 For the purposes of this policy the determining criteria for an active and established business will be that set out under Policy CTY 10 which notes the farm business is currently active and has been established for at least 6 years. DAERA were consulted on this application and noted the farm business Id was allocated on 06/10/1991, it's a Category 1 farm business, the farm business has claimed payments through the Basic Payment Scheme or Agri Environment scheme in each of the last 6 years and the application site is on land for which payments are currently being claimed by the farm business. It

is considered that the application meets criteria (a) of CTY 11 in that the farm business is currently active and established.

8.30 The planning statement and addendum submitted in support of this planning application includes information from the Agent in relation to Policy CTY 11 of PPS 21, criteria b and c. A summary is outlined below:

- Visitors regularly stop at this locality to take time to appreciate the spectacular views on offer.
- Many viewing points with parking and seating areas are provided along the coast and at other beauty spots. However, this type of facility is largely absent from this locality and although there may be parking at Torr Head, it is located at the end of a single-track road that can prove difficult for traffic movement, does not have seating areas or bins and is located at a lower elevation.
- The application site provides a greater scope of sea and landscape views whereas seaviews from the parking at Torr Head are obstructed somewhat by the jutting up of Torr Head itself which involves a somewhat difficult climb that cannot be accessed by all. The site and surrounding locality are tourism areas and therefore the proposed development is supporting this established character.
- The site is not within an environmentally sensitive area and is sufficient distance from the historic monument located to the west. Local materials and less obtrusive engineering solutions form part of the design to ensure the development has as minimal an impact as possible on the sensitive landscape as this is why the tourism amenity facility is required.
- The architect has respected the existing levels and contours of the site while also ensuring the site is accessible for all and appropriate access and egress in the interest of road and pedestrian safety is implemented to accord with DfI Roads Service standards. Given the diligent approach applied in the design, the proposal will not have an adverse impact on the natural or built heritage that attracts so many visitors to stop at this location.

- 8.31 In relation to criteria (b) and (c) as assessed above and following the development is not considered appropriate to the character of the area. The application site is set within Antrim Coast and Glens AONB and the development of this site on such a prominent location is considered detrimental to the rural character. As previously advised existing facilities exist which can serve the needs of tourists in this area. The application fails CTY 11 criteria (b) and (c).
- 8.32 The proposal will not harm the amenities of nearby residents. Environmental Health have been consulted and raised no objections. The application meets criteria (d) of CTY 11.
- 8.33 The proposal does not involve the construction of any new buildings.

PPS 6- Planning, Archaeology and Built Heritage

Policy BH 4 – Archaeological Mitigation

- 8.34 Policy BH 4 of PPS 6 applies and states that; *Where it is decided to grant planning permission for development which will affect sites known to contain archaeological remains, the Department will impose conditions to ensure that appropriate measures are taken for the identification and mitigation of the archaeological impacts of the development, including where appropriate the completion of a licensed excavation and recording of remains before development commences.*
- 8.35 The application site is in close proximity to the site of an enclosure (ANT 015:019). This is probably the remains of an Early medieval rath and given its proximity to the site there is an increased potential for uncovering buried archaeological remains associated with it during site works.
- 8.36 Historic Environment Division (Historic Monuments) have been consulted on the application and raised no objections subject to conditions for the agreement and implementation of a developer-funded programme of archaeological works. This is to identify and record any archaeological remains in advance of new construction, or to provide for their preservation in situ, as per Policy BH 4 of PPS 6.

8.37 The supporting information makes reference to PPS 8 – Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation. The proposal is not considered to be open space or outdoor recreation. The relevant policy context is that outlined in this report.

Natural Heritage

PPS 2 – Natural Heritage

Policy NH 6 - Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

8.38 Policy NH 6 of PPS 2 applies and states that; *Planning permission for new development within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will only be granted where it is of an appropriate design, size and scale for the locality and all the following criteria are met:*

- a) *the siting and scale of the proposal is sympathetic to the special character of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in general and of the particular locality; and*
- b) *it respects or conserves features (including buildings and other man-made features) of importance to the character, appearance or heritage of the landscape; and*
- c) *the proposal respects:*
 - *local architectural styles and patterns;*
 - *traditional boundary details, by retaining features such as hedges, walls, trees and gates; and*
 - *local materials, design and colour.*

8.39 The planning statement and addendum submitted in support of this planning application includes information from the Agent in relation to Policy NH 6 of PPS 2. A summary is outlined below:

- This is a small-scale project that has been sited to take advantage of all the views. A cautious and sympathetic approach has been adopted when designing how best to integrate the development with its surroundings to ensure that the special character and quality of the AONB is not adversely affected.
- There are no heritage features within the site.

8.40 According to the Antrim Coast and Glens Design Guide; *“The Antrim Coast and Glens area has been designated an Area of*

Outstanding Natural Beauty because of both the scenic quality of the landscape and the appeal of the heritage of the dwellings built by past generations.” The landscape of this area is extremely attractive and is well known for its natural beauty. In the surrounding area, there are small clusters of rural development and farmsteads. This part of the AONB is within the countryside, and according to the Antrim Coast and Glens Design Guide; “it is important that the area is protected from incongruous development.” This proposed type of development is uncharacteristic of the area and will harm this high-quality landscape. As assessed under PPS 16 above it is considered the siting and scale of the proposal is not sympathetic to the character of the area and will be visually detrimental to this AONB. The application fails to meet Policy NH 6.

Integration and Rural Character

- 8.41 Paragraph 6.70 of the SPPS states that all development in the countryside must integrate into its setting, respect rural character, and be appropriately designed.
- 8.42 The Moyle Glens Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) sets out key characteristics for this area:
- *Dramatic steep glacial valleys within the Antrim Plateau.*
 - *The northern glens (Glendun, Glenaar) have a v-shaped form with undulating sides, whereas those further south (Glenballyemon and Glenariff) have sweeping u-shaped profiles with dramatic basalt cliffs.*
 - *Prominent hedgerows and trees in field boundaries, and ancient broadleaf woodlands give the glens a well wooded appearance.*
 - *Long straight gorse hedgerows and degraded stone walls run perpendicular to the slopes along historic townland boundaries.*
 - *Roads follow the contours along valley sides, linking distinctive white-washed stone cottages; settlement concentrated at bays.*
 - *Extremely scenic and distinctive valleys, with long coastal views and a backdrop of wild moorland.*
- 8.43 The Moyle Glens LCA also states that; “scattered new development in the glens should avoid the floodplains and

steep slopes, be in character with the existing white cottages, and be carried out in association with planting. Large scale development would be inappropriate in this scenic and sensitive landscape. The location of campsites and car parks in places where they are not visually prominent, such as behind coastal bluffs and within trees is preferable. Planting of deciduous trees around existing tourist developments may be beneficial.”

- 8.44 The surrounding landscape comprises views of the sea and coastal headlands along with views across the rolling Glens of Antrim. The topography rises and falls steeply on the surrounding road networks. There will open views of the site when passing along Torr Road and longer ranging views when travelling along Torr Road further south. The site is elevated, skyline and open and the development of this site with the introduction of hard landscaping and a retaining wall to the entire northern boundary is considered unacceptable. A vehicle restraint barrier (approx. 93m in length) has been included on drawing no. 07 ‘Viewpoint 3’. This structure and material included is not appropriate to the scenic setting of the AONB. All of this along with the increase in ground levels, shown on the section drawings, within the application site will be detrimental to the landscape quality and character of the surrounding area. The existing ground levels currently provide an open view when driving along Torr Road; however, the increase in ground levels (as mentioned earlier) along this part of the Torr Road is considered unacceptable. It is considered that the proposed development is contrary to the information set out within the Moyle Glens LCA. The proposed development would be considered visually prominent and would deter from the coastal area.

Access & Parking

PPS 3 – Access, Movement and Parking

Policy AMP 2 – Access to Public Roads

- 8.45 Policy AMP 2 of PPS 3 applies and states that; The proposal requires the construction of a new access to the public road for pedestrian and vehicle use. DfI Roads were consulted as part

of this planning application and in their most recent response raised no concerns and provided conditions.

Policy AMP 9 – Design of Car Parking

- 8.46 Policy AMP 9 of PPS 3 applies and states that; *The Department will expect a high standard of design, layout and landscaping to accompany all proposals for car parking. Planning permission will only be granted for a proposal where all the following criteria are met:*
- (a) it respects the character of the local townscape / landscape;*
 - (b) it will not adversely affect visual amenity; and*
 - (c) provision has been made for security, and the direct and safe access and movement of pedestrians and cyclists within the site.*
- 8.47 As stated previously, the application site is set within Antrim Coast and Glens AONB and the siting and scale of the proposal is not sympathetic to the character of the area and will be visually detrimental to this AONB and landscape. The proposal fails to meet criteria 'a' and 'b' of Policy AMP 9.
- 8.48 A vehicle restraint barrier has been included on the site layout and a pedestrianised area which will allow for direct and safe access and movement of pedestrians and cyclists within the site. DfI Roads were consulted as part of this planning application and in their most recent response raised no concerns and provided conditions.

Policy AMP 10 – Provision of Public and Private Car Parks

- 8.49 Policy AMP 10 of PPS 3 applies and states that; *Planning permission will only be granted for the development or extension of public or private car parks, including park and ride and park and share where it is demonstrated that:*
- they do not significantly contribute to an increase in congestion;*
 - are not detrimental to local environmental quality;*
 - they meet a need identified by DRD or accepted by DRD following robust analysis provided by the developer;*

- *within defined areas of parking restraint they are only used for short term stay parking and are appropriately managed to deter long stay commuter parking; and*
- *they are compatible with adjoining land uses.*

8.50 The application site is set within Antrim Coast and Glens AONB and the siting and scale of the proposal will be detrimental to the local environmental quality. As such, it is detrimental to local environmental quality and not compatible with the surrounding AONB landscape which is of high scenic value.

8.51 The applicant has not demonstrated robustly that's there is an identified need for car parking at this location and DFI Roads have not identified a specific need for a car park at this location. As previously stated public car parking is provided in the nearby settlement of Cushendun with other areas of parking provided throughout the district.

8.52 A planning statement and addendum have been submitted in support of this planning application. These documents have been assessed and make reference to relevant planning policies and legislation, the existing site and the surrounding environment. Additional photomontages were also provided to support the planning application. However, as assessed above, the application fails to meet Policy AMP 9 and AMP 10 of PPS 3.

Habitat Regulations Assessment

8.53 The potential impact of this proposal on Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and Ramsar sites has been assessed in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 43 (1) of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended). The proposal would not be likely to have a significant effect on the features of any European Site.

9.0 CONCLUSION

9.1 The proposal is considered unacceptable in this location having regard to the Northern Area Plan 2016 and other material considerations. It is considered that the proposed development would have a negative impact on the Antrim Coast and Glens

AONB which is considered to be a Tourism Asset. The proposal fails to comply with Paragraphs 6.256, 6.262, 6.70, 6.172, and 6.187 of the SPPS for NI, Policy TSM 2, TSM 7, and TSM 8 of PPS 16, Policy CTY 1, and CTY 11 of PPS 21, Policy NH 6 of PPS 2 and Policy AMP 9, and AMP 10 of PPS 3. Refusal is recommended.

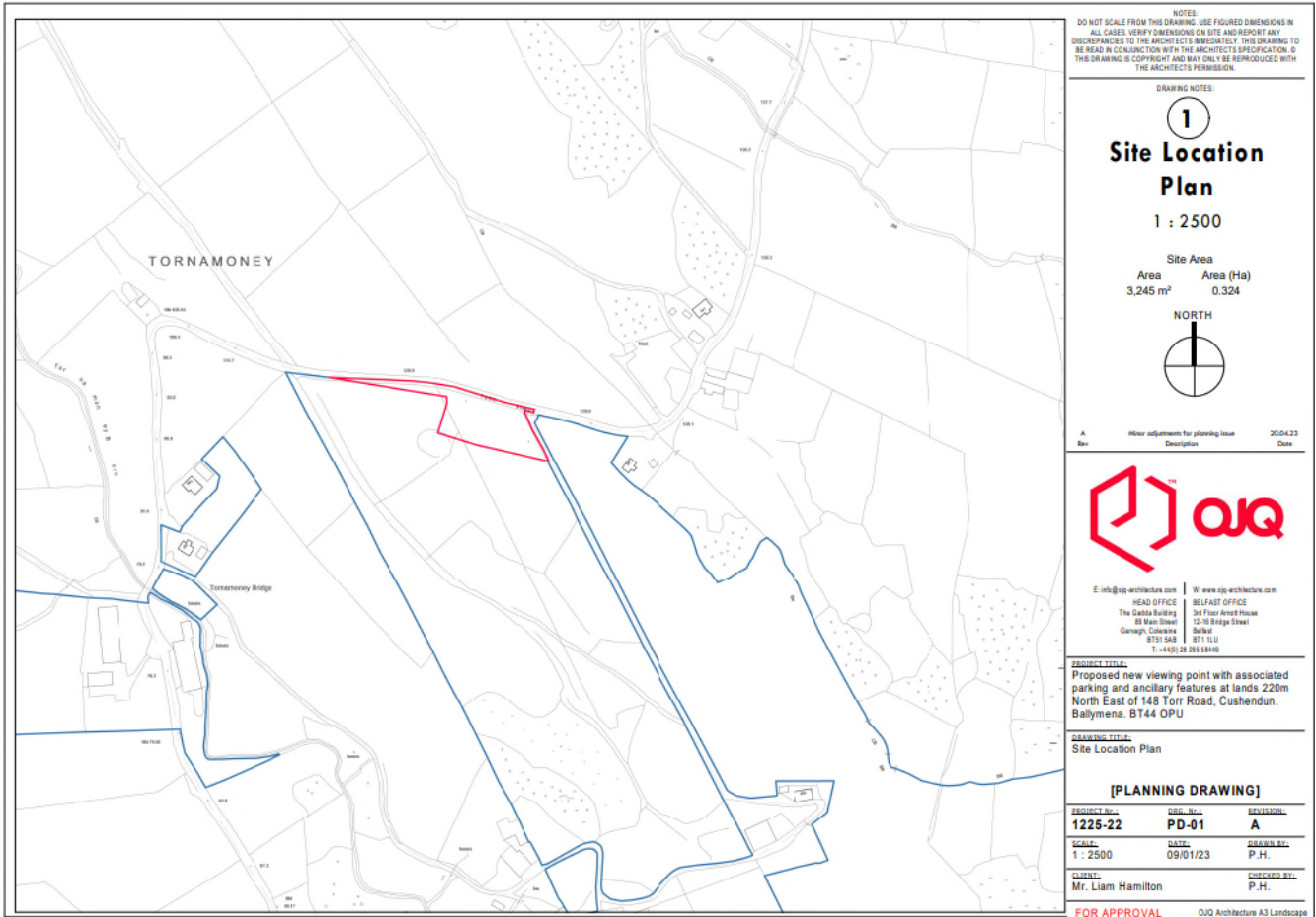
10. Reasons for Refusal

1. The proposal is contrary to the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for NI paragraph 6.256 and Planning Policy Statement 16 Tourism, Policy TSM 2, criteria (a) and (b) as it has not been demonstrated that the proposed development:
 - Is in association with and requires a site at or close to a particular tourism attraction located in the countryside; or
 - The type of tourist activity in itself requires a countryside location.
2. The proposal is contrary to the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for NI paragraph 6.256 and Planning Policy Statement 16 Tourism Policy TSM 7, criteria (b), (c), (g) and (i) as it has not been demonstrated; that the site layout, associated infrastructure and landscaping arrangements are of a high quality; appropriate boundary treatments and means of enclosure are provided; it is compatible with the surrounding land uses; and it does not adversely affect features of the natural and built heritage.
3. The proposal is contrary to the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for NI paragraph 6.256 and 6.262 and Planning Policy Statement 16 Tourism, Policy TSM 8 as the proposed development would have an adverse impact on a tourism asset, namely the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB.
4. The proposal is contrary to the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for NI paragraph 6.70 and Planning Policy Statement 21 Sustainable development in the countryside, Policies CTY 1 and CTY 11 criteria (b) and (c) in that appropriate boundary treatment is not provided, it is not compatible with surrounding land uses, will detract from the

landscape quality and character of the surrounding area, and will adversely affect features of the natural heritage.

5. The application is contrary to the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for NI paragraph 6.172 and 6.187 and Planning Policy Statement 2 Natural Heritage, Policy NH 6 in that the siting and scale of the proposal is not sympathetic to the special character of the area and will be visually detrimental to the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB.
6. The proposal is contrary to the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for NI and Planning Policy Statement 3 Access, Movement and Parking, Policies AMP 9 and AMP 10 as the development is set within the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB and the siting and design of the proposal is not sympathetic to the character of the area; it will be detrimental to the local environmental quality; and no need has been identified for the proposed development.

Site Location Map



NOTES:
DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING. USE FIGURED DIMENSIONS IN ALL CASES. VERIFY DIMENSIONS ON SITE AND REPORT ANY DISCREPANCIES TO THE ARCHITECT IMMEDIATELY. THIS DRAWING TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ARCHITECT'S SPECIFICATION. © THIS DRAWING IS COPYRIGHT AND MAY ONLY BE REPRODUCED WITH THE ARCHITECT'S PERMISSION.

DRAWING NOTES:

1

Site Location Plan

1 : 2500

Site Area	Area (Ha)
3,245 m ²	0.324

NORTH



A	Minor adjustments for planning issue	20/04/23
Rev	Description	Date



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PROJECT TITLE:
Proposed new viewing point with associated parking and ancillary features at lands 220m North East of 148 Torr Road, Cushendun, Ballymena. BT44 OPU

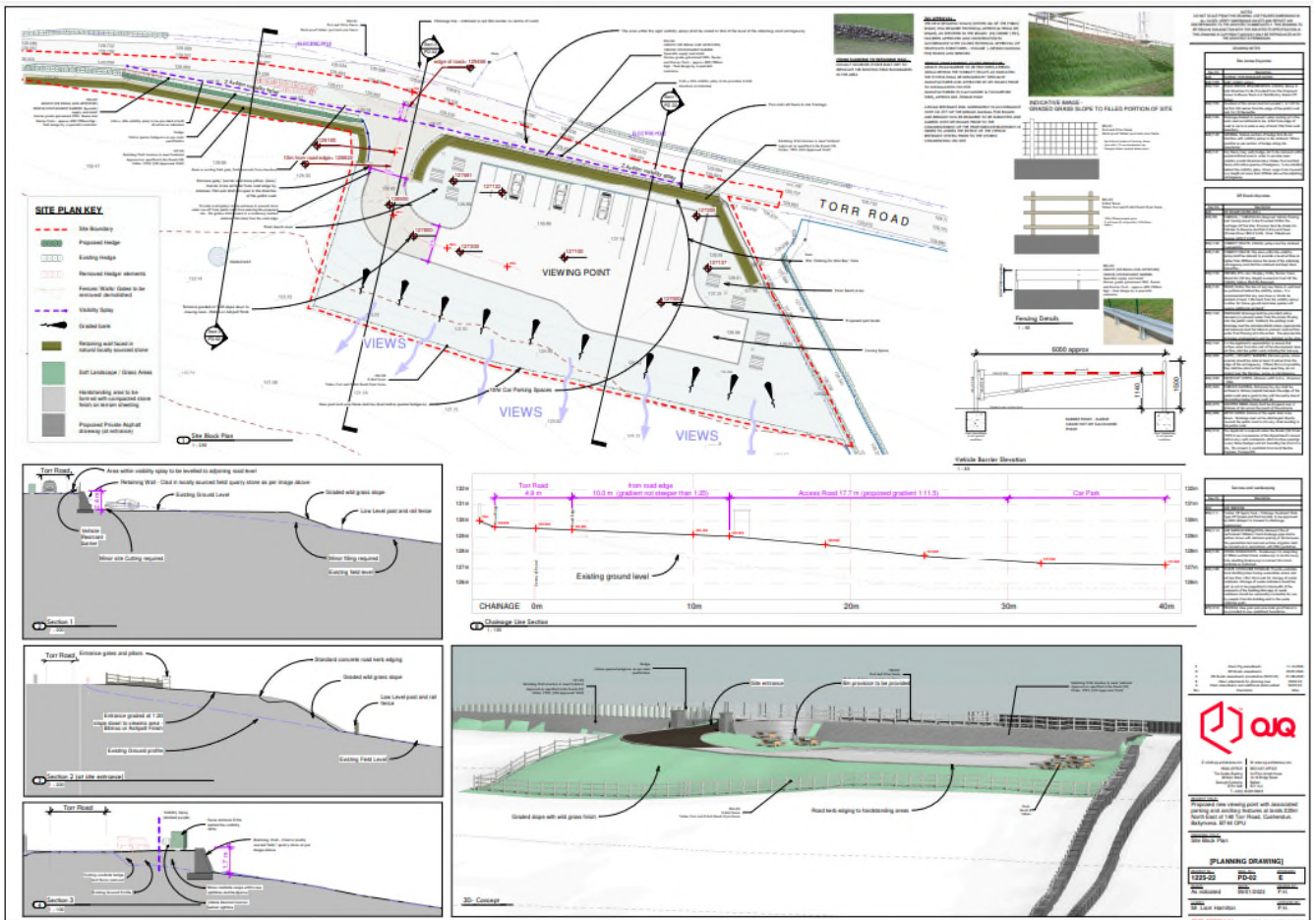
DRAWING TITLE:
Site Location Plan

[PLANNING DRAWING]

PROJECT NO.: 1225-22	DISC. NO.: PD-01	REVISION: A
SCALE: 1 : 2500	DATE: 09/01/23	DRAWN BY: P.H.
CLIENT: Mr. Liam Hamilton	CHECKED BY: P.H.	

FOR APPROVAL AQJ Architecture A3 Landscape

Proposed Block Plan



Appendix 1

Reason for Referral

Laura Crawford

From: Maiqhríad Watson
Sent: 17 January 2025 15:52
To: Planning
Cc: Sandra Hunter
Subject: Referral request to the planning committee - LA01/2023/0667/F - 220m NE of No. 148 Torr Road
Attachments: 1225-22 VP-01_0 [A3].pdf; 1225-22 VP-03_0 [A3].pdf; 1225-22 VP-02_0 FOR APPROVAL A3.pdf

My email relates to a planning application (LA01/2023/0667/F - 220m NE of No. 148 Torr Road) recently received by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council. I would like to request that this planning application would be called-in to the next planning committee meeting. The applicant indicates that the following points sustain grounds for the application to be called-in to the committee for consideration.

- The Council list that the proposal is not sited at or close to a particular tourism attraction located in the countryside or that the tourist activity in itself requires a countryside location. PPS 16 does not define what is meant by a tourism activity, however, it does list that a Tourism Asset is any feature associated with the built or natural environment which is of intrinsic interest to tourists. The Council recognise that the site is located within the AONB and this is a tourism asset. The applicant contends that the AONB can also be considered a tourism attraction as the designation entices local, national and international visitors to the area. The Traffic Survey that accompanied the application clearly shows that vehicles stop at the location of the application site as it clearly provides the optimal viewing point for visitors/tourists to take in and absorb the spectacular scenery on view. The car parks located in Cushendun do not provide this vista; they are provided for access to the water and the attractions found in the village, an urban setting, not the attractions found at the application site which allow for leisure and amusement. A tourist attraction can comprise of natural, cultural, historical or built features. The application site provides a number of these to the visitors to the area. The applicant contends that the application does meet Policy TSM 2 (a) of PPS 16 and (b).

- The photomontages and conceptual drawings that have been provided in support of the application demonstrate that the proposed development will nestle into the landscape. A number of other developments are more conspicuous and prominent in the landscape at this locality and have more of a visual presence and impact on the landscape than the current proposal will have. A sympathetic and respectful design approach was delivered for this site due to the AONB designation, and, as this is the reason for visitors, it is paramount that the landscape setting is not compromised. The topography will provide a degree of enclosure and along with the additional planting, sufficient integration is provided. Boundary treatment is respectful with the exception of the roadside barrier which is necessary from a road safety point of view. Circumstances will exist where policies compete against other and it is contended that road safety takes precedence in this case. However, the material for the crash barrier is not alien to the landscape as metal sheeting is found on the agricultural buildings dotted throughout the landscape as is visible in the photomontages that were provided. Additional planting will soften the impact of the barrier which is across a short stretch of the road.

- The applicant contends that the proposal will increase visitors to the tourism asset as it will provide a safe and enjoyable stopping point for tourists when travelling along this scenic route. It will afford visitors a much needed opportunity to extend their stop, taking their time to fully appreciate the

amazing views on offer and to also explore the nearby heritage feature etc. A tourism information sign can also be provided within the red line.

- The principle of the development is an acceptable form of Farm Diversification. As demonstrated by the photomontages, the site is difficult to ascertain from distance and while travelling along the Torr Road due to the meandering nature and topography of the land on approach to the site. Many car parks along with viewing points and seating areas are an acceptable form of development in the countryside, so the current application is an acceptable land use. The additional landscaping along with the landform configuration will ensure that it does not detract from the landscape quality and character of the surrounding area and therefore will not adversely affect features of the natural heritage.

- The accompanying section drawings and photomontages convey that the proposal nestles into the landscape. Due to the scale and the sympathetic design approach, it will not cause offence to the AONB.

- Respectfully, the applicant contends that the recommendation and reasons for refusal presented by the Local Planning Authority cannot be sustained.

Go raibh míle maith agat

Le meas
Cllr Maighréad Watson
Sinn Féin Councillor for The Glens

Refusal Reason 1: The proposal is contrary to the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for NI paragraph 6.256 and Planning Policy Statement 16 Tourism, Policy TSM 2, criteria (a) and (b) as it has not been demonstrated that the proposed development: - Is in association with and requires a site at or close to a particular tourism attraction located in the countryside; or - The type of tourist activity in itself requires a countryside location.

Refusal Reason 2: The proposal is contrary to the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for NI paragraph 6.256 and Planning Policy Statement 16 Tourism Policy TSM 7, criteria (b), (c), (g) and (i) as it has not been demonstrated; that the site layout, building design, associated infrastructure and landscaping arrangements are of a high quality; appropriate boundary treatments and means of enclosure are provided; it is compatible with the surrounding land uses; and it does not adversely affect features of the natural and built heritage.

Refusal Reason 3: The proposal is contrary to the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for NI paragraph 6.256 and 6.262 and Planning Policy Statement 16 Tourism, Policy TSM 8 as the proposed development would have an adverse impact on a tourism asset, namely the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB.

Refusal Reason 4: The proposal is contrary to the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for NI paragraph 6.70 and Planning Policy Statement 21 Sustainable development in the countryside, Policies CTY 1 and CTY 11 criteria (b) and (c) in that appropriate boundary treatment is not provided, it is not compatible with surrounding land uses, will detract from the landscape quality and character of the surrounding area, and will adversely affect features of the natural heritage.

Refusal Reason 5: The application is contrary to the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for NI paragraph 6.172 and 6.187 and Planning Policy Statement 2 Natural Heritage, Policy NH 6 in that the siting and scale of the proposal is not sympathetic to the special character of the area and will be visually detrimental to the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB.

Refusal Reason 6: The proposal is contrary to the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for NI and Planning Policy Statement 3 Access, Movement and Parking, Policies AMP 9 and AMP 10 as the development is set within the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB and the siting and design of the proposal is not sympathetic to the character of the area; it will be detrimental to the local environmental quality; and no need has been identified for the proposed development.

Additional Supporting Information:

That applicant has received additional supporting documentation, received from surrounding residents of the Torr Road. Supporting the need for this application and parking for tourists, to have a better flow for heavy traffic that can congregate on a high level all year round but especially during summer months.