



<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Planning Committee Report – LA01/2022/1531/F</b>
<b>Committee Report Submitted To:</b>	<b>Planning Committee</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>26<sup>th</sup> March 2025</b>
<b>For Decision or For Information</b>	<b>For Decision – Referred Item – Ald Mark Fielding</b>

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)</b>	
Strategic Theme	Cohesive Leadership
Outcome	Council has agreed policies and procedures and decision making is consistent with them
Lead Officer	Development Management and Enforcement Manager

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

<b>Screening Requirements</b>	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:

**No:** LA01/2022/1531/F

**Ward:** Giant's Causeway

**App Type:** Full

**Address:** 54 Causeway Road, Bushmills

**Proposal:** Conversion of the existing barn to the rear of an existing dwelling into 3No. one bed short stay accommodation units.

**Con Area:** N/A

**Valid Date:** 14.12.2022

**Listed Building Grade:** N/A

**Agent:** Ramage Architecture Ltd, 337 Whitepark Road  
Bushmills BT57 8SL

**Applicant:** Michael Duff, 54 Causeway Road, Bushmills, BT57 8SU

**Objections:** 0      **Petitions of Objection:** 0  
**Support:** 0      **Petitions of Support:** 0

## **Executive Summary**

- This proposal is considered unacceptable at this location having regard to the Northern Area Plan 2016 and all other material considerations.
- The site is located in the countryside within the Distinctive Landscape Setting of the Giant's Causeway as well as being located within the Causeway Coast AONB.
- Policy COU 4 of NAP 2016 does not allow for flexibility as it specifically states 3 circumstances in which development proposals must fall to be acceptable in the DLS of the Giant's Causeway. The conversion of a building into self-catered accommodation is therefore unacceptable in principle contrary to Policy COU 4 of NAP 2016, BH5 of PPS6 and paragraph 6.6 of the SPPS.
- The proposal complies with the Tourism Policies TSM 5 & 7 of PPS 16 as the proposal is located close to an existing tourist amenity site – The Giant's Causeway World Heritage site. However, a new unit would not be allowed under Policy COU 4 of NAP 2016 given the site location within the Distinctive Landscape Setting.
- Access and parking arrangements are acceptable.
- The proposal does not result in natural heritage issues.
- No representations have been received in relation to this application.
- No objections have been raised by consultees in relation to this proposal.
- The proposal is contrary to the Northern Area Plan 2016.

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

## **1.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 1.1 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 subject to the reasons set out in section 10.

## **2.0 SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION**

- 2.1 The application site is located at 54 Causeway Road Bushmills. It is located a short distance from the World heritage site 'The Giant's Causeway'. The site comprises a long established detached 2 storey dwelling with a rear 2 storey outbuilding. It has a private entrance and turning area within a stoned rear yard. There is a old stone wall on the rear boundary within the enclosed rear courtyard area.
- 2.2 The building is constructed from natural stone. It has a slate pitch roof with brick chimney on the pitch at the gable end. There are existing wooden framed doors and windows. There is a small sign above the doors 'Traidcraft'. Internally the small rooms appear to be used for both general storage and one of the units/rooms are used as a traditional house layout with hearth and old traditional fireplace, tiled floor, wooden staircase and items such as old piano, table and chairs and stools.
- 2.3 The site is located in the countryside and lies within the Distinctive Landscape Setting of the Giant's Causeway and the Causeway Coast AONB. The surrounding area comprises dispersed dwellings and farms.

## **3.0 RELEVANT HISTORY**

- 3.1 No relevant planning history.

## **4.0 THE APPLICATION**

- 4.1 Conversion of the existing barn to the rear of an existing dwelling into 3No. one bed short stay accommodation units.

## **Habitats Regulations Assessment**

- 4.2 The potential impact of this proposal on Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas 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, conservation objectives or status of any of these sites.

### **5.0 PUBLICITY & CONSULTATIONS**

5.1 **External:**

No letters of representation have been received in relation to this application.

5.2 **Internal:**

NI Water (No objections)

Environmental Health (No objections)

DFI Roads (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

Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)

PPS 2 – Natural Heritage

PPS 3 - Access, Movement and Parking

PPS6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage

PPS 16 – Tourism

PPS 21 – Sustainable Development in the Countryside

### **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

Development Control Advice Note 15 Vehicular Access Standards

## **8.0 CONSIDERATIONS & ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 The main considerations in the determination of this application relate to: Development Plan Zoning & Regional Policy, Conversion, Tourism Development, Access and Parking and Natural Heritage.

## Planning Policy

- 8.2 The site is located outside any settlement development limit as designated in the Northern Area Plan (NAP). The proposal is located within the countryside and falls within the Distinctive Landscape Setting of the World Heritage Site known as the Giant's Causeway and is also situated within Causeway Coast AONB.
- 8.3 The proposal must be considered having regard to the NAP 2016, SPPS, PPS policy documents and any supplementary planning guidance specified above.

## Development Plan Zoning & Regional Policy

- 8.4 The proposal is located within the Distinctive Landscape Setting of the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site (WHS). Paragraphs 6.6 and 6.7 of the SPPS refers to World Heritage Sites. The Giant's Causeway is of international importance and key considerations include the safeguarding of critical views to and from the site, the access and public approaches to the site and the understanding and enjoyment of the site by visitors.
- 8.5 Policy COU 4 of NAP 2016 applies to this development. No development in this zoning will be approved except in 3 circumstances:
- 1. Exceptionally modest scale facilities, without landscape detriment, which are necessary to meet the direct needs of visitors to the World Heritage Site.*
  - 2. Extensions to buildings that are appropriate in scale and design and represent not more than 20% of the cubic content of existing buildings.*
  - 3. Replacements of existing occupied dwellings with not more than a 20% increase in cubic content.*
- 8.6 In relation to the conversion of the old building into tourism holiday units use, this does not meet any of the specified circumstances which are acceptable in the DLS. It is not necessary to meet the direct needs of visitors to the WHS; it is not an extension to an existing use; and it is not the replacement of occupied dwellings.
- 8.7 The Policy does not allow for flexibility as it specifically states 3 circumstances in which development proposals must fall to be acceptable in the DLS of the Giant's Causeway. The conversion of

a building into self-catered accommodation is therefore unacceptable, in principle, and is contrary to Policy COU 4 of NAP 2016 and paragraph 6.6 of the SPPS.

- 8.8 Policy BH 5 of PPS 6 relates to The Protection of World Heritage Sites. The policy states that:

*“The Department will operate a presumption in favour of the preservation of World Heritage Sites. Development which would adversely affect such sites or the integrity of their settings will not be permitted unless there are exceptional circumstances.”*

As BH5 supports and supplements Policy COU 4 of NAP, the proposal is contrary to BH5 as it is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance.

### **Conversion**

- 8.9 Policy CTY 1 of PPS 21 advises the conversion of a non-residential building to a dwelling is acceptable in principle in the countryside but it must be in accordance with Policy CTY 4 – The Conversion and Reuse of Existing Buildings. Policy CTY 4 of PPS 21 advises that planning permission will be granted to proposals for the sympathetic conversion, with adaptation, if necessary, of a suitable building to a dwelling, where this would secure its upkeep and retention. The SPPS further explains (Para. 6.73) that conversion for residential use must be of a “locally important building” and provides examples such as a former school house, church and older traditional barns and outbuildings so more material weight is attributed to this policy.

- 8.10 Any proposals for conversion must meet the following criteria:

*(a) The building is of permanent construction.*

The existing building is permanent and was most likely used as a domestic outbuilding and potentially may have had a commercial use. It is adjacent to the detached dwelling house. It is presently used for storage.

*(b) The reuse or conversion would maintain or enhance the form, character and architectural features, design and setting of the existing building and not have an adverse effect on the character or appearance of the locality.*



The conversion entails using the exact footprint and converting into 3 studio units for holiday use. There is no extension proposed. Two of the proposed holiday units would be very small studio rooms with a bed, a small kitchenette and ensuite. The third unit would be a ground floor living room and the first floor extends over the whole footprint and over the top of the other two studios. It would incorporate one bedroom and living kitchen on the first floor. External alterations include creating a new front window and door for one of the ground floor studios and a small rear window for another unit. These changes are considered appropriate to facilitate the conversion and will maintain the form, character and design of the existing building. The proposed conversion will not harm the character or appearance of the locality given these appropriate alterations. Public views of this proposal are restricted from Causeway Road due to the siting to the rear of the existing house.

*(c) Any new extensions are sympathetic to the scale, massing and architectural style and finishes of the existing building.*

There are no proposed extensions.

*(d) The reuse or conversion would not unduly affect the amenities of nearby residents or adversely affect the continued agricultural use of adjoining land or buildings*

The proposed conversion will not affect neighbouring residential amenity as the proposal is utilising an existing building with no windows overlooking neighbouring properties. The adjacent nearest property is a museum. The proposal is located within an existing yard at the rear of the existing house currently. The building will be served by existing yard areas and associated access. There will be no adverse impact on the amenity of nearby residents.

*(e) The nature and scale of any proposed non-residential use is appropriate to a countryside location.*

The proposed conversion is for self-catering accommodation. It is located within an existing property in the countryside. The proposal will not harm rural character.

*(f) All necessary services are available or can be provided without significant adverse impact on the environment or character of the locality*

Existing services are available or can be provided without impacting upon the environment or locality. NI Water and Environmental Health have no objections to the proposal.

*(g) Access to the public road will not prejudice road safety or significantly inconvenience the flow of traffic.*

The proposal will be accessed using the existing lane from Causeway Road. DfI Roads raises no objection to the application.

8.11 The proposal meets the criteria for Conversion of Buildings under Policy CTY 4. It is considered this building is of traditional stone and natural slate roof with wooden doors and wooden framed windows and is considered a locally important building as it does present as an older traditional barn outbuilding and has various uses from domestic to commercial and therefore meets the policy test of a locally important building set out in Para 6.73 of the SPPS.

### **Tourism Development**

8.12 Policy TSM 5 of PPS 16 relates to Self Catering Accommodation in the Countryside. Self-catering units of tourist accommodation will be granted in 3 circumstances. These are:

*(a) one or more new units all located within the grounds of an existing or approved hotel, self-catering complex, guest house or holiday park;*

*(b) a cluster of 3 or more new units are to be provided at or close to an existing or approved tourist amenity that is / will be a significant visitor attraction in its own right;*

*(c) the restoration of an existing clachan or close, through conversion and / or replacement of existing buildings, subject to the retention of the original scale and proportions of the buildings and sympathetic treatment of boundaries. Where practicable original materials and finishes should be included.*

- 8.13 The application site falls within criterion (b) as the proposal is located close to an existing tourist amenity site – The Giant’s Causeway World Heritage site. Having regard to this Policy test, the proposal would comply with Policy TSM 5 of PPS 16. However, a new unit would not be allowed under Policy COU 4 of NAP 2016 given the site location within the Distinctive Landscape Setting which is supported by Regional Policy, BH5 of PPS 6.
- 8.14 Policy TSM 7 of PPS 16 also applies to this development. An assessment against the criteria of TSM 7 is considered below:
- a) A movement pattern is not considered necessary for this development.
  - b) The site layout and building design is considered acceptable. There is no vegetation on the application site in need of protection.
  - c) There are no existing plot boundaries given the location of the site in a cluster of buildings. The building on site is surrounded by a concrete yard. No outside storage areas have been identified on the block plan.
  - d) Drainage and surface water run-off in connection with this development is considered adequate and NI Water and DAERA: Water Management Unit have no objections.
  - e) Crime and personal safety are not perceived to be an issue if managed effectively.
  - f) No public art is proposed.
  - g) The proposal is compatible with surrounding land uses. The proposed location is in an existing yard adjacent to other buildings. The building is single storey in height. Only long distance views are possible of this proposal from Causeway Road. The proposal should not detract from the landscape quality and character of the surrounding area given satisfactory integration can be achieved.
  - h) The proposal does not impact upon neighbouring residential amenity.
  - i) It does not adversely affect features of the built heritage or natural heritage.
  - j) It can satisfactorily deal with any emission or effluent. Surface water is being disposed of via soakaways and foul sewage is being disposed of by the existing septic tank to the adjacent house. NI Water, DAERA: WMU and

Environmental Health were consulted and express no objections.

- k) Adequate access arrangements, parking and manoeuvring areas are provided and DFI Roads have no objections.
  - l) Access to the public road will not prejudice road safety or inconvenience the flow of traffic and DFI Roads have no objections.
  - m) The existing road network can cope with this development and DFI Roads have no objections.
  - n) The access to this development is from an existing laneway onto Causeway Road.
  - o) It does not extinguish or significantly constrain an existing or planned public access to the coastline or a tourism asset.
- 8.15 The proposal complies with the requirements of Policy TSM 7 of PPS 16.

### **Access and Parking**

- 8.16 Planning permission will only be granted provided the proposal does not prejudice road safety or significantly inconvenience the flow of traffic. Access to the site is utilising the existing access from Causeway Road. DFI Roads was consulted in relation to this application and offer no objections. The proposal is acceptable and complies with Policy AMP 2 of PPS 3 and DCAN 15.

### **Natural Heritage**

- 8.17 This application comprises conversion of an existing building. A Biodiversity Checklist was not submitted as there is no vegetation on the application site. This application will not harm protected or priority species so is satisfactory in terms of Policies NH 2 and NH 5 of PPS 2.
- 8.18 The application site is located within Causeway Coast AONB. Policy NH 6 of PPS 2 advises proposals should be sensitive to the distinctive special character of the area and the quality of their landscape, heritage and wildlife. Proposals should respect local architectural styles and patterns as well as local materials, designs and colour. The proposal does not offend this policy as the barn exists and given it is for a conversion only, will not alter or significantly increase its visual impact (with the exception of

increased traffic & visitors) and any impact on the landscape, and it will not unacceptably harm the character of the AONB.

## **9.0 CONCLUSION**

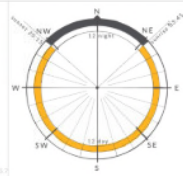
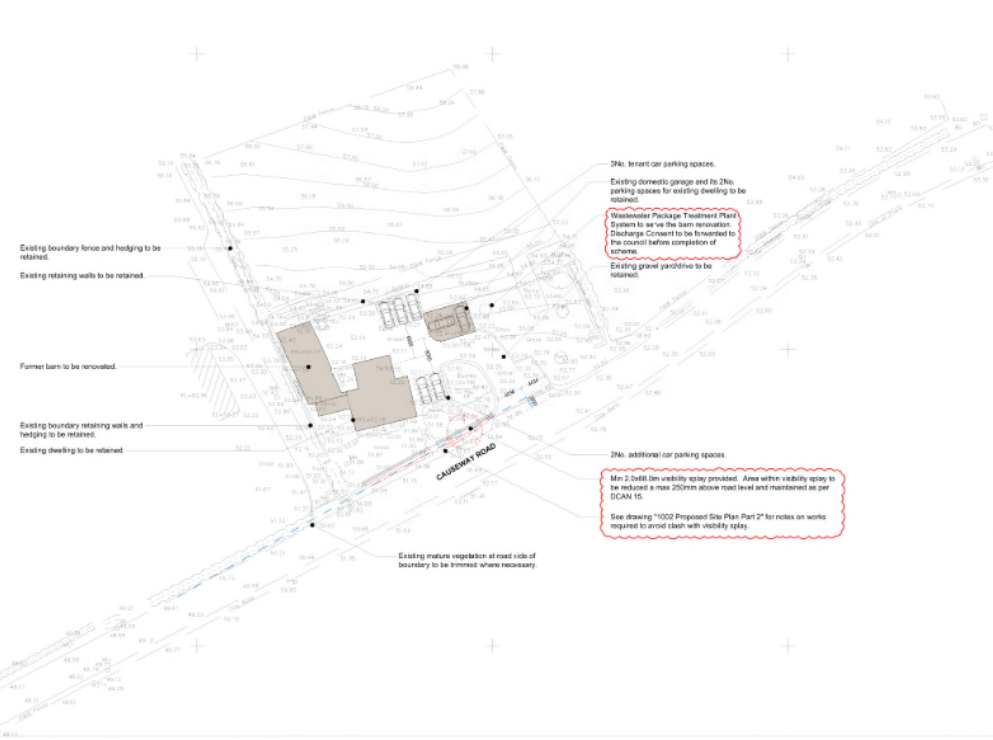
- 9.1 The proposal is considered unacceptable at this location having regard to the Northern Area Plan 2016 and other material considerations. Policy COU 4 of NAP 2016 does not allow for flexibility as it specifically states 3 circumstances in which development proposals must fall to be acceptable in the DLS of the Giant's Causeway. The conversion of a building into self-catered accommodation is therefore unacceptable in principle contrary to Policy COU 4, BH5 of PPS6, and paragraph 6.6 of the SPPS.
- 9.2 The proposal complies with the Tourism Policies TSM 5 & 7 of PPS 16 as the proposal is located close to an existing tourist amenity site – The Giant's Causeway World Heritage site. However, a new unit would not be allowed under Policy COU 4 of NAP 2016 given the site location within the Distinctive Landscape Setting. The proposal has satisfactory access and parking. The proposal is acceptable in terms of natural heritage interests. The proposal will not unacceptably harm the Causeway Coast AONB or rural character because of the scale of development. Refusal is recommended.

## **10 REFUSAL REASON**

1. The proposal is contrary to Policy COU 4 of the Northern Area Plan 2016, Paragraph 6.6 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland and Policy BH5 of PPS6 in that the site lies within the Distinctive Landscape Setting of the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site. The proposed barn conversion does not qualify as an exception and therefore does not justify a relaxation of the strict planning controls in this area.



**PROPOSED SITE PLAN**  
Scale 1:500



5 4 C A U S E W A Y R O A D , B U S H M I L L S

3	Wastewater Package Treatment Plant System to serve the barn renovation added	10/05/2024
2	See 1001 Proposed site plan part 2 for notes on works required to avoid clash with visibility splay	07/05/2023
1	Project files amended, existing garden wall and tree to be removed to accommodate clear visibility splay	02/05/2023
No	Revision	Date
	<b>RAMAGE ARCHITECTURE Ltd.</b>	
Email: info@ramage-architecture.co.uk Tel: 01452450000 Website: www.ramage-architecture.co.uk		
PLANNING		
CONVEYANCE OF 6007600 SQM TO SUDRY STAY HOUSE 54 CAUSEWAY ROAD, BUSHMILLS CLIENT: MICHAEL DUFF		
DWG TITLE:	PROPOSED SITE PLAN	
JOB No:	2023/16	DWG No: 1001

**From:** Mark Fielding  
**Sent:** 17 February 2025 08:08  
**To:** Planning; Sandra Hunter; Denise Dickson  
**Subject:** Referral LA01/2022/1531/F  
**Attachments:** 54 Causeway Road Bushmills.odt

I wish to refer Planning Application LA01/2022/1531/F to the Planning Committee.

Conversion of the existing barn to the rear of an existing dwelling into 3 No. one bed short stay accommodation units at 54 Causeway Road Bushmills.

Yours,

Mark  
Ald. M Fielding

Planning Reference LA01/2022/1531/F

Elected Member Name Mark Fielding

Contact Details Tel :

E-mail

Reasons below, to refer application to Planning Committee - Conversion of the existing barn to the rear of an existing dwelling into 3 No one bed short stay accommodation units at 54 Causeway Road Bushmills.

In response to Policy COU 4 of Northern Area Plan 2016 which states No Development within the Distinctive Landscape Setting outside of settlement development limits will be approved except under condition 1 -exceptionally modest scale facilities, without landscape detriment, which are necessary to meet the direct needs of visitors to the World Heritage Site.

The conversion of the Barn maintains the same footprint that currently exists so it is a modest scale facility providing accommodation for visitors / tourists to the area. Car Parking is provided but is quite concealed with no detriment to the landscape. The Conversion of the existing Barn will preserve what is considered in the planning report "a locally important building."

Development is necessary providing much needed accommodation for visitors to the area who wish to walk to the World Heritage Site from where they are staying.

There have been five examples of development proposals that have been approved since the Northern Area Plan 2016 was implemented and which also fall within the Distinctive Landscape Setting of the Giant's Causeway World Heritage Site and which met Condition 1.

**-Lands adjacent to public car park and approx 10m east of No 53 Bushfoot Road Portballintrae**

Application Reference: LA01/2017/0331/F

- Application received 02 Mar 2017
- Application decided 22 Mar 2018
- Conversion and alteration of historic vernacular building to provide new detached dwelling unit. This was a change of use application which also fell under the policy COU4 from the Northern Area Plan 2016.



**-19 Causeway Road, Bushmills**

Application reference: LA01/2016/1514/F

- Application received 17 Oct 2016
- Application decided 25 Jan 2019

"Open Farm" including change of use with additional car parking and landscaping. Arguably less necessary to visitors of the WHS and less modest.

**-Ballylinney Cottages 7 Causeway Road, Bushmills**

Application Reference: LA01/2018/0964/F

- Application received 02 Aug 2018
- Application decided 04 Oct 2019

This development included erection of a new building along with additional car parking and landscaping. Again, less necessary to visitors of the WHS and less modest. Note: this application was an amendment to E/2002/0013/F which was a 20% extension to an existing building. However, the amended proposal is no longer an extension - it was a new self-contained building yet was approved under COU4.

**-Approximately 25m South of 23 Causeway Road, Bushmills**

Application Reference: LA01/2021/0756/F

- Application received 22 Jun 2021
- Application decided 07 Dec 2022

Includes approval of a toilet facility for use of "open farm" visitors. This toilet facility is not for visitors of the WHS yet was approved.

**-Tramway Halt Bushmills Station Ballaghmore Road, Bushmills.**

Application Reference: LA01/2016/1482/F

- Application received 21 Nov 2016
- Application decided 03 May 2019

This development includes addition of 2 apartments along with coffee shop and facilities.