

Title of Report:	Planning Committee Report – LA01/2019/0322/F
Committee Report Submitted To:	Planning Committee
Date of Meeting:	23rd September 2026
For Decision or For Information	For Decision – Objection Item.
To be discussed In Committee YES/NO	No

Linkage to Council Plan (2026-31)	
Strategic Theme	Governance, Quality & Continuous Improvement
Outcome	Governance arrangements that ensure compliance, transparency and effective decision-making
Lead Officer	Development Management Manager

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	N/A

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:

App No: LA01/2019/0322/F **Ward:** Torr Head and Rathlin
App Type: Full
Address: 70m south west of 23 Fairhead Road, Ballyvoy, Ballycastle.
Proposal: Extension of existing farm yard to include new farm livestock shed with underground slurry storage tank.
Con Area: N/A **Valid Date:** 29.03.19
Listed Building Grade: N/A

Agent: C.McILvar Ltd, Unit 7 Cookstown Enterprise Centre, Sandholes Road, Cookstown.
Applicant: James McClements, 23 Fairhead Road, Ballyvoy, Ballycastle.

Objections: 67 **Petitions of Objection:** 0
Support: 0 **Petitions of Support:** 0

Executive Summary

- Full Planning Permission is sought to extend the existing farmyard and the erection of a new farm livestock shed with underground slurry storage tank.
- The application site is located within the countryside being outside any defined settlement development limits and lies within the Antrim Coast and Glens Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and an area designated as an archaeological site and monument.
- Consultation has been carried out with DfI Roads, NI Water, CCG Environmental Health, Geological Survey NI, DAERA, Historic Environment Division, NIEA, and Shared Environmental Services. No objections have been raised by consultees.
- The application has been assessed against the relevant policies within the Northern Area Plan 2016, SPPS 2nd Edition, PPS 2, PPS 3, PPS 6, and PPS 21.
- Sixty-seven (67) letters of objection have been received and taken into consideration.
- The proposal is considered acceptable at this location and complies with the relevant policies listed. Approval 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 **APPROVE** planning permission as set out in section 10.

2.0 SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site is located approximately 70m southwest of 23 Fairhead Road, Ballycastle.
- 2.2 The roadside site consists of the north-eastern section of an existing agricultural field extending to approximately 0.1 hectares.
- 2.3 The northern boundary is established by post and wire fencing together with hawthorn hedging approximately 1.8m in height. The eastern boundary is defined by post and wiring fencing, 1.5m high hedging and an agricultural field gate. The southern boundary consists of post and wire fencing and the western boundary is undefined and open to the remainder of the field. A copse of trees approximately 7 to 8m in height exists to the northern corner of the site adjacent to the field entrance. The topography of the site is relatively flat and rises only slightly in ground level from east to west.
- 2.4 The site is located on the southern side of Fairhead Road and adjoins its junction with Craigfad Road approximately 6.5km east of Ballycastle. The surrounding area is rural in character, comprising of single residential dwellings, farm holdings, and agricultural land.
- 2.5 The site is located outside any development limits, within the rural remainder, and the Antrim Coast and Glens Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) as indicated by map No. 5 of the Northern Area Plan. The site is also within an area designated as an Archaeological site and monument.

3.0 RELEVANT HISTORY

There is no relevant planning history relating to this site.

4.0 THE APPLICATION

- 4.1 The application seeks Full Planning Permission to extend the existing farmyard and erect a new farm livestock shed with underground slurry storage tank.

5.0 PUBLICITY & CONSULTATIONS

5.1 External

Advertising: The application has been advertised on a total of four occasions, and most recently on 7th January 2026.

Neighbours: A total of sixty-seven (67) letters of objection has been received (from 23 no. separate addresses, and 3 no. addresses unknown). The principal grounds of objection are summarised below:

- Detrimental impact on privacy and amenity;
- Road safety and impact on local infrastructure;
- Potential adverse noise and odour impacts;
- Dominant form of development causing overshadowing;
- The development will adversely affect the A.O.N.B. and tourism within the area;
- The proposal fails to comply with planning policy;
- unsympathetic scale and massing;
- Inconsistencies contained within submitted information and inaccurate description;
- Alternative sites have not been explored;
- Health and safety concerns;
- Insufficient justification has been provided to demonstrate a need for the proposed shed;
- Damaging environmental impacts, including harm to the character of the surrounding area and biodiversity interests; and
- The creation of a prominent feature, which fails to integrate into its surroundings.

- Concerns regarding the lengthy determination period and the numerous amendments made to the application.
- Questions raised over fairness and transparency.
- Initiation of groundworks at the site.

5.2 Internal

- Statutory - DfI Roads Coleraine Office - Content
- Statutory - Geological Survey NI – No concerns
- Statutory - HED Historic Monuments - Content
- Statutory - DAERA - Content
- Internal Advice - CCG Environmental Health - No objection
- Statutory - NI Water - Advice
- Statutory - NIEA NED - Content
- Statutory - NIEA WCU - Content
- Non-statutory - Shared Environmental Services - Content

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

[Northern Area Plan 2016](#)

[Regional Development Strategy \(RDS\) 2035](#)

[Strategic Planning Policy Statement \(SPPS\) 2025 – Edition 2](#)

[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 \(PPS\) 21 - Sustainable Development in the Countryside](#)

[DCAN 15 – Vehicular Access Standards](#)

[A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland \(PSRNI\)](#)

[Antrim Coast & Glens Design Guide](#)

8.0 CONSIDERATIONS & ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 The main considerations in the determination of this application relate to; the principle of development and impact of the development on the character of the area, visual impact, scale, and design, residential amenity, access and parking, natural heritage, habitat regulations assessment and objections received.

Principle of development and Impact on the character of the area

- 8.2 The site is located approximately 6.5km east of Ballycastle, within the Antrim Coast and Glens Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and outside any defined settlement limit, as set out in the Northern Area Plan 2016.
- 8.3 The principle of the type and scale of development proposed must be considered having regard to the SPPS 2nd Edition and PPS policy documents specified above.
- 8.4 The immediate area is rural and characterised by open countryside with dispersed pockets of residential and agricultural development.

- 8.5 Paragraphs 4.23 to 4.30 of the SPPS relate to good design, which is a material consideration in the assessment of all applications and good design should be encouraged with specific regard to those areas recognised for their landscape value such as AONB's. Paragraph 6.70 states that all development in the countryside must integrate into its setting, respect rural character, and be appropriately designed, while Paragraph 6.73 deals with agriculture and forestry development, clarifying that provision should be made for development on an active and established (for a minimum 6 years) agricultural holding or forestry enterprise where the proposal is necessary for the efficient operation of the holding or enterprise. New buildings must be sited beside existing farm or forestry buildings on the holding or enterprise. An alternative site away from existing buildings will only being acceptable in exceptional circumstances. The SPPS outlines the aim to provide sustainable development and with respect to that should have regard to the development plan and any other material considerations. The general planning principles with respect to this proposal have been complied with.
- 8.6 PPS 21 sets out the planning policies for development in the countryside. Policy CTY1 of PPS21 outlines the types of development which in principle are considered to be acceptable in the countryside and that will contribute to the aims of sustainable development.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside

Policy CTY 12: Agricultural and Forestry Development

- 8.7 *Policy CTY12 of PPS21 states that planning permission will be granted for development on an active and established agricultural or forestry holding where it is demonstrated that:*
(a) it is necessary for the efficient use of the agricultural holding or forestry enterprise;
- 8.8 DAERA have confirmed that the farm business Id in this case is a Category 1 and has been active and established for more than six years, having been allocated in November 1991. The

agent has submitted the applicant's herd list and supporting letters from two farmers confirming that livestock are currently wintered in rented agricultural sheds. It is contended that the proposed shed is necessary as no livestock housing facilities exist on the applicant's holding, requiring cattle to be accommodated at separate off-site locations. The agent further advises that this arrangement presents management difficulties and raises animal welfare concerns. The agent submits that the proposed shed is required as a consequence of a marked increase in the applicant's farming activity in recent years, with the existing facilities at 23 Fairhead Road no longer sufficient to support the expanded agricultural enterprise.

(b) in terms of character and scale it is appropriate to its location;

The proposed shed is sited within the northern corner of a large agricultural field which adjoins both Fairhead and Craigfad Road and is opposite the applicant's established farm property. The applicant's farm and two immediate neighbours all benefit from associated agricultural buildings, and the proposed scale and design are considered compatible with the existing character which is covered in further detail under Visual Impact, Scale, and Design, paragraphs **8.10 - 8.13**.

(c) it visually integrates into the local landscape and additional landscaping is provided as necessary;

Again, paragraphs **8.10 - 8.13** explain in more detail that the proposed siting, orientation and scale of the shed coupled with the existing retained vegetation and addition of new planting will allow the new development to visually integrate into its surroundings.

(d) it will not have an adverse impact on the natural or built heritage; and

Natural heritage considerations are addressed separately at Paragraph **8.23**. Notwithstanding this, it has been demonstrated that the proposal would not adversely affect any natural heritage features associated with the site or the surrounding area. Having regard to its scale, design, siting and landscape integration, the proposed shed is not considered to

result in any unacceptable impact on the character or appearance of the area, nor would it adversely affect the existing pattern of built development.

(e) it will not result in detrimental impact on the amenity of residential dwellings outside the holding or enterprise including potential problems arising from noise, smell and pollution.

Following consultations, Environmental Health notes that agricultural buildings already exist within the surrounding area, with some positioned closer to third-party properties than the proposed shed. Furthermore, noise and odour associated with normal agricultural activities are established features of the locality. In light of this context, and noting that no complaints have been received regarding the applicant's existing farming operations, Environmental Health is satisfied that the proposal would not give rise to unacceptable impacts on neighbouring amenity and has offered no objection to the development. This is further clarified under Residential Amenity paragraphs **8.18 - 8.19**.

In cases where a new building is proposed applicants will also need to provide sufficient information to confirm all of the following:

- *there are no suitable existing buildings on the holding or enterprise that can be used;*
- *the design and materials to be used are sympathetic to the locality and adjacent buildings; and*
- *the proposal is sited beside existing farm or forestry buildings.*

- 8.9 The applicant's holding at 23 Fairhead Road contains a small single-storey stone-built outbuilding and a larger portal frame storage shed. Neither building was designed or constructed for livestock accommodation, and substantial alterations would be required to make them suitable for such use. Furthermore, both buildings are currently utilised for the storage and maintenance of agricultural and domestic vehicles and machinery. Consequently, they are not reasonably available or capable of meeting the identified livestock housing needs of the farm business. On balance, the proposed development is

considered acceptable in principle as it aligns with policy CTY 12.

Visual Impact, Scale, and Design

- 8.10 The proposal involves the erection a portal framed agricultural shed 14.3m in width and 18m in length, with a ridge height of 6.1m. The shed features rendered masonry and green coloured cladding to the exterior walls which continues over the low pitch roof structure. Double sliding doors are situated to both east and west gable ends, and the interior features a central concourse providing access to eight livestock pens with slatted floors and an underground tank 1.5m deep. Overall, the scale, design and appearance of the proposed shed are considered typical of this form of agricultural development.
- 8.11 The applicant's property at 23 Fairhead Road consists of a dwelling house, a stone-built outbuilding, and a large agricultural storage shed associated with their agricultural contracting business all set within a concrete yard. The proposed shed has been positioned so as to cluster with the applicant's existing buildings to the greatest extent practicable within the red line boundary. It would be located approximately 33 metres west of the existing storage shed and, whilst separated from that building by Craigfad Road, would remain visually associated with the established group of buildings centred on the applicant's dwelling and farm holding.
- 8.12 The surrounding topography rises gradually towards the east, with the application site itself exhibiting a change in ground level of approximately 0.5m between its western and eastern boundaries. Consequently, properties along Fairhead Road and Craigfad Road are positioned at a slightly higher elevation than the application site. The submitted site plan indicates a proposed finished floor level of 139.3m AOD for the shed. This compares with a finished floor level of approximately 141.1m AOD for the applicant's existing agricultural shed and approximately 140.9m AOD for the neighbouring dwelling at No. 2 Craigfad Road. Similarly, the proposed ridge height of 145.4m AOD is lower than both the applicant's existing shed (147.5m AOD) and the neighbouring dwelling (146.7m AOD). Accordingly, despite the proposed building's footprint and overall scale, its lower siting within the local topography serves

to reduce its prominence when viewed from surrounding properties and the adjacent public roads.

8.13 Furthermore, the proposed shed would adjoin an existing, established copse of trees located within the northern corner of the host field, thereby benefiting from a degree of natural screening. Taking into account the relatively modest scale of the building when viewed in the context of agricultural development, together with its relationship to the existing group of buildings and surrounding vegetation, the proposal is considered capable of integrating satisfactorily into the landscape without causing any undue impacts on visual amenity. Additionally, the shed has been orientated so that views from surrounding public infrastructure are generally angled rather than head-on, which lessens its visual presence and contributes to reducing its overall impact on the rural landscape. The proposal includes the retention of the existing mature hedgerows along the north-western and eastern site boundaries, with the new western boundary being defined by the planting of semi-mature trees.

8.14 While objectors have questioned whether alternative sites were considered, Policy CTY 12 does not require applicants to undertake a comparative assessment of alternative locations. The proposal has instead been assessed against the policy's requirements relating to agricultural need, siting, design and landscape integration. Notwithstanding, the applicant's landholding comprises 35 fields located at Fairhead Road and Drumavoley Road. These holdings are arranged in a number of fragmented parcels which are interspersed with and separated by lands under third-party ownership. The only existing farm buildings associated with the holding are located at 23 Fairhead Road. Consequently, opportunities to site additional agricultural buildings are constrained, and there are limited locations within the holding where a new shed could be accommodated whilst also complying with the requirements of planning policy. The proposed site is therefore considered a logical and appropriate location in terms of its relationship to the existing farmstead and the operational needs of the agricultural enterprise.

8.15 Concerns have been raised that the applicant has failed to adequately demonstrate a need for the proposed development.

However, having regard to the information submitted, including details of the applicant's agricultural activities and existing accommodation arrangements, it is considered that sufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate an operational need for additional livestock accommodation in support of the agricultural holding. The applicant has advised that they operate a beef suckler herd but have no suitable livestock housing or handling facilities on the farm, resulting in cattle being wintered in rented accommodation at separate locations approximately five miles from the farm. It is contended that the proposed shed is necessary to facilitate effective livestock management and maintain animal welfare, particularly during calving, veterinary treatment, statutory testing and the isolation of animals when required. As previously mentioned, a site inspection confirmed that the applicant's holding contains a modest stone-built outbuilding and a larger agricultural shed which are used primarily for the storage of tractors and machinery. Neither building is readily capable of accommodating livestock, and no suitable livestock housing facilities currently exist on the holding. The agent further states that the current arrangement, which involves housing cattle such a distance from the holding, can impede timely intervention during periods of illness or calving and may adversely affect animal welfare. Letters signed by two independent farmers have been submitted confirming the current arrangement whereby the applicant rents agricultural sheds for the winter housing of livestock. The applicant has also stated that this arrangement is not sustainable and cannot be relied upon indefinitely.

- 8.16 The initial application proposed a substantially larger agricultural storage shed measuring 13.7m by 33.4m with a 6.1m ridge height, on a larger site extending further south. The building was originally positioned parallel to the eastern boundary, approximately 24m from No. 2 Craigfad Road. Following concerns regarding its dominant impact and impact on neighbouring residential amenity, the proposal was amended to relocate the shed further west and introduce a tree planting buffer along the eastern boundary. It was at this stage that the applicant's initial requirement for livestock accommodation arose which led to the first change in the application description, and necessitated a further notification process, assessment and the submission of additional

environmental information. Following an extended period of unsuccessful ecological assessment and the submission of further supporting documentation, the proposal was ultimately amended to revert to a farm storage building. The applicant's need for livestock facilities remained however and the proposal was subsequently revised again to include this resulting in a repeat of further notification and assessment. The application was subsequently taken over by a new planning agent representing the applicant in 2024. The application has undergone significant revision during the assessment process. The red line application boundary has been amended on two occasions, while the proposed shed and site layout have been subject to six separate revisions. In addition, a considerable volume of environmental information and updated supporting documentation has been submitted and assessed throughout the determination period. These amendments necessitated further consultation, public advertisement, neighbour notification and consideration of a high volume of representations, all of which contributed to the extended processing period.

- 8.17 Throughout the assessment process, the Council sought amendments to address concerns raised in relation to the proposal's scale, siting and impact on neighbouring amenity. In response, the applicant has progressively reduced the scale of the building and revised its siting within the application site in order to lessen its visual impact and improve its integration with the surrounding landscape. The shed as now presented has now been relocated approximately 10m further north within the holding, increasing its separation distance from the neighbouring dwelling at No. 2 Craigfad Road and incorporating additional landscaping measures. In addition, the proposed shed has been reoriented by approximately 100 degrees to minimise its visual prominence when viewed from surrounding public vantage points, resulting in a more oblique aspect. The building has also been substantially reduced in scale during the processing of the application, with the current proposal achieving a reduction in gross floor area of approximately 203m² when compared to the initial scheme. The current siting represents the maximum practicable separation from neighbouring residential properties while remaining within a location that complies with relevant planning policy

considerations and allows the building to function effectively as part of the applicant's agricultural enterprise.

Residential Amenity

- 8.18 Following consultations, the Environmental Health Department have reviewed all objections, submitted assessments, supporting information and previous consultation responses. Environmental Health acknowledge that a livestock shed located within 75m from a neighbouring dwelling could potentially give rise to noise, odour and pest impacts, however it noted that the site is situated within an established agricultural area where farming activities are a defining characteristic. The AQIA undertook an assessment of the impacts of the proposed land spreading on the nearest sensitive receptors at No. 2 Craigfad Road and No. 25 Fairhead Road. This concluded that when combined with the emissions from the site and grazing, it was not considered that the land spreading process will exceed the appropriate limits for the designated sites.
- 8.19 The Environmental Health Department have further clarified that under normal circumstances they would advise that amenity impacts are likely to be unavoidable where a dwelling is located within 75 metres of a farm shed and would therefore recommend compliance with the 75-metre separation distance. However, in this instance, there are existing farm buildings in the immediate vicinity, including some located closer to the third-party property than the proposed shed. Furthermore, noise and odours associated with agricultural activities are an established feature of the local area. As no complaints relating to noise or odour have been received in connection with the existing farming operations, Environmental Health has no objection to the proposed development.
- 8.20 In summary, the proposal is considered to comply with the relevant policy criteria in that it is located adjacent to an established group of farm buildings, is reasonably necessary for the efficient operation of the agricultural holding, and is appropriate in terms of scale, design and character. The development would not adversely impact natural or built heritage interests, residential amenity, or environmental quality through noise, odour or pollution. Furthermore, the proposal

would integrate satisfactorily within the surrounding landscape, would not appear as a prominent or incongruous feature, and would respect the established pattern of development within the locality.

Access, Movement & Parking

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 3: Access, Movement & Parking

Policy AMP 2: Access to Public Roads

Planning permission will only be granted for a development proposal involving direct access, or the intensification of the use of an existing access, onto a public road where, such access will not prejudice road safety or significantly inconvenience the flow of traffic and the proposal does not conflict with Policy AMP 3 Access to Protected Routes.

- 8.21 The site is accessed via an existing agricultural access which will be improved to meet the required visibility standards. The alteration to the access requires the removal of the existing roadside hedge and stone ditch to the north and a short section of roadside hedging to the south. DfI Roads have no objection to the proposed access and therefore road safety will not be prejudiced, or traffic flow adversely affected. Having carried out a site inspection DfI Roads advise that due to the close proximity of the proposed shed and underground tank to Fairhead Road, Technical Approval will be required as specified in the Roads (NI) Order 1993 and a negative condition will apply regarding this approval.
- 8.22 Objections to the proposal raised concerns over the potential for increased heavy vehicle movements involved in the transportation of digestate to and from the site. DfI have considered the objections and sought clarification on the matter. The agent has confirmed that the proposed underground slurry tank will be emptied once a year and spread on fields within the farm holding by a tractor and slurry tanker. They have also further clarified that there is no digestate imported to the applicant's farm at Fairhead Road currently and there will be no digestate imported once the shed is operational. The 200 cubic metres of digestate referenced

within the Nutrient Management Plan is imported from the Tully Biogas Plant, Ballymena and is spread on the other fields within the agricultural holding located along Drumavoley Road, Ballycastle, as identified on the submitted farm maps.

Natural Heritage

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 2: Natural Heritage

Policy NH 1 – European and Ramsar Sites – International

Planning permission will only be granted for a development proposal that, either individually or in combination with existing and/or proposed plans or projects, is not likely to have a significant effect on:

- *a European Site (Special Protection Area, proposed Special Protection Area, Special Areas of Conservation, candidate Special Areas of Conservation and Sites of Community Importance); or*
- *a listed or proposed Ramsar Site*

Where a development proposal is likely to have a significant effect (either alone or in combination) or reasonable scientific doubt remains, the Department shall make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. Appropriate mitigation measures in the form of planning conditions may be imposed. In light of the conclusions of the assessment, the Department shall agree to the development only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site.

- 8.23 The proposal is supported by an Air Quality Impact Assessment (AQIA), a Soil Analysis Report, and a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP). The most recent updated AQIA (dated 10th February 2026) states that on completion, the site will have the provision for one cattle shed housing a total of forty-one (41) cows. It has been confirmed that animals will be housed in the shed for 5 months of the year during the closed season and grazed on land surrounding the site during the summer months. The revised NMP details that the c. 294m³ of cattle slurry generated by this proposal will be disposed of via land spreading on fields indicated on the applicant's latest farm

maps (submitted 14th January 2025). The AQIA models the emissions of ammonia from the cattle shed, grazing and land spreading of slurry. It has been confirmed by the applicant that the slurry will be spread over fields amounting to approximately 11.97 hectares of land, involving two fields at Fairhead Road, to the south-west of the application site and a further nine fields located at Drumavoley Road. Soil sampling analysis results prepared by Lancrop Laboratories have been provided for the nominated fields and the land spreading locations in the NMP and AQIA are all in agreement.

8.24 The application site (and/or associated land spreading) is within 7.5km of the following nationally, European and internationally designated sites:

- Rathlin Island MCZ, which is designated under the Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013;
- Antrim Hills SPA, Rathlin Island SAC, Rathlin Island SPA, and Breen Wood SAC, which are designated under the 'Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended);
- Ballycastle Coalfield ASSI, Carey Valley ASSI, Fair Head and Murlough Bay ASSI, Rathlin Island - Coast ASSI, Slieveanorra and
- Croaghan ASSI, Castle Point ASSI, Torr Head ASSI, Breen Wood ASSI and Row River Wood which are declared under the Environment Order (Northern Ireland) 2002.

8.25 Following the introduction of livestock housing within the proposed shed, NIEA Natural Environment Division requested the submission of air dispersion modelling AQIA and a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) to assess the potential environmental effects of the development. The original NMP indicated that slurry generated by the applicant's herd would be land spread. Consequently, NIEA Water Catchment Unit requested further information, including soil sample analysis and an updated NMP, in order to assess the capacity of the proposed land bank and the potential implications for the water environment. Given the elevated phosphorus levels within many river catchments across Northern Ireland, it was necessary for the applicant to demonstrate that a sustainable outlet existed for the slurry generated and that sufficient land was available to

accommodate the proposed nutrient loading. As the application progressed, several revisions and updates to the environmental documentation were required, necessitating further consultation with the relevant statutory consultees. The evolving nature of the submitted information resulted in a number of reconsultations and delayed the completion of the Habitats Regulations Assessment. Shared Environmental Services were unable to finalise their assessment until all environmental information was consistent and agreed, and substantive responses had been received from both NIEA Natural Environment Division and NIEA Water Catchment Unit. As a consequence, the consideration of environmental impacts formed a significant component of the overall determination period.

- 8.26 Shared Environmental Services have confirmed that the proposal site and land spreading locations are in the catchment of the Glenshesk River which discharges into Ballycastle Bay. There is no hydrological connection to any European site.
- 8.27 The AQIA concludes that the limits for the protection of vegetation are not exceeded at any designated habitats within the vicinity of the farm, grazing or land spreading areas. Thus, any areas of ecological interest will not be adversely affected from the ammonia emissions for the operation of the shed.
- 8.28 NIEA Water Catchment Unit has considered the impacts of the proposal on the surface water environment and on the basis of the information provided, is content with the proposal subject to conditions, the applicant noting the advice in the Explanatory Note, the applicant referring and adhering to Standing Advice, and any relevant statutory permissions being obtained.
- 8.29 NIEA Natural Environment Division has considered the available environmental information, and is content that the proposed development represents a low risk to the qualifying features of the Designated Sites. NED have also provided advice in relation to Priority Habitats, Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance (SLNCI) where appropriate.
- 8.30 Shared Environmental Services are content that the air quality modelling confirms that the emissions from the proposal are

below the relevant published thresholds that would require further assessment and as such will not undermine the conservation objectives of Antrim Hills SPA, Rathlin Island SAC/SPA and Breen Wood SAC.

Policy NH 6 – Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

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:

- *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*
- *it respects or conserves features (including buildings and other man-made features) of importance to the character, appearance or heritage of the landscape; and*
- *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.*

8.31 A Design and Access Statement accompanied the planning application. The proposed shed is typical in terms of its design and appearance when compared to adjacent agricultural buildings located immediately to the east. Furthermore, it is subordinate in scale, having both a smaller floor area and lower ridge height than the nearby structures. A landscaping scheme has been proposed which seeks to retain existing vegetation around the site boundaries where practicable, supplemented by new planting of semi-mature trees along the western boundary. Having regard to the siting, scale and design of the development, together with the retention and enhancement of boundary planting, it is considered that the proposal would integrate satisfactorily into the surrounding rural landscape and would not result in any unacceptable impact on natural heritage interests, landscape features or environmental assets. On balance, the proposal is considered to comply with the provisions of PPS 2 and would not give rise to any significant adverse effects on natural or environmental features.

Habitat Regulations Assessment

- 8.32 Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council in its role as the competent Authority under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended), and in accordance with its duty under Regulation 43, has adopted the HRA report, and conclusions therein, prepared by Shared Environmental Service, dated 19/06/2026. This found that the project would not be likely to have a significant effect on any European site.

Objections Received

- 8.33 A total of sixty-seven (67) letters of objection (from 23 no. separate addresses, and 3 no. addresses unknown) has been received which have been summarised in paragraph **5.1**. While the majority of representations have been submitted by individuals who do not reside within the local area, many appear to have a clear familiarity of the circumstances, as evidenced by the content of their submissions. Although the concerns raised vary in their material planning weight and a number of representations are duplicates, all comments received have been carefully considered and taken into account in the assessment of this application.
- 8.34 The occupier of the adjoining property at No. 2 Craigfad Road, located immediately east of the application site, has consistently objected to the proposal throughout its various iterations and has submitted numerous representations, both personally and through an appointed planning agent. Almost all points raised in these representations have been considered in full as part of the assessment of the application and are addressed in paragraphs **8.8** to **8.28** above. The remaining points are as follows:
- Objections were received regarding the length of time taken to determine the application, the number of amendments submitted during its progression, and the perceived implications for fairness and transparency within the decision-making process.

8.35 The application has undergone a number of significant amendments since its original submission. In particular, the applicant's revised requirement for livestock accommodation resulted in the proposal changing from an agricultural storage shed to a livestock shed. This change required further assessment of the development, including the submission of additional environmental information and consideration of matters such as ammonia emissions, potential impacts on designated sites, and the wider environmental effects associated with livestock housing. The amendments also necessitated further consultation and notification exercises to ensure that the application details remained accurate, that the proposal could be fully assessed, and that all interested parties were afforded an opportunity to review and comment on the revised scheme. While concerns have been raised regarding the length of time taken to determine the application and the number of revisions submitted, the application has been processed in accordance with the relevant statutory procedures. The amendments formed part of the ongoing assessment of the proposal and were subject to the appropriate consultation, publicity, and re-notification requirements where necessary.

- Concerns were raised over the commencement of ground works prior to planning permission being granted.

8.36 Any unauthorised works undertaken prior to the granting of planning permission constitute a planning enforcement matter. Such works do not form part of the assessment of the current application and should be investigated separately through the Council's planning enforcement process where appropriate.

9.0 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 Having carefully considered the proposal against all relevant planning policies and material considerations, it is concluded that the development is justified as necessary for the efficient operation of the agricultural holding. The proposal is acceptable in terms of its siting, scale, design and rural character, and has been demonstrated to integrate satisfactorily within the landscape through a combination of existing and proposed landscaping. The development will not result in unacceptable impacts on visual amenity, neighbouring residential amenity, natural heritage or built heritage interests. All representations and objections received have been fully considered and appropriately addressed as part of the assessment process. On balance, the proposal is considered to comply with the relevant provisions of the development plan and regional planning policy, and planning permission is recommended for approval.

10.0 CONDITIONS

Drawings 01A, 02F, 03E

1. The development hereby permitted must be begun within five years from the date of this permission.

Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

2. All works, materials and finishes shall be as indicated on the approved plans.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory form of development.

3. No development shall commence until the vehicular access, including visibility splays and any forward sight distance, shall be provided in accordance with Drawing No. 02F and DfI Roads DC 1 form attached, prior to the commencement of any other development hereby permitted. The area within the visibility splays and any forward sight line shall be cleared to provide a level surface no higher than 250mm above the level of the adjoining carriageway and such splays

shall be retained and kept clear thereafter.

Reason: To ensure there is a satisfactory means of access in the interests of road safety and the convenience of road users.

4. The access gradient to the development hereby permitted shall not exceed 8% (1 in 12.5) over the first 5 m outside the road boundary. Where the vehicular access crosses a footway, the access gradient shall be between 4% (1 in 25) maximum and 2.5% (1 in 40) minimum and shall be formed so that there is no abrupt change of slope along the footway.

Reason: To ensure there is a satisfactory means of access in the interests of road safety and the convenience of road users.

5. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until the proposed retaining walls requiring Technical Approval, as specified in the Roads (NI) Order 1993, has been approved in accordance with CG 300 Technical Approval of Highways Structures: Volume 1: Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.

Reason: To ensure that the structure is designed in accordance with CG 300 Technical Approval of Highways Structures: Volume 1: Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.

6. All planting, landscaping and boundary treatments comprised in the approved details of Drawing No. 02F shall be carried out during the first planting season following the construction of the shed and any trees, hedgerow or shrubs which, within a period of five years from the completion of the development, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with other similar size and species.

Reason: To ensure the development integrates into the countryside and to ensure the maintenance of screening to the site

7. The existing vegetation along the existing site boundaries, as

detailed on approved Drawing 02F, shall be permanently retained and allowed to grow to a minimum height of 2m in the case of hedgerows and 10m in the case of trees unless necessary to prevent danger to the public in which case a full explanation along with a scheme for compensatory planting shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Council, prior to removal.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of neighbouring occupiers and in the interests of visual amenity and to ensure that the proposed development does not prejudice the appearance of the locality.

8. Any existing tree or hedgerow shown to be retained on the approved drawings which, within a period of five years from the completion of the development, is removed, dies, becomes seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced during the next planting season with a specimen of similar species, size and location unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council.

Reason: To ensure the long-term retention of landscape features which contribute to the visual amenity and character of the area.

9. The scheme of planting as approved in Drawing No. 02F shall be carried out during the first planting season after the commencement of development. Trees or shrubs dying, removed or becoming seriously damaged within five years of being planted shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species unless the Council gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To ensure the provision, establishment and maintenance of a high standard of landscape in the interests of visual amenity.

10. The maximum number of cattle within the proposed facility shall not exceed 41 cows as stated in the Air Quality Impact Assessment (10/02/26).

Reason: To ensure the project is not likely to have a significant effect on any European site and to prevent adverse impacts from ammonia and nitrogen depositions on the features of designated sites.

11. The development, hereby permitted, shall not deviate from the disposal and mitigation methods for manure from the proposed facility, as detailed within the Air Quality Impact Assessment (10/02/26) and the Revised Nutrient Management Plan (published 10/02/26) without prior written consent of the council.

Reason: To ensure the project is not likely to have a significant effect on any European site and to ensure that the manure arising from the proposal will be utilised in a sustainable manner and to prevent any adverse impact on the aquatic environment and / or to any designated site.

12. The development, hereby permitted, will be in accordance with the Revised Nutrient Management Plan (published 10/02/26) and Air Quality Impact Assessment (10/02/26) in relation to the arrangements for land spreading locations/tonnages, unless the Council, in consultation with NIEA, give written consent to any variation from this arrangement.

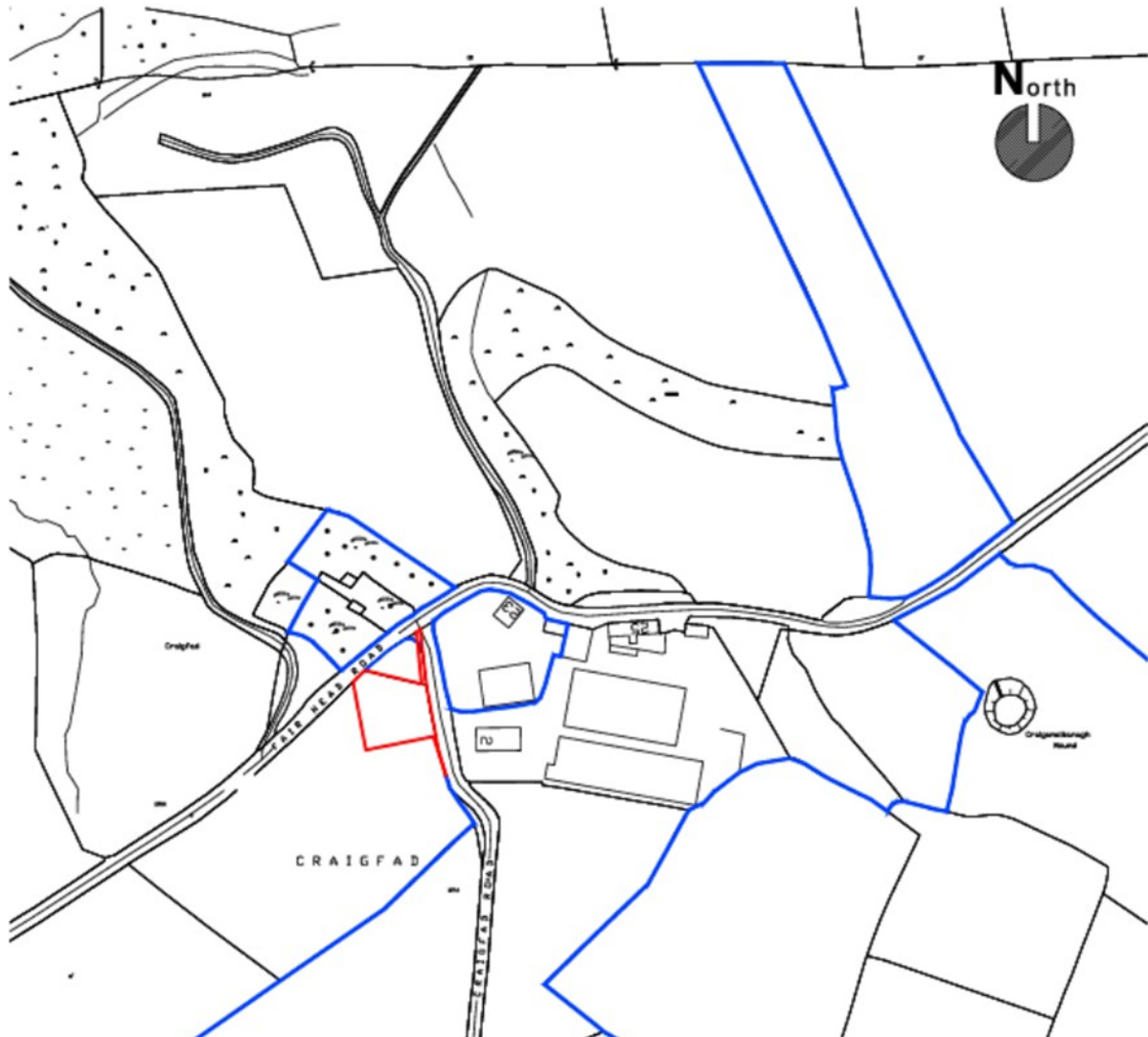
Reason: To prevent adverse impacts from ammonia and nitrogen depositions on the features of designated sites.

Informatives:

1. This permission does not confer title. It is the responsibility of the developer to ensure that he controls all the lands necessary to carry out the proposed development.
2. This permission does not alter or extinguish or otherwise affect any existing or valid right of way crossing, impinging or otherwise pertaining to these lands.

3. This approval does not dispense with the necessity of obtaining the permission of the owners of adjacent dwellings for the removal of or building on the party wall or boundary whether or not defined.
4. This determination relates to planning control only and does not cover any consent or approval which may be necessary to authorise the development under other prevailing legislation as may be administered by the Council or other statutory authority.
5. You should refer to any other general advice and guidance provided by consultees in the process of this planning application by reviewing all responses on the Public Register website at <https://planningregister.planningsystemni.gov.uk/>

Site Location Map



Proposed Site Plan

