Title of Report:	**Planning Committee Report - LA01/2024/0884/O**
Committee Report Submitted To:	**Planning Committee**
Date of Meeting:	**25th November, 2026**
For Decision or For Information	**For Decision - Application referred by Cllr Maighréad Watson**
To be discussed In Committee YES/NO	**Yes**

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: LA01/2024/0884/F **Ward:** Torr Head and Rathlin

App Type: Outline

Address: Lands 16metres South West of 72 Churchfield Road, Ballycastle.

Proposal: Proposed Farm Dwelling.

Con Area: N/A **Valid Date:** 05.08.24

Listed Building Grade: N/A

Agent: ProPlanning Consultancy, 26 Glen Manor Avenue, Newtownabbey.

Applicant: John Darragh, 30 Fairhead Road, Ballyvoy.

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

Support: 0 **Petitions of Support:** 0

Executive Summary

- Outline planning permission is being sought for a dwelling on the farm.

- 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).

- Consultation has been carried out with DFI Roads, NI Water, NIEA, DAERA and Environmental Health Department. No objections have been raised by consultees.

- No overriding reasons have been submitted as to why the development is essential in this location and cannot be facilitated within the development limit.

- The proposal fails Paragraph 6.187 of the SPPS and Policy NH 6 of PPS 2: Natural Heritage in that the proposal is unsympathetic to the special character of the A.O.N.B.

- The proposal is contrary to Paragraphs 6.70 and 6.73 of the SPPS Edition 2 and Policies CTY1, CTY 8, CTY10 and CTY14 of PPS21.

- This application is recommended for Refusal.

- Reasons for Referral by elected member are attached as an annex to this report.

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** outline planning permission for the reasons set out in section 10.

2.0 SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION

2.1 The application site is located approximately 16m south-west of 72 Churchfield Road, Ballycastle.

2.2 The roadside site as delineated by the red line consists of an irregularly shaped paddock containing a modest single storey shed together with an agricultural access point to the northern corner and extends to approximately 0.2 hectares in area.

2.3 The site is well enclosed with the eastern and western boundaries defined by post and wire fencing augmented by native hedging and sporadic mature trees, while the southern boundary is established by dense vegetation and mature trees. The Topography of the site falls gradually from north to south with an overall difference in ground levels of approximately 4m.

2.4 The site is located on the western side of Churchfield Road, approximately half-way between its junctions with Glenshesk Road and Ballynagard Road and 5.1km south-east of Ballycastle. The immediate surrounding area is rural in character, comprising a mix of single dwellings, 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.

3.0 RELEVANT HISTORY

3.1 A search of planning history indicated the following previous applications relating to the site:

- E/2009/0335/O - 50m South of 69 Churchfield Road, Ballycastle. Site for farm dwelling. Permission refused.
- E/2003/0401/O - Site opposite 72 Churchfield Road, Ballycastle. Retirement dwelling. Permission refused.

4.0 THE APPLICATION

4.1 The application seeks outline planning permission for a dwelling on the farm.

5.0 PUBLICITY & CONSULTATIONS

5.1 External

Advertising: The application was advertised on 21.08.2024.

Neighbours: Neighbours were notified on 27.08.2024.

No letters of support or objection were received in relation to this application.

Internal

- DfI Roads Coleraine Office - Content
- DAERA - Content
- CCG Environmental Health - No objection
- NI Water - Advice
- NIEA - Standing Advice
- DfI Rivers - Advice

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) 15 - Planning and Flood Risk
Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 21 - Sustainable Development in the Countryside
DCAN 15 - Vehicular Access Standards
Building on Tradition - A Sustainable Design Guide for the Northern Ireland Countryside
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, impact of the development on the character of the A.O.N.B, integration and rural character, access, flood risk and habitat regulations assessment.

Principle of development

8.2 The site is located around 5km south-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 Paragraph 6.73 of the SPPS and Planning Policy Statement 21 - Sustainable development in the Countryside, Policy CTY 1 notes 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. One such scenario is a farm dwelling development in accordance with Policies CTY 10, CTY 13, CTY 14 and the Departments Design Guide 'Building On tradition'.

8.5 Planning Policy Statement 21, Policy CTY10 permits a dwelling on a farm where the farm business is active and established for at least six years, no development opportunity has been sold from the holding within the previous ten years of the date of the application, and the proposed dwelling visually links with or clusters alongside an established group of farm buildings. Exceptionally, Policy CTY10 permits an alternative site elsewhere on the farm where no suitable site is available within an existing farm building group or out-farm and there are demonstrable health and safety reasons or verifiable plans for farm expansion.

8.6 The applicant's farm holding comprises a number of separate parcels of land, with the main farm dwelling and farm complex located on Fairhead Road, approximately 7 km north-east of the application site. DAERA, has confirmed that the farm business remains active and has been established for a period exceeding six years. Furthermore, there is no evidence to indicate that any dwellings or potential development opportunities have been severed, sold, or otherwise disposed of from the farm holding during the 10-year period preceding

the submission of the application. Officials are satisfied that the proposal complies with criteria a and b of CTY10.

8.7 Criterion (c) of Policy CTY 10 requires that a new dwelling be visually linked to, or cluster with, an established group of buildings on the farm and that, where practicable, access should be obtained from an existing lane. The policy further provides that, in exceptional circumstances, an alternative site elsewhere on the farm may be considered where no suitable site exists adjacent to another group of buildings on the farm or out-farm, and where there are demonstrable health and safety reasons or verifiable plans for expansion of the farm business at the existing building group(s).

8.8 The application site forms part of an out-farm comprising nine fields and extending to approximately 15 hectares. The only agricultural building serving this landholding is located along the western boundary of the application site and consists of a modest single-storey timber-framed, metal-clad shed measuring approximately 6 metres by 4 metres, with a lean-to roof and a single access door. The structure is of a simple construction, lacking both strip foundations and a solid concrete floor, and is used primarily for livestock management. Internally, the building contains five timber lambing pens with straw bedding, providing limited accommodation for seasonal sheep husbandry activities.

8.9 While Policy CTY 10 does not specifically define what constitutes an “established group of buildings on the farm”, it is not considered reasonable to regard a lone agricultural shed within a field as a group of buildings. In this case, the only structure present is a modest single-storey agricultural shed of limited scale and function. As such, the proposal cannot be considered to visually link or cluster with an established group of farm buildings as required by criterion (c) of the policy and therefore fails to satisfy criterion (c) of Policy CTY 10. It is noted that a previous planning application on the site for a farm dwelling was refused planning permission under application E/2009/0335/O and subsequently dismissed on appeal. One of the main reasons for refusal related to the application site not being sited to cluster or visually link with an established group of buildings on the farm. There has been no change in circumstances in regard to farm buildings since the

determination of application E/2009/0335/O and the subsequent appeal.

8.10 In support of the application, the agent advises that the agricultural buildings at the main farm holding on Fairhead Road are operating at full capacity and has submitted photographs and livestock records in support. It is argued that the proposed dwelling is required to address the expanding operational needs of the farm, particularly in relation to animal health, safety and welfare. However, the information provided does not adequately demonstrate why a dwelling is necessary at this specific out-farm location. While a substantial proportion of the flock is grazed on the Churchfield Road lands, the site contains only a single agricultural shed which currently serves the husbandry needs of livestock using these fields.

8.11 The agent advises that the agricultural shed on the application site serves a range of operational functions throughout the year, including the storage of feed and machinery, the provision of lambing pens, and the housing of sick or injured livestock when necessary. The out-farm supports a substantial livestock enterprise, accommodating approximately 150 ewes during late autumn, winter and early spring, together with their lambs during the lambing season. During the summer and autumn months, the holding is also used to graze approximately 31 cows, 31 calves, one bull and seven heifers.

8.12 In addition, the agent submits that approximately 150-170 ewes, together with their lambs, were managed on these lands during 2024 between late autumn and early spring, while around 70 cattle are grazed at the out-farm during the summer months. It is further submitted that other farmlands closer to the main holding lack the capacity to accommodate the flock maintained at the application site. The agent contends that the separation between the main farm complex and the out-farm creates practical difficulties during the lambing season and argues that a dwelling at this location would facilitate closer supervision of livestock and assist in meeting animal health and welfare requirements.

8.13 While the Council acknowledges the scale of livestock husbandry undertaken at the out-farm and accepts that sheep management during the lambing season requires increased

supervision, the evidence submitted does not demonstrate exceptional circumstances sufficient to justify a dwelling at this location. The lands have historically operated as an out-farm without a dwelling, and no substantive evidence has been provided to show that livestock welfare needs cannot continue to be adequately managed from the existing farmstead. Furthermore, no independent professional evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that the separation between the main farm holding, and the out-farm gives rise to significant animal welfare or health and safety concerns, nor has any verifiable farm expansion strategy been provided to justify the need for a dwelling in this location. It has not been demonstrated as to why additional facilities could not be provided at the main farm hub to allow for any necessary increase in supervision/management e.g. lambing season to be managed from there. Consequently, the proposal fails to satisfy the exceptional circumstances required under criterion (c) of Policy CTY 10.

Impact of the development on the character of the A.O.N.B,

8.14 Planning Policy Statement 2, Policy NH 6 deals with Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and states that planning permission for new development within an A.O.N.B. will only be granted where the siting and scale of the proposal are sympathetic to the special character of the designated area and the particular locality. Proposals must also respect and conserve features that contribute to the character, appearance and heritage of the landscape, including important natural and built features. In addition, development should reflect local architectural styles and traditional landscape patterns through the retention of features such as hedgerows, walls, trees and gates, and through the use of appropriate local materials, design and colour palettes.

8.15 The proposal would introduce an additional dwelling within an existing cluster of development along this section of Churchfield Road. While the site is visually enclosed by existing dwellings and the small shed on the site, it currently provides an important gap between Nos. 69 and 75 Churchfield Road, contributing to the rural character of the area. The introduction of a dwelling on this site would diminish this visual break and further consolidate the existing linear pattern of development

along the road frontage. As a result, the proposal would erode the open character of the landscape, adversely affect the scenic quality of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and fail to respect the distinctive character of the locality. Accordingly, the development is considered contrary to Policy NH 6 of PPS 2.

Integration and Rural Character

8.16 Subject to the provision of a modest single storey dwelling on the site it is considered that retention of the existing vegetation to the site boundaries would enable the proposed dwelling to integrate into the site and would comply with the requirements of Policy CTY13.

8.17 Planning Policy Statement 21, Policy CTY14 sets out that planning permission will be granted for a building in the countryside where it complies with all criteria and does not cause a detrimental change to, or further erode the rural character of an area. This policy also relates to the impact of ancillary works (except for necessary visibility splays) which again should not damage rural character.

8.18 The site is located within an established group of dwellings and outbuildings along this section of Churchfield Road and is readily visible in the context of the existing built form when travelling in either direction along the public road. In these circumstances, the proposed dwelling would add to the existing concentration of development, resulting in a suburban-style build-up that would be detrimental to the rural character of the area. Furthermore, given its position and relationship with surrounding development, the proposal would fail to respect the traditional settlement pattern and would create a prominent and unacceptable visual impact within the countryside.

8.19 Additionally, given the existing linear pattern of development along the western side of this section of Churchfield Road, the proposal would extend the existing ribbon of development. This conclusion is reinforced by the planning history of the site. Planning permission for a dwelling on this land was previously refused under applications E/2009/0335/O and E/2003/0401/O, with subsequent appeals dismissed by the Planning Appeals Commission under references 2011/A0003 and 2006/A0693

respectively. The circumstances of the current proposal have not materially changed to such an extent as to overcome the concerns previously identified regarding ribbon development and the cumulative erosion of rural character. Accordingly, the proposal remains unacceptable in principle. As a result, the proposal fails to satisfy criteria (b) and (d) of Policy CTY 14 and Policy CTY 8 of PPS 21 in respect of ribbon development.

Access

8.20 The existing access point situated to the northern corner of the site will be utilised to serve the application site. Following consultation DFI Roads offered no objections to the proposals on condition that a block plan based on a topographical survey shall be submitted as part of any reserved matters application showing the access to be constructed and other requirements in accordance with DfI Roads standards. The application will not prejudice road safety and the convenience of road users and complies with Policy AMP2 of PPS3.

Flood Risk

8.21 The overarching aim of PPS 15 is to prevent inappropriate development within flood-prone areas and to promote sustainable patterns of development that minimise flood risk both on and off-site.

8.22 Following consultation, DfI Rivers advise that the site lies partially within the 1 in 100-year fluvial floodplain as identified on the Flood Maps (NI). In accordance with Policy FLD 1, development will not be permitted within the 1 in 100-year fluvial floodplain unless it constitutes an exception under the policy or is of overriding regional or sub-regional importance.

8.23 The Flood Hazard Map (NI) also indicates that a small portion of the site is affected by Surface Water flooding. Given the proposal does not exceed the thresholds set out in Policy FLD 3, a Drainage Assessment is not required.

8.24 As the principle of development is not considered acceptable in this instance, and the proposal does not meet with one of the exceptional types of development as set out in Policy FLD1 of PPS15 the Council does not consider it necessary to place the

applicant under the additional expense of preparing and submitting a Flood Risk Assessment. While the lower section of the site adjacent to the watercourse along the southern boundary is susceptible to flooding, the upper northern portion is identified as outside of the fluvial floodplain and if development was restricted to the northern portion this could overcome any conflict with Policy FLD1. However, this would be dependent on the submission of a concept layout demonstrating that a dwelling, together with its associated curtilage and access arrangements, could be accommodated entirely outside the identified floodplain.

Habitat Regulations Assessment

8.25 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.

Other Matters

8.26 No objections or letters of support have been received in relation to the application. However, the owner of the neighbouring property at No. 75 Churchfield Road has advised that a boundary dispute is currently ongoing following the alleged removal of the southern boundary without prior consultation or agreement. The applicant has indicated a willingness to engage with the neighbouring landowner in an effort to resolve the matter amicably. While it is acknowledged that the dispute may prove difficult to resolve, it is considered to be a private civil matter between the respective parties. On the basis of the information available, the boundary issue does not materially affect the planning assessment of the proposal and can therefore be afforded limited weight in the determination of the application.

9.0 CONCLUSION

9.1 Having assessed the proposal against all relevant planning policy and material considerations, it is concluded that the development is unacceptable in this location. The application site would neither visually link or cluster with the established group of buildings on the farm, and there is insufficient justification that a dwelling is essential at the proposed location. The development does not meet any of the recognised exceptions for residential development in the countryside. As such, the proposal is contrary to paragraphs 6.70 and 6.73 of the SPPS 2nd edition and fails to comply with Policies CTY 1, CTY 8, CTY 10 and CTY 14 of PPS 21. In addition, the proposal is contrary to Policy NH 6 of PPS 2. Accordingly, refusal of planning permission is recommended.

10.0 REASONS FOR REFUSAL

1. The proposal is contrary to Paragraph 6.187 of the SPPS and Policy NH 6 of PPS 2: Natural Heritage in that the proposal is unsympathetic to the special character of the A.O.N.B.

2. The proposal is contrary to Paragraph 6.73 of the SPPS and Policy CTY 1 of PPS 21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside in that there are no overriding reasons why the development is essential in this location and could not be located within a settlement.

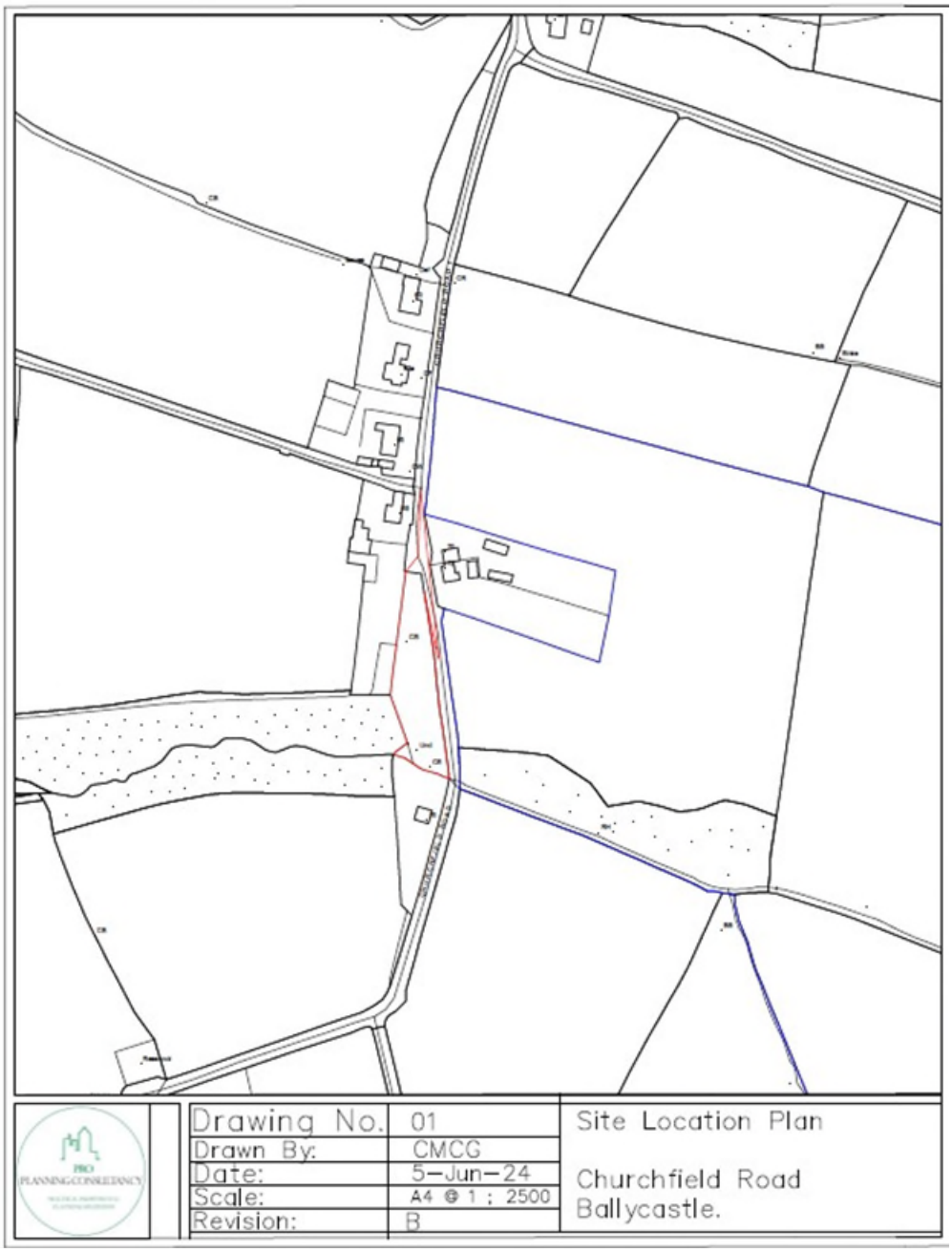
3. The proposal is contrary to Paragraph 6.73 of the SPPS and Policy CTY10 criteria (c) of PPS21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside in that it does not merit being considered as an exceptional case as it has not been demonstrated that the proposed new dwelling is visually linked or sited to cluster with an established group of buildings on the farm.

4. The proposal is contrary to Paragraph 6.70 of the SPPS and Policy CTY 8 of PPS 21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside in that the proposal would, if permitted, result in the addition to ribbon of development along Churchfield

Road and would therefore result in a detrimental change to the rural character of the countryside.

5. The proposal is contrary to Paragraph 6.70 of the SPPS and Policy CTY 14 of PPS 21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside in that the proposal would, if permitted, result in a suburban style build-up of development and create a ribbon of development along Churchfield Road and would therefore result in a detrimental change to the rural character of the countryside.

Site Location Map



Referral Request

Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

Development Management Information Note 07

January 2024

Annex 1

Template for Requesting Referral of a Contentious Delegated Decision to Issue' List Planning Application to Planning Committee for Determination

The Protocol for the Operation of the Planning Committee provides for an Elected Member to request a planning application listed on the weekly list of 'contentious delegated decisions ready' to be referred to Planning Committee for determination. This request must be received by the Planning Department no later than 10am on the Monday following the issuing of the contentious list and submitted via email to planning@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk.

Planning Reference	LA01/**2024/0884/O**
Elected Member Name	Maighréad Watson
Contact Details	Tel: Email:

Refusal Reason 1: Unsympathetic to AONB (PPS 2: Policy NH 6)

Officer's claim: The dwelling would be unsympathetic to the special character of the Antrim Coast & Glens AONB.

Rebuttal:

Integration & Design – The application complies with CTY 13: the site is bounded on three sides by mature hedging/trees and topography provides a natural backdrop, with minimal visibility from public viewpoints.

AONB Guidance Compliance – The proposed dwelling will be of a rural vernacular design, use traditional materials, and retain existing boundary vegetation.

Minimal Landscape Impact – This is not an open exposed site; additional planting will further reduce any visual impact. The modest scale and siting adjacent to the existing farm building will ensure the proposal is sympathetic to local character and landscape quality.

Refusal Reason 2: No overriding reason why development is essential here

Officer's claim: The development could be located elsewhere (e.g., within a settlement) and is not essential in this location.

Rebuttal:

PPS 21 CTY 10 Exception – The policy explicitly allows an off-site farm dwelling where there are demonstrable health and safety reasons and no suitable site exists at another group of buildings.

Operational Necessity – Approximately 50% of the flock (150–170 ewes + lambs) are kept here during critical lambing periods; summer grazing also supports ~70 cattle. Daily on-site presence is essential for animal welfare and emergency response, especially during lambing and illness.

Distance Constraint – The 2.7 km separation from the main farm makes rapid welfare response impractical, creating unacceptable risk to livestock.

Not transferable to a settlement – Relocating to a settlement would remove the welfare benefit of proximity and fail to address the operational requirement that the dwelling be functionally linked to the out-farm.

Refusal Reason 3 – Fails CTY 10(c): No cluster with established group of buildings

Officer's claim: A single shed cannot be considered an "established group of buildings" and no evidence supports an exception.

Rebuttal:

Functional Grouping – The farm building here is not an isolated casual structure; it is the operational base for 15.1 ha of grazing land, with permanent handling pens, lambing pens, and storage for feed/machinery.

Policy Flexibility – CTY 10(c) allows exceptions for health and safety reasons even if no building cluster exists, provided there is no alternative site.

Evidence Submitted – Herd/flock records, photographic evidence, and operational descriptions demonstrate: