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PRECEDENT REPORT

Tourist Accommodation & Glamping Development

Iveragh Peninsula, Co. Kerry

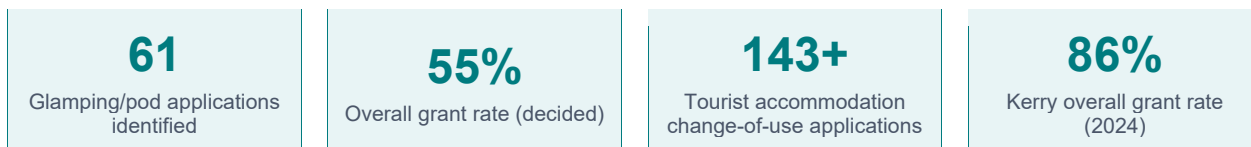
PREPARED FOR Wild Atlantic Glamping Ltd.
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DATE March 2026
REFERENCE PPR-2026-0042

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01 Executive Summary

This report assesses the planning precedent and viability for the proposed development of a glamping and self-catering tourist accommodation facility on agricultural land on the Iveragh Peninsula, Co. Kerry. The analysis draws on a comprehensive review of all comparable planning applications across Kerry County Council, examining grant patterns, refusal grounds, and the policy framework governing tourist accommodation in rural areas.



Sixty-one glamping and camping pod applications have been identified across Kerry County Council's planning register. Of the 49 decided applications, 27 were granted and 22 refused — a grant rate of 55%. This is notably below Kerry's overall planning grant rate of 86% (2024), confirming that glamping development is a contested use type that requires carefully prepared applications.

Kerry County Council is broadly supportive of small-scale tourist accommodation in appropriate rural settings, but applies strict controls relating to landscape sensitivity, road access standards, wastewater treatment, and settlement proximity. The critical success factors are site selection away from Visually Sensitive landscape designations, robust wastewater proposals, adequate road access, and a clear connection to an existing settlement or established tourism asset. Projects that fail on any of these grounds face refusal, and the precedent record confirms this pattern with considerable consistency.

02 Research Methodology

This precedent analysis was conducted using the Archa Planning Intelligence platform, which aggregates normalised planning application data from all 31 Irish local authorities. The research methodology comprised the following steps:

1. Statistical analysis of Kerry County Council planning activity 2022–2025, covering over 6,100 applications across the four-year period.
2. Full enumeration of all Kerry applications containing glamping, camping pod, or holiday pod proposals, identifying 61 relevant applications with decided outcomes available for 49.
3. Separate enumeration of tourist accommodation change-of-use applications (dwellings, farm buildings, vacant structures), identifying 143 applications — substantially more than often appreciated.
4. Full-text search and extraction of Planner's Reports and decision documents to identify specific refusal grounds, conditions of permission, and policy citations, using the Archa document search tool.
5. Cross-referencing with the Kerry County Development Plan 2022–2028, particularly Sections 10.3.5.3 (Short-Term Letting) and 11.6.3.1 (Visually Sensitive Areas).
6. Review of An Bord Pleanála appeal records for all identified applications to assess appeal outcomes and ABP's approach to glamping in Kerry.

03 Kerry Planning Context

To properly interpret the glamping precedent data, it is useful to understand the broader planning context in Kerry County Council.

Year	Applications Received	Granted	Refused	Grant Rate	Commercial
2022	1,383	1,075	140	88.5%	156
2023	1,684	1,110	131	89.4%	120
2024	1,496	1,022	159	86.5%	140
2025*	1,569	724†	126†	85.2%†	121

* Many 2025 applications still in review or awaiting decision at time of research (March 2026). † Reflects decided applications only.

The glamping grant rate of 55% sits significantly below the council’s overall grant rate, reflecting the more complex policy balancing act involved. Glamping applications must navigate landscape, wastewater, and access hurdles that routine residential or agricultural applications do not face.

04 Comparable Applications — Key Precedents

The following table summarises the most instructive precedent applications identified through our research. Applications have been selected to illustrate the range of outcomes and the factors that distinguish successful from unsuccessful proposals. All references are Kerry County Council format (YY/NNNNN) and have been verified against the council's planning register.

Ref.	Location	Description	Date	Decision	Key Factor
24/60907	Garranearagh, Cahersiveen	6 glamping pods, service building, PV panels	01/05/2025	GRANTED	Established tourism area; adequate services; sewer connection available
23/698	Portmagee	5 pods, PV panels, farm access upgrade, wastewater system	09/02/2024	GRANTED	Adjacent to tourism asset; farm diversification; Ring of Kerry corridor
23/360	Sandy Feet Farm, Camp	12 pods adjacent to existing pet farm, mechanical treatment unit	19/09/2024	GRANTED	Largest recent grant; adjacent to established farm tourism business; 19 conditions
23/825	Rahinnane West, Ventry	4 pods, wastewater treatment, car/bicycle parking	15/04/2024	GRANTED	Small scale; public sewer connection; Peninsula tourism corridor
23/277	Cantra, Ventry	6 pods with decking, connection to public sewer	13/03/2024	GRANTED	Public sewer eliminated wastewater risk; Dingle Peninsula tourism asset
24/61003	Coologes, Kilgarvan	2 pods, Tricel Novo + Sandcel polishing filter, entrance upgrade	23/07/2025	GRANTED	Minimum viable scale; Named proprietary system; clean access
13/356	Kells, Cahersiveen	3 camping pods, parking, wastewater system	27/08/2013	GRANTED	Modest scale; Ring of Kerry tourism corridor; long-established precedent
12/812	Derra, Asdee	Change of use: dwelling + farm building to holiday accommodation	22/04/2013	GRANTED	Reuse of existing buildings; new wastewater system; farm diversification
24/60854	Ballyheigue Castle	7 self-catering units in vacant structures, Protected Structure curtilage	26/03/2025	GRANTED	Reuse of derelict buildings; public sewer connection; heritage asset benefit
22/268	Killarney Racecourse	15 glamping units, office, car parking	19/10/2022	GRANTED	Established leisure venue; largest granted scheme; confirmed by ABP on appeal
25/60704	Callahaniska, Glenbeigh	8 pods (2x2-bed + 6x1-bed), reception, astronomy observatory	08/10/2025	REFUSED	Visually Sensitive designation; Killarney NP buffer; substandard road access; 10 submissions
24/60322	Ballinskelligs	28.5ha tourism park: hotel, 144 mobile homes, 21 pods, leisure complex	02/07/2025	REFUSED	Excessive scale on Visually Sensitive coastal site; under appeal to ABP
23/288	The Glen, Ballinskelligs	9 glamping pods, wastewater, parking	12/06/2024	REFUSED	Visually Sensitive designation; landscape character conflict; appealed by applicant
22/1016	Westcourt, Tralee	Change of use: dwelling to Airbnb accommodation	18/11/2022	REFUSED	Residential zone; KCDP 10-33 prohibition; housing supply impact
22/879	Dunloe Upper, Beaufort	4 pods, reception, laundry, effluent treatment	17/10/2022	REFUSED	Visually Sensitive area; inadequate road; no farm connection
24/60949	Ardroe, Annascaul	Conversion of existing structure to glamping pod	06/02/2025	REFUSED	Private access road substandard; inadequate width for additional traffic; 10 submissions

Source: Archa Planning Intelligence — Kerry County Council planning register, verified against council records, accessed March 2026.

05 Analysis of Decision Patterns

5.1 What Gets Granted

The successful applications share several consistent characteristics. Scale is the single most important variable: applications for 2–6 pods are routinely granted in Kerry, provided they satisfy core planning requirements. The Garranearagh scheme (6 pods, 2025), the Portmagee scheme (5 pods, 2024), and the Coologes/Kilgarvan scheme (2 pods, 2025) all demonstrate this pattern. Above 6 pods, the precedent record becomes more mixed.

The most striking outlier is the Sandy Feet Farm, Camp application (Ref. 23/360), which secured permission for 12 pods — the largest single-phase glamping grant in the recent period. The key distinguishing factor was the adjacent established pet farm: the development was framed as ancillary to an existing agri-tourism business rather than as a standalone rural glamping facility. This is an important strategic consideration for applicants with existing farm or leisure assets on site.

The Killarney Racecourse scheme (Ref. 22/268), granted for 15 glamping units, provides the strongest large-scale precedent. The site's status as an established leisure venue provided the locational justification that isolated rural sites cannot replicate. Notably, this permission was challenged by a third-party appeal to An Bord Pleanála, which confirmed the grant in February 2024, providing ABP-level endorsement of the principle.

The conversion of existing agricultural or derelict buildings to tourist accommodation also has strong precedent. The Derra, Asdee application (Ref. 12/812) demonstrates that a dwelling and farm building can be successfully converted to holiday letting. The Ballyheigue Castle scheme (Ref. 24/60854) took this principle further, securing permission for 7 self-catering apartments within the curtilage of a Protected Structure — a result confirmed by ABP following a third-party appeal in July 2025. The conversion of vacant and derelict structures for tourist accommodation is treated very favourably by the council, consistent with Objective KCDP 10-34.

Public sewer connection is a significant success factor where available. Four of the granted schemes (Garranearagh, Dromatoor, Cantra/Ventry, and Ballyheigue Castle) connected to the public foul network, which eliminates the wastewater risk entirely. Where public sewer is not available, the consistent pattern in granted applications is the specification of a named proprietary treatment system — typically a Tricel Novo unit with a Tricel Sandcel or Puraflo polishing filter — supported by site assessment evidence.

5.2 What Gets Refused — And Why

The refusal pattern reveals four distinct grounds on which Kerry County Council consistently refuses tourist accommodation.

Ground 1: Visually Sensitive Landscape Designations. This is the primary refusal ground across the register. The Callahaniska refusal (Ref. 25/60704) is the most recent and detailed example. The Planner's Report noted that the site is located within the Killarney National Park, MacGillycuddy Reeks & Caragh River Catchment pNHA & SAC buffer zone and within a Visually Sensitive landscape designation. The decision cited KCDP Section 11.6.3.1, which requires that development in VSA areas demonstrate no alternative location outside the designation, sympathetic design, and no adverse impact on landscape character, integrity, and distinctiveness. The same ground drove refusals at Dunloe Upper, Beaufort (Ref. 22/879), Ballinskelligs (Ref. 23/288 and 24/60322), and Dooaghs, Glenbeigh.

Ground 2: Road Access and Traffic Safety. The Planner's Report for the Callahaniska application noted that the site is served by a road which is substandard and inadequate in terms of width with restricted sightlines and that the traffic generated would be a hazard. The same ground was cited in the Ardroe, Annascaul refusal (Ref. 24/60949), where the planner found that the private access road serving the site is substandard and inadequate in terms of surface and width. This is an independent refusal ground that can apply even where landscape issues are minimal.

Ground 3: Excessive Scale. The 28.5-hectare Ballinskelligs tourism park (Ref. 24/60322) was refused despite a full EIAR. The scale was fundamentally at odds with the receiving environment. Similarly, the Fossa campsite applications (Refs. 21/355 and 21/623) for 13 glamping units alongside 35 tent pitches, 21 caravan pitches, and 85 RV stands were refused. Scale compounds every other risk factor: a large proposal in a Visually Sensitive area is invariably refused.

Ground 4: Residential Zone Protection. The Westcourt, Tralee Airbnb refusal (Ref. 22/1016) is unequivocal. Objective KCDP 10-33 explicitly prohibits the change of use of residential properties to short-term letting in established residential areas. This ground is not applicable to new-build glamping or the conversion of agricultural buildings, but any proposal involving an existing residential unit requires careful assessment.

5.3 The Persistent Applicant Effect

The precedent record contains several instructive examples of applicants who persisted across multiple applications before succeeding — or continued to fail.

Tina and Barry Godley applied three times for glamping pods at Dromatoor, Ballyheigue. The first two applications (Refs. 21/528 and 23/252) were refused. On the third application (Ref. 23/360 equivalent — resubmitted as Ref. 23/159), the proposal was revised and granted. The lesson: refusal does not preclude eventual success where the underlying site has merit; redesign addressing specific refusal grounds can succeed.

By contrast, Lisa O'Donoghue applied twice for glamping pods at the Old Road, Cahersiveen (Refs. 21/382 and 21/935), both refused. South Kerry Accommodation Limited first attempted development at Garranearagh in 2021 (Ref. 21/506 — not decided) before the successfully permitted Ref. 24/60907 in 2025. These cases suggest that some sites present fundamental constraints that repeated applications cannot overcome.

06 An Bord Pleanála Appeal Record

The appeal record for Kerry glamping and tourist accommodation applications reveals an important pattern: where the council grants permission, third parties frequently challenge; where the council refuses, applicant appeals have a low success rate.

Ref.	Proposal	Council	Appeal Type	ABP Outcome	Significance
24/60854	Ballyheigue Castle, 7 self-catering units	Granted	Third Party	Granted	ABP confirmed; heritage reuse principle endorsed at appeal level
22/268	Killarney Racecourse, 15 glamping units	Granted	Third Party	Granted	ABP endorsed largest granted glamping scheme; established venue as locational justification
23/919	Ownagarry, Killorglin — 4 pods	Granted	Third Party	Refused	ABP overturned council grant on appeal; applicant's permission removed. High-risk caution.
21/528	Dromatoor, Ballyheigue — 4 pods	Refused	Applicant	Refused	ABP confirmed refusal; applicant later succeeded on third revised submission at same site
24/60322	Ballinskelligs, 28.5ha tourism park	Refused	Applicant	Pending	Appeal lodged; outcome awaited. Scale remains fundamental barrier.

The Ownagarry, Killorglin case (Ref. 23/919) is a significant caution for the client. ABP overturned a council grant on third-party appeal. This demonstrates that even a successfully obtained planning permission is not necessarily secure until the appeal window has closed. Where local objections exist, a grant from the council should not be treated as final. Legal advice on the planning process and appeal strategy should be sought alongside the planning application.

07 Relevant Policy Framework

The Kerry County Development Plan 2022–2028 establishes a two-track approach to tourist accommodation that directly affects our client's proposal.

Short-term letting restrictions (Section 10.3.5.3): Objective KCDP 10-33 explicitly prohibits the change of use of residential properties to short-term letting in established residential areas, protecting the long-term housing supply. However, Objective KCDP 10-34 provides a counterbalancing pathway: it supports the change of use of derelict or vacant buildings to short-term letting where such buildings are not suitable for long-term residential accommodation. New-build glamping on agricultural land is not constrained by KCDP 10-33.

Landscape designations (Section 11.6.3.1): Visually Sensitive Areas are the outstanding landscapes throughout the county that are sensitive to alteration. Development within these designations must demonstrate no alternative location outside them, sympathetic design, and no adverse impact on landscape character, integrity, and distinctiveness. Much of the Iveragh Peninsula carries VSA designation. The precedent record confirms that Kerry's planners apply this objective rigorously and consistently.

Tourism development support (Section 10.3): The Development Plan positively supports tourism-related development, including glamping, camping pods, and caravan-type accommodation, where proposals are located within or adjacent to existing settlements, established tourism assets, or adjacent to a main farmyard complex on suitable sites at an appropriate scale. The client's proposal should be framed to maximise alignment with this positive objective.

Farm diversification (Section 6.5): The Development Plan supports farm diversification into agri-tourism, rural recreation, and tourism accommodation. Where the client's site is operated as an active farm or contains a main farmyard complex, this policy track provides an additional justification strand. Portmagee (Ref. 23/698), Coomdeeween (Ref. 21/1092), and Rathmore (Ref. 21/1228) all leveraged farm diversification policy to support their applications.

08 Risk Assessment for Client’s Proposal

Risk Factor	Level	Assessment & Mitigation
Landscape Sensitivity	HIGH	Much of the Iveragh Peninsula is designated Visually Sensitive. Site selection must avoid the most sensitive designations or demonstrate exceptional landscape mitigation. The Callahaniska, Glenbeigh refusal (Oct 2025) confirms that Kerry will refuse proposals that cannot overcome this ground. A Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment is essential on any VSA-adjacent site.
Road Access Standard	HIGH	Two recent refusals (Callahaniska, Oct 2025; Ardroe, Annascaul, Feb 2025) cited substandard road access as an independent refusal ground. The private access road serving the site must be assessed for width, surface condition, and sightlines. Inadequacy cannot be offset by wastewater or landscape compliance.
Wastewater Treatment	MEDIUM	Every successful rural glamping application specified a proprietary treatment system. Site Assessment Unit engagement and trial hole testing required. Name the system explicitly in the application (Tricel Novo + Sandcel polishing filter is the most frequently cited combination in Kerry grants). Connection to public sewer eliminates this risk.
Scale / Pod Count	LOW-MED	Schemes of 2–6 pods are routinely granted. The Sandy Feet Farm precedent shows 12 pods can be permitted where an existing farm tourism use provides locational justification. Recommend limiting the initial phase to 4–6 pods, with a phased approach.
Settlement / Tourism Proximity	MEDIUM	Council policy favours development within or adjacent to settlements or tourism assets. Isolated rural sites without connection to a village, town, or established farmyard are vulnerable to refusal. Proximity to the Ring of Kerry route or the Kerry Way strengthens the case significantly.
Ecology / Natura 2000	MEDIUM	Multiple SACs and SPAs on the Iveragh Peninsula (Killarney NP, Iveragh Peninsula SPA, Valencia Harbour SAC). AA Screening required as a minimum. A Natura Impact Statement may be necessary depending on proximity to European Sites and hydrological connections.
Third-Party Appeal	LOW-MED	The Ownagarry, Killorglin case shows that a council grant can be overturned by ABP on third-party appeal. Neighbour and community engagement prior to submission reduces this risk. Where local opposition is anticipated, a pre-application consultation with the council is advisable to identify and address concerns early.
Housing Supply Impact	LOW	Only relevant if converting an existing residential dwelling. KCDP 10-33 is a hard prohibition in residential zones. Not applicable to new-build glamping or the conversion of non-residential agricultural buildings. KCDP 10-34 actively supports conversion of derelict/vacant non-residential structures.

09 Recommendations

Based on the precedent analysis and policy framework assessment, we make the following recommendations for the client’s proposed development:

01 Site Selection. This is the most critical decision. Prioritise sites that sit outside Visually Sensitive landscape designations and are within 1–2km of an established village, tourism asset, or the Ring of Kerry/Kerry Way route. Avoid isolated upland or coastal sites without strong tourism or farm connectivity. Instruct a landscape architect to review VSA mapping before committing to a specific site.

02 Access Road Assessment. Commission an independent road and access assessment at the outset. The access road must meet minimum width and sightline standards. If the existing road is substandard, prepare a road upgrade scheme as part of the application. Do not proceed to submission without resolving this.

03 Scale. Limit the initial proposal to 4–6 glamping pods with a modest service building. This sits comfortably within the envelope of routinely granted applications. A phased approach, with potential expansion in a subsequent permission, is prudent. Where the site contains or is adjacent to an existing farm operation, a case for 8–12 pods may be viable on the Sandy Feet Farm model.

04 Building Reuse. If the site contains existing agricultural buildings, incorporate their conversion into the proposal. The Derra (Ref. 12/812) and Ballyheigue Castle (Ref. 24/60854) precedents demonstrate strong Council support for the adaptive reuse of vacant and derelict structures, consistent with Objective KCDP 10-34.

05 Wastewater. Engage the Site Assessment Unit at the earliest stage. Conduct trial hole testing and specify a named treatment system — the Tricel Novo unit with a Tricel Sandcel polishing filter is the most frequently cited combination in Kerry glamping grants. Where public sewer connection is feasible within reasonable cost, this eliminates a significant risk factor.

06 Ecological Assessment. Prepare an AA Screening Report as a minimum. Given the ecological sensitivity of the Iveragh Peninsula, a precautionary approach is warranted. If the site is within the hydrological catchment of any European Site, prepare a full Natura Impact Statement ahead of submission.

07 Pre-Application Consultation. Request a pre-application meeting with Kerry County Council's planning department. The Callahaniska refusal demonstrates the cost of proceeding to a full application without resolving landscape and access concerns. A pre-application discussion allows the applicant to test the Council's attitude to the specific site and proposal before investing in a full application package.

08 Neighbour and Community Engagement. Given the Ownagarry precedent (council grant overturned by ABP on third-party appeal), early engagement with adjacent landowners and local residents is recommended. An informal letter to neighbours explaining the proposal before submission can reduce the risk of a third-party appeal substantially.

10 Conclusion

The precedent evidence supports the viability of a small-scale glamping or self-catering tourist accommodation development on the Iveragh Peninsula, provided the site and proposal are appropriately calibrated to the receiving environment.

Kerry County Council has granted permission for glamping pods at Garranearagh/Cahersiveen, Portmagee, Kilgarvan, Kells, Rossbeigh/Glenbeigh, Rathmore, Kenmare, Tonavane/Tralee, and multiple other locations across the county — all within the broader tourism corridor. Sandy Feet Farm demonstrates that schemes up to 12 pods are achievable where an existing tourism or farm use provides the locational justification. The Killarney Racecourse scheme at 15 units, confirmed by ABP on appeal, sets the upper limit for what is currently achievable.

Conversely, the refusal pattern is equally clear and has been applied with consistency through to 2025. Proposals in Visually Sensitive landscapes without exceptional justification, proposals that depend on substandard road access, proposals that remove residential housing stock, and proposals of excessive scale in sensitive environments will be refused. The 2025 Callahaniska refusal demonstrates that Kerry's planners apply these controls rigorously even on small-scale schemes where the landscape and access grounds are present.

The most important risk factors for the client's specific proposal are landscape sensitivity and road access standards — both of which must be assessed and resolved before any application is prepared. Where those site constraints can be satisfied, the precedent record strongly supports a proposal of 4–6 pods with an appropriate wastewater treatment system and a clear connection to the Iveragh tourism corridor.

Our assessment is that the proposed development is viable, subject to careful site selection and the preparation of a robust application addressing the risk factors identified in Section 8. We recommend proceeding to site access assessment, VSA mapping review, and pre-application consultation with Kerry County Council.

Disclaimer

This report is prepared for the sole use of the named client and should not be relied upon by any third party. Planning outcomes are subject to the discretion of the relevant planning authority and An Bord Pleanála. The precedent analysis reflects applications identified at the date of preparation and does not constitute a guarantee of any particular outcome.

Data Source: All planning application data sourced from Archa Planning Intelligence (archa.ie). Application references, decisions, and document extracts verified against Kerry County Council's planning register.