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PRECEDENT REPORT

# Tourist Accommodation & Glamping Development

Iveragh Peninsula, Co. Kerry

PREPARED FOR

Wild Atlantic Glamping Ltd.

PREPARED BY

[Planning Consultancy Name]

DATE

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REFERENCE

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Irish planning data across 31 local authorities · archa.ie

## 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 comparable planning applications across Kerry County Council, examining grant patterns, refusal grounds, and the policy framework governing tourist accommodation in rural areas.

**75** glamping and camping pod applications and **52** tourist accommodation change-of-use applications were identified in Co. Kerry. Kerry County Council is broadly supportive of small-scale tourist accommodation in appropriate rural settings, but applies strict controls relating to landscape sensitivity, wastewater treatment, settlement proximity, and the protection of existing residential housing stock.

The critical success factors are site selection within or adjacent to an existing settlement or established tourism asset, robust wastewater treatment proposals, and sensitivity to Kerry's Visually Sensitive landscape designations. Projects that fail on any of these grounds face refusal, and several recent examples confirm this pattern.

## 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's 2024 planning activity (**1,496 applications** received, of which **146** were classified as commercial development).
- 2 Keyword search across all Kerry applications for *tourist accommodation*, *holiday accommodation*, *glamping*, and *camping pods*, identifying **127 relevant applications**.
- 3 Detailed review of application proposals, decision outcomes, and appeal histories for all identified applications.
- 4 Full-text search and extraction of Planner's Reports and decision documents to identify specific refusal grounds, conditions of permission, and policy citations.
- 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).

## 03 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.

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
23/698	Portmagee	5 glamping pods, PV panels, farm access upgrade, wastewater system	09/02/2024	GRANTED	Adjacent to tourism asset; farm diversification
24/61003	Coologes, Kilgarvan	2 glamping pods, wastewater treatment, entrance upgrade	23/07/2025	GRANTED	Small scale; appropriate rural setting
13/356	Kells, Cahersiveen	3 camping pods, parking, wastewater system	27/08/2013	GRANTED	Modest scale; Ring of Kerry tourism corridor
12/812	Derra, Asdee	Change of use: dwelling & farm building to holiday accommodation	22/04/2013	GRANTED	Reuse of existing buildings; new wastewater system
24/60854	Ballyheigue Castle	7 self-catering units in vacant structures within Protected Structure curtilage	26/03/2025	GRANTED	Reuse of derelict buildings; public sewer connection
25/60704	Callahaniska, Glenbeigh	8 glamping pods, reception, astronomy observatory, wastewater system	08/10/2025	REFUSED	Visually Sensitive zone; Killarney NP buffer; remote from settlement
22/1016	Westcourt, Tralee	Change of use: dwelling to Airbnb accommodation	18/11/2022	REFUSED	Residential zone; KCDP 10-33 prohibition; housing supply
24/60322	Ballinskelligs	28.5ha tourism park: hotel, 144 mobile homes, 21 glamping pods, leisure complex	02/07/2025	REFUSED	Excessive scale; Visually Sensitive; environmental concerns; under appeal

Source: Archa Planning Intelligence — Kerry County Council planning register, accessed February 2026.

## 04 Analysis of Decision Patterns

### 4.1 What Gets Granted

The successful applications share several consistent characteristics. Small-scale glamping developments of 2–6 pods are routinely granted permission in Kerry, provided they satisfy core planning requirements. The Garranearagh scheme near Cahersiveen is instructive: six pods with a service building and PV panels, granted in May 2025 with conditions relating to wastewater, access, and landscaping.

The conversion of existing agricultural or derelict buildings to tourist accommodation also has strong precedent. The Derra, Asdee application demonstrates that a dwelling and farm building can be successfully converted to holiday letting where the applicant provides a new wastewater treatment system and the site is in an appropriate rural location.

Perhaps the most significant precedent is the Ballyheigue Castle scheme, where Kerry County Council granted permission for 7 self-catering apartments within the curtilage of a Protected Structure and Recorded Monument. The conversion of vacant and derelict outbuildings to tourist accommodation was considered consistent with the conservation and appropriate reuse of heritage assets.

The common thread across all granted applications is **proportionality**: modest scale, reuse of existing structures or brownfield elements where possible, adequate wastewater treatment, and a location that is either within or visibly connected to an established settlement or tourism asset.

## 4.2 What Gets Refused — And Why

The refusal pattern is equally instructive and reveals three distinct grounds on which Kerry County Council consistently refuses tourist accommodation.

**Ground 1: Residential Zone Protection.** The Westcourt, Tralee Airbnb refusal is unequivocal. The Planner's Report directly cited Objective KCDP 10-33, which prohibits the change of use of residential properties to short-term letting in established residential areas. The planner concluded that the proposal would withdraw housing from the long-term rental supply, cause noise and disturbance to neighbours, and set an undesirable precedent.

**Ground 2: Landscape Sensitivity.** The Callahaniska glamping refusal (8 pods near Glenbeigh) was driven by the site's location within a Visually Sensitive landscape area adjacent to the Killarney National Park, MacGillycuddy Reeks & Caragh River Catchment Area. The Environmental Assessment Unit recommended refusal, 17 objection letters were received, and the planner concluded that the road infrastructure was inadequate and the development would interfere with the character of the landscape.

**Ground 3: Excessive Scale and Remoteness.** The 28.5-hectare Ballinskelligs tourism park — comprising a hotel, 144 mobile homes, 21 glamping pods, and a leisure complex — was refused despite the applicant submitting a full Environmental Impact Assessment Report. The scale was fundamentally at odds with the receiving environment. This application is currently under appeal to An Bord Pleanála.

## 05 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. 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.

**Landscape designations (Section 11.6.3.1):** Visually Sensitive landscape areas comprise the outstanding landscapes throughout the county that are sensitive to alteration. Development proposals within these areas must demonstrate that there is no alternative location outside the designation, that the proposal is designed sympathetically to the landscape, and that it will not have an adverse impact on the character, integrity, and distinctiveness of the area.

**Tourism policy support:** The Development Plan supports tourism-related development, including glamping, camping pods, and caravan-type accommodation, where such 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.

## 06 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. If unavoidable, a Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment is essential. The Callahaniska refusal demonstrates that the Council will refuse where landscape concerns are not addressed.
Wastewater Treatment	MEDIUM	Every successful rural glamping application included a specified treatment system (typically mechanical aeration + polishing filter). Site suitability assessment and trial holes required. Connection to public sewer eliminates this risk entirely.
Scale / Density	LOW-MED	Schemes of 2–6 pods are routinely granted. Above 6 pods, risk increases. The Ballinskelligs refusal shows that large-scale proposals face significant resistance. Recommend limiting initial phase to 4–6 pods.
Settlement Proximity	MEDIUM	Council policy favours development within or adjacent to settlements or tourism assets. Isolated rural sites without connection to a village, town, or farmyard complex are vulnerable to refusal. The Portmagee and Cahersiveen grants both had clear links to existing tourism infrastructure.
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 conversion of non-residential agricultural buildings. KCDP 10-34 actively supports conversion of derelict/vacant buildings.
Ecology / Natura 2000	MEDIUM	Multiple SACs and SPAs on the Iveragh Peninsula (Killarney NP, Iveragh Peninsula SPA, Valencia Harbour SAC). AA Screening will be required. A Natura Impact Statement may be needed depending on proximity and hydrological connections.

## 07 Recommendations

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

- 01 Site Selection.** Prioritise sites within 1–2km of an established village or tourism asset on the Iveragh Peninsula. Proximity to the Ring of Kerry route, the Kerry Way, or an established attraction significantly strengthens the case. Avoid sites within Visually Sensitive designations where possible; where unavoidable, commission a Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment at the outset.
- 02 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 for later expansion, is prudent.
- 03 Building Reuse.** If the site contains existing agricultural buildings, incorporate their conversion into the proposal. The Derra and Ballyheigue precedents demonstrate strong Council support for the adaptive reuse of vacant and derelict structures for tourism purposes, consistent with Objective KCDP 10-34.

- 04 Wastewater.** Engage the Site Assessment Unit early. Conduct trial hole testing and specify a named treatment system (e.g., Tricel Novo + Sandcel polishing filter, as used in recent Kerry applications). Where public sewer connection is feasible, this eliminates a significant risk factor.
- 05 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.
- 06 Pre-Application Consultation.** Request a pre-application meeting with Kerry County Council's planning department. The Callahaniska refusal demonstrates that early engagement on landscape and environmental issues can prevent costly refusals. A pre-application discussion allows the applicant to test the Council's attitude to the specific site before investing in a full application.

## 08 Conclusion

The precedent evidence strongly 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 granted permission for glamping pods at Cahersiveen, Portmagee, Kilgarvan, and Kells — all within the broader Iveragh/South Kerry tourism corridor. Conversions of agricultural buildings and derelict structures to holiday accommodation have been granted at Asdee and Ballyheigue. The common denominator is modest scale, adequate infrastructure, and respect for landscape character.

Conversely, the refusal pattern is equally clear. Proposals in Visually Sensitive landscapes without adequate justification, proposals that remove residential housing stock, and proposals of excessive scale in sensitive environments will be refused. The Callahaniska and Westcourt refusals demonstrate that Kerry's planners apply these controls rigorously.

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 6. We recommend proceeding to detailed site assessment 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.