

P L A N N I N G R I S K A S S E S S M E N T

Land at Upper Road, Greenisland

Upper Road, Greenisland
Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
BT38 8 / Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland

REPORT DATE	LPA	SITE AREA	OVERALL RISK
May 2026	Mid and East Antrim	Approx. 0.22 ha	Medium-High

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Site is plannable — but NI Water infrastructure is the critical constraint that must be resolved before any application is lodged.

The site sits within the defined settlement limit of Greenisland as established by the Carrickfergus Area Plan 2001 and is zoned for residential use. In principle, the planning policy position is supportive of residential development at this location. However, Greenisland Wastewater Treatment Works is confirmed by NI Water as operating at capacity, and negative planning responses are currently being issued across this catchment. This is the single most significant risk and must be actively managed through NI Water's Pre-Development Enquiry process before any formal application is prepared. Secondary risks relate to DfI Roads access standards, design quality requirements under PPS7, and the proximity of residential properties requiring careful amenity analysis.

RISK SUMMARY	
SETTLEMENT LIMIT	Low
NI WATER / SEWERAGE	High
ACCESS / ROADS	Medium
DESIGN / PPS7	Medium
NEIGHBOUR AMENITY	Medium
LISTED BUILDINGS	Low
FLOOD RISK	Low
ECOLOGY / TREES	Low
COMMUNITY TITLE	Low
DEVELOPER CONTRIB.	Low
OVERALL	Medium-High

SITE CONTEXT

Residential infill site on Upper Road, Greenisland. Predominantly back-land / rear garden configuration with access via Upper Road. Surrounded by established two-storey residential. Approximate site area 0.22ha. Adjacent properties are largely detached and semi-detached dwellings typical of the Greenisland Upper Road character area.

RECOMMENDED ROUTE

Full Planning Application under the Planning Act (NI) 2011 — but only following a positive NI Water Pre-Development Enquiry (PDE) response. A Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) with MEABC planning officers is strongly advised given the NI Water constraint and access sensitivities. Do not lodge a formal application before the PDE is resolved.

KEY FINDINGS

NI Water — Critical:

Greenisland WwTW is confirmed at capacity. NI Water are issuing negative planning responses across this catchment. A PDE must be submitted first. Resolution may require a developer-funded wastewater impact assessment and agreed mitigation solution.

Policy Position — Supportive:

Site falls within the Greenisland settlement limit under the CAP 2001. Residential development is the expected land use. No fundamental policy objection to housing at this location.

Access — Resolvable:

Upper Road access will require DfI Roads assessment. Precedent from nearby approvals (including 8 units at Upper Road deferred 2024) suggests access via private laneway is contested. Early Roads pre-consultation advised.

Design Quality — Manageable:

PPS7 QD1 requires development to respect local character. The established pattern — detached and semi-detached dwellings at low to medium density — sets the design parameters. A well-considered scheme at an appropriate scale is readily achievable.

Developer Contributions — None expected:

Northern Ireland has no equivalent of English CIL or mandatory S106 for small residential schemes. A Section 76 agreement may be required if the scheme exceeds the affordable housing threshold, but at this scale this is unlikely to be material.

Carrickfergus Area Plan 2001 (CAP 2001)

Settlement Limit — Greenisland

The CAP 2001 remains the statutory area plan for the Carrickfergus area following the quashing of BMAP 2015 by the Court of Appeal in May 2017. The site at Upper Road falls within the defined settlement limit of Greenisland as established by the CAP. Within the settlement limit, the plan does not resist residential development where it is compatible with local character, subject to design quality and infrastructure capacity. The site does not carry any specific zoning designation (e.g. open space, conservation area) that would restrict housing.

→ The CAP 2001 position is supportive. The site is within the settlement limit and the plan's presumption is in favour of development that respects local character.

Draft BMAP 2004

Material Consideration — Greenisland Residential Context

Draft BMAP 2004 remains a material consideration in the determination of planning applications within the MEABC area. The draft plan broadly affirms the settlement hierarchy and housing policies applicable to Greenisland. It does not introduce designations or zonings that would conflict with residential development at this location.

→ Draft BMAP 2004 does not introduce any material constraint. The CAP 2001 takes precedence as the statutory plan.

SPPS 2015 — Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland

Housing in Settlements / Sustainable Development

The SPPS 2015 is the primary operational planning policy for Northern Ireland, applying until such time as the MEABC Local Development Plan 2030 is adopted. The SPPS states that planning authorities should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For housing within existing settlements, the SPPS supports development which is compatible in scale, form and character with the established residential environment. The SPPS also requires that development proposals address infrastructure capacity including water and sewerage — which is the critical issue for this site.

→ SPPS 2015 is broadly supportive subject to infrastructure capacity resolution and design quality compliance.

PPS7 — Quality Residential Environments (2001) + Addendum (2010)

Policy QD1 — Design Quality in New Residential Development

PPS7 QD1 requires proposals for new residential development to demonstrate sensitivity to local character and residential amenity. For infill and back-land development, the Addendum is particularly relevant — it sets a clear test that development must not cause unacceptable harm to local character through inappropriate form, scale or density. The precedent of 8 units at Upper Road (deferred 2024) illustrates that MEABC applies these policies actively.

→ PPS7 compliance is achievable but requires a carefully considered scheme. A Design Concept Statement will be required with the application. Density should reflect the established local pattern.

PPS12 — Housing in Settlements

Housing Need and Sequential Approach

PPS12 provides the policy framework for housing within settlements, supporting development which meets identified housing need in sustainable locations. Greenisland is an established settlement within the Greater Belfast Metropolitan Area with good public transport links (rail).

→ PPS12 position is supportive. Greenisland's connectivity and established character support a housing case.

APP. REFERENCE	DATE	PROPOSAL	DECISION
LA05/2023/0481/F	2024	8no. four-bedroom dwellings to rear of 2-20 and 30-52 Upper Road. Access via private laneway.	Deferred — Site Visit
LA05/2022/1104/F	2023	22no. dwellings at former Rathmore Convent site, Station Road — 2 detached, 16 semi-detached, 4 apartments.	Under Consideration
V/2007/0060/0	2008	Demolish existing house and garage, erect 9no. apartments with parking. 111 Upper Road.	Approved
V/2005/0312/F	2006	Erection of 3no. detached dwellings on infill site, Upper Road.	Approved
V/2004/0189/0	2005	Outline for 2no. dwellings on land rear of Upper Road.	Approved

WHAT THE HISTORY SIGNALS

The planning history at Upper Road, Greenisland establishes a clear precedent for residential development on infill and back-land sites in this location. Multiple approvals over the past two decades confirm that MEABC and its predecessor Carrickfergus Borough Council have consistently granted permission for housing at this address, including at densities above the immediately surrounding pattern (9 apartments at 111 Upper Road).

The most directly relevant precedent is the recent application for 8 dwellings to the rear of 2-52 Upper Road (2024), which was deferred for a site visit rather than refused. The deferral was driven by objector concerns regarding NI Water's refusal to support the application, road safety on Upper Road, private laneway adoption, and bin collection access. Crucially, the principal planning officer's report did not recommend refusal on policy grounds — the concerns were infrastructure and amenity-based. This indicates the planning policy case for housing at Upper Road is well-established.

Key intelligence from the 2024 case: NI Water issued a negative response on capacity grounds. The planning officer confirmed no development can take place until sewerage issues are resolved. One affordable housing unit was recommended by the Housing Executive, but no housing association could be found to accept it — a material consideration but not a reason for refusal in itself. The developer argued there is no policy limit on the number of dwellings accessing a private laneway. These arguments remain live for any new application.

NI Water — Sewerage Capacity

High

Greenisland Wastewater Treatment Works is confirmed at capacity by NI Water. Capacity issues have also been identified in parts of the Greenisland sewer network. NI Water are issuing negative planning responses across this catchment and have done so explicitly in recent Upper Road applications. This is a NI-wide systemic issue stemming from chronic underfunding of NI Water's capital programme. However, NI Water's position is not an absolute block: developers can obtain a positive response by demonstrating a "no detriment solution" through a developer-funded Wastewater Impact Assessment (WIA), or by showing the development is like-for-like replacement of existing connected premises.

ACTION: Submit a Pre-Development Enquiry (PDE) to NI Water immediately. This is a free process. If the PDE returns a negative response, commission a Wastewater Impact Assessment. Do not lodge a planning application until a positive NI Water position is secured.

DfI Roads — Access and Road Safety

Medium

Upper Road is a classified road. DfI Roads will assess any new junction or access arrangements against current standards. The 2024 application raised concerns about road safety with 34 objections from neighbours. Access via a private laneway is a contested approach that DfI Roads may resist if the laneway does not meet adoptable standards.

ACTION: Engage DfI Roads at pre-application stage. Prepare a Transport Statement proportionate to scheme scale. Explore whether a direct junction onto Upper Road is achievable — this is preferable to a private laneway arrangement.

Design Quality and Residential Amenity — PPS7

Medium

PPS7 QD1 and the 2010 Addendum require development to be sensitive to local character. The established residential pattern consists predominantly of detached and semi-detached dwellings at relatively low density on generous plots. A scheme that significantly overdevelops the back-land area risks a QD1 objection and is likely to attract significant neighbour opposition.

ACTION: Design for quality over quantity. A scheme of 4–6 well-designed dwellings respecting local character will be far more deliverable than a maximised yield. Prepare a Design Concept Statement as required by PPS7 QD2.

Listed Buildings / Conservation Area

Low

No listed buildings have been identified in the immediate vicinity of the site. Greenisland does not contain a designated Conservation Area that would affect this location. The Historic Environment Division (HED) is unlikely to be a statutory consultee for a residential scheme at this location.

ACTION: No specific action required. Confirm via the NI planning portal that no listed buildings or scheduled monuments are within the site boundary prior to application.

Flood Risk and Drainage

Low

Upper Road, Greenisland is elevated above Belfast Lough and not within a known flood plain. The site is not identified in the DfI Rivers flood mapping as being within a flood risk zone. Surface water drainage will need to be addressed via SuDS in line with SPPS and DfI Rivers requirements — but this is standard practice and not a material constraint.

ACTION: Include a SuDS drainage strategy with the planning application. Confirm with DfI Rivers that the site is not within a designated flood risk zone as part of pre-application due diligence.

RECOMMENDED APPLICATION ROUTE

Full Planning Application — Planning Act (NI) 2011

Subject to positive NI Water PDE response

A Full Planning Application is the appropriate route. An Outline Application would add delay without material advantage. The application must not be lodged until NI Water has confirmed a positive PDE response. The PDE process is free and typically takes 8-10 weeks.

THREE-POINT STRATEGY

01

Resolve NI Water before anything else

Submit PDE to NI Water today. If the response is negative, commission a Wastewater Impact Assessment. Explore whether a like-for-like connection argument is available if any existing buildings on the site are already connected to the public sewer. This single action unlocks or blocks everything else.

02

Engage DfI Roads and MEABC early

Request a Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) with MEABC planning officers. This is a paid process but provides officer views on scheme approach, density, and design expectations before costs are committed. Simultaneously, submit a pre-consultation request to DfI Roads on access arrangements.

03

Design for deliverability

A scheme of 4-6 dwellings at a density and form consistent with the established Upper Road character is the most deliverable outcome. A Design Concept Statement is mandatory. Consider 2-storey detached or semi-detached forms matching the local grain.

PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSION — WHAT TO RAISE

When requesting a PAD with MEABC, the following issues should be tabled: (1) NI Water capacity status and the council's approach in constrained catchments. (2) Acceptable density and dwelling form for this character area. (3) Access — private laneway or new junction. (4) Parking. A positive PDE response and a positive PAD response on these four issues will significantly increase the chance of a successful planning application.

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INDICATIVE PROGRAMME

Wks 1-2	Submit NI Water PDE. Request PAD with MEABC. Pre-consultation to DfI Roads.
Wks 2-10	Await PDE, PAD, and Roads responses. Commission Design Concept Statement if PDE is positive.
Wks 10-16	Prepare and lodge Full Planning Application with supporting documents.
Wks 16-30	MEABC statutory determination period (30 working days for local applications, extendable).
Total	Approximately 8-10 months from today, assuming PDE is resolved promptly.

REPORT DETAILS

REPORT REFERENCE

VBL-2026-001

STATUTORY PLAN

Carrickfergus Area Plan 2001; Draft BMAP 2004

REPORT TYPE

Report A — Planning Risk Assessment

POLICY FRAMEWORK

SPPS 2015; PPS7; PPS12; Planning Act (NI) 2011

SITE ADDRESS

Land at Upper Road, Greenisland, Co. Antrim, BT38

DATE OF ISSUE

May 2026

LPA

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

OVERALL RISK RATING

Medium-High — NI Water is the controlling constraint

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FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

One round of follow-up included within your fee.
Reply to this report by email.

REPORT B — UPGRADE

Upgrade to Report B for a full site capacity study
and indicative dwelling count. Fee: £1,250 (£500 uplift).