

**Parents Association for Lisheenkyle National School
Third party observation – SID Reference no. 324113**

Cashla Peaker Plant, Rathmorrissy, Athenry, Co. Galway



Parents Association of Lisheenkyle N.S.
Lisheenkyle
Oranmore
Galway
H91 YR20

Date: 24th April 2026

Contact: Catriona Eastwood, Chair of the association

SID Planning Reference: 324113

Dear Members of An Coimisiún Pleanála,

We are the Parents' Association of Lisheenkyle National School, Athenry. We represent the parents of more than 200 children — from three-year-olds in the preschool to thirteen-year-olds in sixth class — who spend their days in the classrooms, the yard, the school garden, and in Seomra na Coille, our outdoor woodland classroom in the trees behind the school. We are writing to formally object to the proposed Cashla Peaker Plant at Rathmorrissy, Athenry, Planning Reference PA07.324113.

We are not planners, lawyers, or environmental consultants. We are mothers and fathers. Every morning we bring our children to that school gate and every evening we collect them. The proposed plant will be 2.81 kilometres from that gate. It will burn gas and diesel and emit nitrogen oxides, particulate matter, and carbon monoxide — with no mitigation measures proposed for its operational emissions, as the applicant's own EIAR confirms (Volume 2, Chapter 8, Section 8.7.2) — for 25 years, until 2050. Many of our families live within the same corridor between the plant and the school, meaning our children will be exposed at home and at school throughout every day of their childhood, every school term, every year, for the entire duration of this development. Nobody from Bord Gáis Energy came to our school to tell us what was being planned 2.81 kilometres from where our children learn and play. We found out from a planning notice. This objection is what we have to say about that.

The applicant's EIAR report assessment states:

"Children and adolescents are considered to have a high sensitivity to air quality as they are particularly vulnerable to air pollution because their bodies, organs and immune systems are still developing."

That is a direct quote from the applicant's own document. Having made that acknowledgement, they assessed no school.

Air Quality and the Health of Our Children

The prevailing wind direction at the site is westerly and south-westerly, confirmed in the applicant's own meteorological data (EIAR Volume 2, Chapter 7, p.374). However, on any given day the wind can blow towards our school, emissions from the gas turbine stack — NO_x, PM_{2.5}, PM₁₀, and CO — will travel consistently toward where our children spend their days.

What concerns us most is not the steady-state emissions. It is the peaks. A peaker plant does not run continuously. It fires up suddenly when demand spikes on the grid — and during start-up and part-load operation, emissions are materially higher than during steady-state running. Our children could be in the yard at break time, in the garden, in Seomra na Coille, when a dispatch event begins. The EIAR does not assess these transient emission spikes for start-up of the development, for any school.

The science on children and air pollution is not contested. Children breathe faster than adults relative to body weight, meaning they inhale more pollutant per kilogram of body mass. Their lungs are still developing. Short-term exposure to elevated NO_x and PM_{2.5} is associated with reduced lung function, increased respiratory symptoms, and exacerbation of asthma. Long-term cumulative exposure during childhood — the kind that a development operating until 2050 would create for children who are three years old today — is associated with permanently impaired lung development and increased cardiovascular risk in later life. These are not theoretical risks. They are documented outcomes, acknowledged in the applicant's own EIAR through the EEA references cited at footnotes 54 and 55. They were acknowledged and then not assessed.

Many of our families live in the immediate area between the plant and the school. For those children, there will be no refuge. They will be exposed at breakfast. They will be exposed walking to school. They will be exposed in the classroom. They will be exposed at home in the evening. The cumulative lifetime dose of pollution for a child who starts in our preschool this September and finishes in sixth class in 2037 will be shaped entirely by the decision An Coimisiún Pleanála makes on this application.

The L3103 — A Road That Cannot Cope

We need An Coimisiún Pleanála to understand what the L3103 road is like. It is not a road with a hard shoulder, or a cycle lane, or a footpath, or a passing bay. It is a narrow rural road bordered by low stone walls and hedgerows, where two HGVs travelling in opposite directions must slow and ease past each other with care. There is no margin for error. There is no room for mistakes.

This is the road that many of our families use every morning to bring their children to school. Families travelling from Athenry town to Lisheenkyle National School use the L3103 as their direct route. It is also the road on which the applicant proposes to construct the entrance to the Cashla Peaker Plant. School drop-off and the main industrial access point for a 334 MW power plant will share the same road at the same time.

The applicant's own EIAR (Volume 2, Table 10-2, p.483) confirms that up to 80 construction worker vehicles will arrive between 6:00 and 7:00 a.m., and that HGV earthworks vehicles will operate from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., generating 28 two-way HGV trips per hour at peak (EIAR Volume 2, Table 10-3, p.484). Our school day begins at 8:00 a.m. Morning club opens at 8.00a.m. Our school does not close until 3:30 p.m., with afterschool running until later. The HGV window runs directly through our school collection time.

EIAR Volume 2, p.504 — Applicant's own mitigation commitment

"Deliveries will be scheduled to avoid HGV traffic arriving during the morning peak hours and creating conflict with local residents' commute or school run."

The applicant knew the school run was a problem. They wrote it into their own mitigation. Scheduling around "the morning peak" does not remove the conflict with our 3:30 p.m. collection, our 8 a.m. morning club, or the 80 workers arriving on the same road our families use. And it does not change the fundamental nature of a road that cannot safely accommodate two HGVs passing each other in any direction at any time of day.

The families commute to Lisheenkyle National School uses the L3103 and Lisheenkyle East Road (L7108). The EIAR (Volume 2, Table 10-4) confirms that the L7108 will be fully closed for up to five months during cable installation. That is the road the our families travel twice daily. No assessment has been made of the impact of that closure on school transport arrangements.

Traffic will not simply slow down on this road when an HGV meets a school bus or a family car on the school run. It will stop. It will back up. It will create exactly the kind of dangerous, pressurised situation on a narrow road with no margin that leads to accidents. This is not a risk that can be mitigated by scheduling windows.

It is a road that is fundamentally unsuitable for this level of traffic.

Eighteen Months of Construction on Our Doorstep

The construction programme is expected to last approximately 18 months (EIAR Volume 2, Chapter 10, p.482). During that period, our children will attend school 2.81 kilometres from active excavation, rock breaking, heavy plant operation, concrete battering, and HGV movements. Construction noise at 87 dB at 10 metres from cable works is confirmed in the EIAR (Volume 2, p.282). The L7108 and L7109—Lisheenkyle East Road, which our school families use — will be fully closed for up to five months.

No construction noise assessment has been conducted at our school. No vibration assessment has been conducted at our school. No air quality assessment for construction dust and diesel exhaust has been

conducted at our school. The applicant acknowledged our school exists as a community asset whose access could be disrupted (EIAR Volume 2, Chapter 4, p.192). Having acknowledged it, they assessed none of these impacts.

Groundwater, Karst, and the Safety of Our Environment

Our school, our homes, and the farms around us sit on karst limestone — the same Rkc conduit aquifer that underlies the proposed plant site. The applicant's own EIAR (Volume 2, p.572) describes this groundwater system using the Geological Survey Ireland's own words:

EIAR Volume 2, p.572 — GSI description of Clarinbridge Groundwater Body

“Rapid groundwater flow velocities have been recorded through groundwater tracing” and “Groundwater storage in karstified bedrock is low and the potential for contaminant attenuation in such aquifers is limited.”

Attenuation means the ground's natural ability to filter and slow down pollution. In this system, that ability is limited. The proposed development involves 6,670 cubic metres of diesel storage (EIAR Volume 2, p.700) above this aquifer. If a spill or leak enters this karst system, it will not filter slowly through deep soil. It will travel fast, through underground channels that cannot be tracked from the surface, to places nobody can predict. It can emerge in wells, in springs, in the groundwater that flows beneath our school and our families' homes. No dye tracing from the development site to local water sources has been carried out. This is not a minor technical gap. It means nobody can say with certainty where contamination would go if it entered this system.

Fire, Explosion, and Our Children's Safety

The proposed development is a lower-tier COMAH establishment involving natural gas under pressure and 6,670 cubic metres of diesel storage. The EIAR (Volume 2, Chapter 15) identifies credible major accident scenarios including vapour cloud events, jet fires, and fireballs. Our school is 2.81 kilometres from the proposed plant. In the event of a major incident, our children will be in classrooms and in the yard. The L3103 — the road emergency services would use to reach the plant — is the same road some of our families use for school drop-off and collection.

No emergency planning assessment has been conducted for Lisheenkyle National School. No evacuation assessment, no public information protocol, and no emergency communication arrangement for the school has been included in the application. We do not know what we would be told or when. We do not know what our children's teachers would be instructed to do. This is not an acceptable gap when the development in question is a COMAH facility 2.81 kilometres from a school of 200 children.

What We Are Asking For

We formally object to the grant of planning permission for the proposed Cashla Peaker Plant, Planning Reference PA07.324113, and we ask An Coimisiún Pleanála to refuse this application.

If An Coimisiún Pleanála still wish to consider permission, we ask that no determination issue until:

- A full air quality assessment is conducted with discrete AERMOD receptors placed at Lisheenkyle National School, using the correct breathing height for children aged 3 to 13, for all construction and operational phases including start-up and part-load transient emissions
- Lisheenkyle National School is added to the noise sensitive location register and a site-specific noise assessment is conducted in accordance with EPA Guidance Note NG4
- A specific road safety audit of the L3103, L7108 and L7109 is conducted addressing the interaction between the proposed site access junction, school traffic, and family vehicles during morning drop-off (8 a.m.) and afternoon collection (2.30-3:30 p.m.) periods, across the full 18-month construction programme
- A specific assessment is made of the impact of the L7108 and L7109, five-month closure on school transport arrangements and family access to the school
- A site-specific emergency planning assessment is conducted for Lisheenkyle National School covering major accident scenarios, evacuation procedures, and communication protocols
- A completed hydrogeological assessment including dye tracing is provided before permission is granted, not as a post-permission condition

Our children did not get a say in whether this plant is built beside their school. We are their parents. This is our say. We are asking An Coimisiún Pleanála to protect them. We respectfully ask you to refuse this application.

Yours sincerely,



Catriona Eastwood
Chair of Association

Lisheenkyle N.S. Parents' Association • 24th April 2026

Location of our school to the proposed development

