

OBSERVATION/SUBMISSION TO PLANNING APPLICATION

Case Reference: 324162

Sharon Mitchell

Moorpark

Athenry

Galway

H65 D653

To: An Coimisiún Pleanála

64 Marlborough Street

Dublin 1

D01 V902

Date: 22 May 2026

Re: Observation to the proposed development of a 220kV substation, telecommunications mast and underground electricity cable infrastructure with associated works.

Location: Rathmorrissey, Pollnagroagh, Moanbaun, Castletambert, Knocknacreeva, Caraunduff, Caherbriskaun, Lisheenkyle East, Barrettspark and Cashla (Townlands), Athenry, Co. Galway

Applicant: Bord Gáis Energy Limited

Dear Sir/Madam,

I live in what has always been a quiet rural area, where I have raised my three children. They attend local schools, are actively involved in sports and community activities, and regularly cycle to meet friends and take part in local activities.

Our daily lives depend heavily on the local road network, particularly the L3103 and surrounding roads. My son plays golf at Athenry Golf Club, which is located along the proposed grid route associated with the wider peaker plant development. My children also travel by school bus along the L3103 into Athenry each day.

As a parent, I regularly use these roads for school runs, medical appointments, after-school activities, shopping, access to the M6, and essential local public services. These are important everyday routes for families, schoolchildren, cyclists, sports clubs, and the wider community.

The prospect of road excavation works, construction traffic, stop-and-go traffic systems, noise, vibration, and disruption associated with the proposed peaker plant and grid connection works is deeply concerning.

Increased heavy vehicle movements on roads used daily by school buses, cyclists, and families will inevitably create additional safety risks and significant disruption.

Our community has already experienced the impact of major infrastructure through the motorway. Residents should not now be expected to absorb further industrialisation and traffic impacts that threaten the safety, wellbeing, and rural character of the area we chose to call home.

Having reviewed the application documentation, I have outlined my concerns regarding the proposed development

Emissions Impact on Residents and Vulnerable Groups

Although this application relates to the proposed substation and mast, both form part of infrastructure required for the wider Cashla Peaker Project and the operation of the proposed gas-fired peaker plant. I am concerned about the potential impact of emissions associated with the overall development on local air quality and public health, particularly for nearby residents, children, older people and individuals with respiratory conditions.

Cumulative Construction Impact on Health and Wellbeing

I believe insufficient information has been provided regarding the cumulative impact of construction activity, heavy traffic movements, excavation works, noise and prolonged disruption on the health, wellbeing and quality of life of residents living close to the proposed infrastructure works.

Unsuitable Rural Location

I believe the proposed substation and mast are not suitable for this rural location. The development would introduce permanent industrial-scale infrastructure, including a 220kV substation, security fencing, lighting and telecommunications equipment, into an area characterised by homes, farms and open countryside.

Pressure for Further Expansion Near Homes and Communities

I am also concerned that approval of this development could create pressure for further expansion and additional energy infrastructure within the area over time. In my opinion, this type of industrial infrastructure is not appropriate so close to homes, farms, schools and established rural communities.

Disruption to Rural and Residential Communities Along Route

The proposed 8.1km underground cable route would pass through a number of established rural and residential communities, including Rathmorrissey, Castletambert, Knocknacreeva, Caherbriskaun, Lisheenkyle East and Cashla. These are active farming and residential areas with homes, schools, farms and local businesses located along narrow rural roads. I am concerned about the level of disruption the proposed works would cause to residents, farms, local roads and daily community life.

Prolonged Trenching, Road Closures and HGV Traffic

I believe insufficient consideration has been given to the impact prolonged trenching works, excavation, road occupation, traffic management systems and heavy construction traffic would have on narrow rural roads and the communities that rely on them daily. The application documentation confirms significant road closures,

stop/go traffic systems and substantial HGV movements during construction, which could result in serious disruption and ongoing inconvenience for local residents and road users.

Emergency Services and Limited Alternative Routes

I am concerned about the impact the proposed cable and construction works could have on emergency access and daily movement throughout the area. The affected rural roads are used daily by ambulances, emergency services, carers, school transport, farmers, local businesses and residents, and many of these roads have limited alternative access routes available.

Cumulative Impact on Community Access Routes

The roads affected by the proposed cable route are important community access routes serving homes, farms, schools and businesses across the wider Athenry area. In my view, the cumulative impact of prolonged construction activity, HGV traffic, road closures and disruption on daily community movement has not been adequately addressed within the application documentation.

Private Wells, Livestock Water and Agricultural Land

Many farms and rural homes in the area rely on private wells, groundwater supplies and established drainage networks. I am concerned that excavation, rock-breaking and underground cable installation works could interfere with wells, livestock drinking water supplies, drainage systems and agricultural land conditions during and after construction.

Habitats and Ecological Corridors for Wildlife

Hedgerows and roadside vegetation within the area provide important habitats and ecological corridors for birds, pollinators and local wildlife. I am concerned that prolonged construction activity and vegetation disturbance could negatively affect biodiversity and the ecological character of the surrounding rural landscape.

Students Travelling Daily Along Affected Roads

Many students and school staff from surrounding rural areas travel daily along these local roads to schools in Athenry by bus, car, bicycle and on foot. The road network already experiences significant traffic volumes during school drop-off, collection and commuter periods, particularly within this expanding rural residential area characterised by substantial ribbon development.

Additional Safety Risks for Young People and Vulnerable Road Users

Children and teenagers regularly use these roads to travel to school, sports training and other local activities. I am concerned that prolonged construction works, trenching activity, temporary road restrictions and increased heavy goods vehicle traffic associated with the proposed cable route would create additional safety risks for young people, cyclists, pedestrians and other vulnerable road users throughout the area.

Negative Effect on Residential Character and Quality of Life

The affected area forms part of a growing rural residential community within the wider Athenry area, where many families choose to live because of its rural character, agricultural setting and proximity to local towns, schools and employment centres. The area has experienced significant residential and commuter-related growth in recent years. I am concerned that the introduction of major energy infrastructure into this

established rural environment would negatively affect the residential character, visual amenity and overall attractiveness of the area as a place to live and raise families, while also impacting the enjoyment and quality of life of existing residents and property owners.

Facilitating Fossil Fuel Infrastructure Against Climate Policy

The proposed substation, mast and underground cable infrastructure are intended to support the operation of new gas-fired electricity generation infrastructure. I am concerned that the proposed development would facilitate long-term fossil fuel energy infrastructure at a time when national and EU climate policy requires significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and greater transition towards sustainable and lower-carbon energy systems.

Transparency and Aarhus Convention Obligations

Given the scale and long-term nature of the proposed infrastructure works, I believe a greater level of transparent community consultation and public engagement should have taken place before the application was submitted. In my view, the level of public consultation and access to clear and understandable information has been inadequate and raises concerns regarding the principles of transparency and public participation under the Aarhus Convention.

Likely Scale and Duration of Disruption Not Fully Reflected

I am concerned that the application does not fully reflect the likely scale, duration and intensity of disruption associated with prolonged construction works, trenching activity, traffic management systems, road restrictions, rock-breaking and associated infrastructure works across multiple rural communities. Given the nature of the local road network and surrounding residential areas, I believe the likely impact during the construction phase has been significantly underestimated.

Further Assessment Required and Precautionary Approach Needed

I believe further assessment is required regarding the long-term impact of the proposed infrastructure on rural amenity, groundwater protection, traffic safety, agricultural activity and future development within the area. I am also concerned that no detailed vibration assessment appears to have been carried out in relation to trenching works, rock-breaking, excavation activity or heavy construction traffic along the proposed cable route. Given the sensitive karst limestone geology within the area, vibrations may travel further and affect nearby homes, boundary walls, agricultural structures and local roads. I do not believe sufficient baseline studies, including structural surveys, road condition assessments, vibration monitoring proposals or mitigation measures, have been provided prior to works commencing. Given these uncertainties and the potential for lasting impacts on surrounding rural communities, I believe a precautionary approach should be applied in the assessment of this application.

Conclusion

I believe the proposed development is not suitable for this rural location and would contribute to the long-term industrialisation of the surrounding countryside. The likely impacts on homes, farms, schools, local roads, biodiversity and community life have not been fully addressed or adequately mitigated within the application documentation. For these reasons, I do not believe the proposal is consistent with proper planning and sustainable development, and I respectfully request that permission be refused.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Mitchell', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Name: Sharon Mitchell

Date: 22 May 2026