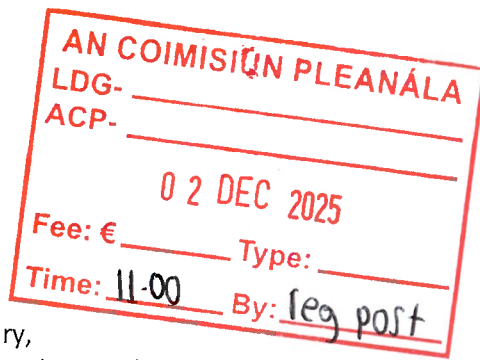




The Secretary,
An Coimisiun Pleanala (ACP)
64 Marlborough Street,
Dublin 2

GALWAY ROAD,
ROSCOMMON,
CO. ROSCOMMON.

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1st December 2025

Re: Roscommon County Council DED 724/An Coimisiun Pleanala Ref 320506-25;

Dear Sir/Madam

We refer to your letter dated 7/11/25 inviting the BoM Tarmon National School to comment on the section 5 referral referenced above. We Collins Boyd Engineers and Architects of Galway Road, Roscommon have been asked to formulate this response. The referral is quite extensive and deals with a myriad of issues, factors and actors many of which appear to have minimal if any relationship to the case in point. We do not propose to comment in detail on the relevancy or otherwise on the referral's content and we trust that ACP will be capable of distilling the question posed to what is relevant.

We would like to take this opportunity to ask the ACP to consider the following points which have not received mention in the referral to date

1. The common good is at the forefront of the planning acts and we would ask that the interests of pupils and other users of the school are given equal consideration to other parties many of whom are only obliquely if at all affected by the lights of the school.
2. The lights on the school are permitted development. This was implicit by virtue of permissions granted for the development of the school over the last 20 years. There were five permissions granted in that time frame and references were consistently made to connections to services and associated site works in the orders made. The erection of lights in/on buildings is a universal feature of the vast majority of buildings in the country and are accepted as an integral part of normal development. We would ask that ACP to consider that the lighting on the school falls into this category and that a section 5 referral is not used as a weapon to undermine and frustrate permitted development.
3. The provision of lighting in and around a development in this case the school and its attendant grounds is a pre-requisite to ensure that the development can function in a safe manner and is fit for purpose. In granting fire safety certificates the fire authority assumes that the development is designed in conformity with the building regulations. The design of an adequate lighting system is taken as a given in terms of conformity. The planning system unless it is explicitly stated to the contrary accepts that buildings have 24 hour use and this obviously cannot happen without lighting. In this instance we ask that the ACP consider that the provision of lighting would fall into Class 41(e) of the planning and development regulations.

4. The actual level of light is not exceptional. The use of the lighting is infrequent and sporadic, the attached schedule is typical of use outside of normal school hours. The BoM have been put in a very difficult position arising from this referral and on the one hand are reluctant to use the lights because of the threat of further legal action arising and on the other hand recognise the duty of care they have to ensuring the safety of workers, pupils and visitors to the school.
5. The impact from the lighting is miniscule in the context of lighting installations already extant in the area e.g. Castlerea prison and Castlerea Floodlit playing pitches. We would invite ACP to conduct a nocturnal site visit to fully appreciate the impacts referred to above. We will arrange to have the lights turned on so the inspector can assess the referral from a first-hand primary knowledge. The visual attachments in the referral document appear to us to present distorted images of the lighting due to the method of photography.

Conclusion

The provision of the building lighting should in this instance be considered as exempt/permitted development as to do otherwise would mean that that the vast majority of development in the country with external lighting would theoretically find themselves categorised as un-authorised development. This could have significant un-intended consequences and leave building owners and operators in an impossible position. We would also ask that the ACP expedite consideration of this referral in order that the school can operate safely.

Yours faithfully,



Eamon Collins BE CEng MIEI,

Encl: Additional Submission Letter by School



**Tarmon
Castlerea
Co. Roscommon
F45K298**

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Email: office@tarmonns.ie
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28th November 2025

To Whom it Concerns,

On behalf of the Board of Management of Tarmon NS, I wish to present the following information for the Board's consideration in relation to the continued and notable success of Tarmon National School:

- Tarmon National School was established under the Education Act of 1831 and has operated in its current location for well over a century. The school has evolved and developed in line with Department of Education policy and the needs of its surrounding community. The School is a fully funded and supported by the Department of Education.
- The School is monitored by the Department of Education and consistently receives very favourable reports. The School has a reputation for excellence and this is reflected in the ongoing strong community support and a proven record of providing high-quality education to generations of pupils.
- The School enjoys excellent relations with its surrounding community and this is reflected in the School enrolments and in the very generous support the school receives in fundraising activities.

Enrolment currently stands at 276 pupils, reflecting the trust families place in the school. The School strives to meet the ever-changing demands being placed upon it through changing Government policy and an evolving student profile. The School now caters for a very diverse student population drawn from many ethnic backgrounds and to students with particular special development needs. A case in point is the school's reputation for meeting the needs of pupils with autism. The School has 5 Autism classes providing much need special class places for children with additional needs in the surrounding community

- Over many decades, the Board of Management has developed the physical infrastructure of the School and its environments to better respond to its student needs and to reflect developments in learning pedagogy. These developments extend to internal and external facilities.
- The school in all its activities must be mindful of the health and safety needs of its students, staff and the public.
- External lights are not used on weekends and are generally not in use after 3:30 p.m. on school days, except when required for safety.

- The school year consists of 182 in-school days, and the vast majority of these days do not involve evening lighting or the use of external wall lights in question.
- There are typically 10–15 after-hours meetings which take place each year. These meetings are essential to the operation of the School and include Board of Management meetings and Parent Association meetings etc. In the normal course of events these meetings do not extend beyond 10pm.
- During these occasions, car park and building lights are necessary for safe access and exit, in line with health and safety obligations.
- Due to the split-level nature of the building, adequate lighting is essential to prevent trips, falls, or accidents when people are moving around the grounds after dark.
- Lighting is used only, when necessary, for the shortest duration possible, and never for decorative or non-functional purposes.
- The school currently does not operate external lighting for security purposes and consequently the school is in darkness for night-time hours.

All in our school are focused on providing the best education possible for the children in our care. We aim to do this in solidarity and with the support of the whole community and our local environment.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Marie Baggott", written over a horizontal line.

Chairperson
Board of Management,
Tarmon NS