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Garryhinch Wind Farm

Pre-Application Consultation # 1

An Bord Pleanála

10th February 2023

The Applicant

Bord na Móna

- Bord na Móna Powergen Ltd is a subsidiary of Bord na Móna plc. Bord na Móna is fully focused on renewable energy generation, recycling, the development of new low carbon enterprises alongside peatlands restoration. The company is committed to become a leader in renewable energy generation in Ireland by 2030.



- FT is an Irish civil and environmental engineering, scientific and planning consultancy. FT is one of Ireland's foremost consultancies in energy development, having been involved in the industry since the late 1990s.



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Outline of Presentation

- Outline of the Proposed Development
- Rationale & Policy Context
- Existing Environment & Constraints
- Project Milestones & Consultation



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PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

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The Proposed Development

- The project will consist 10 wind turbines with a tip height of 220m and a potential power rating of between 5.0 MW to 7.6 MW.
- The development will also consist of new tracks and upgrade to existing tracks along with ancillary civil and electrical infrastructure. Tracks previously used for the extraction of peat will be utilised and incorporated into the design where possible.
- The Turbine Delivery Route (TDR) will likely approach the development from the M6 and onto the N52.

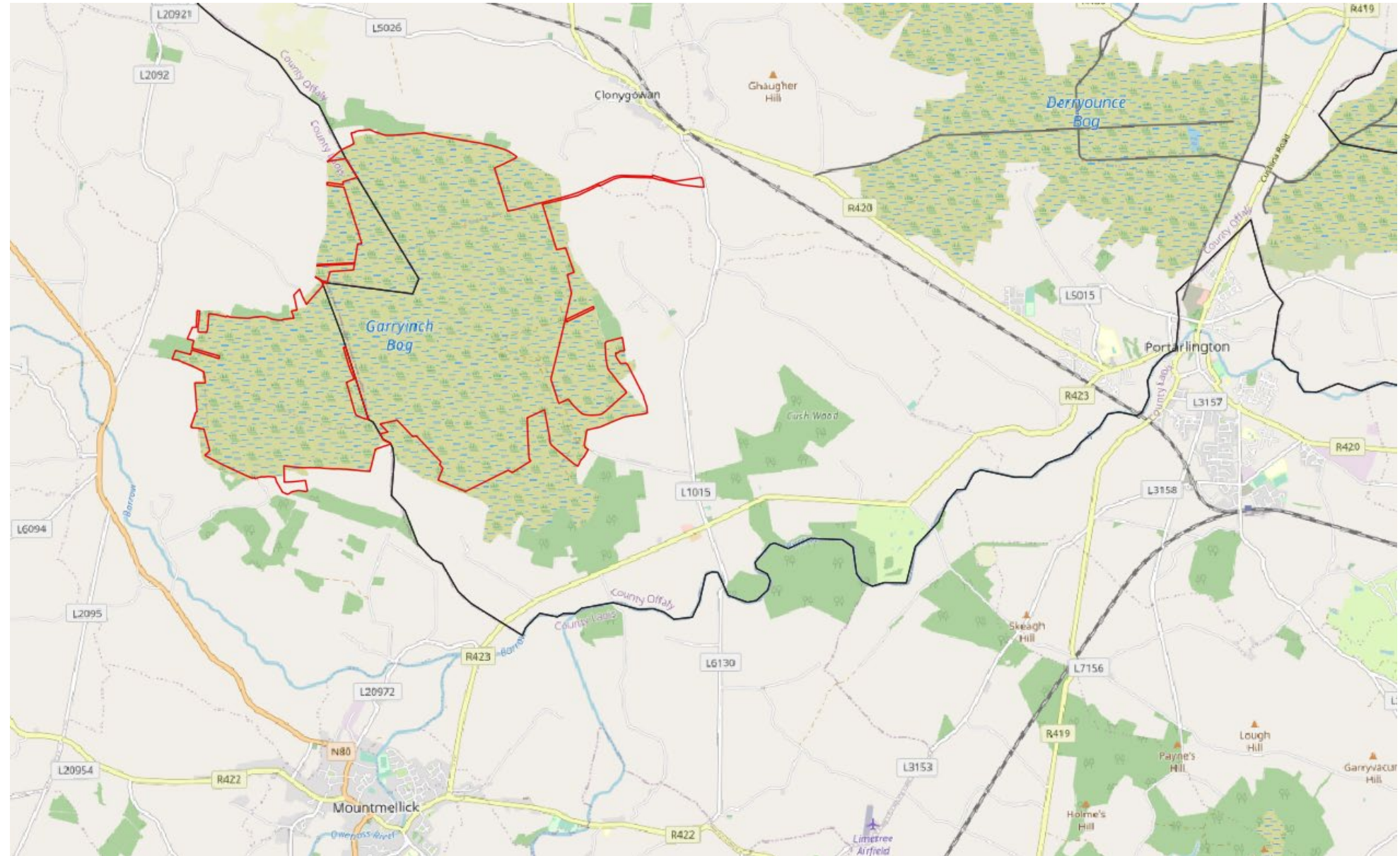


Site Location

The proposed development will be located on two bogs which straddle the Offaly and Laois border namely Garryinch and Garrymore Bogs.

Proximate settlements:

- c. 6.4km west of Portarlinton,
- c. 3.7km north of Mountmellick
- c. 1.5km southwest of Clonygowan



Turbine Array Layout

10 turbines. Have gone through various array layouts which have been feasibility and constraints assessed.

Distance between **turbines** and existing dwellings indicated:

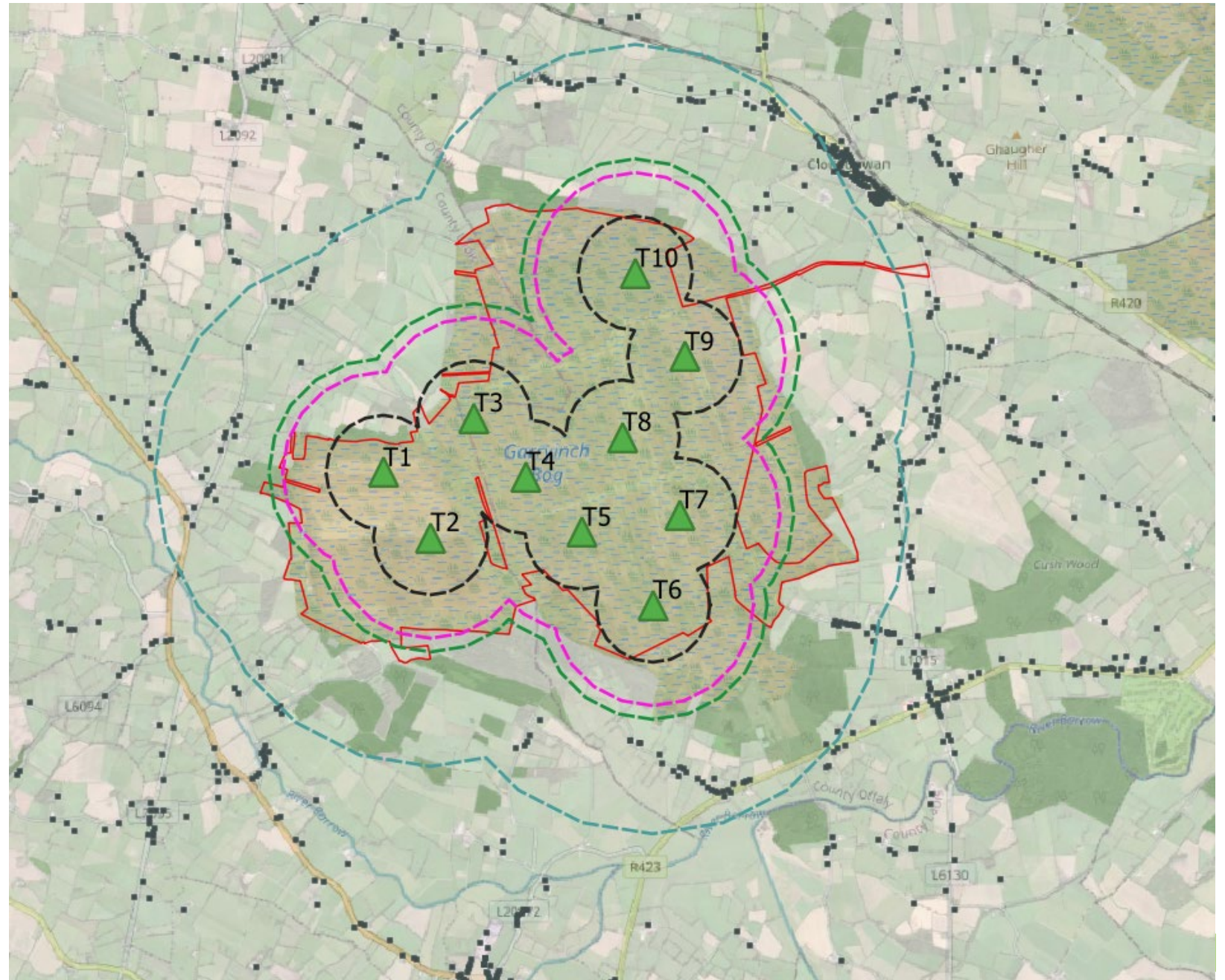
- Zero dwellings within 1km.
- C. 160 dwellings within 2km

Project will achieve minimum setback of 4 times tip height (880m).



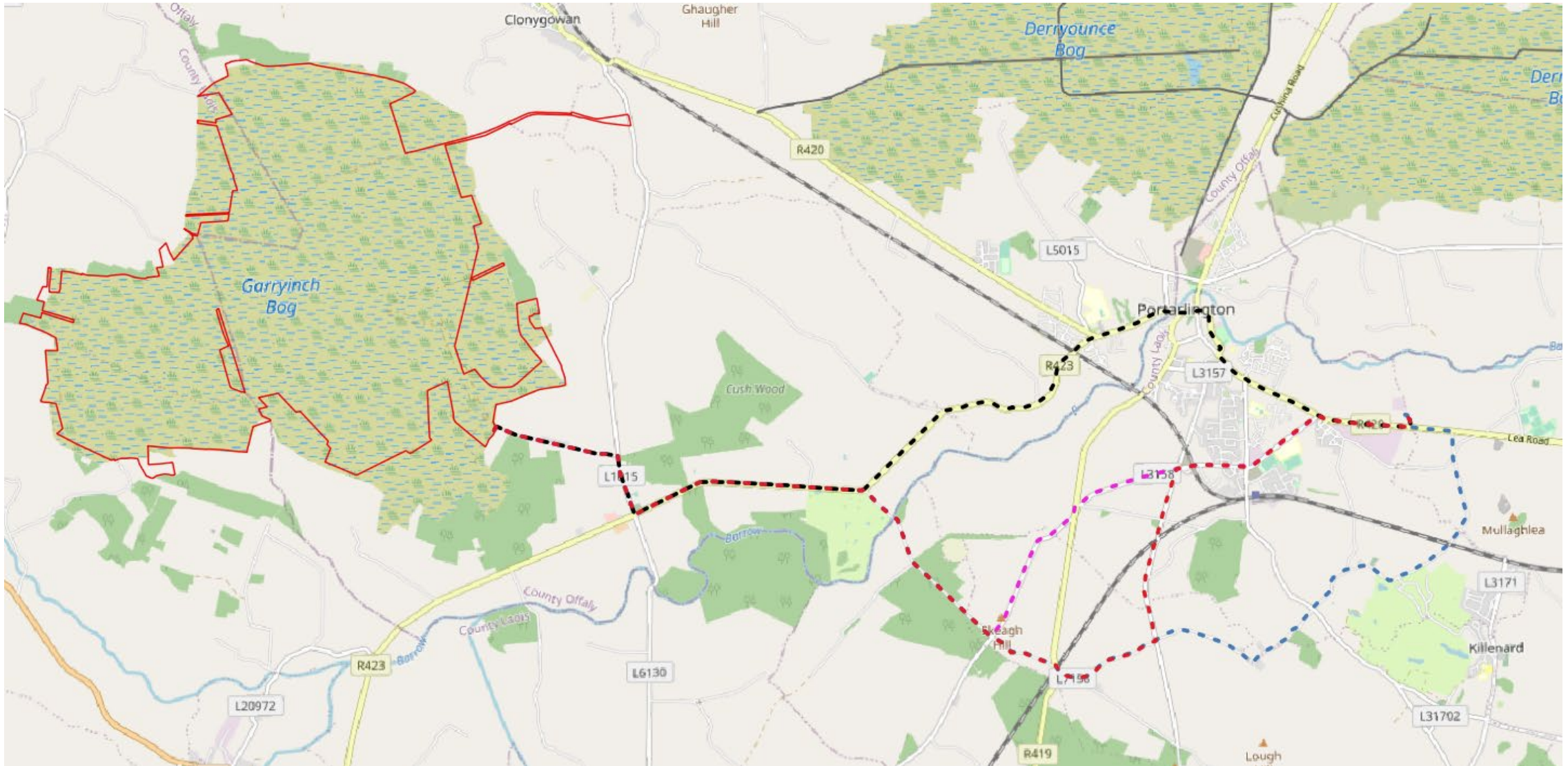
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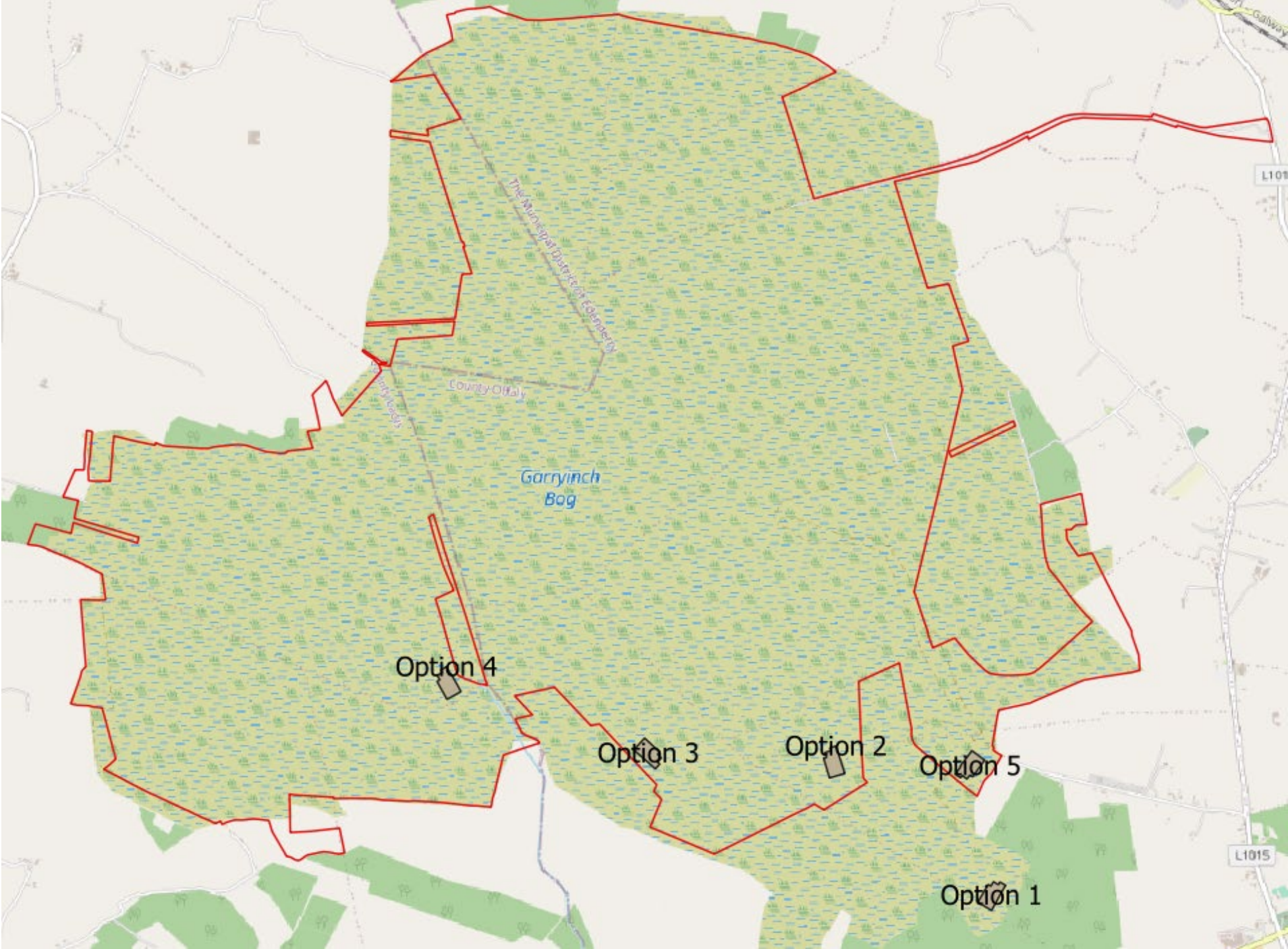


Grid Route Option

It is proposed to provide a 110kV on-site substation and associated connection to the national grid. The preferred connection is to be an underground cable connection to the 110 kV/MV station at Bracklone which is consented (Planning Application: 20638, Laois County Council) but not yet constructed.



**On-site
Substation
Location
Options**





RATIONALE & POLICY CONTEXT

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Rationale

The Climate Action Plan 2023 (CAP) includes a target to increase electricity generation from renewable sources to 80% by 2030.

To achieve this target substantial new development will be required. The CAP “pathway” to meeting the target for ‘*a massive and rapid build-out of renewable generation capacity (wind and solar power generation technologies)*’ and ‘*buildout and strengthening of grid infrastructure*’.

The CAP sets out targets as follows which rely heavily on wind energy technology:

- **9 GW from onshore wind;**
- 8 GW from solar; and
- At least 5 GW of offshore wind energy.



The proposed development has potential to provide up to approximately 106MW of renewable electricity. This represents 1.2% of the overall national onshore target for 2030.

The development could produce power for up to 32,000 – 66,000 Irish homes.

Rationale

Midlands are recognized as an area in Ireland with high opportunity for renewable energy development



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REGIONAL PROFILE

Midlands, Ireland

GENERAL INFORMATION

Country: Ireland
Region Name: Midlands
Region NUTS2 code^{*}: IE06 - Eastern and Midlands
Region NUTS3 code: IE063 - Midlands Region

Main urban centres in the region:

- Portlaoise (population: 22,050)
- Athlone (population: 21,349)
- Mullingar (population: 20,928)
- Tullamore (population: 14,607)
- Longford (population: 10,008)

^{*}NUTS: Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics



Energy

Transition opportunities

Existing and identified transition opportunities	High (priority) interest	Moderate interest	Minimal interest	No interest
Reconversion of coal-related sites / locations for renewable / alternate energy				
• Biomass				
• Energy storage	x			
• Gas				
• Geothermal				
• Hydro power and pumped hydro-storage				
• Hydrogen				
• Solar	x			
• Wind	x			
Other energy related opportunities				
Reconversion of peat-related sites for new economic and social activities	x			
Repurposing of peat-related industrial infrastructure	x			
Heritage, culture and tourism	x			
Low carbon mobility and transport				
Diversification of peat-related supply chain and service activities	x			
Other opportunities:				
Agribusiness, farming (e.g. organic farming / food production), remote working infrastructure and opportunities, technology back office, film / animation industry, social enterprises, energy retrofitting, domestic heating and energy programmes, homecare / eldercare,				

Strategic Infrastructure

Strategic Infrastructure is defined in the Seventh Schedule of the 2006 Act as amended by S.78 of the 2010 Act and under Class 1 as:

“An installation for the harnessing of wind power for energy production (a wind farm) with more than 25 turbines or having a total output **greater than 50 megawatts.**”

- The current project includes 10 no. turbines with individual power outputs of between 5.0 MW to 7.6 MW



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Impact Assessment

- ✓ Subject to Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment
- ✓ Natura Impact Statement (NIS) will be prepared with the application
- ✓ EIAR will be prepared with Application
- ✓ Will not be seeking formal scoping with the Board
 - We have consulted directly with stakeholders and prescribed bodies on an informal basis. EIAR scoping report issued to consultees on 15 June 2022



EIA Scoping

Issued 15th June 2022, response sought by 15th July 2022

- **Forestry Division, DAFM** - Need for felling licence and need to consider felling and replanting in the EIA / NIS
- **TII** – focus on cable route, need for Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA), need to consult with National Roads Design Office, LVIA from roads, cumulative effects with other wind farms (in terms of road usage).
- **OPW** - Partially located in lands that benefit from the Barrow Drainage District. Need for access to maintenance channels. Need for S50 applications.
- **GSI** - Refer to national GSI datasets. GSI would appreciate a copy of reports detailing any site investigations carried out.
- **Irish Red Grouse Association** - We request that heather should be reseeded in this area following the completion of works to support the conservation of the red grouse.
- **DAU** – generic email with indication of 6-week response period.
- **Bat Conservation Ireland, Biodiversity Ireland, BirdWatch Ireland, Irish Water** do not have the capacity to comment on planning applications.
- **Gas Networks Ireland** have no comment to make.

Policy Context

Laois County Development
Plan 2021-2027

Laois Wind Energy Strategy

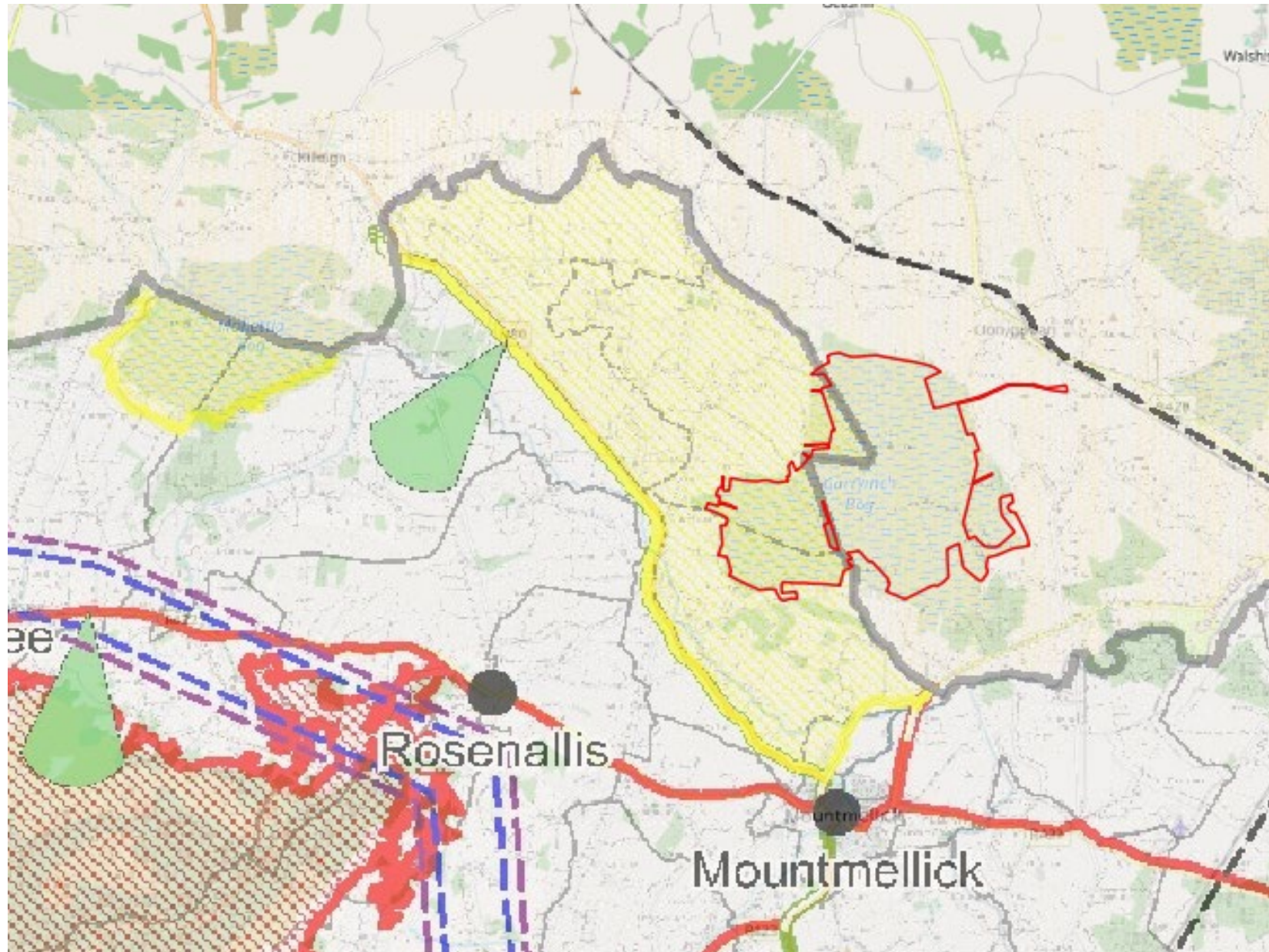
- Open to consideration

Future Publication of the
Renewable Energy Plan for
the Midlands Region



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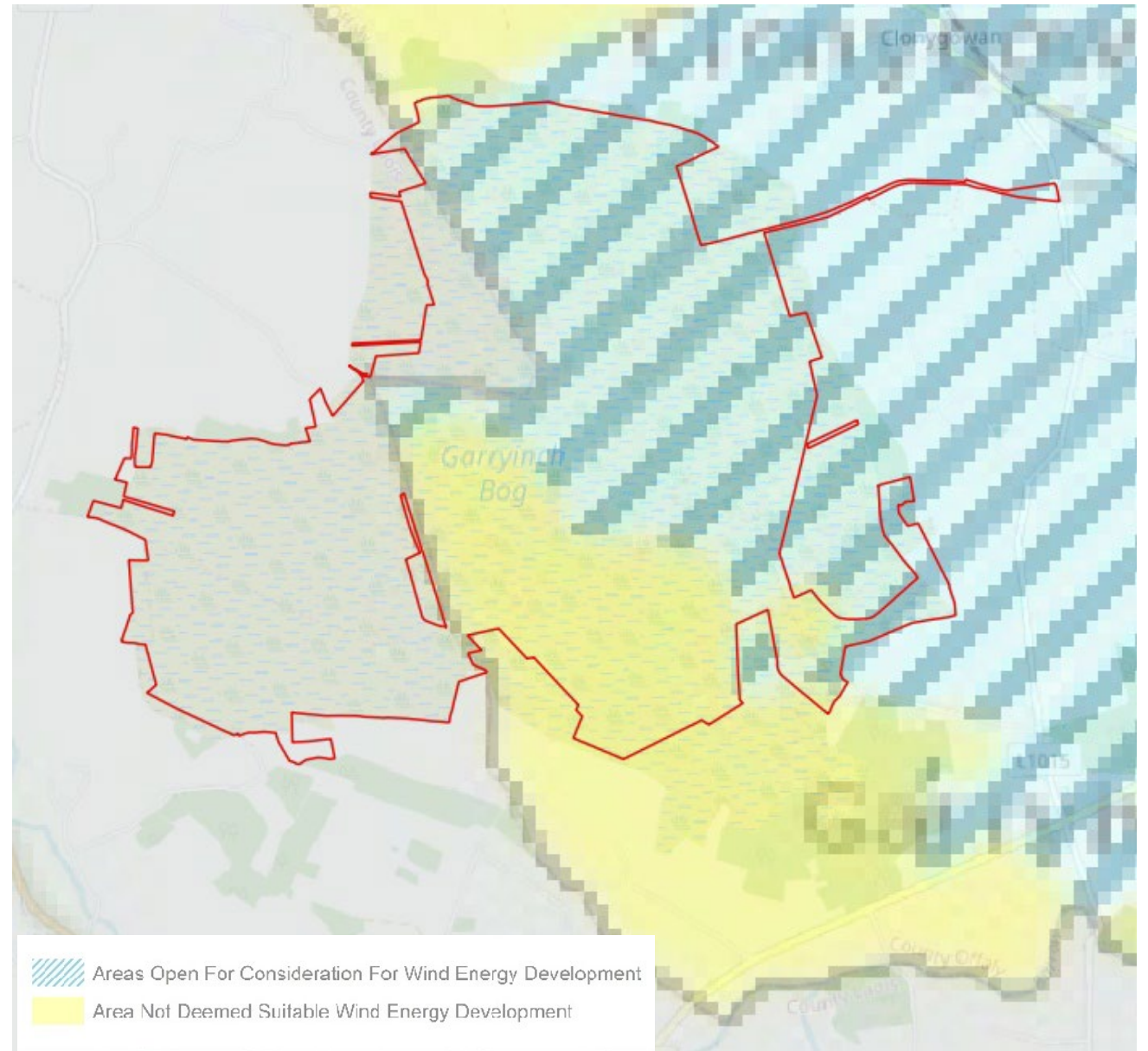
Policy Context

Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

- CAEP-37 It is Council policy to recognise the importance of wind energy as a renewable energy source which can play a vital role in achieving national targets in relation to reductions in fossil fuel dependency and therefore greenhouse gas emissions.

Offaly Wind Energy Strategy

- Areas Open for Consideration
- Areas Not Deemed Suitable - appears to be based upon wind speed
 - *'wind speeds over 7.5 m/s available at hub height of 100 metres'*





EXISTING ENVIRONMENT & CONSTRAINTS

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Environmental Considerations

Noise

- Baseline noise monitoring at Noise Assessment Locations (NALs) complete
- Cumulative noise model

Hydrology

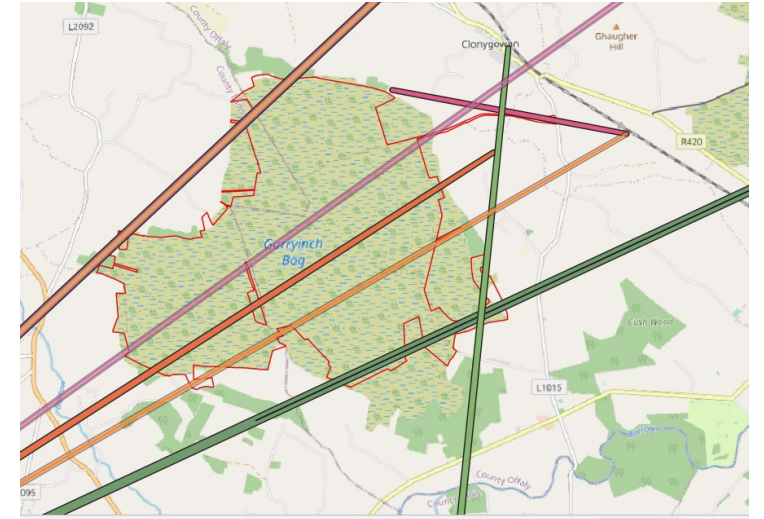
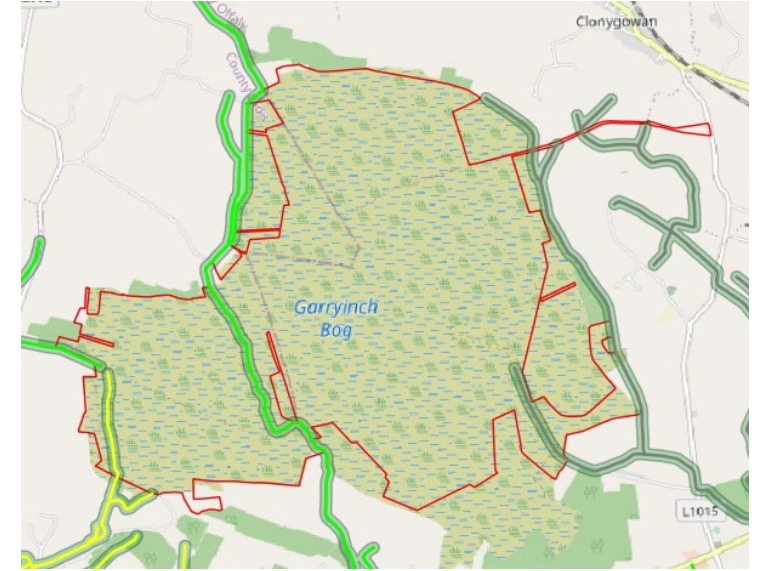
- Main Watercourses: BARROW_030 (Good Status), BARROW_040 (Moderate Status), COTTONERS BROOK_010 (Good Status), CLONYGOWAN_010 (Unassigned Status)
- Existing silt ponds on site operated in accordance with IPC licence P503-01.

Aviation & Telecoms

- AiBridges Assessment
- Operator Set-Back Buffer: 2nd Fresnel + 30m

Geotechnical

- Peaty topsoil over sandy/silty clay with occasional cobbles. Mean peat depth of 1.29m.
- Potential borrow pit locations identified within northern area of Garryinch Bog
- Peat Stability Assessment report including a Peat and Spoil Management Plan will be included in EIAR.



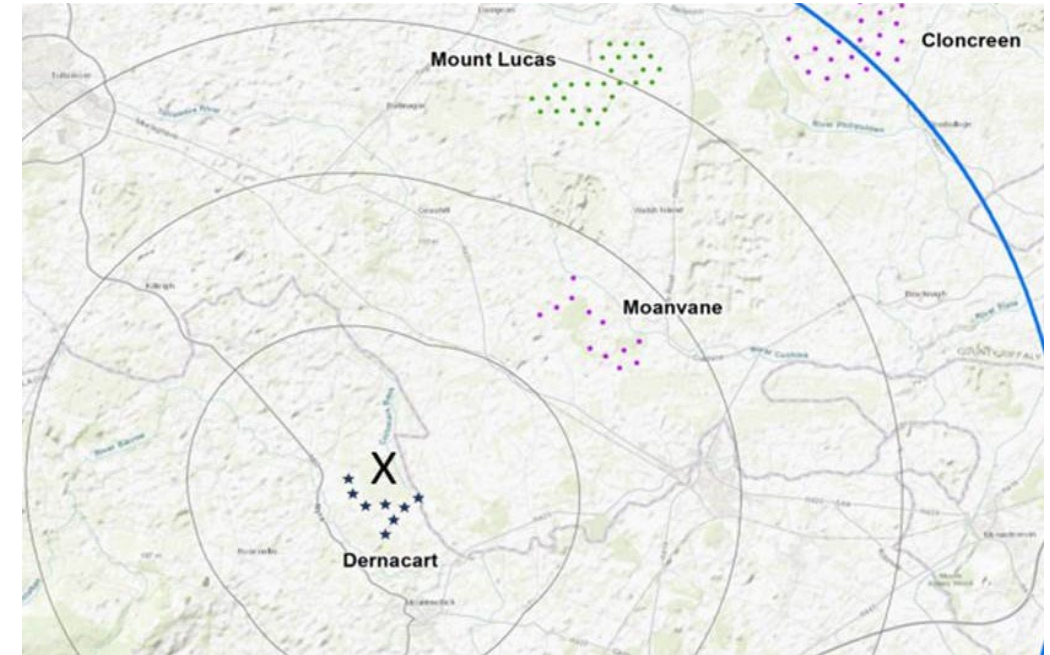
Environmental Considerations

LVIA

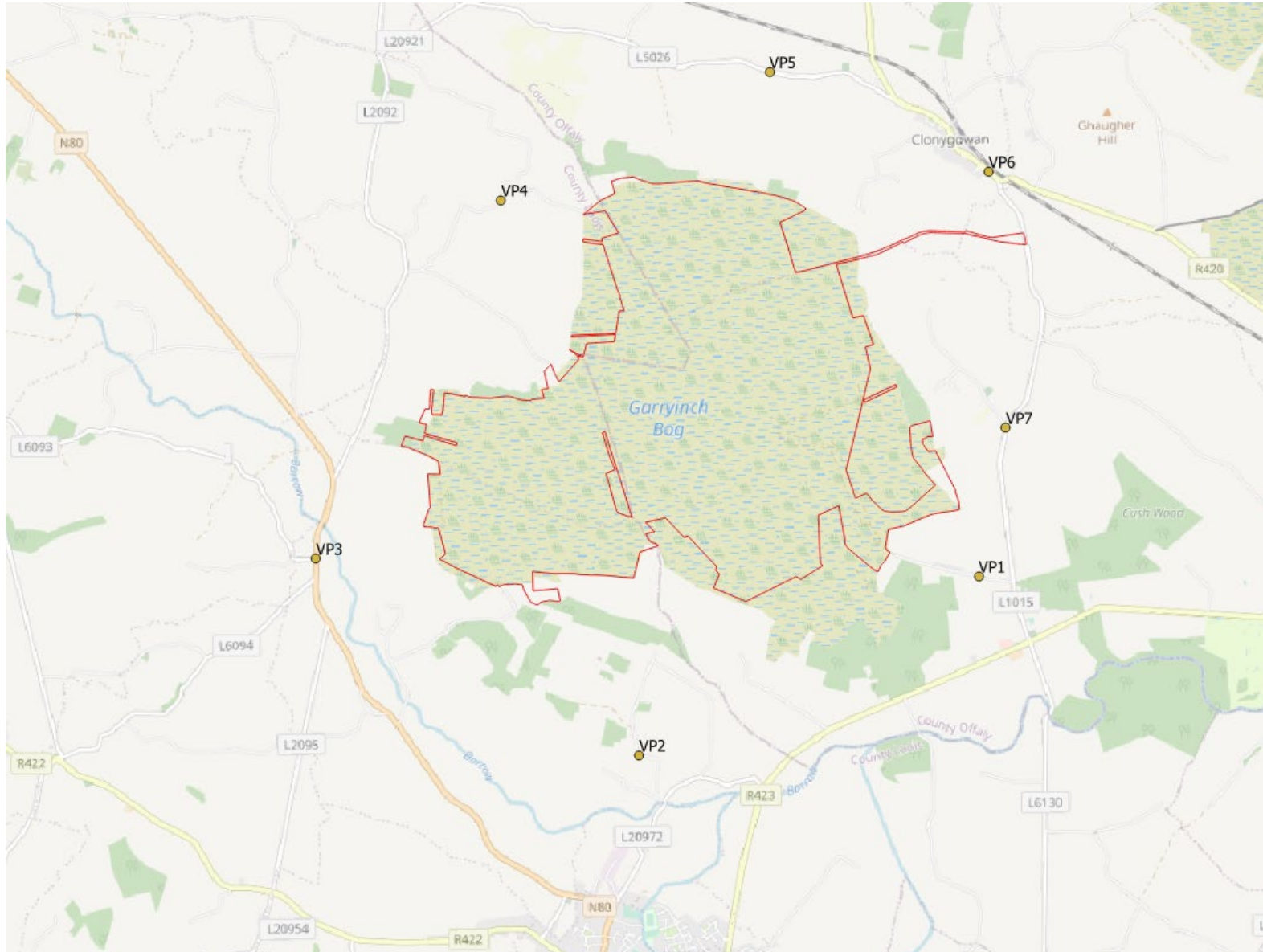
- There are a number of operational, consented or proposed wind farms within 30km:
 - Dernacart Wind Farm (adjacent to the east of Garrymore)
 - Moanvane Wind Farm (c. 4km to northeast)
 - Mountlucas Wind Farm (c. 12km to north- northeast)
 - Cloncreen Wind Farm (c. 17km to northeast)

Biodiversity

- Assessment of European Designated Sites
 - AA Screening & Natura Impact Statement
- Assessment of National Designated Sites
- Assessment of Locally Important Ecology/ Biodiversity: Surveys
 - Terrestrial Habitats
 - Invasive Species
 - Wintering Birds
 - Breeding Birds
 - Bat Surveys
 - Aquatic Ecology
 - Mammals
 - Amphibians
 - Marsh Fritillary



Landscape & Visual



- Early-stage wireframe montages generated in March/April 2022 for 7 No. receptors within the vicinity of the site (i.e., less than 3km)



VP02: Forest Lower Road at Ballynamire townland





VP03: at N80 Junction, west of Garryhinch Bog





VP05: Local road at Fearnamona townland





VP06: R420 at at Clonygowan



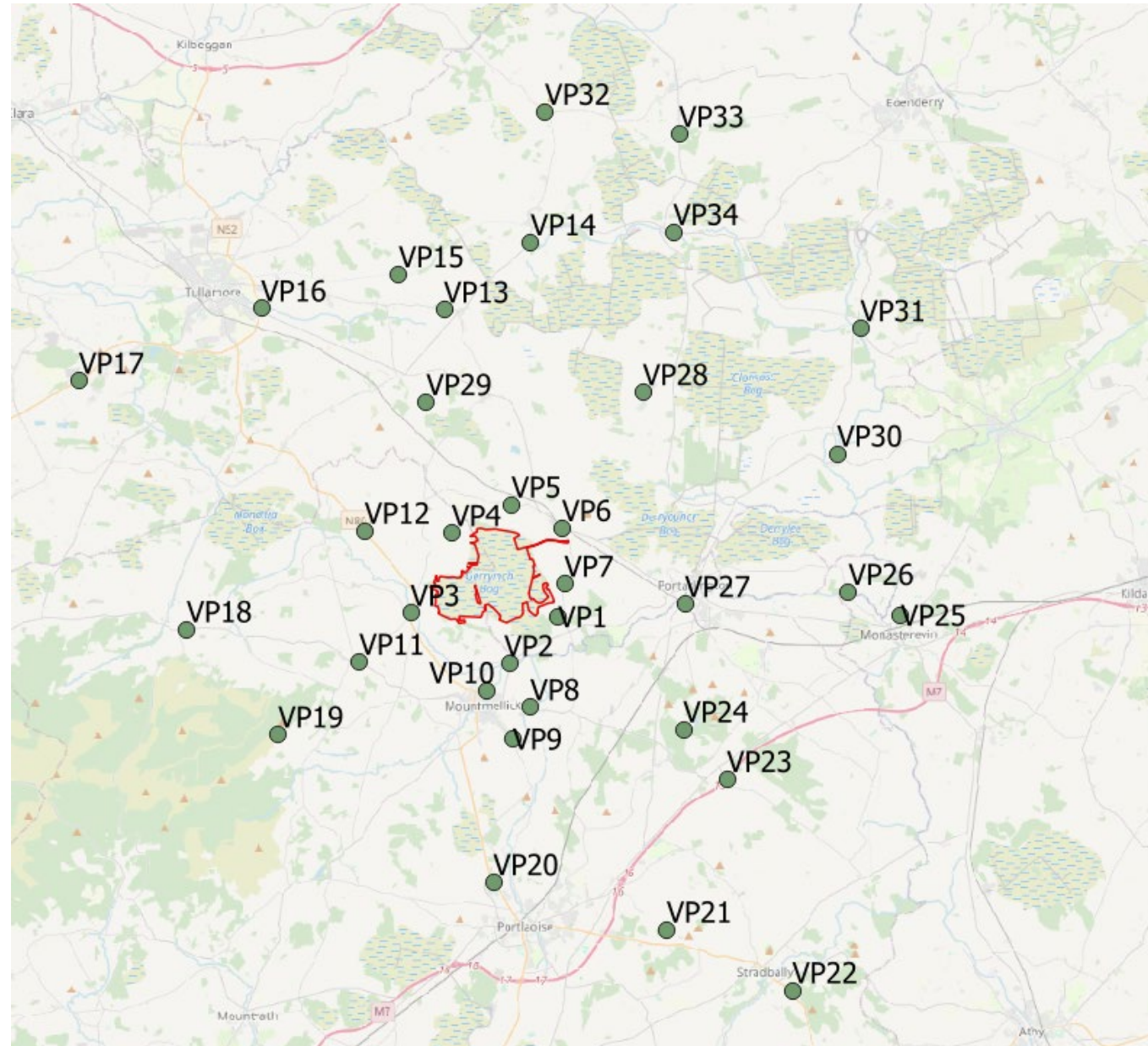
Proposed Viewpoints

- 34 viewpoints are proposed.
- Feedback sought from the local authorities on VPs.
 - Asked that they are in keeping with those used for Dernacart



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Biodiversity

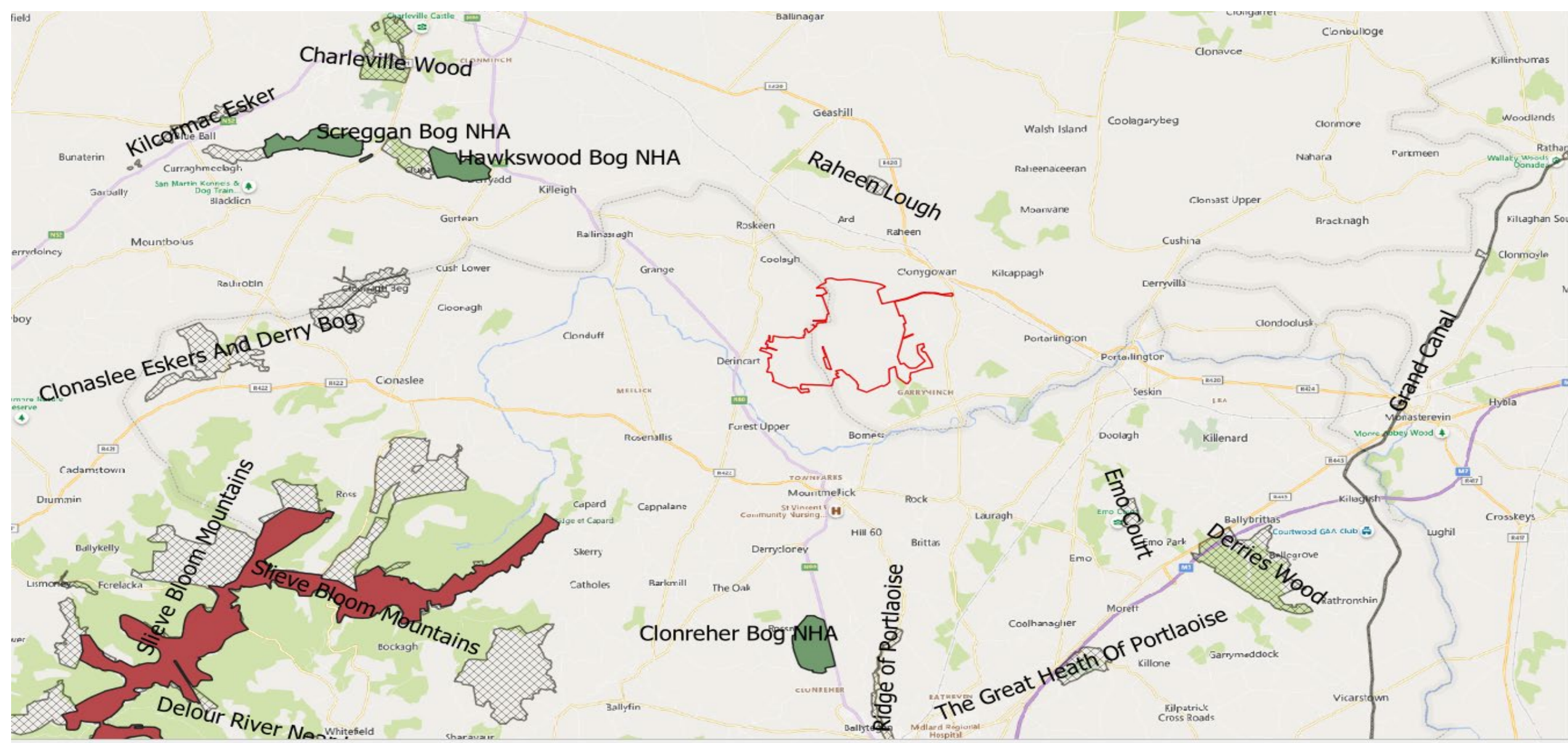
European Sites

River Barrow and River Nore SAC, Slieve Bloom Mountains SPA & SAC



National Sites

NHAs, pNHAs, RAMSAR, Wildfowl Sanctuaries, Nature Reserves etc.



Terrestrial Ecology



Birch Woodland



Cutover Bog



Bare Peat



Heath & Scrub



Grassland



Raised Bog

Other Biodiversity

Birds

- Winter and Breeding Bird Surveys 2020-2023.

Bats

- Static bat detector, preliminary roost assessment and monitoring at height.

Mammals

- Badger, otter and pine marten have been recorded using the site (historically) but no resting places.

Marsh Fritillary

- Marsh fritillary have been recorded in the west of Garryhinch Bog.

Invasive Species

- Japanese knotweed has been recorded along an access track to the bog. Is undergoing treatment.



PROJECT MILESTONES & CONSULTATION

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Project Milestones & Consultation

Project Milestones:

- Leave to apply for Substitute Consent – Q1 2023
- Site Investigation and Wind Farm Design – Q1 2023
- Substitute Consent Application - Q2/Q3 2023
- SID Application – Q3/Q4 2023

Consultation to date:

- Community Liaison Officer
- Mailing List and Feedback Questionnaire
- Project Website: <https://www.garryhinchwindfarm.ie/>
- Face-to-Face Community Engagement Sessions Held

Mountmellick Conference Centre	Tuesday 25 th January 2022	Wednesday 2 nd November 2022
CYMS Hall, Clonygowan	Wednesday 26 th January 2022	Tuesday 1 st November 2022
St Brigid's Community Hall, Garryhinch/Clonyhurke	Thursday 27 th January 2022	Thursday 3 rd November 2022

Final Phase Consultation: door to door visits to circulate the final layout, planned Q2/Q3 2023



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