

# Laois - Kilkenny Reinforcement Project Environmental Reports

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## Assessment of Corridors Report - Human Beings

**Submission to:** ESB International

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## **1. Introduction**

This section provides an assessment of the potential route corridors within the study area for the proposed 110kV line from Ballyragget in Co. Kilkenny to the proposed substation location in Laois. The purpose of this assessment is to recommend the route corridor that causes the least environmental impacts.

A previous Constraints Report identified the most significant constraints within the study area. The potential route corridors have been designed having regard to the identified constraints. The main objectives of this desk study were to identify potential constraints of each proposed route corridor and select the 'most preferred' route corridor that will minimise the overall impact of the proposed development on the study area.

## **2. Methodology and Information Sources**

The following list of information sources were reviewed as part of the desk study:

- National Development Plan 2007-2013;
- National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020;
- Regional Planning Guidelines for the Midlands and South East Region 2010-2022;
- Laois County Development Plan 2006 - 2012;
- Kilkenny County Development Plan 2008 – 2014;
- Ordnance Survey Mapping and Photography;
- Central Statistics Office data;
- Fáilte Ireland and Local Tourism websites;
- GeoDirectory data.

## **3. Assessment of Route Corridors**

Western Route Corridor Nodes 1, 5, 10:

*Population:*

This western route passes to the east of the heritage town of Abbeyleix and passes over the village of Ballyroan. As identified in the Constraints report, Abbeyleix is an important town in the region and serves a wide rural catchment. This route runs

parallel to the R432 as it leaves Ballyragget station and runs west of the village of Ballinakill, crosses over the R432 road and the R430 east of Abbeyleix. This route runs adjacent to the most populated parts of this study area. GeoDirectory data indicates a total of 442 separate addresses within the area of this corridor.

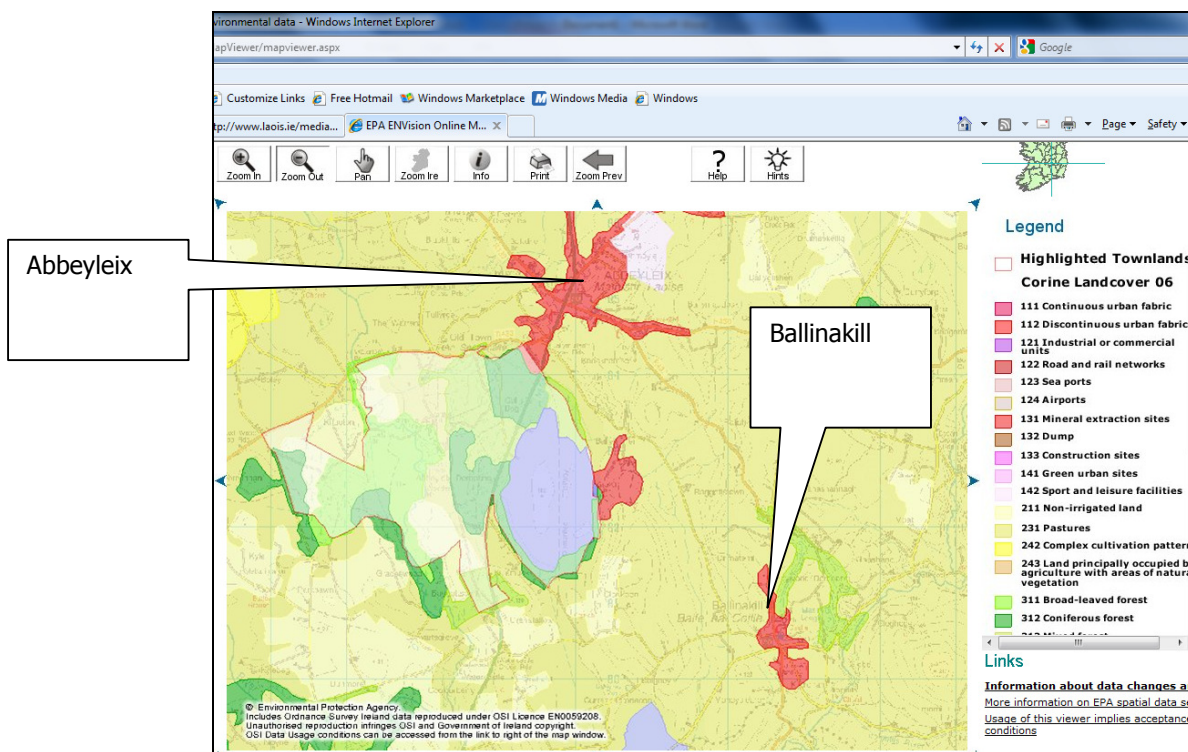
*Economic Activity:*

Economic activity in the *overall* project study area is principally agricultural and agricultural related activities with urban related activity in Portlaoise and Kilkenny City and to a lesser degree Abbeyleix. This applies equally to all the Route Corridors.

*Tourism and Amenities:*

This route is the closest to the heritage town of Abbeyleix and Heywood Demesne. Laois County Council County Development Plan notes that "*The County has many natural and heritage attractions such as demesne landscapes - Emo Court, Ballyfin, Vesey House, **Abbeyleix/Mountain ranges** such as - Slieve Bloom, Killeshin Plateau, Cullahill Mountains and historical landscapes such as Rock of Dunamaise, Heritage Gardens such as **Heywood Demesne**'.*

*Landuse:*



**Figure 3.1 – Corine Land Cover Map 2006  
(Ordnance Survey Ireland License No AR 0077410)**

From Figure 3.1 above it can be seen that Abbeyleix and Ballinakill landuse is noted as 'Discontinuous Urban Fabric' but the land over which most of the corridor travels is through landuse noted as 'Pastures'.

#### Central Route Corridor Nodes 1-2-3-4-6-7-8-10 and sub routes

##### *Population:*

The central corridor runs north east from Ballyragget, and at node 3 heads north to node 6, node 7 and on to the substation location. This Corridor crosses over sparsely populated areas avoiding clusters of dwellings. Sub route alternatives are also considered for this option. Sub route 2 - 4 passes to the east of Ballinakill but otherwise the sub routes avoid villages.

An analysis of GeoDirectory data for the Central Corridor Route Corridor indicated a total of 124 addresses within the area of the corridor. GeoDirectory data for the 110kv sub route corridors showed that there are 53 addresses along sub route 2-4; 76 addresses along sub route 3-7; 31 addresses along sub route 5-6; 21 addresses along sub route 7-9: and 25 addresses along sub route 8-10.

##### *Economic Activity:*

Economic activity in the *overall* project study area is principally agricultural and agricultural related activities with urban related activity in Portlaoise and Kilkenny City and to a lesser degree Abbeyleix. This applies equally to all the Route Corridors.

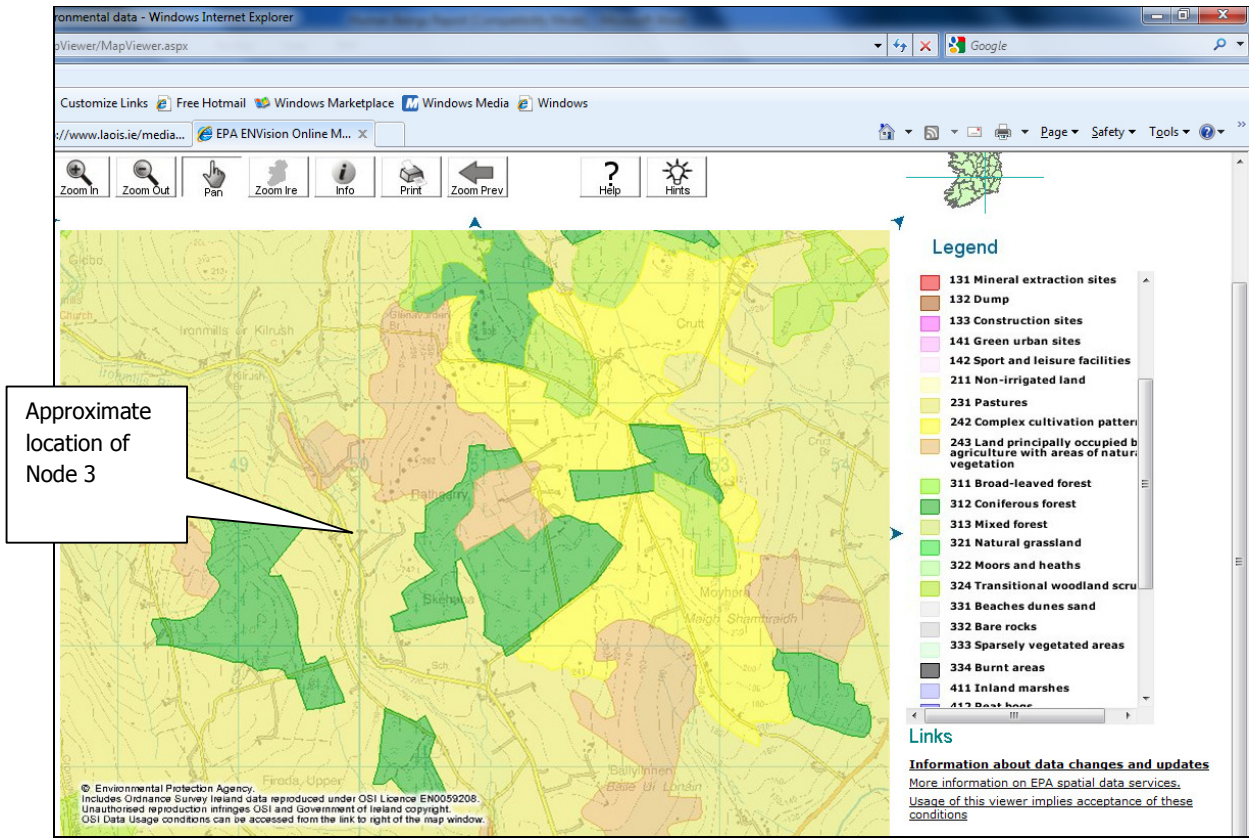
##### *Tourism and Amenities:*

Scenic View 12 is noted as "*Views overlooking Castlecomer and Ballyragget on the Castlecomer /Ballyragget Road R694 between its junctions with road nos. 1227 and 250m S.E.of road no 1063*".

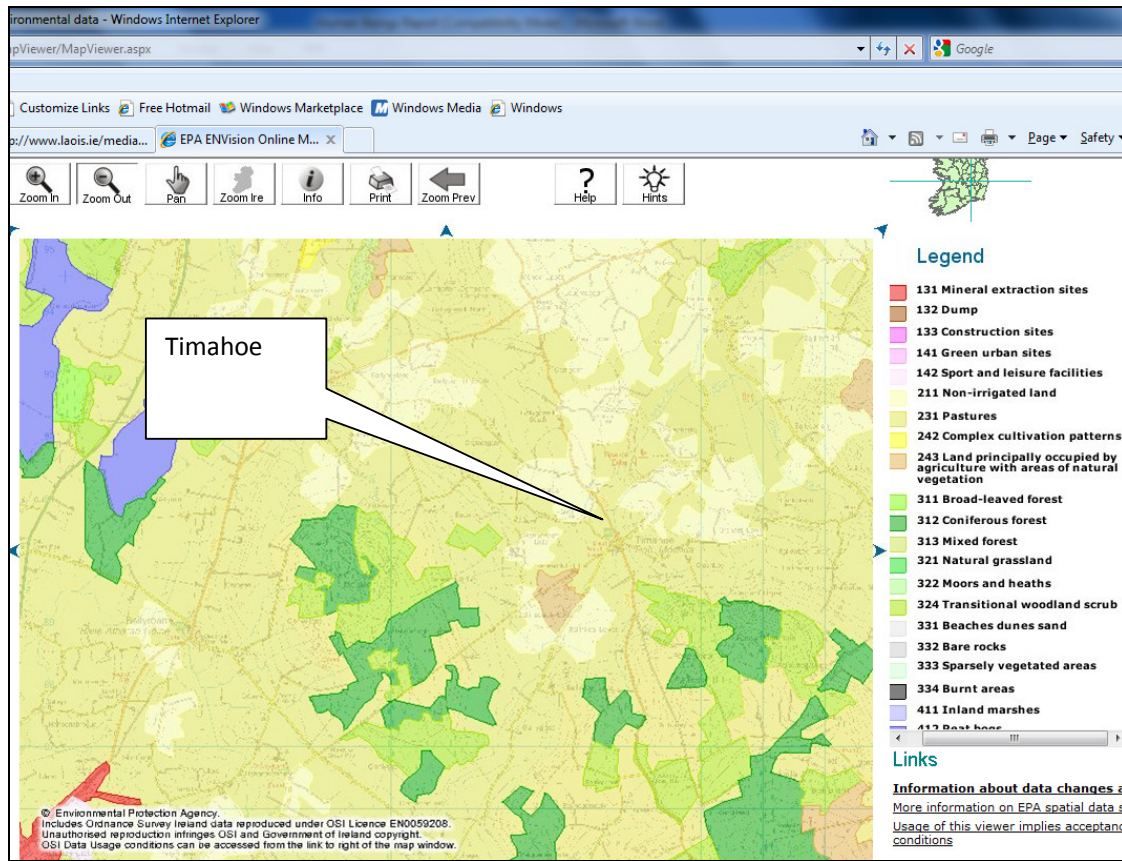
Sub route 8 – 10 passes through the north west corner of Timahoe which is noted for the Timahoe Round Tower and the Timahoe Eskers which should be avoided.

##### *Land Use:*

Figure 3.2 and 3.3 below illustrate that the land use in this area varies from forestry, complex cultivation patterns to land principally occupied by agriculture with areas of natural vegetation.



**Figure 3.2 – Corine Land Cover Map 2006 illustrating southern end of central route corridor  
(Ordnance Survey Ireland License No AR 0077410)**



**Figure 3.3 – Corine Land Cover Map 2006 illustrating northern end of central route corridor  
(Ordnance Survey Ireland License No AR 0077410)**

### Eastern Corridor nodes 1- 10

#### Population:

The eastern corridor is the longest corridor and passes close to Castlecomer and runs approximately parallel to the N78 road. It crosses over a number of roads such as the N78 in two locations, the R694, and the R430. It passes adjacent to a number of small villages such as Coolbaun, Crettyard, and Luggacurren. According to GeoDirectory data for the study area, there are a total of 330 separate building addresses within the area covered by this corridor.

#### Economic Activity

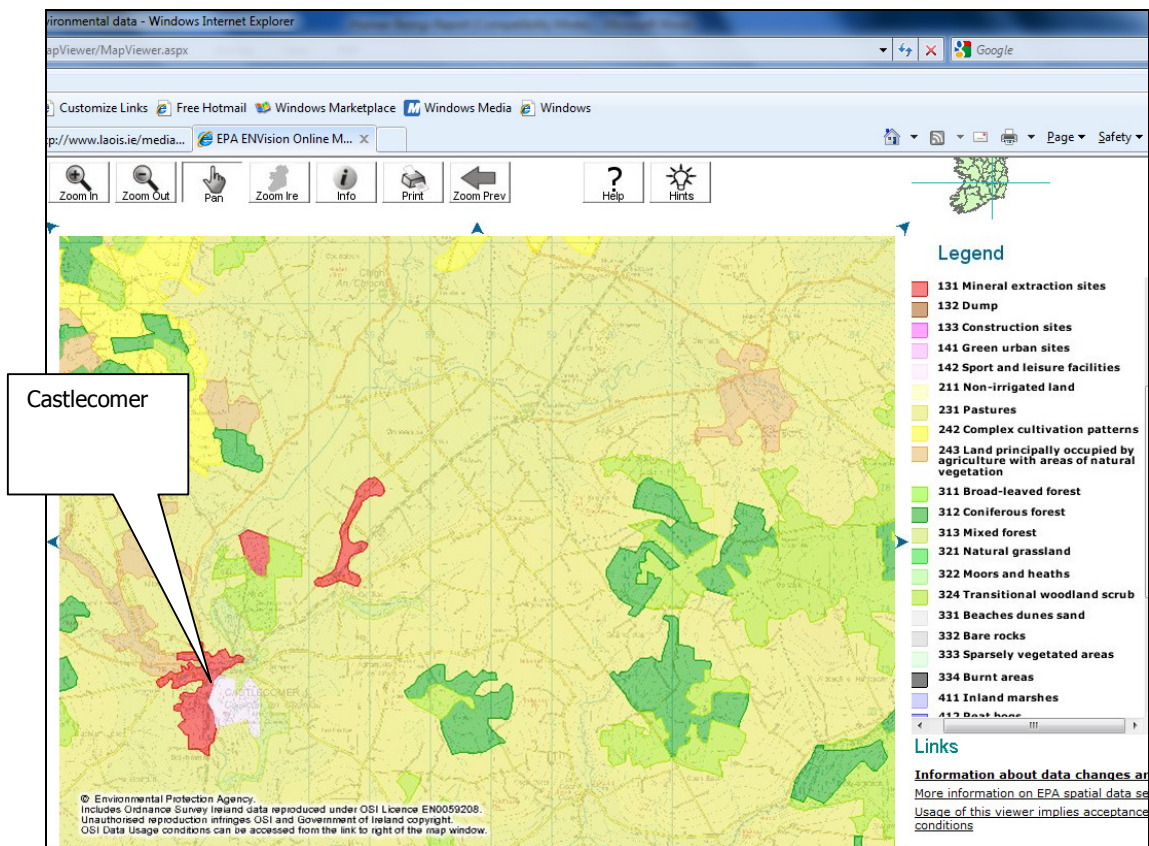
Economic activity in the *overall* project study area is principally agricultural and agricultural related activities with urban related activity in Portlaoise and Kilkenny City and to a lesser degree Abbeyleix. This applies equally to all the Route

Corridors.

### Tourism and Amenities

The eastern corridor is the longest route and passes over the Castlecomer Plateau crossing much of the higher ground within the study area. It runs east of the Fossy Mountain and the Timahoe Eskers and passes over an Area of Special Development Control.

### *Landuse:*



**Figure 3.4 – Corine Land Cover Map 2006  
(Ordnance Survey Ireland License No AR 0077410)**

Landuse in the area is illustrated in Figure 3.4 above which illustrates that the land use in this area varies from forestry, complex cultivation patterns to land principally occupied by agriculture with areas of natural vegetation.

#### **4. Preferred Route**

There are no significant constraints in relation to human beings. The implementation of appropriate mitigation measures during detailed design will ensure there will be no significant residual impact on the environment from the proposed development with respect to human beings. The Central Route Corridor nodes 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 has the minimum number of dwellings within the corridor, hence this would be the preferred corridor. The western corridor is the least preferred as well as Node 8 – 10 and the eastern corridor is the less preferred.