



Summary Report

FOR

UPGRADE/INSTALLATION OF
BROADBAND NETWORK

AT

DA105, Municipal District of Portlaoise

ON BEHALF OF



National Broadband Ireland

Prepared by
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1 OVERVIEW

1.1 Project Overview

This report is a summary of the appropriate assessment screening report undertaken on the proposed deployment of broadband infrastructure for Design Area (DA) 061, Castlecomer. This summary report focuses specifically on Network Build poles which National Broadband Ireland (NBI) proposes to install on public land as an integral part of the implementation of the National Broadband Plan (NBP). This report will summarise the assessment of the installation of network build infrastructure within the Portlaoise Municipal District and discuss any likely significant effects that may arise within Natura 2000 sites as a result of the Proposed Project. The Proposed Project entails the upgrade and installation of telecommunications infrastructure to buildings in Castlecomer and surrounding areas, covering a total area of 367 km².

Network build infrastructure is defined by NBI as items of infrastructure which are integral to the deployment of broadband infrastructure throughout the state. Network build poles are distinct to drop poles i.e., poles which will not be installed until customers have placed an order for the provision of broadband service through a 3rd party reseller.

The installation of Broadband Network Infrastructure at DA105 Castlecomer, including the Portlaoise Municipal District Area, is comprehensively assessed in Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report ref. AA_Screening_DA105_Castlecomer_Enviroguide. The AA Screening report assesses the likelihood of significant effects arising from the Proposed Development including the installation of both network build and drop poles.

The purpose of this MD summary report and the above referenced AA Screening Report is to provide information for the relevant competent authority to carry out the screening for Appropriate Assessment and other applicable statutory functions including licences issued under Section 254 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

1.2 Identification of Relevant Natura 2000 Sites

The proposed installation location of new network build infrastructure is presented in Figure 1. The details of each 6 items of infrastructure to be installed within the Portlaoise Municipal District is presented in Table 1.

To identify whether any of the items of infrastructure are proposed to be installed with a Natura 2000 site the following process is undertaken on all DAs:

- Using a Geographic Information System (GIS) the locations of all new proposed items of infrastructure are overlaid onto the locations of all Natura 2000 sites in Ireland and Northern Ireland.
- Analysis is performed using the GIS which will identify each individual feature proposed to be installed within a Natura 2000 site.
- If individual features are identified, they are recorded and presented on a drawing or series of drawings as required.

Using the described methodology, it was identified that none of the proposed items of infrastructure will occur within *River Barrow and River Nore SAC*, *Lisbigney Bog SAC* or *River Nore SPA*.

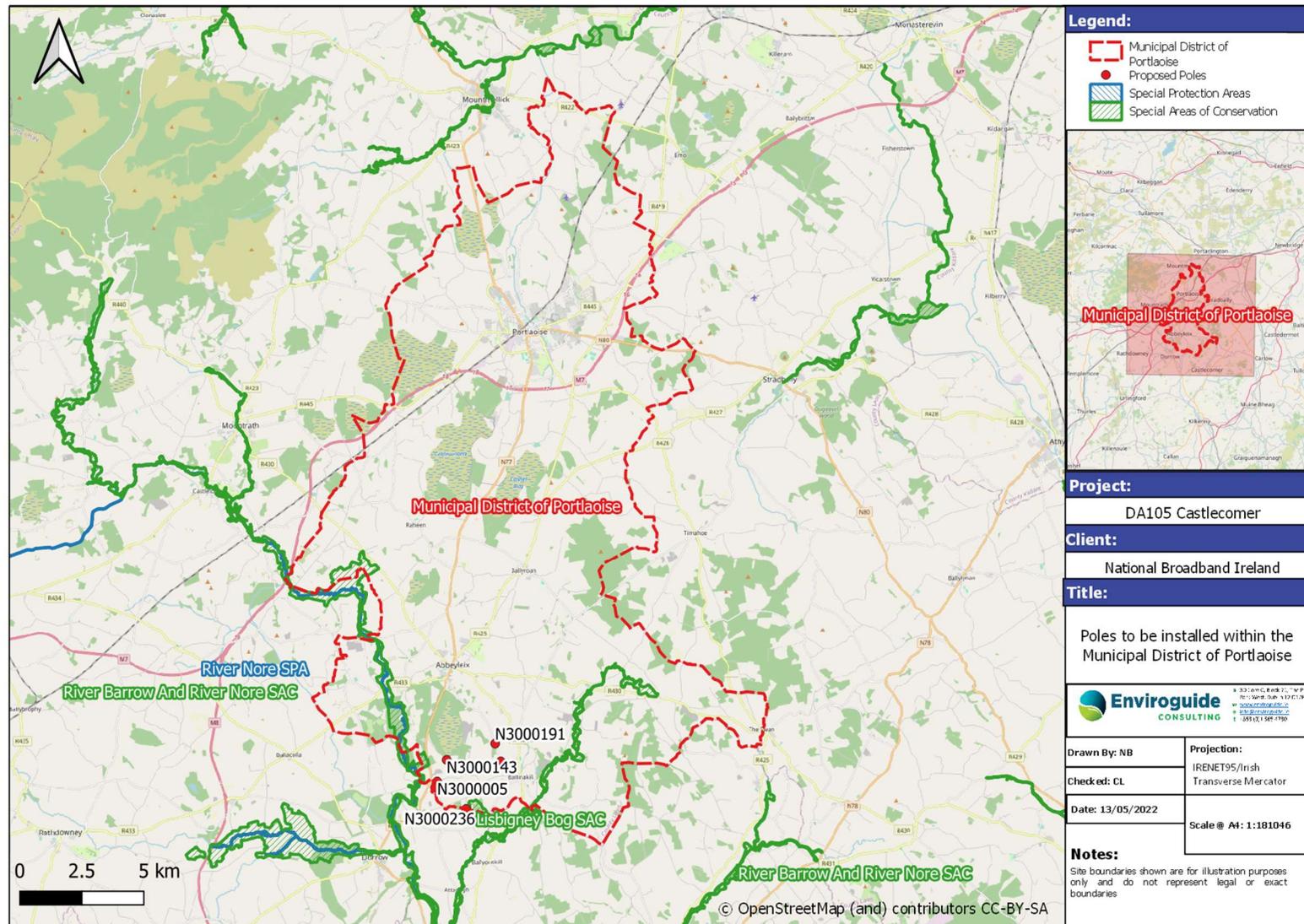


FIGURE 1 NETWORK BUILD POLES IN PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

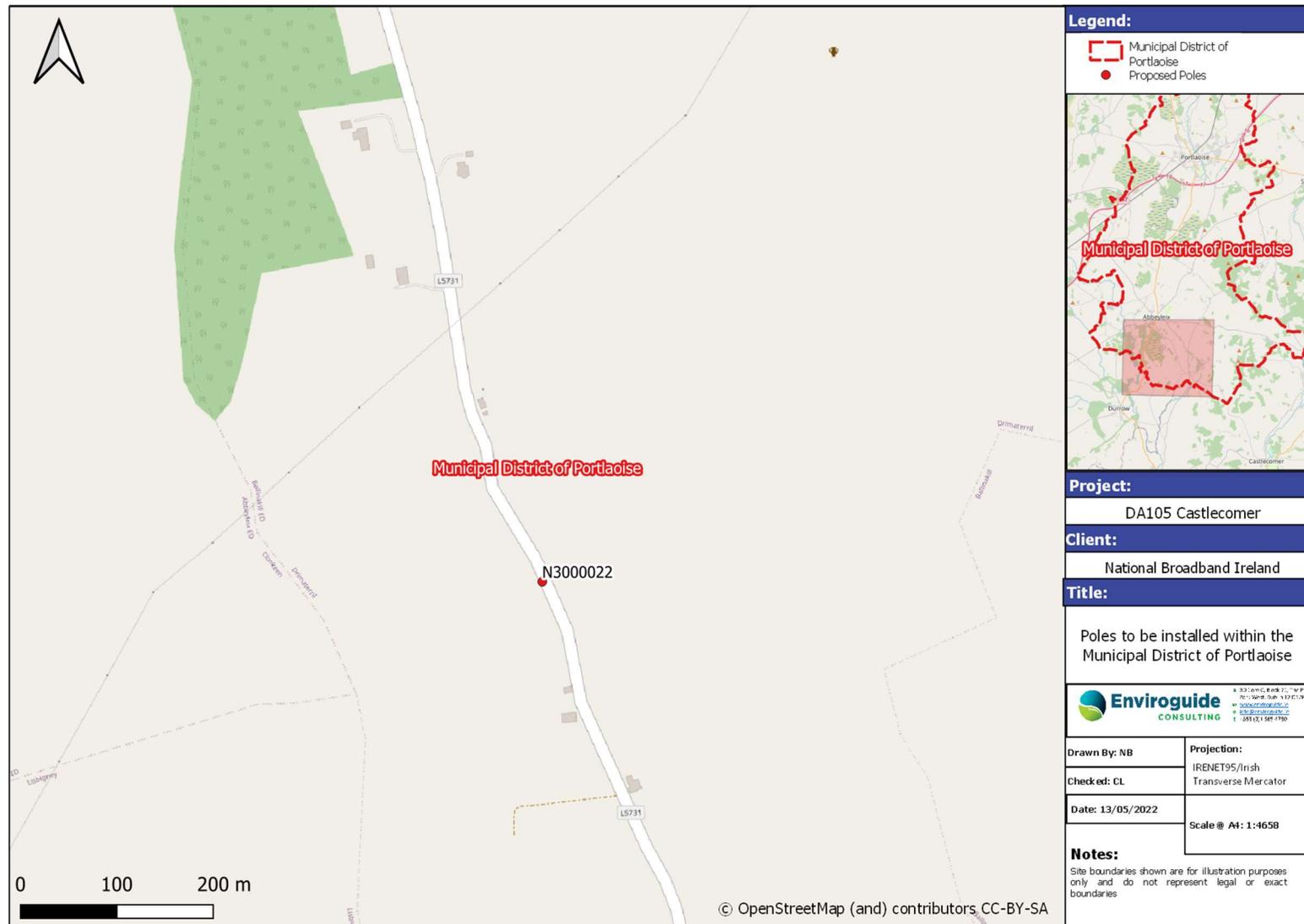


FIGURE 2 NETWORK BUILD POLES IN PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

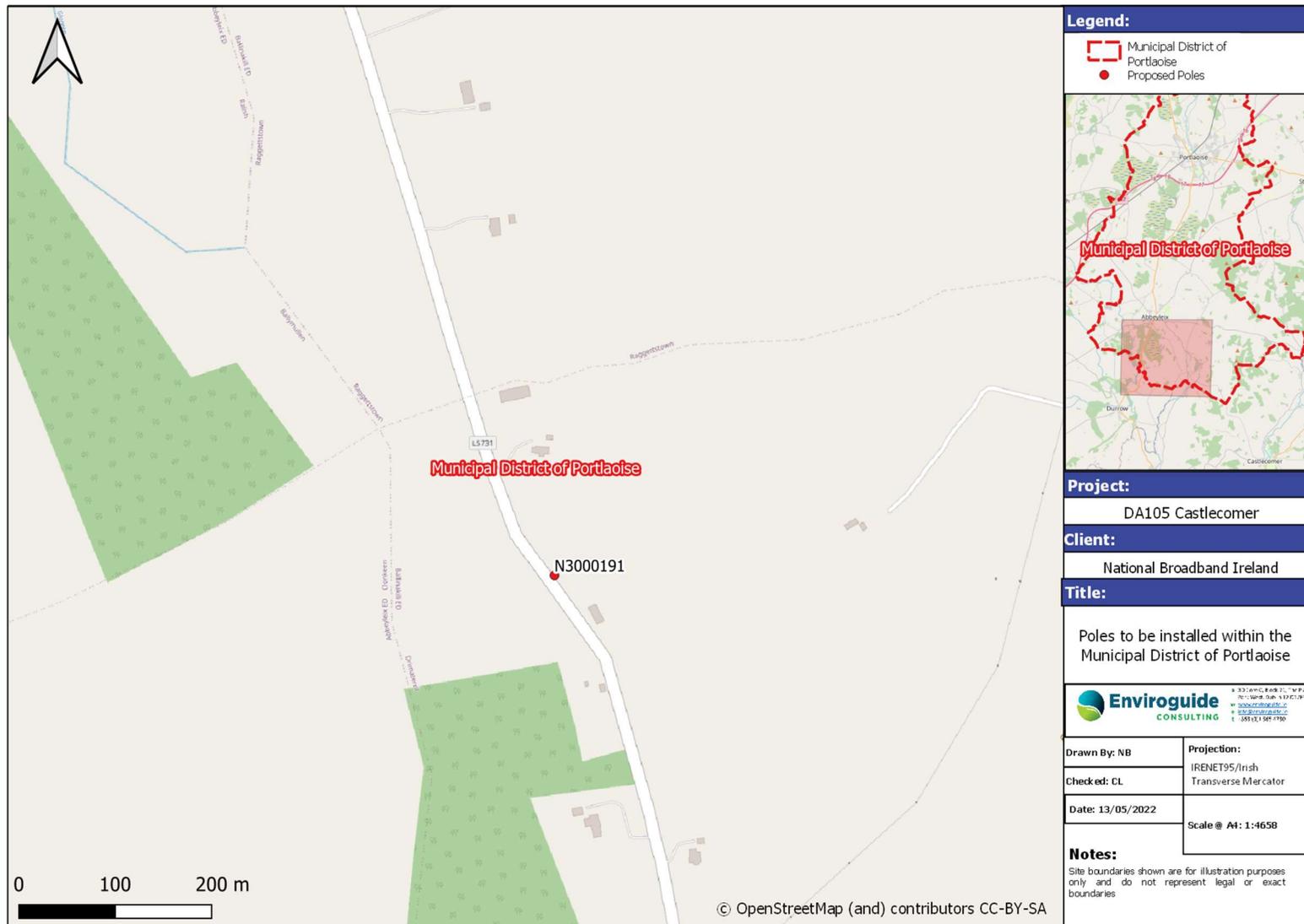


FIGURE 3 NETWORK BUILD POLES IN PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

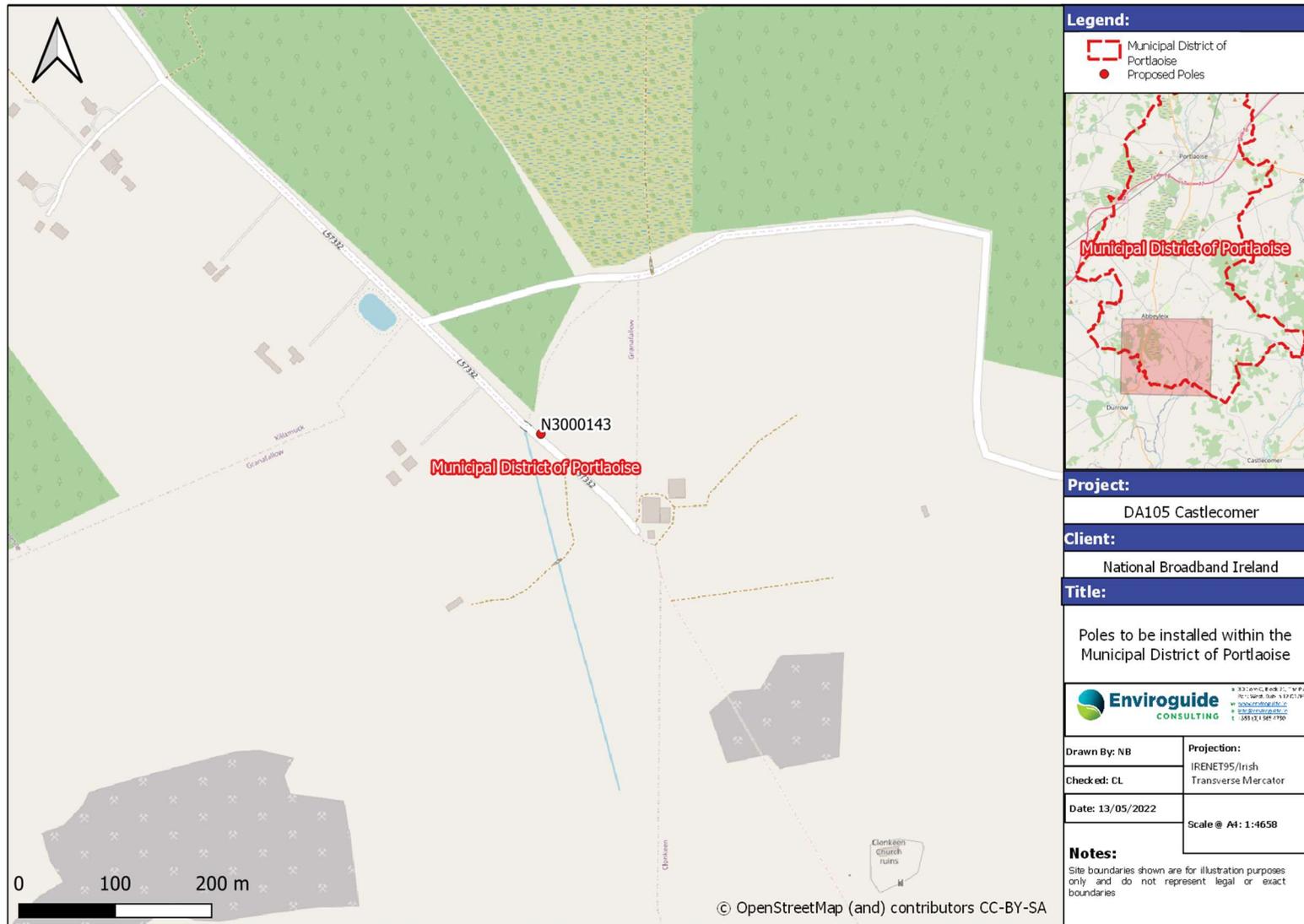


FIGURE 4 NETWORK BUILD POLES IN PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

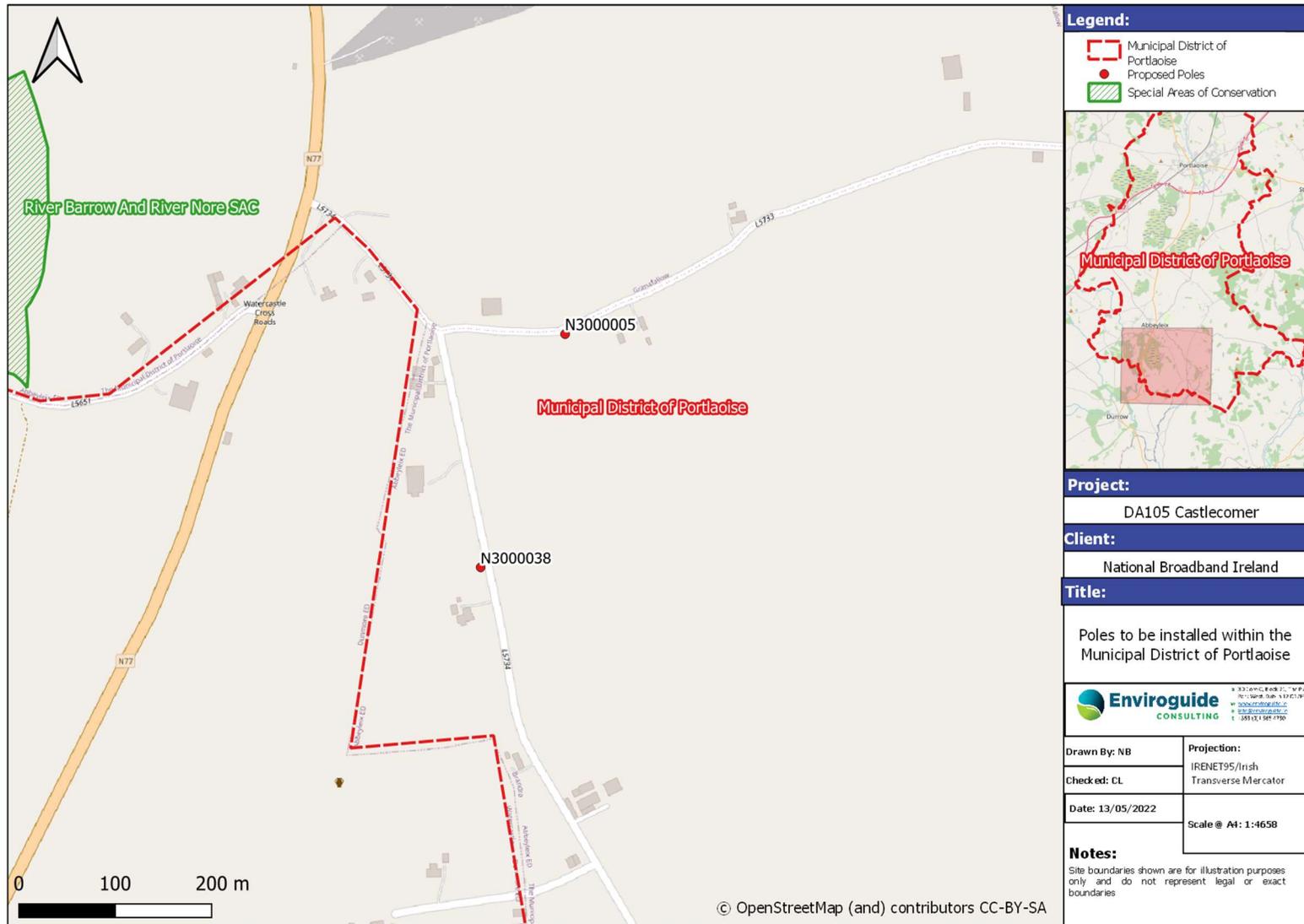


FIGURE 5 NETWORK BUILD POLES IN PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

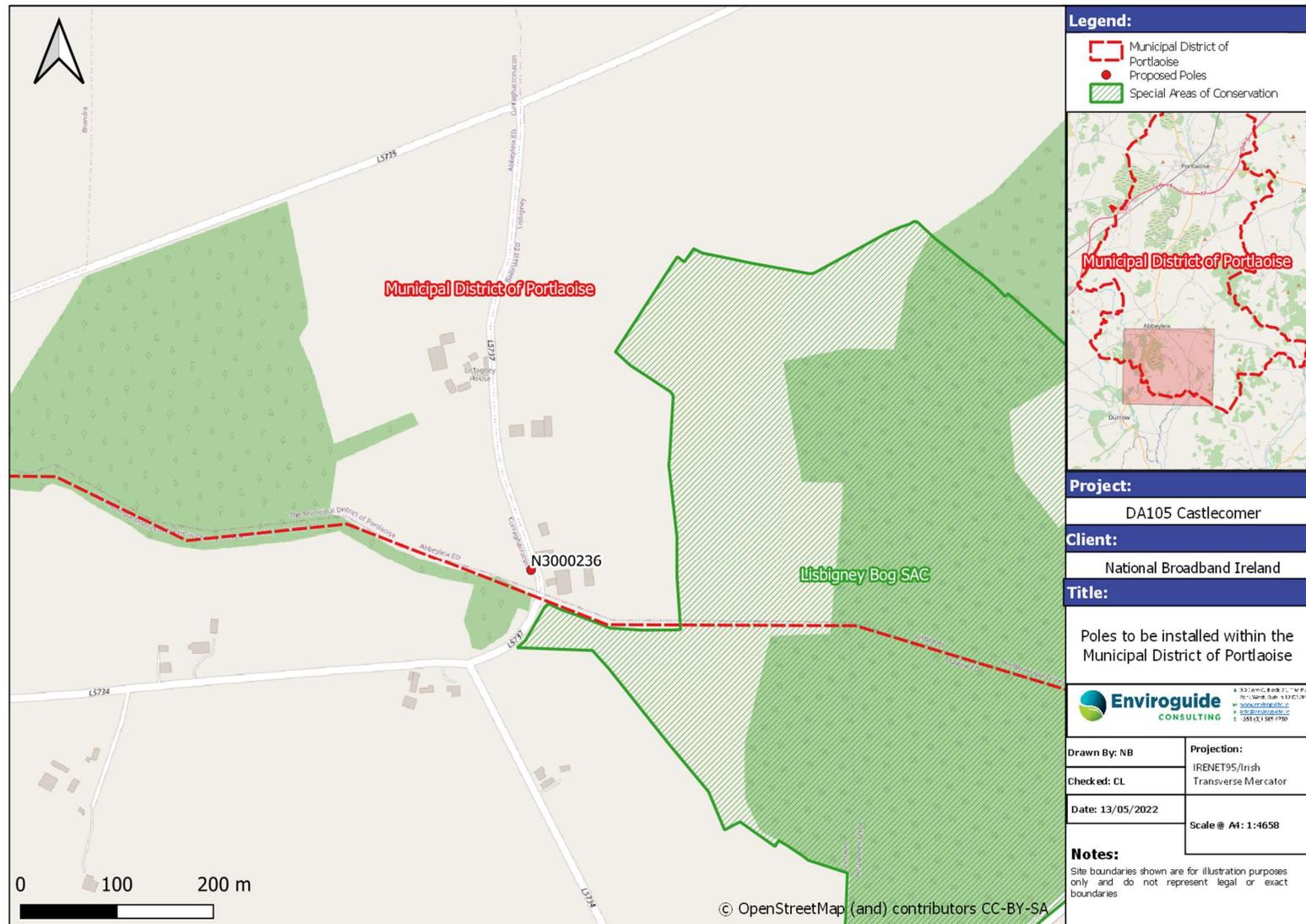


FIGURE 6 NETWORK BUILD POLES IN PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

1.3 Identification of Potential Impacts

The AA Screening report prepared for DA105 Castlecomer reviewed and assessed Information available on the Natura 2000 network of sites to establish whether the installation and operation of the Proposed Project has the potential to have an impact on any of the conservation objectives of associated sites. The assessment framework used in the preparation of the AA Screening report was taken from the best practice guidelines issued by the European Commission “Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites – Methodological guidance”.

The installation element of this project will involve the erection of new poles, installation of new underground chambers and underground duct sections. There may be some release of suspended solids into watercourses during such excavations; however, these will be small in nature, extremely localised and of very short duration as all surplus material is removed from site for compliant waste management.

In addition, the replacement poles being erected may carry the risk of contamination of soil and/or groundwater with creosote which is used as a preservative for telecommunications poles. Creosote is a dense non-aqueous liquid (DNAPL) which is not soluble in water. Therefore, the risk associated with its use will be extremely localised by virtue of it not migrating through the watercourse or soil. The impact therefore associated with its use can be deemed imperceptible.

The potential for fugitive dust emissions will be minimal and temporary as each mini excavation required to install a pole will be completed within a short period of time with water used as a dampening down medium in cases of extreme weather.

The AA Screening report prepared for DA105 Castlecomer considered the potential for significant impacts resulting from the Proposed Project based on a range of indicators, including:

- Habitat loss or alteration ;
- Habitat/species fragmentation ;
- Disturbance and/or displacement of species.
- Changes in population density; and
- Changes in water quality and resource.

It was deemed by the AA Screening Report that the Proposed Project will not have a significant adverse effect on the Conservation Objectives of: *River Barrow and River Nore SAC, Lisbigney Bog SAC or River Nore SPA*.

1.4 Intersecting features within Natura 2000 sites in Portlaoise Municipal District

The Proposed Project route intersects or contains the following: *River Barrow and River Nore SAC, Lisbigney Bog SAC or River Nore SPA*.

It was identified that none of the proposed items of infrastructure will occur within the aforementioned Natura 2000 sites within the Municipal District of Portlaoise (Table 1).

Each installation location was surveyed as part of the pre-build design process. Table 1 identifies each individual item of equipment within the Portlaoise Municipal District and describes the proposed installation locations and whether the proposed feature is to be installed within a Natura 2000 site.

Table 1 and Figures 1 to 6 demonstrate that all items of infrastructure for the Proposed Project within the Portlaoise Municipal District will be installed along the existing road network, in locations that consist primarily of roadside verges.

TABLE 1 NETWORK BUILD POLES WITHIN PORTLAOISE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT AND NATURA 2000 SITES

Barcode/Duct Label	Infrastructure Type	Location - Public	Site Name
N3000005	Utility Pole	Verge	Proposed infrastructure not located within any Natura 2000 site in the Portlaoise Municipal District
N3000022	Utility Pole	Verge	Proposed infrastructure not located within any Natura 2000 site in the Portlaoise Municipal District
N3000038	Utility Pole	Verge	Proposed infrastructure not located within any Natura 2000 site in the Portlaoise Municipal District
N3000143	Utility Pole	Verge	Proposed infrastructure not located within any Natura 2000 site in the Portlaoise Municipal District
N3000191	Utility Pole	Verge	Proposed infrastructure not located within any Natura 2000 site in the Portlaoise Municipal District
N3000236	Utility Pole	Verge	Proposed infrastructure not located within any Natura 2000 site in the Portlaoise Municipal District

2 CONCLUDING STATEMENT

The Proposed Project consisting of the installation of Broadband Network at DA105 Castlecomer, has been assessed taking into account:

- the nature, size and location of the proposed activities and possible impacts arising from the construction activities.
- the qualifying interests and conservation objectives of the Natura sites
- the potential for in-combination effects arising from other plans and projects.

In conclusion, upon the examination, analysis and evaluation of the relevant information and applying the precautionary principle, it is concluded by the authors of this report that, on the basis of objective information; the possibility **can be excluded** that the Proposed Project will have a likely significant effect on any Natura 2000 sites.

River Barrow and River Nore SAC (002162)

Lisbigney Bog SAC (000869)

River Nore SPA (004233)

Thus, it can be concluded on the basis of the results of Stage 1 of the Appropriate Assessment process that there is no requirement to proceed to Stage 2 of said process; and the preparation of a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) is not required.