



**FLYNN
FURNEY**

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

Ecology Survey Report

Nash's Boreen Pedestrian & Cycle Scheme

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this pre-construction survey is to ascertain the environmental constraints of the project. This is to inform the route designers as to the environmental and ecological mitigation measures required to be carried out as part of the scheme. This report details the findings made by Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants, following an ecological walkover survey of the site involved.

This report and recommendations are based on surveys conducted in September 2023, as well as desktop surveys of available documents and databases.

2. Project Description

The project is located at Nash's Boreen on the northside of Cork City. Nash's Boreen extends west and southwards from Upper Fairhill to David McCarthy Road (adjacent to Apple Computers) and is approximately 2.1 km in length. The existing road is mostly paved and serves houses located on both sides for approximately 1.2 km west of Upper Fairhill. The remaining section (approx.. 0.9km) up to David McCarthy Road has greenfield/agricultural land on both sides of the road. Nash's Boreen is also used as an amenity walk as part of the Cork City Northwest Slí na Sláinte loop.

The purpose of this scheme is to upgrade Active Travel (walking and cycling) infrastructure within the project area. The purpose of this scheme is to upgrade Active Travel (walking and cycling) infrastructure within the project area. The facility will be complete with raised traffic calming ramps and drop kerbs at strategic points. The project will include accommodation works for vehicle access, as well as a dedicated vehicle turning facility (CH+ 1700). Traffic management bollards and appropriate signage will also be installed where necessary.

The eastern most point of this project is at Grid ref.: 51.91617, -8.49149 and its western most point is at Grid ref.: 51.90864, -8.51313.

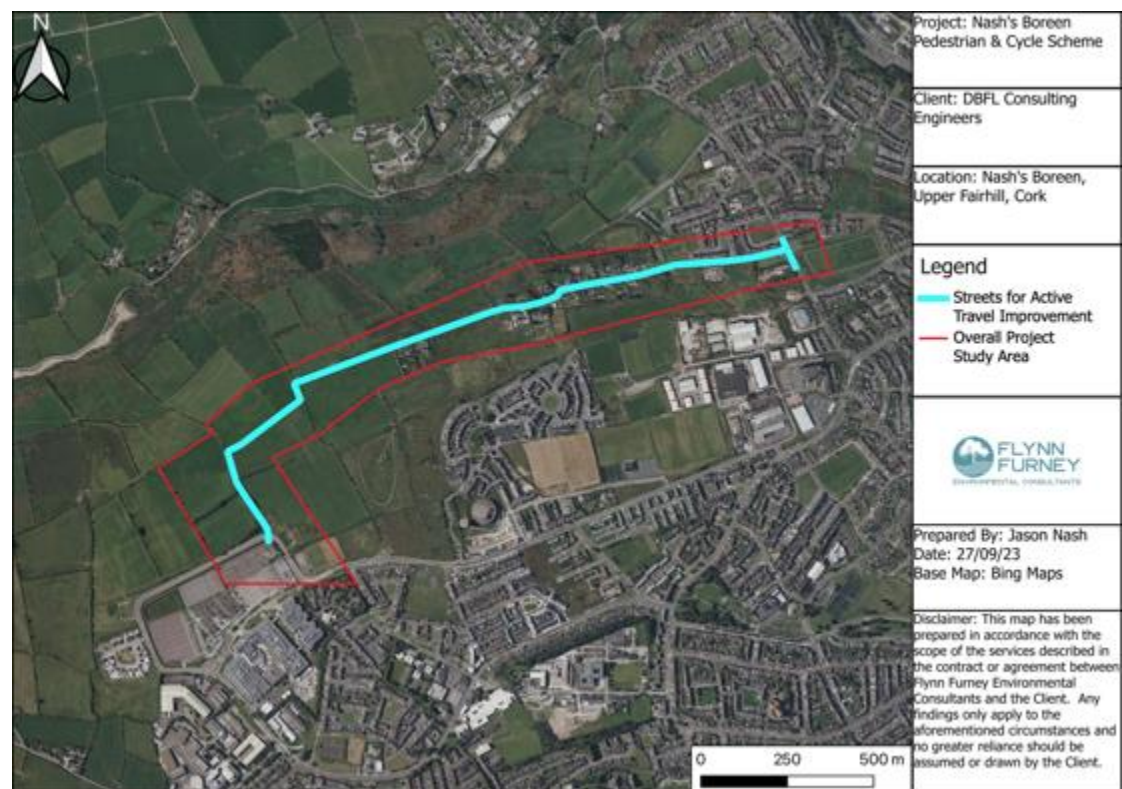


Figure 1: Nash's Boreen and overall study area.

3. Survey Methodologies

The following is a list of methodologies followed. Any environmental issues or concerns, such as hazardous material, were also recorded during the survey.

3.1. Habitat and Flora

All habitat types occurring within the survey area were recorded as per guidelines given by the Heritage Council (2010). Habitats were classified according to Fossitt (2000). Dominant vegetation types and species were noted.

3.2. Fauna

The survey for mammals involved direct observation (during daylight hours) of signs of mammalian activity. Targeted signs included mammal prints, tracks, spraints, holts and other resting places, water access points and evidence of feeding. Badger setts and otter holts were also targeted by the survey. All tangible signs were recorded.

Trees were visually assessed for suitability for bat roosts - having crevices, cracks or cavities.

3.3. Amphibians and Reptiles

All areas suitable for these species were noted. For amphibians these included pools, larger puddle areas (e.g. deep and long-standing ruts in tracks) and wet grasslands. Areas suitable for reptiles included areas of heath and where rocky outcrops occur.

3.4. Aquatic

All watercourses and drains present were surveyed for aquatic species potential. This was done by direct observation.

3.5. Birds

A dedicated birdsong survey was not carried out as part of the works. However, bird species were recorded and particular attention was paid to the presence birds of conservation concern (Birdwatch Ireland, 2013).

3.6. Invasive Alien Plant Species

All of the area under study was surveyed for the presence of non-native invasive species. Invasive species as listed on Sections 49 and 50 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477 of 2011) were surveyed for. The improper treatment of species listed in the above regulations constitutes an offence.

4. Survey Results

The pre-construction survey was conducted on September 11th, 2023.

- Habitats & Flora
- Fauna
- Amphibian and Reptiles
- Aquatic
- Avian
- Invasive Alien Plant Species

4.1 Habitats & Flora

The eastern end of the route starts at Upper Fairhill and proceeds along into Nash's Boreen, which is an artificial surface (**BL3**). This is bordered by grassy verge (**GS2**), stone wall (**BL1**), buildings (**BL3**) and a hedgerow (**WL1**) composed mainly of Waxyleaf privet (*Ligustrum quihoui*) on the southern side of the road and a pavement with residential buildings (**BL3**) and stone wall (**BL1**) on the northern side.

Proceeding westwards, surrounding lands on the southern side of Nash's Boreen are dominated by amenity grassland (**GA2**), with neutral grassland (**GS1**) further on, separated by an earth bank (**BL2**) from the road. This earth bank is composed of grass (*Lolium* spp.), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and nettle (*Urtica dioica*). Areas of scrub (**WS1**), dominated by bramble and nettle, are punctuated within the neutral grassland and amenity grassland. Trees such as hawthorn, sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and elder (*Sambucus nigra*) are punctuated along the earth bank on the southern side of the boreen, with a treeline (**WL2**) forming a field boundary, whilst a stone wall and residential buildings persist along the northern border.

At grid reference 51.91586, -8.49607, recolonising bare ground (**ED3**) and spoil and bare ground (**ED2**) is present on the northern side of the road to the west of the residential estate. An earth bank and scrub comprised of willow (*Salix* sp.) and gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) is present on the southern side opposite this area. Grassy verge is present once again west of these areas on both sides of the road, with a line of residential houses present to the north.

Stone walls and some flower beds and borders (**BC4**) are present on the both sides of the road, with hedgerows and earth banks also present and persisting eastwards until grid reference 51.91453, -8.50331 and the area becomes more semi-rural. At this point, neutral grassland is present to the south, whilst scrub and improved agricultural grassland is present to the north. Scrub is mostly composed of nettles and briars, with willowherb (*Epilobium* spp.) also dominant. Stone walls and earth banks form field boundaries here.

Some houses are present on the southern side again at grid reference 51.91344, -8.50706 and opposite this, past the northern side of the road, immature woodland (**WS2**) composed of silver birch (*Betula pendula*) and pine (*Pinus*) border a conifer plantation (**WD4**) composed of sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*). Patches of scrub are also present to the west of this plantation as improved agricultural grassland (**GA1**) is present to the south.

From this point until Nash's Boreen converges with Kilmore Heights at grid reference 51.90864, -8.51313, either side of the road is flanked with improved agricultural grassland. Stone walls act as field boundaries and these are flanked by scrub, hedgerows and treelines. Earth banks, with some mature trees, form boundaries between the road and fields.



Figure 2: Habitat Map (Section 1)



Figure 3: Habitat Map (Section 2)

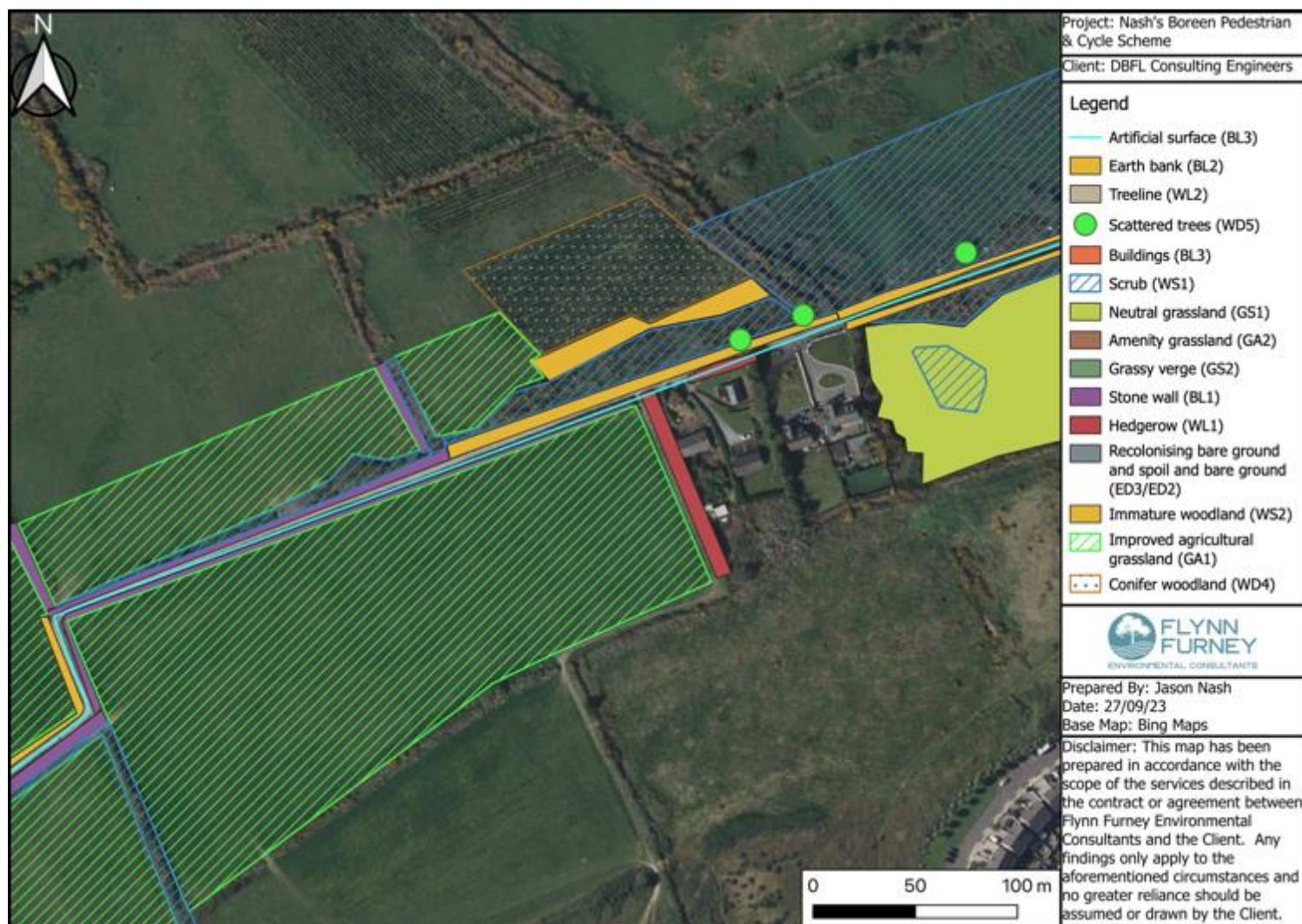


Figure 4: Habitat Map (Section 3)

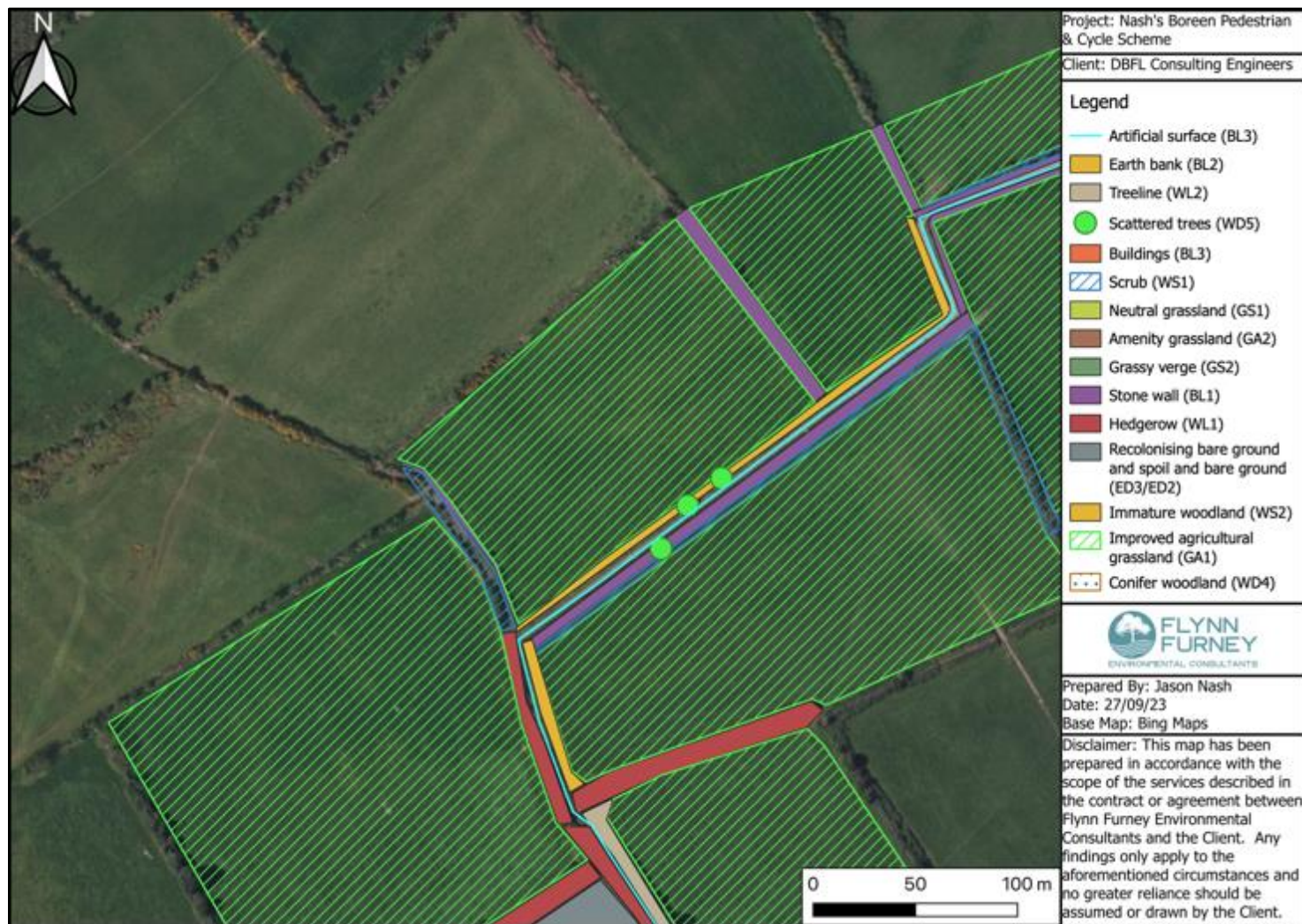


Figure 5: Habitat Map (Section 4)

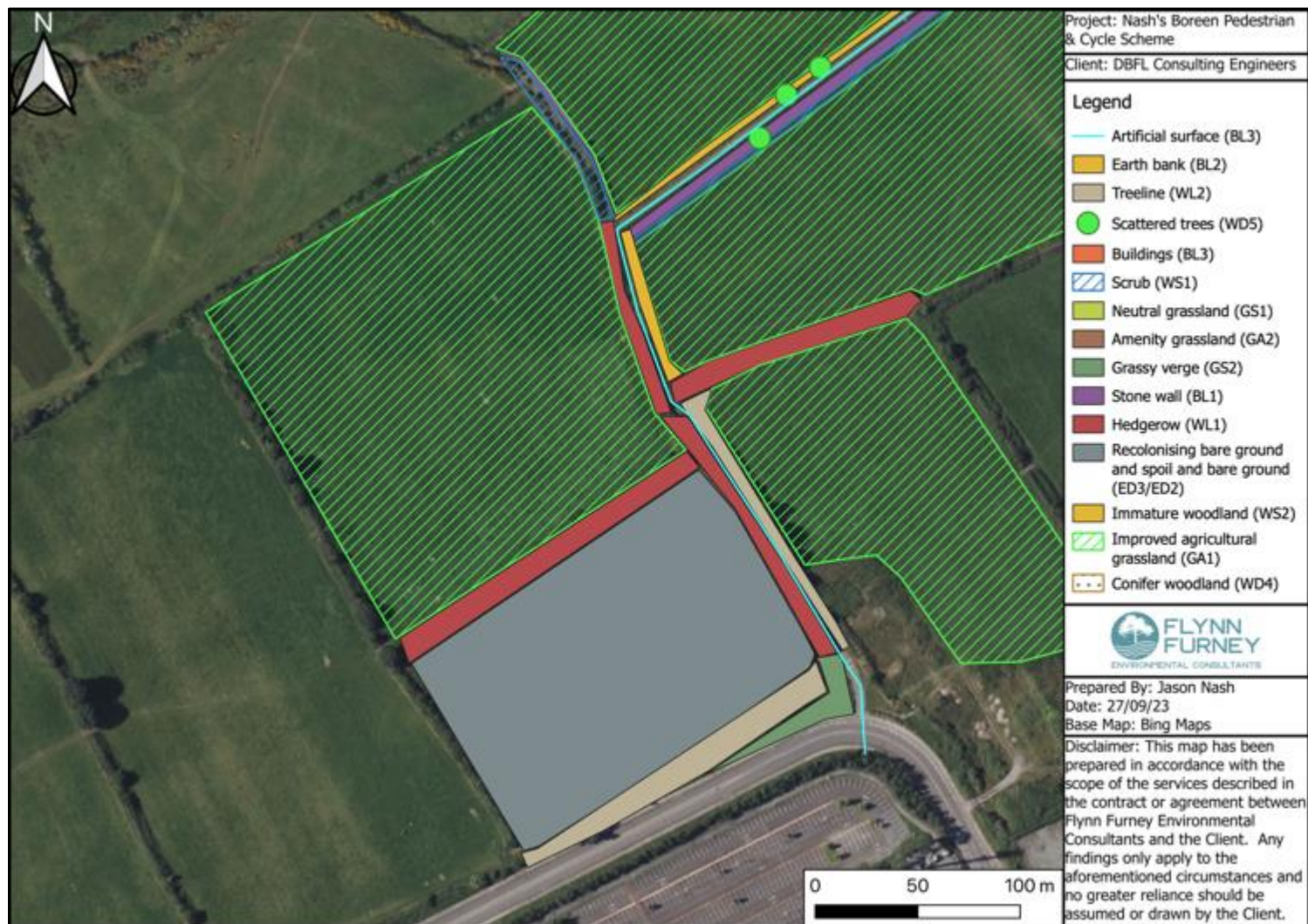


Figure 6: Habitat Map (Section 5)

4.2 Fauna

3 no. badger (*Meles meles*) faeces were recorded in fields adjacent to Nash's Boreen. These were all recorded west of the last house on the northern side of the road, and were all located on the northern side of the road. No other signs of mammal activity, such as setts, burrows, spraint or prints were observed.

No trees containing bat (*Chiroptera sp.*) potential were detected within the project works area. One building with bat potential, located on the eastern end by the Upper Fairhill Road at grid reference 51.91604, -8.49171, was recorded.

4.3 Amphibian and Reptiles

An amphibian survey was not carried out as part of this project, due to the lack of suitable habitat for spawning common frog (*Rana temporaria*) or smooth newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*) within the proposed works area.

4.4 Aquatic

No streams or drains will be crossed as part of this project. No watercourses are located within close proximity. The closest watercourse is the Bride River, a tributary of the Lee River, and is located 370m to the north of Nash's Boreen.

4.5 Avian

A dedicated bird survey was not carried out for this project. The proposed works may not involve removal of trees/other vegetation that might support nesting species. Clearance of vegetation may be able to avoid the bird nesting season (March 1st to August 31st inclusive). Otherwise, a pre-construction nesting survey may need to be carried out, depending on the timing of works.

4.6 Invasive Alien Plant Species

Invasive alien plant species (IAPS), listed under the 3rd Schedule of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 were recorded along and adjacent to the route. This included Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*).

Other IAPS were recorded adjacent to and along the route. These were:

- Old man's beard (*Clematis vitalba*)
- Winter heliotrope (*Petasites fragrans*)
- Fuchsia (*Fuchsia magellanica*)
- Butterfly bush (*Buddleja davidii*)
- Cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*)



Figure 7: IAPS Map (Section 1)



Figure 8:

IAPS Map (Section 2)

5. Recommendations

The following is a list of preliminary recommendations based on the surveys and consultations to date.

- All relevant method statements and plans (EOP etc.) are to be reviewed and contributed to where necessary by Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants.
- The bird nesting season is from the 1st of March to the 31st of August. If feasible, all vegetation should be cleared outside of this period. Once vegetation clearance commences, it is advised that areas with the highest potential for nesting birds, such as hedgerows, should be cleared first. Infrastructure projects have a derogation of the Wildlife Act to remove nesting habitat but must be mindful of nesting activity should it be found. Any potential habitat to be removed after March 1st must be surveyed for nesting activity within 48 hours beforehand. Should a nest be found, best practise dictates that NPWS should be notified and the nest be retained. Hazard tape should be erected 15m either side of the nest to retain the nest until the brood period has ended. This will be checked and determined by the site ecologist.
- Once vegetation clearance commences, it is important to note that a clear plan is required in order to clear all vegetation that requires clearing. This will ensure all vegetation is cleared efficiently and no unnecessary clearance is conducted.
- Scrub areas should be cleared under ecological supervision due to potential for mammal refuge areas being present. Some areas of scrub were too dense to survey and due to their composition, will remain so during the winter period.
- Where trees are to be preserved but require pruning to enable works, it is advised that a qualified tree surgeon is employed. Using a track machine to selectively prune trees will result in damaged tree limbs which will cause rot and disease in the tree.
- The design looks to minimise the loss of hedgerows or any trees. A select number of trees may need to be removed, as detailed in the Tree Survey. Any unforeseen tree works which have not been considered in the Tree Survey Report will require an ecological survey prior to works. Furthermore, the redevelopment of Nash's Boreen occurs in advance of the development of the Northwest Regional Park that will offer many opportunities for biodiversity enhancement and tree planting.
- Japanese Knotweed is present along the route. As it is part of the Third Schedule listed on Sections 49 and 50 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477 of 2011), it is advised that an Invasive Species Management Plan is drawn up prior to them commencement of any works onsite.

6. References

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