

M25 junction 28 improvement scheme

TR010029

6.3 Environmental Statement

Appendix 7.13: Dormouse survey

APFP Regulation 5(2)(a)
Planning Act 2008

Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009



Infrastructure Planning

Planning Act 2008

The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009

M25 junction 28 scheme Development Consent Order 202[x]

6.3 ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT 7.13: DORMOUSE SURVEY

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Appendix 7.13

Dormouse survey

Report



Hazel Dormice Survey Report: Junction 28 M25

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Revision History

Revision	Date	Amendment

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background and Survey Objectives

Surveys for hazel dormice using nest tubes were undertaken from June to November 2017 and this report documents their findings.

2 Methodology

2.1 Desk Study

Biological records for the site were obtained from Greenspace Information for Greater London (GIGL), Essex Records Centre (ERC) and Essex Field Club (EFC) in 2017 and updated in September 2019 to identify if any hazel dormice had been recorded within 2km of the DCO boundary.

2.2 Field Survey

The Survey Area for hazel dormouse focused on the land within the DCO boundary subject to impacts during construction and operation of the Scheme. For this reason, survey was focused on the land north west of Junction 28, where the new loop road will be constructed. Outside of this area, there are temporary works associated with the gas main diversion south of the A12 (west of junction 28). All other works within the DCO boundary are limited to the existing carriageway of the A12 and M25 (e.g. replacement of signs on existing gantries). As no potential impacts to hazel dormouse were identified in these areas, detailed survey work has not taken place.

A hazel dormouse survey, using dormouse nest tubes, was undertaken following the guidance in English Nature's (now Natural England) publication 'The Dormouse Conservation Handbook' (English Nature, 2006). Fifty nest tubes were set out in the woodland and hedgerows within and around the Survey Area, in positions as shown at Annex 1, in areas within or adjacent to habitat affected by the construction of the Scheme

The nest tubes were put in place on the 30th May 2017 by an experienced licensed surveyor (2016-26405-CLS-CLS – see Annex 2) and Senior Ecological Consultant. Following a settling-in period, the tubes were inspected for dormice or any evidence of dormice such as nests or feeding remains, on 21st June 2017, 25th July 2017, 31st August 2017, 21st September 2017, 25th October 2017 and 25th November 2017.

Using the points system suggested by Chanin and Woods (2003) this survey scores 20 points, which meets the minimum required for an adequate survey and to robustly assume absence.

2.3 Limitations

The original hazel dormouse survey did not cover the full Scheme extent as shown by the DCO boundary in Figure 1 due to access restrictions to the wider areas of the site such as to the south of the A12 . However further walkover surveys were completed in 2019 of land to the south of the A12 which identified that the area was unsuitable for hazel dormice due in part to recent landscaping works. Therefore, it is considered that all areas that had suitability for hazel dormice which would be directly impacted by the construction of the Scheme, as shown in Annex 1, was covered by the survey.

It was not possible to survey scrub vegetation directly adjacent to the M25 carriageway for health and safety reasons. However, the survey included woodland (Alder Wood) which is directly connected to the scrub habitat adjacent to the carriageway. Therefore, the results of the survey can be used to determine likely presence or absence of hazel dormouse from the areas inaccessible for survey.



Figure 1: DCO boundary highlighted in red (ADAS general mapping tool 2019)

3 Results

3.1 Desk Study

No biological records were identified for hazel dormice within 2km of the DCO boundary.

3.2 Field Survey

No hazel dormice or signs of hazel dormice were recorded during any of the surveys. The habitats within the Survey Area are considered to be sub-optimal for this species due to the lack of shrub layers as a result of heavy grazing by deer. The woodlands are dominated by standard trees and are open in nature with no understorey which would provide shelter and foraging habitat for dormice. The hedgerows are considered to provide more suitable habitat but with the exception of bramble do not provide a variety of foraging opportunities required to support this species, such as any of the other species typically associated with hazel dormice (e.g. hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*)).

4 Conclusions

The surveys undertaken between June and November 2017 did not identify the presence of hazel dormice within the Survey Area. Due to the impact of grazing by fallow deer the woodlands in the Survey Area do not have an understorey suitable for supporting this species. In addition, the hedgerows and trees/scrub along the brooks provide limited range food sources needed to support this species throughout the year.

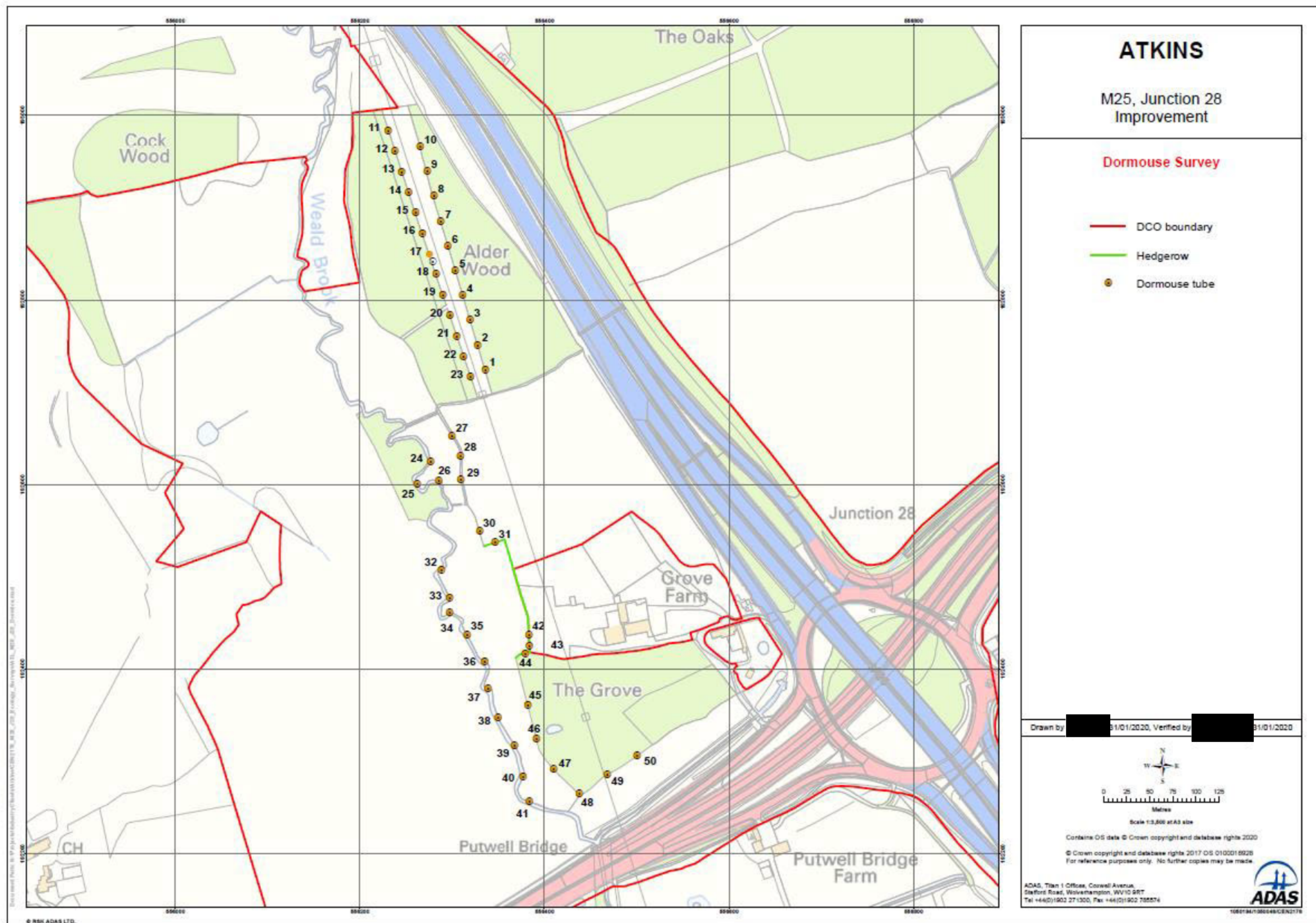
5 References

Chanin, P. and Woods, M. (2003) Surveying dormice using nest tubes Results and experiences from the South West Dormouse Project

English Nature (2006) The Dormouse Conservation Handbook (2nd edition)

Annex 1: Dormouse Nest Tube Location Plan

See following page



Annex 2: Surveyor experience

Surveyor 1: Has held a dormouse class licence for 3.5 years 2016-26405-CLS-CLS . Since then the surveyor has been surveying at a registered NDMP site, planning and leading professional dormouse surveys, and training other ecologists towards their dormouse licence.

Surveyor 2: The surveyor has been undertaking dormouse surveys for approximately four years, both on projects and voluntarily. This has involved setting up dormouse nest tubes for monitoring presence and absence and undertaking nut searches. The surveyor also provides support to clients on managing sites with dormice. The surveyor has also produced a mitigation licence for a development which impacted woodland supporting dormice species. This licence included the development of a mitigation and enhancement plan for the remaining woodland.

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