

Ecological feature, value, policy and legal framework and factors on which its integrity or conservation status depends	Proposed activity, biophysical change and relevance to receptor in terms of ecosystem structure and function	Characterisation of Impact	Ecologically significant if unmitigated? (Effect on integrity or conservation status if characterisation correct and confidence in this) and rationale	Mitigation proposals	Residual impact and ecological significance	
Construction Impacts						
<p>Name: Red Squirrels</p> <p>Regional Value</p> <p>Population Density: Low</p> <p>The red squirrel is listed on Appendix III of the Bern Convention and is protected by Schedules 5 and 6 of the WCA and Schedules 5 and 6 of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985.</p> <p>Listed as a priority species under the UK BAP which states that where possible current population should be maintained and enhanced.</p> <p>Presence of red squirrels identified in Woodland 1 as well as in most other woodlands nearby on both side of the AYYY.</p>	<p><i>Site Clearance</i></p> <p>Land-take for construction works would unavoidably remove some hedgerow sections, areas of scrub, mature and immature landscape planting, and approximately 0.4Ha of Woodland 1. Much of this habitat is likely to be used by red squirrels either for foraging or dispersal. No dreys were found.</p>	<p>SI: -ve</p> <p>PO: Certain</p> <p>CO: Direct</p> <p>EC: About 50% of the project will adjoin habitat used by Red Squirrels c.10.000m2</p> <p>MA: Complete loss</p> <p>RE: R</p> <p>DU: P</p> <p>HT: P</p>	<p>Significant (75%)</p> <p>Parts of the existing AXXX verge habitats appear to be helpful as part of the network of 'corridors' linking disparate foraging areas for squirrels. The loss of features that can be used by squirrels as dispersal routes could further fragment an already 'at risk' population. However, the total loss of habitat is likely to be insignificant, given the resource requirements of the resident animals.</p>	<p>New hedge, tree and shrub planting and hedgerow translocation would be designed with the specific aim of re-establishing important links rapidly and creating new ones. The tree and shrub species chosen are intended to maximise the foraging opportunities for red squirrels, whilst avoiding species that would favour grey squirrels.</p>	<p>Not significant</p>	
	<p><i>Disturbance during construction</i></p> <p>Some areas close to the scheme may become less attractive to squirrels through increases in noise and human presence.</p>	<p>SI: -ve</p> <p>PO: Probable</p> <p>CO: Indirect</p> <p>EC: 10,000m2 - 50% of project will adjoin habitat used by Red Squirrels.</p> <p>MA: Medium (already relatively disturbed habitat)</p> <p>RE: R</p> <p>DU: T</p> <p>HT: T</p>	<p>Not Significant (40%)</p> <p>Resident animals are likely to be habituated to disturbance due to presence of existing AXXX.</p>	<p>None Proposed</p>	<p>Not significant</p>	
	<p><i>Incidental mortality during site clearance</i></p> <p>Removing habitat used by Red Squirrels for both foraging and dispersal means that there is an associated risk that Red Squirrels will be killed incidentally as part of the site clearance operations.</p>	<p>SI: -ve</p> <p>PO: Unlikely</p> <p>CO: Direct</p> <p>EC: 10,000m2 - 50% of project impacts upon red Squirrel Habitat</p> <p>MA: Small</p> <p>RE: NR</p> <p>DU: P</p> <p>HT: P</p>	<p>Not Significant (70%)</p> <p>Current Survey revealed no dreys within vegetation that would have to be removed. Prior to works commencing this should be confirmed by a suitably experienced Ecological Clerk of Work, inspecting trees and other features of value to be removed immediately prior to site clearance. Any Red squirrel dreys identified that are likely to be affected would be removed between mid-October and January inclusive. Should dreys be identified outside this period the trees and surrounding vegetation would not be removed until mid-October unless it could be confirmed that Red Squirrels were no longer using this drey.</p>	<p>None Proposed</p>	<p>Not significant</p>	
	Operational Impacts					
	<p><i>Road Casualties</i></p> <p>Potential for squirrels to be hit by vehicles as they try to cross the motorway mainline, APR and other side roads.</p>	<p>SI: -ve</p> <p>PO: Unlikely</p> <p>CO: Indirect</p> <p>EC: About 50% of the project will run through habitat used by Red Squirrels</p> <p>MA: Small</p> <p>RE: NR</p> <p>DU: P</p> <p>HT: P</p>	<p>Not Significant (90%)</p> <p>Chance of Squirrels being run over is likely to return to largely similar levels as prior to scheme. Currently few squirrels appear to be killed.</p>	<p>None Proposed</p>	<p>Not significant</p>	
	<p><i>Inappropriate Landscaping Design</i></p> <p>The choice of large fruit and nut producing species for new planting alongside the scheme could potentially create conditions which would, in the future, facilitate the spread of grey squirrels.</p>	<p>SI: -ve</p> <p>PO: possible</p> <p>CO: Indirect</p> <p>EC: ??</p> <p>MA: Small</p> <p>RE: NR</p> <p>DU: P</p> <p>HT: P</p>	<p>Not Significant (70%)</p> <p>Risk of interspecific competition is unlikely as Grey Squirrel range does not extend into this part of the country.</p>	<p>The tree and shrub species chosen are intended to maximise the foraging opportunities for Red Squirrels, whilst avoiding large-seeded species that would favour Grey Squirrels in case Grey Squirrel expand their range because of for example population pressures or climate change.</p>	<p>Not significant</p>	