

Colin Murphy

From: Vincent O'Malley
Sent: Friday 29 August 2025 12:47
To: Colin Murphy
Cc: Christian Nea
Subject: Re: N22 Ovens Bridge Tree Removal [August 2025]

Hi Colin,
Having reviewed the content of your email, I accept the reasoned determination as set out below.
Sincerely
Vincent

Dr Vincent O'Malley

*Head of Environmental Policy & Compliance,
Transport Infrastructure Ireland*

www.tii.ie

From: Colin Murphy [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 28, 2025 12:40
To: Vincent O'Malley [REDACTED]
Cc: Christian Nea [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: N22 Ovens Bridge Tree Removal [August 2025]

Hi Vincent,

We have received an AA screening from Atkins Réalis for proposed tree removal works along the N22 within the River Bride at Oven, Co. Cork. I would be grateful if you could review the information below and provide a reasoned determination.

As noted in the text provided below, the proposed works will involve the removal of a number of tree trunks and branches from the River Bride, which have created a blockage before the bridge (CC-N22-018.00) at the junction of the N22/L5228/L2209. This blockage has reduced the normal rate of flow at this section of the river, and is resulting in an increased stress load to the bridge structure as more material builds up and the carrying capacity of the river is reduced. It is noted below that the works will be carried out in February 2025, however Atkins Réalis have corrected this and confirmed the works would occur sometime between September and December 2025. The proposed works are expected to occur over a duration of four hours, to be completed without interruption and within a single day.

The proposed works are located on the River Bride (EPA name: Bride (Cork)). The river flows north towards the City Centre, where it merges with the River Lee, which then flows eastwards before discharging into Lough Mahon. Lough Mahon and the wider Cork Harbour area host two Natura 2000 sites: the Great Island Channel SAC and the Cork Harbour SPA. Therefore, there is hydrological connectivity between the proposed works and two no. Natura 2000 sites (24.76km and 20.01km downstream respectfully). Great Island Channel SAC is designated for two marine QI habitats while the Cork Harbour SPA is designated for SCI species, including winter waders and waterbirds and supporting wetland habitat.

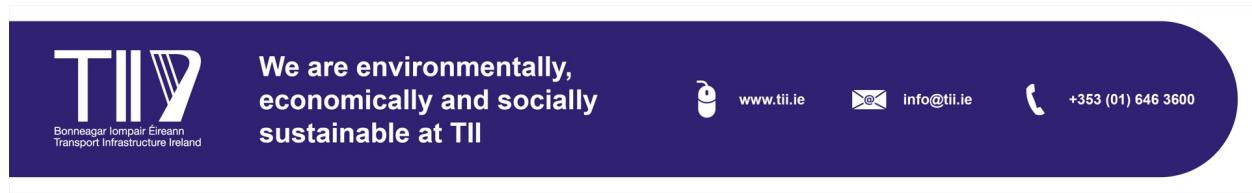
The text below notes '*While there is hydrological connectivity between these designated sites and the site of the proposed works, the works are of a short duration (approximately four continuous hours during a single day) and the methodology to be followed ensures the risk of any additional debris or pollutants entering the river channel is low. In the event of such, the distance between the proposed works and the designated sites would create a dilution effect that would have a negligible impact on the water quality at the designated sites*'.

Based on the description of the proposed works and associated methodologies provided by Atkins Réalis, along with the small nature and scale and short duration and significant hydrological distance to the nearest Natura 2000 site, I agree with the conclusion that the proposed works will not lead to likely significant effects on the Great Island Channel SAC and the Cork Harbour SPA or any other Natura 2000 site.

Having performed screening for Appropriate Assessment in respect of the proposed emergency repair works detailed in the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report received in an email from Paul O'Donoghue dated the 22nd of August 2025, and entitled 'N22 Ovens Bridge Tree Removal [August 2025]', I accept the recommendation of AtkinsRéalis that the proposed works, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, would not be likely to have a significant effect on any European site in view of the best scientific knowledge and the site's conservation objectives. I determine that an Appropriate Assessment of these proposed works is not required, as it can be excluded on the basis of objective scientific information following the screening done that the proposed works, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on any European site.

Regards,
Colin Murphy
Ecologist
Transport Infrastructure Ireland
[REDACTED]

[Address: Parkgate Business Centre, Parkgate Place, Parkgate Street, Dublin 8, Ireland, D08 DK10](#)



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From: Christian Nea [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday 22 August 2025 10:05
To: Colin Murphy [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: N22 Ovens Bridge Tree Removal [August 2025]

From: O'Donoghue, Paul [REDACTED]
Sent: 21 August 2025 14:34
To: Christian Nea [REDACTED]
Cc: Harrigan, Greg [REDACTED]; Schmidt, Alec [REDACTED]; Woodland, Mark [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: N22 Ovens Bridge Tree Removal [August 2025]

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Dear Christian

Re: N22 Ovens Bridge Tree Removal

As part of the MMArc project, AtkinsRéalis have been requested to undertake Stage 1 Screening for Appropriate Assessment for the proposed tree removal works within the River Bride at Ovens, Co. Cork. The proposed works are located on the River Bride at the junction between the N22, L5228 and L2209 roads in Ovens, Co. Cork. The river runs northwards adjacent to the L2209, passing underneath the bridge (CC-N22-018.00) which carries the N22 across the river, before continuing northwards adjacent to the L5228 (Figure 1 & 2). The proposed works are not related to or directly associated with the management of any Natura 2000 site.

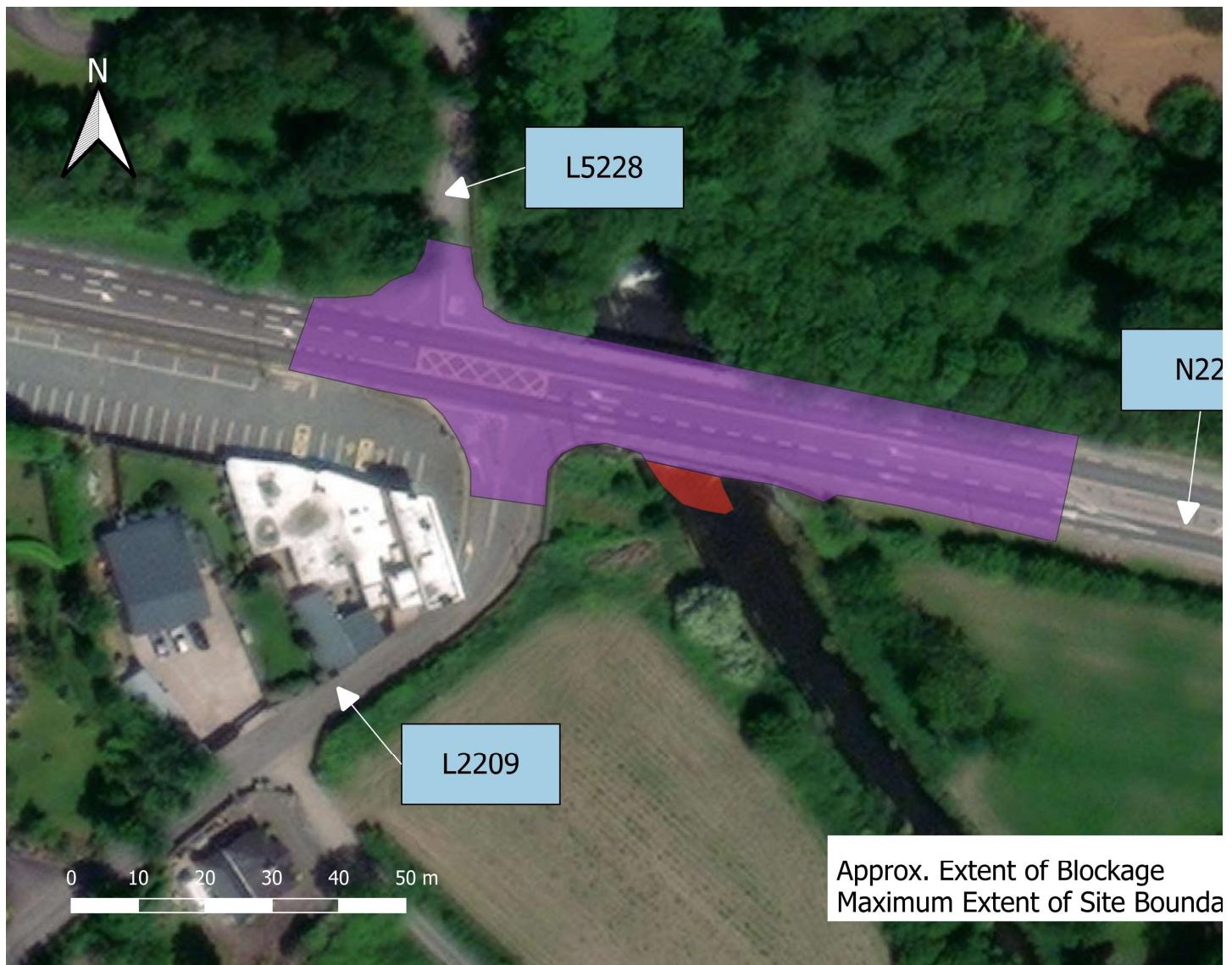


Figure 1: Approximate site boundary of the proposed works on the River Bride at the junction of the N22/L5228/L2209 in Ovens, Co. Cork. [Basemap: ESRI].

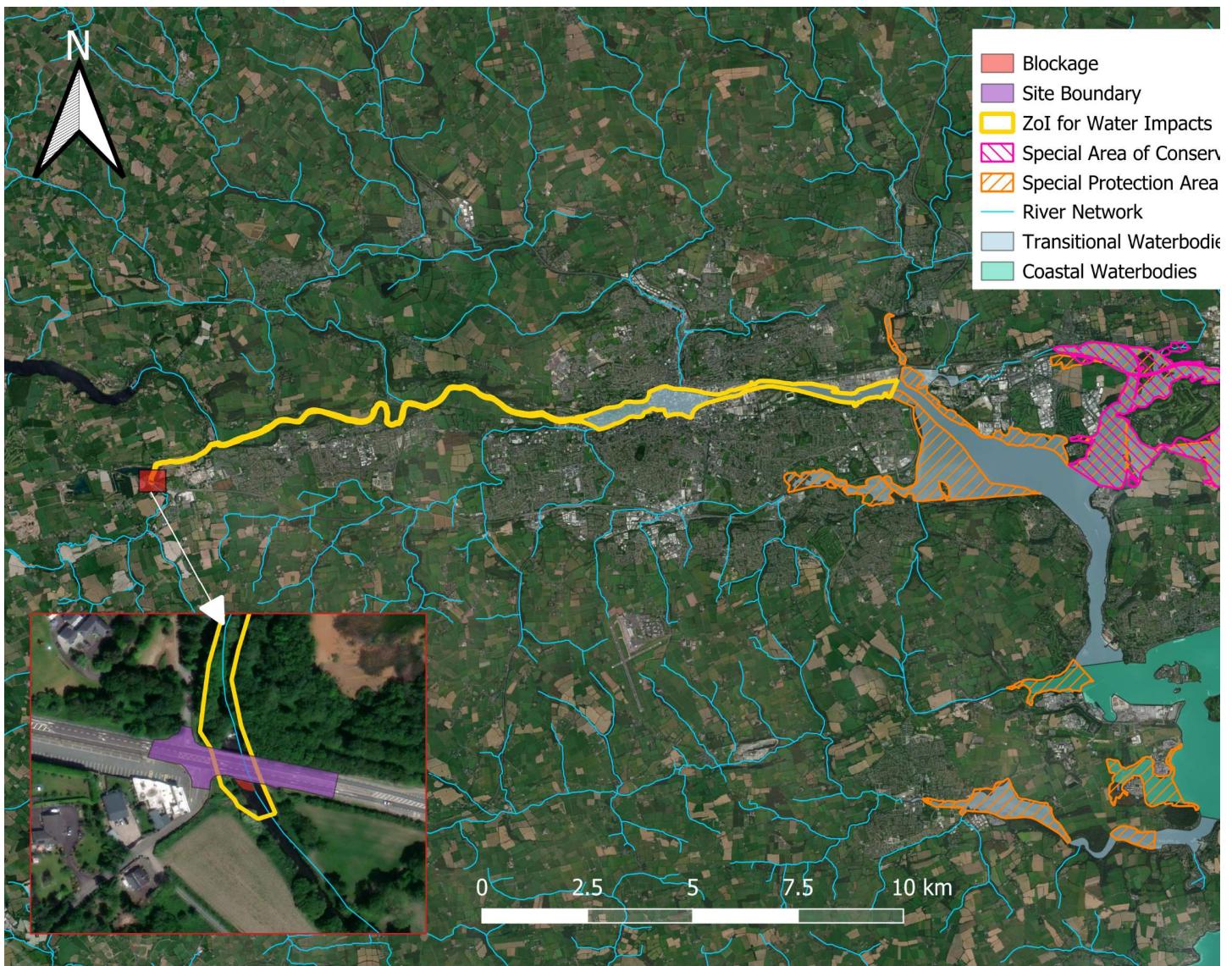


Figure 2: Location of the proposed works in relation to the location of Natura 2000 sites. [Basemap: ESRI].

Proposed Works

Periods of heavy rainfall and high flow events have washed a number of tree trunks and branches from dead trees into the River Bride, which have created a blockage before the bridge (CC-N22-018.00) at the junction of the N22/L5228/L2209. This blockage has reduced the normal rate of flow at this section of the river, and is resulting in an increased stress load to the bridge structure as more material builds up and the carrying capacity of the river is reduced. The Contractor has been commissioned by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) to remove the vegetation that is obstructing the normal rate of flow of the river. The Contractor is expected to mobilise in early February, 2025. The proposed works are expected to occur over a duration of four hours, to be completed without interruption and within a single day. Access to the site of the proposed works will be from the N22, which will be closed to traffic on the westbound side to facilitate access and create a staging area for the works. All plant and materials will be removed from the site upon the conclusion of the works.

Part of the proposed works will require the use of machinery above the river channel. Oil absorbent booms and pads, grab ropes and silt trapping booms will be on-site to ensure that there is no input of additional debris or pollutants into the river arising from the proposed works in the event of an oil leak or if silt is disturbed within the river channel. Forecasts will also be consulted prior to commencing works to ensure that high winds or rain do not flush any debris or other material associated with the proposed works into the river channel.

Methodology

Mobilisation

- All personnel will be made familiar with the Risk Assessment and Method Statement (RAMS) by the ELS supervisor prior to arrival on site.
- Tools and equipment will be checked and certified, and personnel will be briefed prior to accessing the site.
- Advanced notice regarding the closure of the westbound lane of the N22 will be posted one week before the commencement of the works.
- Forecasts will be consulted daily and works will be cancelled for the scheduled day if there is a strong risk of high winds or high rainfall.
- Access to the site will be undertaken from the J3 on-ramp which will be manned.
- Overhead services / obstructions will be checked prior to the commencement of the vegetation removal to ensure they do not come into contact with the vehicles, equipment or personnel.

Vegetation Removal

- Vegetation removal will be conducted using a Sennebogen material handler.
- The works will be conducted from the roadside as much as possible. The cab of the handler can be raised over the parapet so that the works area is viewable by the operator. Manual removal methods will be utilised in cases where tree material lies outside of the mechanical reach of the Sennebogen material handler.
- An on-ground spotter will be in place to ensure unauthorised persons do not enter the area near the machinery or in the felling zone. The operatives of the machinery will commence the works only when the on-ground spotter verifies that the surroundings are clear.
- The tree material removed from the river will be cut and chipped on-site by trained personnel from Noel Kelleher Tree Services.
- Oil absorbent booms will be placed adjacent to the works on stand-by in the event of an oil leak. Silt trapping booms will also be on stand-by, to be deployed downstream if the works disturb the sediment within the river channel at any point. Every effort will be taken to ensure that the vegetation removal does not disturb the silt within the river.
- Grab ropes will be installed on both sides of the river, approximately 200-300mm above the water level.

Note: - This was reviewed last year for tree blockages at the same location in February 2025. The blockage is approximately in the same location, with some also under the bridge in this instance – see attached photographs. As you can see the water level is very low at present, so access on foot is fairly easy, which would allow sections to be easily cut and lifted clear. Should water levels rise before works can be undertaken the more conservative approach as outlined above will be followed.

Demobilisation:

- Grab ropes and booms, any debris remaining on the riverside, and all vehicles and equipment will be removed before leaving the site.

Ecological Constraints

The proposed works are located along the River Bride (EPA name: Bride (Cork)). The river flows north towards the City Centre, where it merges with the River Lee, which then flows eastwards before discharging into Lough Mahon. Lough Mahon and the wider Cork Harbour area host two Natura 2000 sites: the Great Island Channel SAC and the Cork Harbour SPA. Therefore, there is hydrological connectivity between the proposed works and two no. Natura 2000 sites.

The Great Island Channel SAC (site code 001058) is situated within Cork Harbour to the east of Lough Mahon / Little Island. Great Island Channel SAC is designated for *Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]* and *Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) [1330]* (see - <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/001058>). The distance from the works to Great Island Channel SAC is ca. 24.76km downstream at its closest extent. None of the habitats for which the SAC has been designated are located at the works area.

The Cork Harbour SPA (site code 004030) is situated within Lough Mahon and Cork Harbour. Cork Harbour SPA is designated for wintering waterbirds and breeding Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*), as well as the wetland habitats that support these species (see - <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/spa/004030>). The river distance from the works to Cork Harbour SPA - Douglas Estuary is 20.01km downstream at its closest point. The works area does not support suitable habitat for any of the species for which Cork Harbour SPA has been designated.

The water quality of the River Bride (labelled as Bride (Cork)) monitored under the Water Framework Directive (2016-2021) has been assessed as 'Good'.

The River Bride supports a population of Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo salar*), with suitable spawning ground present at numerous sites along the river. However, there are no records of Atlantic salmon within the immediate vicinity of the proposed works. Furthermore, Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) were contacted in relation to the proposed works and no additional mitigation measures are required. While there may be a slight disturbance should salmon be within the vicinity of the proposed works, the removal of the tree material that has created a blockage at the bridge will improve fish passage at this section of the river. There are no records of invasive species within the immediate vicinity of the site boundary, although Japanese Knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) and Winter Heliotrope (*Petasites fragans*) have been recorded as close as 1.3km downstream of the site of the proposed works (Source: NBDC Biodiversity Maps - <https://maps.biodiversityireland.ie/Map/Terrestrial/Dataset/397>).

Screening Comments

The proposed works will not occur within a designated site. The proposed works are located ca. 24.76km upstream from the Great Island Channel SAC and ca. 20.01km upstream from the Cork Harbour SPA. While there is hydrological connectivity between these designated sites and the site of the proposed works, the works are of a short duration (approximately four continuous hours during a single day) and the methodology to be followed ensures the risk of any additional debris or pollutants entering the river channel is low. In the event of such, the distance between the proposed works and the designated sites would create a dilution effect that would have a negligible impact on the water quality at the designated sites.

This Stage 1 Screening for Appropriate Assessment is based on the best available scientific information. If the scope of the proposed works changes, a new screening determination may be required. It is concluded that the works, as currently proposed, will result in no likely significant effects on the aforementioned Natura 2000 sites, either alone or in-combination with other projects. Thus, it is recommended that it is not necessary for the proposed project to proceed to Appropriate Assessment.

Would you be able to review the above and provide a Determination. Many thanks.

Regards

Paul

Paul O'Donoghue BSc MSc PhD MCIEEM CEnv



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