

A1 in Northumberland: Morpeth to Ellingham

Scheme Number: TR010041

6.7 Environmental Statement – Appendix 9.18 Otter Monitoring Survey Report

Part A

APFP Regulation 5(2)(a)

Planning Act 2008

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

June 2020

Infrastructure Planning

Planning Act 2008

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

**The A1 in Northumberland: Morpeth to Ellingham
Development Consent Order 20[xx]**

Environmental Statement - Appendix

Regulation Reference:	APFP Regulation 5(2)(a)
Planning Inspectorate Scheme Reference	TR010041
Application Document Reference	TR010041/APP/6.7
Author:	A1 in Northumberland: Morpeth to Ellingham Project Team, Highways England

Version	Date	Status of Version
Rev 0	June 2020	Application Issue



Highways England

A1 IN NORTHUMBERLAND: MORPETH TO FELTON

Appendix 9.18: Otter Monitoring Survey Report

APPENDIX 9.18: OTTER MONITORING SURVEY REPORT

.

PROJECT NO. 70044136

OUR REF. NO. HE551459-WSP-EGN-M2F-RP-LE-1942

DATE: OCTOBER 2019

CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1.	PROJECT BACKGROUND	1
1.2.	ECOLOGICAL BACKGROUND	1
1.3.	OBJECTIVES	1
2.	METHODS	2
2.1.	CAMERA TRAP DEPLOYMENT	2
2.2.	NOTES AND LIMITATIONS	2
3.	RESULTS AND EVALUATION	3
3.1.	WALKOVER SURVEY	3
3.2.	CAMERA TRAP MONITORING	3
4.	IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHEME	4
5.	REFERENCES	5

FIGURES

Figure 1 - Scheme Location and Camera Trap Locations	6
--	---

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A PHOTOGRAPHS	
------------------------	--

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Otter holt monitoring surveys were undertaken in 2018. Camera traps were deployed along the River Coquet and Longdike Burn to monitor features potentially used by otter *Lutra lutra*. This was completed following previous otter surveys carried out to inform the A1 in Northumberland: Morpeth to Felton (hereafter referred to as 'the Scheme') (**Ref 1.1**).

Previous surveys carried out in 2016 identified four potential holts (PH) along the two watercourses (PH1, PH2, PH3 and PH4) that bisect the Scheme (**Figure 1**). Prior to camera traps being deployed, a walkover survey confirmed the absence of PH2. As such, PH2 was excluded from further monitoring. PH4, located on Longdike Burn, was scoped out of further assessment as it was 300 m from the Scheme.

Two camera traps were deployed to monitor PH1 (Camera Traps A and B) along the River Coquet and two were deployed to monitor PH3 (Camera Traps E and F) along Longdike Burn. A further two camera traps were deployed along the River Coquet to monitor any additional otter activity close to where PH2 was previously located (Camera Traps C and D). Traps were deployed for a total of fifteen days between 22nd August and 6th September 2018.

Camera traps monitoring PH1 and PH3 did not record any otter activity. Additionally, no otter activity was recorded along the River Coquet by Camera Traps C and D. Otters are known to use different areas within their territories at different times of the year. Given that both watercourses support features suitable to accommodate otter resting sites, it remains possible that otter may be active along the River Coquet and Longdike Burn at a later date. Mitigation in relation to the presence of otter within the wider landscape is fully addressed within the ES Chapter, which includes recommendations for a pre-commencement walkover survey to confirm there are no changes to the baseline conditions concerning otter presented within this report.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1. Otter holt monitoring surveys were undertaken in 2018. Camera traps were deployed to monitor features potentially used by otter *Lutra lutra* as holts on two watercourses crossed by the A1 in Northumberland: Morpeth to Felton (hereafter referred to as the 'Scheme').
- 1.1.2. The Scheme aims to increase capacity along an approximately 12.6 km section of the existing A1 between Morpeth and Felton in Northumberland. It includes 6.1 km on-line widening and 6.5 km of new off-line highway. The Scheme also aims to improve journey times and safety along the route. The boundary of the Scheme is taken as the Order Limits, as shown in **Figure 1**.
- 1.1.3. The Scheme includes the construction of a new bridge over the River Coquet and works on and in close proximity to Longdike Burn (including culvert extension and general construction).

1.2. ECOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 1.2.1. Previous ecological surveys along these watercourses undertaken in 2016 and 2017 (**Ref. 1.1**) recorded the following four potential otter holts within the surveyed area:
 - § River Coquet, NZ 1745 9978, hereafter referred to as 'PH1'.
 - § River Coquet, NZ 1761 9989, hereafter referred to as 'PH2'.
 - § Longdike Burn, NZ 1800 9689, hereafter referred to as 'PH3'.
 - § Longdike Burn, NZ 1811 9746, hereafter referred to as 'PH4'.
- 1.2.2. The locations of PH1, PH2 and PH3 are illustrated in **Figure 1**. A Camera trap was used to monitor PH1 in 2016, and no evidence of use by otter was recorded. The other potential holts were not subject to monitoring at that time. PH4 is located approximately 300 m from the Scheme and was therefore scoped out from further assessment and is not considered within this report.

1.3. OBJECTIVES

- 1.3.1. This report details the findings of monitoring surveys undertaken in August/September 2018 and is intended to supplement the 2016/17 baseline survey report (**Ref. 1.1**). The findings of the surveys were used to inform the impact assessment of the Scheme in relation to otter and mitigation development as part of the Environmental Statement (ES) (**Chapter 9: Biodiversity, Volume 2** of this ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010041/APP/6.2**)).

2. METHODS

2.1. CAMERA TRAP DEPLOYMENT

- 2.1.1. A walkover survey of the River Coquet and Longdike Burn was undertaken in August 2018 to update the baseline information and confirm that potential holt features PH1, PH2 and PH3 remained present.
- 2.1.2. Subsequently, two camera traps (Camera Traps A and B) were deployed to monitor PH1 along the River Coquet and two camera traps (Camera Traps E and F) to monitor PH3 along Longdike Burn (**Figure 1**). Camera traps were secured to nearby mature trees and, between the two camera traps deployed at each location, all possible access and egress points were within view. Vegetation that might have obscured or trigger the trap was removed, where possible, before deployment.
- 2.1.3. During the walkover survey, there was no evidence of PH2 being present. However, two camera traps (Camera Traps C and D) were deployed facing out onto the River Coquet to capture any otter activity that might have occurred along the watercourse near to where PH2 was previously located (**Figure 1**).
- 2.1.4. Camera traps were left *in situ* for a total of fifteen days; deployed on 22nd August and collected on 6th September 2018. Camera deployment and collection was undertaken by an experienced ecologist with prior experience in camera trapping for otter and other mammals, assisted by a graduate ecologist. Knowledge of otter ecology, field signs and survey methodologies was extracted from relevant field guides and other literature (**Ref. 1.2, Ref. 1.3**).

2.2. NOTES AND LIMITATIONS

- 2.2.1. Camera Trap C, facing south-west across the River Coquet, was moved by a member of the public on 1st September 2018 at 15.09pm but was replaced on the same date at 15.19pm. The placement of the camera trap when fixed back to the tree was very similar to where it had been previously. As the camera trap was removed for only a short period of time during daylight hours and given that the subsequent data recorded was from a similar viewpoint to the original, this action did not have an impact on the findings of the survey or the validity of the data collected.

3. RESULTS AND EVALUATION

3.1. WALKOVER SURVEY

- 3.1.1. During the walkover survey, no evidence was found of PH2, which had been recorded in 2017 along the River Coquet (void under bankside tree on northern bank). Associated field signs, including a nearby run/ slide, were also not evident. It was concluded that this potential holt feature was no longer present.
- 3.1.2. PH1 was still present in the form of a void beneath a tree on the south bank of the river to the immediate east of the existing road bridge, intertwined with large cobbles (Plate 1, **Appendix A**). PH3 was also present, as a dry, shelf-like hollow within the bank side amongst tree roots at the northern entrance of a culvert (Plate 4, **Appendix A**).

3.2. CAMERA TRAP MONITORING

- 3.2.1. No otter activity was recorded by any of the six camera traps deployed and there was no evidence indicating otter activity at the two potential holt features (PH1 and PH3). However, the surveyed area is still considered to be suitable to support otter, and it is possible that otter may be detected at other times of year. This suitability extends to features along the River Coquet and Longdike Burn that are suitable for use as breeding and resting sites.
- 3.2.2. Presence of American mink *Neovison vison* was confirmed by footage from Camera Trap F along Longdike Burn (Plate 5, **Appendix A**).

4. IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHEME

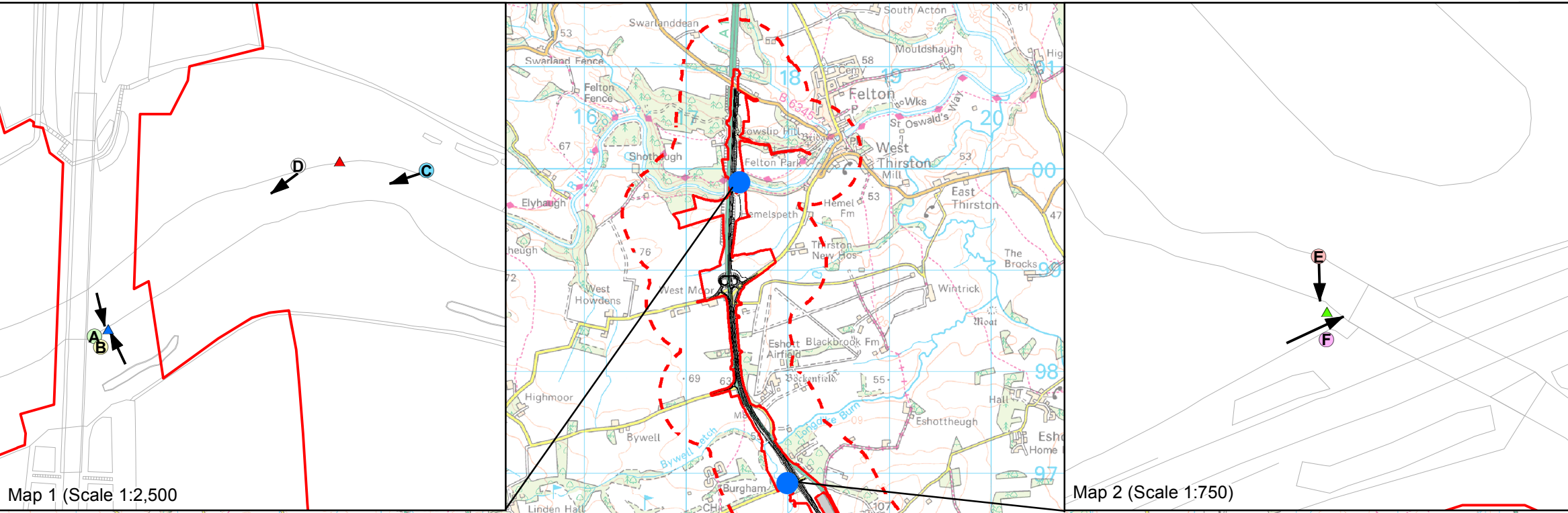
- 4.1.1. The survey results indicate that PH1 and PH3 are not otter holts and therefore are not constraints to the Scheme. PH2 was confirmed to be no longer present along the River Coquet and PH4 was scoped out of further assessment given its location 300 m from the Scheme.
- 4.1.2. Mitigation in relation to the presence of otter within the wider area is detailed within the ES.

5. REFERENCES

Ref 1.1 - Jacobs (2018). *A1 in Northumberland, BS2104700/OD/263, Water Vole and Otter Survey Report*. Version 1.3, August 2018.

Ref 1.2 - Muir, G. and Morris, P. (2013). *How to Find and Identify Mammals*. The Mammal Society, Southampton.

Ref 1.3 - Mason, C, E and Macdonald, S, M. (2008). *Otters: Ecology and Conservation*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.



Key

- Order Limits
- General Arrangement
- Areas Excluded from Order Limits
- 500m Study Area

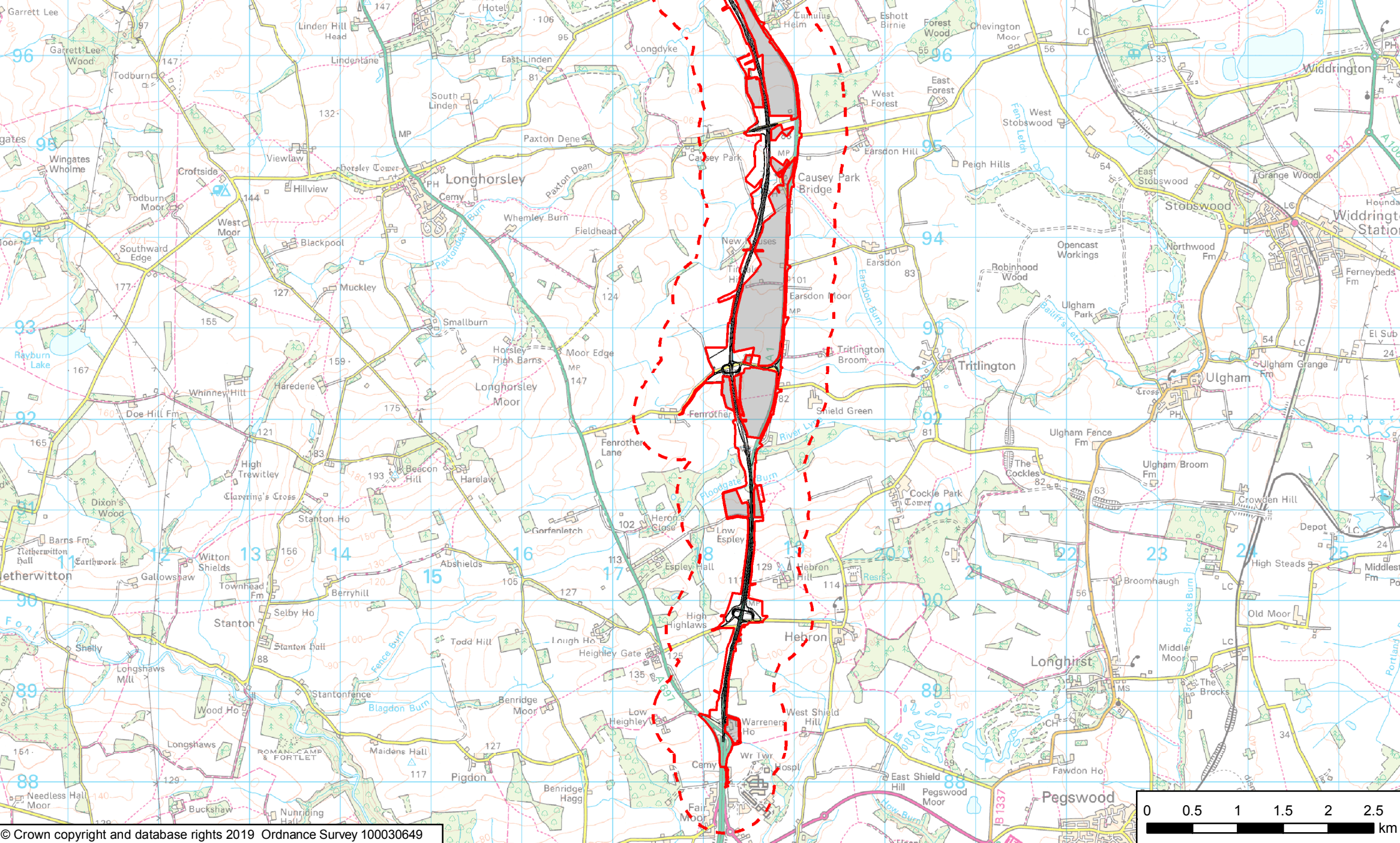
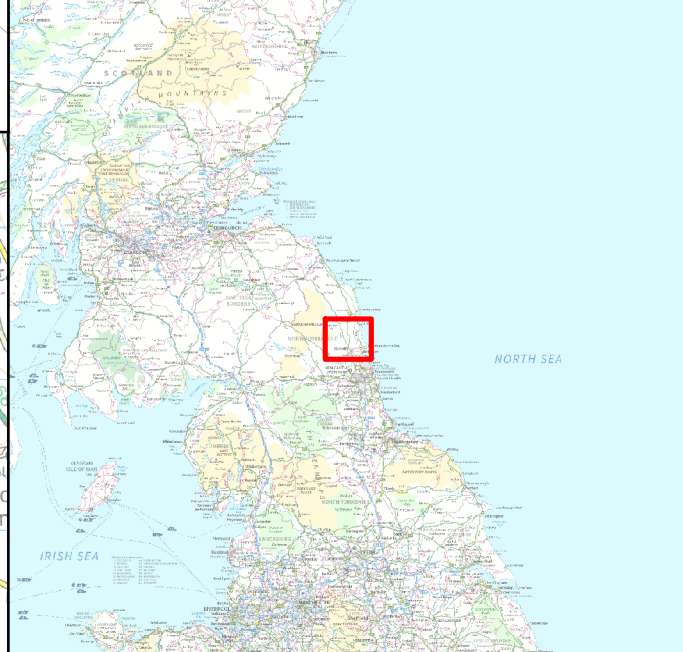
Camera Trap Locations

- A
- B
- C
- D
- E
- F

Potential Otter Holts

- ▲ Potential Otter Holt PH1
- ▲ Potential Otter Holt PH2
- ▲ Potential Otter Holt PH3

← Direction of camera



Rev	Date	Description	By	Chk'd	App'd
P02	12/07/19	Second Issue	GH	JF	NM
P01	28/03/18	First Issue	JSdS	JF	SP

Client

Project Title: A1 in Northumberland: Morpeth to Felton

Drawing Title: Figure 1 - Extent of Scheme and Camera Trap Locations




Scale	Drawn	Checked	Approved	Authorised
1:50,000	JSdS	JF	SP	DM
Original Size	Date	Date	Date	Date
A3	07/08/2018	07/08/2018	07/08/2018	07/08/2018



Drawing Status: For Information Suitability: S1

Drawing Number	Originator	Volume	Project Ref. No.
HE551459	WSP	6.3	70044136
Revision			
M2F	Type	Role	Number
Location			P02

Appendix A

PHOTOGRAPHS

Watercourse	Plate Number	Description	Image
River Coquet	1	PH1 at bottom of bankside tree (circled red). View from Camera Trap A. All Images taken using iPhone 5 camera.	
River Coquet	2	View of the River Coquet as seen from Camera Trap C.	
River Coquet	3	View from Camera Trap D along River Coquet.	

Watercourse	Plate Number	Description	Image
Longdike Burn	4	PH3 (circled red) along Longdike Burn as seen from opposite side of the watercourse by Camera Trap E.	
Longdike Burn	5	American mink captured on camera trap F on 29/08/2018 (circled red). Observed close to PH3 along Longdike Burn.	 <p data-bbox="799 1413 1294 1435">Lit Acorn 051F 011C 08/29/2018 21:52:58</p>

© Crown copyright 2020.

You may re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence:

visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/

write to the **Information Policy Team, The National Archives,**

Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email

psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This document is also available on our website at www.gov.uk/highways

If you have any enquiries about this document A1inNorthumberland@highwaysengland.co.uk or call **0300 470 4580***.

*Calls to 03 numbers cost no more than a national rate call to an 01 or 02 number and must count towards any inclusive minutes in the same way as 01 and 02 calls.

These rules apply to calls from any type of line including mobile, BT, other fixed line or payphone. Calls may be recorded or monitored.

Registered office Bridge House, 1 Walnut Tree Close, Guildford GU1 4LZ

Highways England Company Limited registered in England and Wales number 09346363