

A1 in Northumberland: Morpeth to Ellingham

Scheme Number: TR010059

7.6B Statement of Common Ground with Natural England

Rule 8 (1)(e)

Planning Act 2008

Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010

June 2021

Infrastructure Planning

Planning Act 2008

**The Infrastructure Planning
(Examination Procedure) Rules
2010**

**The A1 in Northumberland: Morpeth to
Ellingham**

Development Consent Order 20[xx]

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

- 1.1.1. This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) relates to an application made by Highways England (the Applicant) on 7 July 2020 to the Secretary of State for Transport via the Planning Inspectorate (the “Inspectorate”) under the Planning Act 2008 (the “2008 Act”) for a Development Consent Order (DCO). The application was accepted for examination by the Inspectorate on 4 August 2020.
- 1.1.2. If made, the DCO would grant consent for the A1 in Northumberland, Morpeth to Ellingham (the “Scheme”). The Scheme is formed of two parts as follows: A1 Morpeth to Felton (Part A) and A1 Alnwick to Ellingham (Part B). A detailed description of the Scheme can be found in Chapter 2: The Scheme of the Environmental Statement (ES) [APP-037].
- 1.1.3. This SoCG does not seek to replicate information which is available elsewhere within the application documents. All documents are available on the Inspectorate website <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/North%20East/A1-in-Northumberland---Morpeth-to-Ellingham/>
- 1.1.4. The SoCG has been produced to confirm to the Examining Authority where agreement has been reached between the parties to it, and where agreement has not (yet) been reached. SoCGs are an established means in the planning process of allowing all parties to identify and so focus on specific issues that may need to be addressed during the examination.

1.2 PARTIES TO THIS STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

- 1.2.1. This SoCG has been prepared by (1) Highways England as the Applicant and (2) Natural England.
- 1.2.2. Highways England became the Government owned Strategic Highways Company on 1 April 2015. It is the highway authority in England for the strategic road network and has the necessary powers and duties to operate, manage, maintain and enhance the network. Regulatory powers remain with the Secretary of State. The legislation establishing Highways England made provision for all legal rights and obligations of the Highways Agency, including in respect of the Application, to be conferred upon or assumed by Highways England.
- 1.2.3. Natural England is the government’s adviser for the natural environment in England, helping to protect England’s nature and landscapes for people to enjoy and for the services they provide. Within England, they are responsible for:
- a. promoting nature conservation and protecting biodiversity;
 - b. conserving and enhancing the landscape;
 - c. promoting access to the countryside and open spaces and encouraging open-air recreation; and
 - d. contributing in other ways to social and economic well-being through management of the natural environment, e.g. changes to wildlife licensing to improve flexibility for developers.

1.3 TERMINOLOGY

- 1.3.1. The tables within Chapter 3 of this SoCG, “Not Agreed” indicates a final position, and “Under Discussion” where these points will be the subject of on-going discussion wherever possible to resolve or refine the extent of disagreement between the parties. “Agreed” indicates where an issue has been resolved.
- 1.3.2. It can be taken that any matters not specifically referred to in Chapter 3 of this SoCG are not of material interest or relevance to Natural England and therefore have not been the subject of any discussions between the parties. As such, those matters can be read as agreed, only to the extent that they are either not of material interest or relevance to Natural England.

WITHOUT PREJUDICE

2 RECORD OF ENGAGEMENT

- 2.1.1. A summary of the meetings and correspondence that have taken place between Highways England and Natural England in relation to the Application is outlined in Table 2-1.
- 2.1.2. This table has been split to reflect discussions held on Part A, Part B and the Scheme as a whole. This reflects the history of the Scheme. Part A and Part B were originally proposed to be the subject of separate applications for DCOs but were combined into the current single Scheme.
- 2.1.3. Engagement detailed within the separate sections for Part A and Part B relates to discussions held prior to the combination of the two Parts into the Scheme in March 2020. With the exception of engagement relating to interim Letters of No Impediment (LoNIs) for Part A, all engagement following combination is detailed under the header for the Scheme. Engagement relating to the interim LoNIs for Part A continued until May 2020 and is captured under the Part A section of Table 2-1 for clarity in following the narrative of this engagement.
- 2.1.4. A SoCG for Part A was agreed and signed by both Highways England and Natural England on 19/03/2020 (as detailed within Table 2-1 below). Following this, Part A and Part B were combined into a single application for the Scheme, which was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 07/07/2020. The previous signed SoCG for Part A is considered an interim version and an account of consultation and agreement between Natural England and Highways England as of 19/03/2020. The interim SoCG for Part A (presented in Appendix A) has been used to inform this SoCG, which relates to the Scheme in its entirety.

Table 2-1 - Record of Engagement

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
Engagement Relating to the Scheme		
18/05/2020	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Highways England explained a sensitivity test was being completed against updated Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) guidance (released between July 2019 and March 2020) to determine if this would change the significance of effects assessment for the Scheme.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England confirmed on 22/05/2020 that the query had been referred to their air quality specialist for comment. Natural England provided a response on 30/06/2020, detailed below.</p>
01/06/2020	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Due to the age of data, Highways England presented the proposed scope of a series of 2020 verification surveys for Part A of the Scheme. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A single breeding bird verification survey using nine walked transects; – An environmental DNA (eDNA) survey of each previously surveyed waterbody for great crested newts. It is proposed to assume that known populations of great crested newts remain stable and of the same population size class (small, medium, large); – An update Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PBRA) walkover of the Order limits plus 100 m, to verify the roosting suitability of buildings and trees; – A single verification activity survey (either dusk or dawn) of those buildings and trees last surveyed in 2017; – An update badger walkover survey of the Order Limits plus 100 m to verify the location and distribution of badger setts. An update to the territory marking survey was not proposed. <p>Further survey was not proposed for bat activity associated with habitats, barn owl, reptiles, red squirrel, water vole, otter, fish, white-clawed crayfish, aquatic macroinvertebrates or terrestrial invertebrates. This was primarily because there have been no significant changes to habitat distribution and use since the completion of previous surveys and/or existing mitigation is considered sufficient.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England confirmed in an email on 30/06/2020, “given that more of less all the surveys are less than three years old they would still be considered to be valid and thus scope of the verification surveys would appear to be appropriate particularly since there has not been any significant change in land use since the original surveys were undertaken.” Natural England also provided comment on the verification reports during a meeting on 15/12/2020 and subsequently within an email dated 11/02/2021 (see below).</p>
30/06/2020	Email from Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England to Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Email response from Natural England following the request for comment by Highways England on 18/05/2020 (see above) regarding the approach taken within the DMRB sensitivity air quality assessment.</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
		<p>Key Outcome Highways England and Natural England do not agree on the approach to air quality assessment detailed in the updated DMRB.</p>
03/09/2020	Email from Highways England to Natural England Protected Species Licensing Team (general submissions email)	<p>Key Topic Submission of draft licence applications and supporting documentation to Natural England for review and comment and inform a Letter of No Impediment for Part B of the Scheme.</p> <p>Key Outcome Submission of applications and supporting documents associated with two draft European Protected Species bat licenses required for Part B of the Scheme. Provided to Natural England for a review and comment and to inform Letters of No Impediment.</p>
28/09/2020	Telephone call between Beth Hadfield (Advisor), Natural England and Highways England followed by subsequent email request in writing	<p>Key Topic Natural England queried and requested the submission of figure E4 missing from submitted draft licence applications for Part B of the Scheme.</p> <p>Key Outcome Highways England to submit requested figure E4 to Natural England to support submitted draft licence application for Part B of the Scheme (issued to Natural England on 28/09/2020, see below).</p>
28/09/2020	Email from Highways England to Beth Hadfield (Advisor), Natural England	<p>Key Topic Submission of requested figure E4 missing from original draft licence application submission for Part B of the Scheme.</p> <p>Key Outcome Submission of Figure E4 to Natural England as requested to support submitted draft license applications for Part B of the Scheme.</p>
05/10/2020	Telephone call between Abigail Halstead (Wildlife Lead Advisor), Natural England and Highways England	<p>Key Topic Call with request for submission of outstanding bat faeces DNA analysis results to support submitted draft licence application.</p> <p>Key Outcome Highways England to submit requested bat faeces DNA analysis results to support submitted draft licence application for Part B of the Scheme (issued to Natural England on 06/10/2020, see below).</p>
06/10/2020	Email from Highways England to Abigail Halstead (Lead Wildlife Advisor), Natural England	<p>Key Topic Submission of bat faeces DNA analysis results.</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
		<p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Highways England submission of bat faeces DNA analysis results as requested by Natural England to support submitted draft licence application for Part B of the Scheme. Natural England confirmed receipt on 07/10/2020.</p>
<p>11/12/2020</p>	<p>Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser) and Michael Miller (Team Leader- Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England</p>	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>The 2020 verification bat surveys recorded new bat roosts within two bat boxes attached to tree T148A. The area of woodland containing T148A will be felled to facilitate construction of the Scheme and, in the absence of mitigation, the bat boxes would be lost. Highways England stated this action had been assessed against legislation (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)) and believed that the relocation could be completed under a precautionary working method statement (PWMS) rather than the need for a licence.</p> <p>Highways England presented a justification for the approach in relation to offences identified by the legislation, where a licence would otherwise be required, and request comment from Natural England. The justification included:</p> <p><i>Deliberately capture, injure or kill a wild bat</i></p> <p>Relocation would be timed during transitional roosting periods (March to May, September to October) to reduce the likelihood of bats being present. Should a bat be present, the bat would be carefully transferred by gloved hand of a licensed ecologist, given a health check and then placed carefully inside sturdy box for transport. The bat would be carefully placed back in the bat box following relocation. The relocation of the bat boxes would be undertaken under the supervision of a licensed ecologist within a single day. As such, the relocation of the bat boxes would not result in the injury or killing of a bat. The capture would be covered by the class licence that the surveyor holds.</p> <p><i>Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats</i></p> <p>In relation to an offence from disturbance, Regulation 43(2) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) defines this as disturbance which is likely to impair the ability of a bat to survive, to breed/reproduce, to rear or nurture their young or to hibernate.</p> <p>The bat boxes of T148A support summer day roosts of a single soprano pipistrelle and a single unconfirmed species of bat (no echolocation on emergence). No evidence of breeding behaviour has been recorded. Relocation would be timed during transitional roosting periods to reduce the likelihood of bats being present. This timeframe would also avoid both the maternity and hibernation periods.</p> <p>A pre-start inspection would be undertaken by a licensed and experienced ecologist to confirm the presence/absence of roosting bats within the bat boxes. Should a bat be present, as detailed above, the bat would be carefully transferred by gloved hand of a licensed ecologist to a sturdy box for transport. The bat would be carefully placed back in the bat box following relocation. Relocation of the bat box would be completed within a matter of hours.</p> <p>In the event that a great number of bats are encountered that may suggest the presence of a roost of higher importance/significance, works would cease immediately, and Natural England contacted for advice and to obtain an EPS licence if necessary. It should be noted that surveys conducted to date have not recorded a roost of significance greater than day roosts.</p> <p>The measures above would ensure that the relocation of the bat box would result in no greater than trivial disturbance to two-day roosts and would not impede the ability of a bat to survive, breed/reproduce, rear young or hibernate. As such, the relocation of the bat boxes</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
		<p>could be achieved in a manner that does not affect the favourable conservation status of the species and would not constitute licensable disturbance.</p> <p><i>Damage or destroy a place used by bats for breeding or resting (roosts) (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time)</i></p> <p>The bat boxes of T148A support day roosts. No evidence of breeding behaviour has been recorded. It is proposed to relocate the bat boxes to trees along the retained woodland edge to the north of T148A. The proposed relocation site is approximately 120m to the north of T148A. The bat boxes would be installed on the northern side of the trees, facing into the woodland. This would place the boxes in shade to replicate existing environmental conditions as closely as possible. The woodland along the River Coquet to the north of the proposed relocation site is more mature in comparison to the woodland surrounding T148A and offers foraging habitat of higher suitability. The proposed relocation site is also connected via existing woodland to the current location of T148A and would be subject to reduced disturbance from vehicular traffic due to a greater distance from the A1. As such, the proposed relocation site has the potential to provide more beneficial roosting conditions in comparison to the current roost location. As it is proposed to relocate the bat boxes, there would be no damage or destruction of a resting place.</p> <p><i>Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost</i></p> <p>A pre-start inspection would be completed by a licensed and experienced ecologist and bats temporarily transferred into a sturdy box and placed back in the bat boxes following relocation. Relocation of the bat boxes shall be undertaken in a single day and therefore actions shall not result in the obstruction of access to the bat roosts.</p> <p><i>Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat of a species found in the wild in the EU (dead or alive) or any part of a bat</i></p> <p>Proposed actions do not involve the advertisement, selling or exchange of bats.</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England provided a response via email on 16/12/2020, see below.</p>
15/12/2020	Meeting between Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser) and Michael Miller (Team Leader-Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England and Highways England	<p>Key Topic Highways England requested comment on the ecological surveys undertaken to date for the Scheme.</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England confirmed that the ecological surveys undertaken to date for the Scheme were appropriate, including methodologies, timing and extent.</p> <p>Key Topic Highways England requested comment on the biodiversity ES documents for Part B.</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England provided a response via email on 11/02/2021 (see below).</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
		<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Following the completion of verification surveys for Part A (scope previously agreed with Natural England, see email correspondence on 01/06/2020 above), Highways England presented a summary of the findings:</p> <p>Breeding birds – single verification survey using multiple transect across the Survey Area (Order Limits plus 100m). Survey did not record any additional species of conservation concern or species in numbers that exceeded those recorded in 2016. As such, impact assessment and mitigation of the ES are considered valid.</p> <p>Great crested newts (GCN) – updated Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) and eDNA survey of each of the previously surveyed waterbodies, where accessible. Access was not granted for four waterbodies, including A12 that supports GCN. Existing mitigation includes the completion of updated surveys to inform the proposed European Protected Species (EPS) licence. Therefore, the limited access for A12 for the verification survey was not a concern. No changes to presence/likely absence recorded for surveyed waterbodies and the impact assessment of the ES remains valid.</p> <p>Badger – updated walkover of Order Limits of Part A plus 100 m. Two new setts recorded to the west of the existing River Coquet Bridge, although located at least 150 m from construction (located adjacent to proposed woodland creation). Overall, no changes in baseline conditions were recorded that would alter the impact assessment or proposed mitigation.</p> <p>Bats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A single activity survey was also undertaken for each of the buildings/trees previously surveyed in 2016/17. Access was not granted to four trees with roosting suitability (T51A, T54A, T56A and T131A) that will be lost to the Scheme. The Applicant is currently seeking access to undertake a climb and inspect of the four trees. However, existing mitigation includes the completion of a pre-construction updated assessment/survey for all trees with roosting suitability (Low, Moderate or High). A new bat roost was recorded in building B105A, which will be retained and protected from disturbance by existing proposed mitigation measures. The roost recorded in building B4A was not recorded in 2020, although existing mitigation includes a licence for the demolition of the building (therefore sufficient and valid). A single soprano pipistrelle and a single unconfirmed species of bat were recorded emerging from two bat boxes on tree T148A; new roosts. It is proposed to relocate the bat boxes under precautionary working methods (rather than an EPS licence), as proposed within the email dated 11/12/2020 (see above). – An updated walkover Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PBRA) was also completed of the Order Limits plus 100 m. There were no changes to the roosting suitability of buildings that would change the impact assessment (including several additional buildings subject to an assessment in 2020). The survey recorded an additional 133 trees with roosting suitability, of which 15 may be directly lost to the Scheme or subject to high levels of disturbance. The additional trees were likely recorded due to the growth of the trees since the 2016/17 assessment (previously Negligible roosting suitability but now a tree/woodland of sufficient size or age to contain potential roost features, therefore classified as Low roosting suitability) or as a result of roosting features that have developed over the last four years. A further 11 trees had increased in roosting suitability from Negligible/Low to Moderate/High and would be lost to the Scheme or subject to high levels of disturbance. The Applicant is currently arranging access to undertake a climb and inspect of the 15 additional trees and 11 upgraded trees. However, existing mitigation includes the completion of a pre-construction updated assessment/survey for all trees with roosting suitability (Low, Moderate or High). <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Highways England confirmed that reports detailing the findings of the verification surveys were to be issued to the Planning Inspectorate at Deadline 1 (12/01/2021). Natural England confirmed that, once available, they would review the reports and provide comment. Natural England provided comment within an email on 11/02/2021 (see below).</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
		<p>Natural England confirmed they would provide comment regarding the approach to the relocation of the bat boxes appended to tree T148A (precautionary working methods or an EPS licence) in a separate email (see email dated 16/12/2020 below).</p> <p>Key Topic</p> <p>Highways England confirmed that following questions from the Examining Authority (ExA), changes are proposed to the HRA Report, which shall be resubmitted at Deadline 1 (12/01/2020).</p> <p>Item 1</p> <p>Highways England confirmed that the northbound diversion of the A1 is located within 200m of the Northumberland Marine Special Protection Area (SPA) at a single location; the A1068 over the mouth of the River Coquet. This conflicts with a statement made in the current version of the HRA. Highways England confirmed that it was deemed that the diversion would not lead to likely significant effects to the SPA as the diversion utilises an existing road (therefore no land take from SPA and qualifying bird species would already be acclimatised to disturbance from road traffic) and the diversion would be temporary and for short durations (therefore impacts from nitrogen deposition (vehicle emissions) would not occur). Highways England also confirmed that the proposed diversion route represents the existing route that would be used for diversion of A1 traffic (although not a designated route).</p> <p>Item 2</p> <p>Highways England explained that the ExA had questioned the assessment regarding decommissioning of the Scheme. Highways England confirmed that it was not intended to update the HRA Report following the comment, but that clarification would be provided within a response to the ExA's question. The response would refer to Chapter 2: The Scheme, which confirms that demolition (decommissioning) would not be either feasible or desirable and was therefore not considered within the ES. The response would also clarify that, for the purposes of the HRA Report, it was assumed that any decommissioning would be conducted in a similar manner to construction.</p> <p>Item 3</p> <p>Highways England also confirmed that the referenced construction traffic volumes within the ES would be updated to align with those presented within the Construction Traffic Assessments for Part A [APP-199] and Part B [APP-270]. However, the changes in traffic volumes were small and do not change the conclusions of the assessment.</p> <p>Item 4</p> <p>Further to a comment from the ExA, Highways England requested verification from Natural England that the qualifying features of the River Tweed SAC did not include "Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>)."</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Regarding Item 1, Natural England confirmed that the assessment sounded reasonable but requested further information within an email so that this could be reviewed in detail. Highways England issued the information via email on 18/01/2021, see below.</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
16/12/2020	Email from Michael Miller (Team Leader- Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Regarding Item 2, Natural England agreed with the approach presented.</p> <p>Natural England acknowledged Item 3 but did not provide comment.</p> <p>Regarding Item 4, Highways England issued an email on 18/12/2020 (see below) with a definitive list of qualifying features for the River Tweed SAC and requested confirmation from Natural England that this list was correct. Natural England provided a response on 11/01/2021.</p> <p>Key Topic</p> <p>Response from Natural England following the email from Highways England on 11/12/2020 (see above) regarding the proposed relocation of the bat boxes of T148A under precautionary working methods rather than a licence.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England confirmed that a licence would be required for the relocation of the bat boxes of T148A.</p>
16/12/2020	<p>Meeting between Highways England and Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser) and Michael Miller (Team Leader- Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England</p> <p>Environment Agency were also in attendance</p>	<p>Key Topics</p> <p>Meeting to discuss the proposed changes to the Scheme (Change Request) regarding works in and around the River Coquet, Stabilisation Works and Southern Access Works. Highways England provided a summary of the proposed changes:</p> <p>Stabilisation Works</p> <p>Ground investigation (GI) was undertaken in 2020 to inform detailed design. The GI observed cracking on the north slope of the River Coquet and identified a potential failure mechanism. Three rows of piles have been proposed to stabilise the north bank for the new and existing bridge structure that carry the A1. The works would also comprise permanent scour protection of the north bank, with temporary river training measures installed to create a dry working area. Additional temporary land take outside the Order limits of the Scheme (west and east) would be required to temporarily access the platforms, which are required to install the piles. Additional land take is approximately 0.28ha and comprises woodland within the Coquet River Felton Park Local Wildlife Site (LWS).</p> <p>Highways England confirmed that it is intended that the loss of woodland from within the LWS associated with the Stabilisation Works would be addressed by an amendment to the Ancient Woodland Strategy. Highways England presented a proposed approach and, in acknowledgement of proposed soil salvage efforts and replanting of the additional temporary land take post-construction, woodland creation (compensation) at a ratio of 1:6 (loss:creation) was proposed.</p> <p>Southern Access Works</p> <p>These works would provide an opportunity to access the south bank of the River Coquet from the north bank. Access to the south bank would include a temporary bridge across the river, with temporary river training measures installed to create a dry working area. The works would also include permanent scour protection along the southern bank of the River Coquet. The Southern Access Works would avoid the need for vehicular access via a haul road down the south embankment of the river (as per the Scheme design) and therefore may result in reduced areas of ancient woodland clearance on the south bank (within the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)).</p> <p>Key Outcomes</p> <p>Natural England confirmed that, in relation to loss of woodland associated with the Stabilisation Works, they would prefer the approach detailed within the Ancient Woodland Strategy Part A [APP-247] to be applied. This would constitute a 1:12 (loss:creation) ratio for the purpose of woodland compensation. Highways England agreed to this approach and an updated Ancient Woodland Strategy for Change Request was submitted at Deadline 4 [REP4-054 and 055].</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
		<p>Natural England raised concern regarding the proposed scour protection of the banks. Natural England stated the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI is designated for its morphology, form and function. Natural England see the use of scour protection as a permanent loss of bank habitat that would require compensation. Highways England confirmed that it has been determined that there is a requirement to protect the bridge foundations from hydraulic action and that scour protection measures are required to maintain the integrity of the proposed design. The preferred scour protection solution at the time of the meeting was confirmed as rock armour revetment which maintains the existing channel cross section profile. This protects the bridge foundation and also prevents scour from outflanking the solution through erosion of the banks in the downstream reach.</p> <p>Natural England confirm that compensation for the proposed scour protection could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Removal of in-river structures elsewhere within the watercourse (such as a weir). - Land management changes further upstream. - Land/woodland management. <p>Natural England also confirmed that a soft engineered structure could lessen the level of compensation required.</p> <p>Natural England raised that the biodiversity assessment should consider operational impacts associated with the scour protection, as during the lifetime of the Scheme, some of the rock armour may be lost to the river. Highways England acknowledged this point and completed an operational impact assessment within the Addendums (paragraphs 8.8.5 to 8.8.7, 8.9.11 to 8.9.12 and 8.10.19 to 8.10.21; Environmental Statement Addendum: Stabilisation Works [REP4-063] and paragraphs 7.8.5 to 7.8.7, 7.9.10 to 7.9.12 and 7.10.19 to 7.10.21, Environmental Statement Addendum: Southern Access Works [REP4-064]).</p>
18/12/2020	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser) and Michael Miller (Team Leader- Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Further to the meeting between Highways England and Natural England on 15/12/2020 (see above), Highways England provided the proposed amendments to the HRA Report following comments by the Examining Authority (ExA) during their first written questions (EXQ1).</p> <p>Highways England confirmed the existing HRA Report states “diversions would not affect roads or transport links in close proximity to the [Northumberland Marine SPA].” The following amendments are proposed within the Northumberland Marine SPA screening matrix of Section 2 (with similar amendments in Table B-4 of Appendix B). The ExA identified that the northbound diversion for Part A includes the A1068 which crosses and runs alongside the River Coquet and the boundary of the Northumberland Marine SPA. As such the following amendments were proposed:</p> <p>In relation to emissions (‘Description of Part A: Emissions’):</p> <p><i>“The proposed northbound diversion (see Appendix C: Diversion Route Plans of the Construction Traffic Management Plan [APP-347]) includes the A1068, which is located within 200m of the European Site at a single location; where the A1068 crosses and runs alongside the mouth of the River Coquet. The use of the A1068 carriageway as a diversion route for traffic during construction of Part A will be required intermittently and temporarily, with the majority comprising overnight closures (see paragraph 2.6.24 of the Construction Traffic Management Plan [APP-347]). Due to the intermittent and temporary use of the diversion route during construction, no adverse effects are predicted to the European Site or its qualifying features as a result of vehicle emissions.”</i></p> <p>In relation to transportation requirements (‘Description of Part A: transportation requirements’):</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
		<p>“The proposed northbound diversion is located within 200m of the European Site at a single location; where the A1068 crosses and runs alongside the mouth of the River Coquet (Appendix C: Diversion Route Plans of the Construction Traffic Management Plan [APP-347]). As the A1068 is an existing carriageway subject to regular traffic movements, no direct impacts to the European Site or its qualifying features are anticipated. Effects associated with vehicle emissions are also not predicted, as discussed above in the ‘Description of Part A: Emissions’ section. The qualifying features of the European Site predominantly comprise seabird species which utilise cliff and coastal edge habitat. The areas of the European Site at the mouth of the River Coquet, located within 200m of the A1068, lie within the intertidal zone and may be used by foraging birds that are a qualifying feature of the European Site. However, as an existing carriageway, any birds that utilise the low tide exposed habitats will be accustomed and habituated to road traffic noise and movements and are therefore unlikely to be adversely impacted by diverted traffic movements. There are no other diversion routes proposed within 200m of the European Site.”</p> <p>Highways England also requested confirmation of the qualifying features of the River Tweed SAC, following discussion during the meeting held on 15/12/2020 (detailed above). Highways England stated that the qualifying features of the River Tweed SAC assessed within the HRA Report are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculus fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation. (Rivers with floating vegetation often dominated by water-crowfoot) - Atlantic Salmon <i>Salmo salar</i> - Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> - Brook lamprey <i>Lampetra planeri</i> - River Lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> - Sea Lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England provided a response on 11/01/2021 (see below) and confirmed that the list of qualifying features presented above is correct.</p>
05/01/2021	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser) and Michael Miller (Team Leader-Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Highways England requested a timeframe for the update of the LoNIs previously provided for Part A in early 2020 (see the email dated 19/05/2020 within the Part A section of this table below). This includes the single bat draft licence, two GCN draft licences and single badger draft licence. The only update required is the update of the scheme name; “A1 in Northumberland: Morpeth to Ellingham, Part A”.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Highways England issued a follow up email to Natural England on 11/02/2021 (see below).</p>
05/01/2021	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser) and Michael Miller (Team Leader-Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Highways England requested comment from Natural England regarding specific areas that had been scoped out of the 2020 verification bat preliminary roosting assessment survey undertaken for Part A.</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
		<p>Highways England confirmed that the surveyed area for the 2020 survey was the Order limits plus 100m. Highways England stated that the survey area was refined to the Order limits only in relation to the de-trunked section of the existing A1 carriageway and the unnamed road to be used as an access route from Felton (northern end of Part A) as impacts of the Scheme during both construction and operation would be restricted to trivial disturbance only. Highways England confirmed that proposals along the de-trunked section of the A1 involve minimal works to convert this section of road into an access for properties and communities along its length (as detailed in paragraphs 2.5.44 to 2.5.55 of Chapter 2: The Scheme [APP-037]) and would not result in the loss of trees.</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England responded via email on 11/02/2021 (see below).</p>
10/01/2021	Email from Highways England to Michael Miller (Team Leader- Sustainable Development and Marine) and Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England	<p>Key Topic Highways England requested if it would be possible to receive updated LoNIs from Natural England for Part B to reflect the correct Scheme name (A1 in Northumberland: Morpeth to Ellingham, Part B). The same approach has been proposed for the Part A LoNIs (see email dated 05/01/2021 above).</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England responded via email on 11/01/2021 (see below).</p>
11/01/2021	Email from Michael Miller (Team Leader- Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic Natural England response to Highways England's email dated 11/01/2021 (see above). Natural England confirmed that it would be possible to update the Part B LoNIs to reflect the correct Scheme name. Natural England requested confirmation of the Scheme name and the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) reference number.</p> <p>Key Outcome Highways England responded via email on 12/01/2021 (see below).</p>
11/01/2021	Email from Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topics In response to the email from Highways England dated 18/12/2020, Natural England confirmed that they do not consider that the proposed update to the HRA relating to the use of the A1068 as a temporary diversion route will change the overall conclusion of the HRA. Natural England stated that this was for the following reasons: "The proposed diversion using the existing A1 diversion route along the existing A1086 and does not require any additional land take or construction impacting on the SPA. The proposed diversion is temporary in nature and for short periods only, primarily for night time closures of the A1, when traffic levels would naturally be lower. Interest features of the Northumberland Marine SPA using the sections of the R. Coquet Estuary close to the proposed diversion route are already habituated to the disturbance associated with the existing road and therefore not likely to be significantly affected by the proposed diversion route. The aerial emissions from the limited additional traffic movements associated with the proposed temporary diversion are likely to be minimal and, therefore, unlikely to have a significant effect on the SPA and its interest features."</p>

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		<p>Natural England also confirmed that the qualifying features of the River Tweed SAC, as detailed in Highways England's email dated 18/12/2020 (see above), are correct and that Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>) are not a qualifying interest feature of the SAC.</p> <p>Finally, Natural England confirmed agreement with the HRA Report for the Scheme, stating "<i>Natural England has previously confirmed that it agreed with the HRA conclusions for both Part A (Morpeth to Felton) and Part B (Alnwick to Ellingham) separately and I can also confirm that Natural England agrees with the conclusions of the HRA assessment (i.e. no likely significant effect) for the scheme as a whole for the proposed improvements to the A1 in Northumberland – Morpeth to Ellingham.</i>"</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>The HRA Report was updated in response to the ExAs first written questions and in accordance with the engagement detailed above. The updated HRA Report was issued to the ExA at Deadline 1 [REP1-012].</p>
12/01/2021	Email from Highways England to Michael Miller (Team Leader- Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>In response to Natural England's email dated 11/01/2021 regarding the updated Part B LoNIs (see above), Highways England confirmed the Scheme name and PINS number.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Highways England awaits receipt of the updated Part B LoNIs.</p>
21/01/2021	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser) and Michael Miller (Team Leader- Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>An email from Highways England to request comment from Natural England on the verification ecology survey reports issued to the ExA at Deadline 1. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> REP1-014 – breeding bird verification report REP1-015 – preliminary bat roost assessment verification report REP1-016 – bat activity verification survey report REP1-017 – great crested newt verification survey report REP1-018 – badger verification survey report <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England provided comment on all but the great crested newt verification survey report within an email dated 11/02/2021 (see below). A response regarding the great crested newt verification report was provided in an email on 11/05/2021 (see below).</p>
03/02/2021	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser) and Michael Miller (Team Leader- Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Highways England requested a response to their email dated 05/01/2021 (see above) regarding the areas scoped out of the verification bat survey. Highways England also confirmed that the same approach was applied to the verification badger survey and requested comment for the approach taken to both surveys.</p> <p>Highways England also requested a response to their email dated 21/01/2021 (see above) regarding comments on the verification ecology survey reports.</p>

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		<p>Key Outcome Natural England provided a response within an email dated 11/02/2021 (see below).</p>
03/02/2021	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser) and Michael Miller (Team Leader-Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England	<p>Key Topic Highways England issued a courtesy email to Natural England (and the Environment Agency) to make them aware of the submission of a Biodiversity No Net Loss (BNNL) Assessment for the Scheme [REP2-009] and accompanying Annex A Approach to the Assessment of Losses and Gains for Watercourses [REP2-010] at Deadline 2 (29 January 2021).</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England provided a response within an email dated 11/02/2021 (see below).</p>
05/02/2021	<p>Meeting between Highways England and Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser) and Michael Miller (Team Leader-Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England</p> <p>Northumberland County Council was also in attendance.</p>	<p>Key Topic Highways England provided a summary of the findings of the Updated Biodiversity Air Quality DMRB Sensitivity Assessment to be issued to the ExA at Deadline 3 (12 February 2021). The updated assessment was in response to: The change in the opening year from 2023 to 2024 (with associated changes to traffic flows and speeds); The release of updated air quality datasets (with associated changes in speed-banded vehicle emission rates and background concentrations); and Reflection by the Applicant of how the updated DMRB guidance (namely LA 108 Biodiversity) has been applied to the assessment.</p> <p>Highways England confirmed that the previous DMRB sensitivity assessment (Appendix 16.7 Biodiversity DMRB Sensitivity Test: The Scheme [APP-333]) concluded that there would be no significant effects (adverse or beneficial) to ecological receptors as a result of changes in operational nitrogen deposition.</p> <p>Highways England explained that the updated DMRB sensitivity assessment concluded that increases in nitrogen deposition may lead to significant adverse effects at the following: Borough Woods Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and ancient woodland (impacted area of LNR contains the impacted area for the ancient woodland) Well Wood ancient woodland Veteran tree T682 Veteran tree T701</p> <p>Highways England confirmed that no significant effects to the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI were predicted as the Maintain air quality attribute threshold (1.7 kg N/ha/yr) is not predicted to be exceeded (maximum increase predicted to be 1.3 kg N/ha/yr).</p> <p>Key Outcomes Further to Natural England's email dated 30/06/2020 (see above), Natural England maintain that they do not agree with the approach to the air quality assessment detailed in the updated DMRB. Natural England believe the air quality attribute for the River Coquet and</p>

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		<p>Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI should be Restore (Rather than Maintain). Highways England agreed to discuss this particular matter further within a separate meeting.</p> <p>Key Topic</p> <p>Highways England presented mitigation options where significant effects may occur as a result of operational nitrogen deposition. Highways England explained that LA 105 Air Quality (the updated DMRB guidance) states the following mitigation measures should be assessed for suitability, alongside any other proposed viable mitigation measures for the project:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. vertical barrier of at least 9m in height 2. speed limits adjusted for air quality <p>Highways England explained that preliminary discussions within the project team concluded both options to be unviable for the ecological receptors under consideration.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England acknowledged that it is unlikely to be appropriate to install a vertical barrier of at least 9m in height due to landscape constraints, visual obstruction and public perception. Highways England concurred with this statement. Natural England also acknowledged that reducing the speed limit was also likely unviable as the purpose of the Scheme is to dual the A1; Highways England confirmed that this action could compromise the objectives of the Scheme.</p> <p>Natural England and Highways England agreed to continue discussions to explore potential opportunities for mitigation and, if viable, seek to secure these.</p> <p>Key Topic</p> <p>Following the discussion of mitigation options, opportunity for compensation was discussed. Highways England confirmed that the following compensation opportunities had been identified and were to be explored further:</p> <p>Both veteran trees are located within grazed grassland fields (believed to be sheep). Highways England suggested the installation of stock fencing around the tree to reduce the pressures of grazing.</p> <p>Highways England enquired regarding other known pressures on the Borough Woods LNR/ancient woodland and Well Wood ancient woodland, where it may be possible to develop intervention measures to “offset” the impacts of increased operational nitrogen deposition predicted as a result of the Scheme. Northumberland County Council stated that their Country Parks Team may be able to assist.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England did not raise objection to the potential opportunity to fence the veteran trees as a compensatory measure.</p>

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		<p>Natural England and Highways England agreed to continue discussions to explore potential opportunities for compensation and, if viable, seek to secure these. It was agreed that this may involve measures to reduce adverse effects from recreational pressure, littering and dog fouling (as examples); compensatory planting and/or a financial contribution/commuted sum.</p>
<p>08/02/2021</p>	<p>Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser) and Michael Miller (Team Leader- Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England</p>	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Highways England provided confirmation of how comments raised by the former lead from Natural England for Part B on 10/02/2020 (see below) have been addressed. The comments by Natural England were in response to a review of an early version of the Part B Chapter 9: Biodiversity and prior to the combination of Part A and Part B as the Scheme. The comments provided by Natural England are provided in italics below, with responses by Highways England below each item.</p> <p><i>In terms of your query regarding the ‘less than local’ categorisation – the logic behind this appears sound, and assuming there is an equivalent in the survey guidelines which you’ve been using I don’t see there being any objection to you using this approach.</i></p> <p>Highways England confirmed that this approach is consistent with CIEEM Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) guidelines.</p> <p><i>Paragraph 9.5.1 – we usually accept surveys up to 3 years old as being valid to support an application, and so it would be helpful to see what advice we have offered in this regard.</i></p> <p><i>Table 9.6 – it is noted in the ornithology section that the breeding and wintering bird surveys were carried out in 2015/16, and so are now 4 years old – please see my previous comment regarding the age of survey data.</i></p> <p>Highways England confirmed that this comment has been superseded by subsequent meetings with Natural England where the approach to surveys and assessment and validity of data have been discussed and approach agreed (see meeting dated 15/12/2020 above). Part B was additionally supplemented with an updated desk study in search of new bird records prior to submission.</p> <p><i>Section 9.7 – a map showing the proposal limits, including construction compound locations, in relation to designated sites would be useful.</i></p> <p>Highways England confirmed that these are provided in Figures 9.1 – Statutory Designated Sites [APP-153] and Figure 9.2 – Habitats of Principal Importance and Non-Statutory Designated Sites [APP-154].</p> <p><i>Table 9.7 – It is noted that the main construction compound will be 0.5km south of the River Coquet SSSI – as the proposal boundaries are north of the River Coquet, presumably there will be construction traffic from the main compound frequently crossing the SSSI. Has the potential impact from exhaust fumes from the construction traffic on the SSSI interest features been considered?</i></p> <p><i>Paragraph 9.7.4 – we note the statement that no ancient woodland will be affected as none falls within the 200m buffer, but it is unclear if this buffer includes travel from the main construction compound. River Coquet SSSI includes ancient woodland, immediately adjacent to the A1 crossing, but it is unclear if impacts from exhaust fumes from construction traffic on this habitat has been considered when making the statement above.</i></p> <p>Highways England confirmed construction traffic data has been used to inform the air quality assessment of potential impacts arising from construction traffic movements, but none trigger the DMRB criteria and have been subsequently scoped out of the assessment. This has since been subject to additional assessment following the combining of Parts A and B and conclusions remain the same (see paragraph 2.1.7 of the Updated Biodiversity Air Quality DMRB Sensitivity Assessment [REP3-010]).</p>

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		<p>Table 9.10 – Red squirrel & Bats (RS01 & BAT03) – we note the comment that a species protection plan would be produced in consultation with Natural England for these species. Presumably any species licenses issued would cover mitigation and compensation requirements, which could then be transposed into a SPP, without the need for further NE input?</p> <p>Highways England confirmed amendments had been made to the Outline CEMP [REP3-013] to remove the need for consultation with Natural England. Consultation with Natural England will only be engaged in the event of a need for licensing.</p> <p>Highways England requested confirmation from Natural England that the comments have been addressed following their review of the final ES submitted with the DCO.</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England provided a response via email on 11/02/2021 (see below).</p>
11/02/2021	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser) and Michael Miller (Team Leader-Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Further to emails on 05/01/2021 and 10/01/2021, Highways England requested a timeframe of when it is anticipated that the updated LoNIS for both Part A and Part B would be provided. Highways England confirmed for those listed below, this relates to the Scheme name: A1 in Northumberland: Morpeth to Ellingham (Part A/Part B as appropriate) and PINS reference TR010059 only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft badger licence Part A - Draft great crested newt licence Part A - Burgham Park - Draft bat licence Part B - Northern woodland near Charlton Hall Road - Draft bat licence Part B - Charlton Mires <p>For the Draft great crested newt licence Part A - River Coquet, Highways England confirmed it is intended to update the above details in addition to capturing the small area of additional woodland to be temporarily lost as a result of the proposed changes to the Scheme (bank stabilisation of the north bank of the River Coquet). Highways England requested that the email identifying agreement with this approach is forwarded on (as discussed during the meeting on 05/02/2021 (see above)).</p> <p>For the Draft bat licence Part A – Building B4A, further to Natural England’s email dated 16/12/2021, Highways England confirmed it is intended to submit an updated draft licence to capture the relocation of the bat boxes (which support roosts) of tree T148A (as per previous correspondence).</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England provided updated LoNIs for the two draft great crested newt licences on 11/02/2021 (see below). This matter was further discussed during a call and subsequent email on 17/03/2021 (see below). A response regarding the LoNIs was provided in an email on 11/05/2021 (see below). The updated draft bat licence for Part A was issued to Natural England for review and comment on 24/03/2021 (see below).</p>
11/02/2021	Email from Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Further to previous engagement (see 30/06/2020 above for most recent email correspondence) Natural England confirmed that, at a national level, they have issues with the approach taken in the updated DMRB guidance for air quality (LA 105 Air Quality) and are not</p>

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	England to Highways England	<p>able to endorse the approach taken in the guidance. Natural England also raised that the assessment does not deal with potential impacts of increases in ammonia as a result of the Scheme.</p> <p>Key Outcome As detailed in the outcome to the email dated 30/06/2020 above, Highways England and Natural England do not agree on the approach to air quality assessment detailed in the updated DMRB. However, both parties continue to engage on this matter and the suitability of an assessment of ammonia.</p> <p>Key Topic Natural England provided updated LoNIs for the Draft great crested newt licence Part A - Burgham Park and Draft great crested newt licence Part A - River Coquet licence.</p> <p>Key Outcome Highways England replied via email on 16/02/2021 (see below) requesting confirmation from Natural England that the LoNI for the Draft great crested newt licence Part A - River Coquet licence covers the additional temporary woodland loss that would arise should the proposed changes to the Scheme (bank stabilisation works) be accepted by the ExA (with reference to recent emails). A response regarding the LoNI was provided in an email on 11/05/2021 (see below).</p> <p>Key Topic Further to the meeting held on 15/12/2020 (see above), Natural England provided comment on Chapter 9: Biodiversity Part B [APP-049]. Natural England noted that the chapter of the ES indicates that Part B would result in a net loss of running and open water habitat of approximately 611 m, although this has been reduced to approximately 156 m following reassessment (Annex A Approach to the Assessment of Losses and Gains for Watercourses [REP2-010]). Natural England commented that <i>“it is important that measures are put in place to address this loss.”</i></p> <p>Apart from the above, Natural England agreed with the conclusions of Chapter 9: Biodiversity Part B [APP-049].</p> <p>Key Outcome Highways England provided a response via email on 16/02/2021 (see below).</p> <p>Key Topic Natural England provided comment on Appendix 9.26 Wintering Bird Verification Survey Report Part A [APP-252]. Natural England stated that <i>“the survey was carried out using current best practice guidance but was more limited both spatially and temporally.”</i> However, Highways England acknowledge that Natural England provided agreement with the scope of the verification surveys in an email dated 30/06/2020. Natural England queried whether the verification survey used a subset of the same transect routes that were used to collect the baseline data in 2016-17 [APP-240].</p> <p>Natural England agreed with the report’s conclusion that the wintering bird verification survey and the impact assessment presented in Chapter 9: Biodiversity Part A [APP-048].</p>

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		<p>Key Outcome Highways England provided a response to Natural England’s query regarding the transect routes within an email dated 16/02/2021 (see below).</p> <p>Key Topic Natural England provided comment on the Badger 2020 Verification Survey Report [REP1-018]. Natural England confirmed that the surveys were carried out using industry standard methodologies. Natural England stated that <i>“the survey was carried out in June and July and while this is not the optimal time (i.e. early spring or Autumn) for such a survey, measures were taken to ensure that areas of dense vegetation was inspected for evidence of badger use.”</i> Natural England confirmed they agree with the report’s conclusion that the badger verification survey does not change the impact assessment and mitigation set out in Chapter 9: Biodiversity Part A [APP-048].</p> <p>Key Outcome Highways England note that Natural England agrees with the conclusions of the verification report and that the impact assessment and mitigation detailed in Chapter 9: Biodiversity Part A [APP-048] remains valid.</p> <p>Key Topic Natural England provided comment on the Breeding Bird Verification Survey Report [REP1-014]. Natural England confirmed that the 2020 verification survey utilised the same industry standard survey methods used in the baseline breeding bird survey of 2016 [APP-239]. Natural England confirmed that <i>“there has not been any significant changes in land use in the area since the [2016] baseline studies were undertaken and it is not surprising that, when compared with the baseline surveys of 2016, the verification survey did not record any species of greater conservation concern that would increase the importance valuation of breeding birds presented in the relevant chapter of the ES.”</i> Natural England confirmed they agree with the report’s conclusion that the breeding bird verification survey does not change the impact assessment and mitigation set out in Chapter 9: Biodiversity Part A [APP-048].</p> <p>Key Outcome Highways England note that Natural England agrees with the conclusions of the verification report and that the impact assessment and mitigation detailed in Chapter 9: Biodiversity Part A [APP-048] remains valid.</p> <p>Key Topic Natural England provided comment on the Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Verification Survey Report [REP1-015] and Bat Activity 2020 Verification Survey Report Part A [REP1-016]. Natural England provided the following comments and queries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“Trees T51A, T54A, T56A and T131A - A winter inspection would be highly unlikely to reveal evidence of use and therefore prove absence (most tree roosts unsuitable for use as hibernation roost and signs of bat usage in trees do not persist very long). Could it be suggested that the final pre-fell inspection or better yet, a dusk/dawn followed by a pre fell inspection, is undertaken during spring/summer to have more confidence in a negative result? It also assumes that the tree will be fully inspectable i.e. what if the features can’t be accessed during an aerial inspection?”</i> - <i>“Verification surveys for trees T209A and T215A cancelled due to weather. It’s probably a bit doubtful to conclude that nothing was roosting due to surveyors present in that locality surveying other trees (one of whom was 20m away) who didn’t see anything (tree surveys notoriously difficult to record anything due to poor view points), but as they’re being retained likely insignificant.”</i> - <i>“Weather conditions - Weather recorded as raining at start and end of 19 August 2020 (Dusk) survey but not listed as a</i> </p>

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		<p><i>constraint/weather conditions not expanded upon. Likely not significant or there were periods of dry weather, as bat roost recorded during this survey in building B105A.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“Building B105A now has a recorded roost not picked up in 2017. Only august 2020 data for new location where 3 SPIPS [soprano pipistrelle] emerged. Therefore, has not been a survey from maternity season. If the risk is assessed as high risk/potential for such a roost in original survey it would need a full season of surveys. However, mitigation is already in place and a precautionary method statement to be followed should mitigate. Is this a just proximity disturbance and will all works will be conducted in daylight hours?”</i> <p>However, Natural England confirmed they agree with the report’s conclusion that the bat verification surveys do not change the impact assessment and mitigation set out in Chapter 9: Biodiversity Part A [APP-048].</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Highways England note that Natural England agrees with the conclusions of the verification report and that the impact assessment and mitigation detailed in Chapter 9: Biodiversity Part A [APP-048] remains valid. Highways England provided a response to Natural England’s comments and queries within an email dated 16/02/2021 (see below).</p> <hr/> <p>Key Topic</p> <p>Natural England provided comment on the Biodiversity No Net Loss Assessment for the Scheme [REP2-009] and the supporting Annex A - Approach to the Assessment of Losses and Gains of Watercourses [REP2-010]. Natural England confirmed that they had not been in a position to study the documents in detail but highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Natural England acknowledged that while the Scheme will regrettably result in the loss ancient woodlands from within the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI this has been addressed in the Ancient Woodland Strategy developed for the Scheme. - <i>“Overall the Scheme will not achieve no net loss due to the loss of hedgerow and river habitat and consideration must be given to what additional measures can be put in place to remediate for these losses.”</i> - Natural England stated if the amended plans for the construction of the new bridge across the River Coquet SSSI (proposed changes to the Scheme) are accepted the No Net Loss Assessment will need to be revised further. <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Highways England provided a response to Natural England’s comments and queries within an email dated 16/02/2021 (see below).</p> <hr/> <p>Key Topic</p> <p>Further to emails from Highways England on 05/01/2021 and 03/02/2021 (see above), Natural England provided comment on the approach taken to the refinement of the survey areas for land adjacent to the de-trunked section of Part A for the 2020 verification bat preliminary roost assessment and badger surveys [REP1-015 and REP1-018 respectively].</p> <p>As detailed in the email dated 05/01/2021 (above), the surveyed area for the 2020 bat and badger surveys was the Order limits plus 100m. The survey area was refined to the Order limits only in relation to the de-trunked section of the existing A1 carriageway and the unnamed road to be used as an access route from Felton (northern end of Part A) as impacts of the Scheme during both construction and operation would be restricted to trivial disturbance only. Highways England confirmed that proposals along the de-trunked section of the A1 involve minimal works to convert this section of road into an access for properties and communities along its length (as detailed in paragraphs 2.5.44 to 2.5.55 of Chapter 2: The Scheme [APP-037]) and would not result in the loss of trees or badger setts.</p> <p>Natural England considered the changes to be minimal and disturbance is not likely to be significant.</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
		<p>Key Outcome No actions necessary.</p> <p>Key Topic Further to Highways England’s email dated 08/02/2021 (see above) regarding comments from Natural England relating to the Part B biodiversity (see email dated 10/02/2020 within the “Engagement Relating to Part B” below), Natural England agreed that these items had been addressed within the ES.</p> <p>Key Outcome No actions necessary.</p>
16/02/2021	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser) and Michael Miller (Team Leader- Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England	<p>Key Topic In response to Natural England’s email dated 11/02/2021 (see above), Highways England requested confirmation from Natural England that the LoNI for the Draft great crested newt licence Part A - River Coquet licence covers the additional temporary woodland loss that would arise should the Change Request (bank stabilisation works) be accepted by the ExA.</p> <p>Key Outcome Highways England requested an update during a teleconference with Natural England on 17/03/2021 (see below). A response regarding the LoNI was provided in an email on 11/05/2021 (see below).</p> <p>Key Topic Highways England provided a response to Natural England’s comment within their email dated 11/02/2021 (see above) regarding the loss of watercourse for Part B and the need for measures to address this loss. Highways England confirmed that measures to address the loss of watercourse for the Scheme (inclusive of both Part A and Part B) were under discussion and consideration. Highways England confirmed that this matter was also to be discussed further with the Environment Agency.</p> <p>Key Outcome At the time of writing, there has been no further engagement on this specific matter.</p> <p>Key Topic Highways England provided a response to Natural England’s query regarding whether the verification wintering bird survey [APP-252] used a subset of the same transect routes that were used to collect the baseline data in 2016-17 [APP-240]. Highways England confirmed the survey area of the 2016/17 assessment allowed for flexibility in the design of Part A and therefore extended up to 500 m from the proposed road alignment at the time of survey. The survey area for the 2020 verification survey was refined to be proportionate to the zone of influence of Part A, to account for the refinement of the design of Part A since 2016. The verification survey was based upon the transect routes used in the 2016-17 baseline surveys, but routes were shortened or modified to cover the Order limits of Part A plus an additional 100 m buffer.</p> <p>Highways England requested comment from Natural England to the response provided.</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
		<p>Key Outcome Natural England provided a response via email on 17/03/2021 (see below).</p> <hr/> <p>Key Topic Highways England provided a response to Natural England’s comments within their email dated 11/02/2021 (see above) regarding the bat verification survey reports [REP1-015 and REP1-016]. The comments provided by Natural England are provided in italics and bold below, with responses by Highways England below each item.</p> <p><i>Trees T51A, T54A, T56A and T131A - A winter inspection would be highly unlikely to reveal evidence of use and therefore prove absence (most tree roosts unsuitable for use as hibernation roost and signs of bat usage in trees do not persist very long). Could it be suggested that the final pre-fell inspection or better yet, a dusk/dawn followed by a pre fell inspection, is undertaken during spring/summer to have more confidence in a negative result? It also assumes that the tree will be fully inspectable i.e. what if the features can’t be accessed during an aerial inspection?</i></p> <p>Highways England confirmed that at the time of writing it had not been possible to undertake the proposed climb and inspect survey of trees T51A, T54A, T56A and T131A, although they were continuing to pursue access agreements. Highways England agreed that a wintering inspection may not reveal evidence of use and therefore prove absence. The aim of the proposed climb and inspect assessment prior to the summer period and during the DCO examination is to collect further, more accurate information via a close-up inspection of any roost features than would be possible from ground level. This survey has the potential to downgrade the roosting suitability of the trees compared to the current classification.</p> <p>Highways England confirmed that current mitigation includes a pre-fell inspection and/or dusk/dawn re-entry survey of trees that retain bat roost suitability (measure S-B7 from the Outline CEMP [REP3-014 and -015]. Dusk/dawn re-entry surveys would be undertaken between May and September in accordance with best practice.</p> <p><i>Verification surveys for trees T209A and T215A cancelled due to weather. It’s probably a bit doubtful to conclude that nothing was roosting due to surveyors present in that locality surveying other trees (one of whom was 20m away) who didn’t see anything (tree surveys notoriously difficult to record anything due to poor view points), but as they’re being retained likely insignificant.</i></p> <p>Highways England noted Natural England’s comment and stated the absence of a roost within trees T209A and T215A as recorded by surveys for nearby trees was indicative only. However, it is correct these trees would be retained and buffered from disturbance by retained vegetation (particularly for T209A). Highways England agreed that the absence of a survey for the two trees is insignificant.</p> <p><i>Weather conditions - Weather recorded as raining at start and end of 19 August 2020 (Dusk) survey but not listed as a constraint/weather conditions not expanded upon. Likely not significant or there were periods of dry weather, as bat roost recorded during this survey in building B105A.</i></p> <p>Highways England confirmed that whilst rain was recorded during the survey, this was not identified as a significant limitation as bat activity was recorded and a roost was identified.</p> <p><i>Building B105A now has a recorded roost not picked up in 2017. Only august 2020 data for new location where 3 SPIPS [soprano pipistrelle] emerged. Therefore, has not been a survey from maternity season. If the risk is assessed as high risk/potential for such a roost in original survey it would need a full season of surveys. However, mitigation is already in place and a precautionary method statement to be followed should mitigate. Is this a just proximity disturbance and will all works will be conducted in daylight hours?</i></p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
		<p>Highways England confirmed whilst surveyed on a single occasion in 2020, it should be noted that B105A (which represents a garage block) is located between B104A and B106A (bungalow properties), which were surveyed on two occasions in 2017 (August and September (Appendix 9.8 Bat Activity Survey Report Part A [APP-234]). The surveys of B104A and B106A did not record any roosts within B105A.</p> <p>B105A does not contain any roost features suitable to support a roost of significance, both in terms of the number of bats or roost type (such as maternity). The building is also retained by the Scheme. As such, the reduced level of survey effort is not considered a significant limitation to the impact assessment. Highways England confirmed that predicted impacts were due to the proximity of B105A to the Scheme and therefore potential disturbance. Building B105A is afforded the same precautionary works mitigation as the bat roosts previously recorded in nearby buildings B86A and B101A, which are closer than B105A to the new West Moor junction to the northeast (see sheet 9 of 19 on the Land Plans [APP-006]). Building B105A has been included within measure A-B24 of the Outline CEMP [REP3-014 and -015], which includes (but not limited to) a toolbox talk to site personnel, keeping duration of works within 100m of the roost to a minimum and restricting these works to daylight hours.</p> <p>Highways England requested comment from Natural England to the response provided.</p> <p>Key Outcome At the time of writing, there has been no further engagement on this specific matter.</p> <p>Key Topic Highways England provided a response to Natural England’s queries within their email dated 11/02/2021 (see above) regarding the Biodiversity No Net Loss Assessment for the Scheme [REP2-009] and the supporting Annex A - Approach to the Assessment of Losses and Gains of Watercourses [REP2-010].</p> <p>Regarding the net loss of hedgerow and river habitat, Highways England confirm that this matter was being considered further.</p> <p>In relation to the need to amend the no net loss assessment in response to the proposed changes to the Scheme, Highways England confirmed the proposed amendments to the application (particularly the bank stabilisation of the north bank of the River Coquet) would impact woodland for which compensation is addressed within the Ancient Woodland Strategy [APP-247] (as updated at Deadline 4). As such, the habitat loss and area of proposed compensatory planting has been excluded from the no net loss calculation (in accordance with the methodology of the assessment). The Biodiversity No Net Loss Assessment for the Scheme would be subject to an update at detailed design following further refinement and/or design of the construction of the Scheme. If the proposed amendments to the application are accepted by the ExA, it is proposed to capture any changes to the Biodiversity No Net Loss Assessment for the Scheme at the detailed design stage. Highways England requested comment from Natural England to the response provided.</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England provided a response on 17/03/2021 and 26/03/2021 (see below).</p>
04/03/2021	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser) and Michael Miller (Team Leader-	<p>Key Topic The ExA stated within Issue Specific Hearing 2 on 25/02/2021 that Table 3.2 of the draft SoCG with Natural England [REP3-019] contains quite specific agreed matters in relation to the Ancient Woodland Strategy [APP-247]. The ExA requested that there be a more general statement to confirm that Natural England consider that the ancient woodland strategy is acceptable.</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
	Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England	<p>Highways England has requested a statement from Natural England to this effect.</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England provided a response via email on 10/03/2021 (see below).</p>
10/03/2021	Email from Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic Response from Natural England to Highways England's email dated 04/03/2021 (see above) requesting a statement to confirm that Natural England consider that the Ancient Woodland Strategy [APP-247] is acceptable, as requested by the ExA during Issue Specific Hearing 2.</p> <p>Natural England confirmed that <i>"the Ancient Woodland Strategy is considered to be acceptable to Natural England. The strategy has been drawn up following detailed discussion and collaboration with Natural England. Finer details of the strategy will be developed at the detailed design stage and agreed with Natural England."</i></p> <p>Key Outcome No action necessary.</p>
17/03/2021	Teleconference and subsequent email between Highways England and Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser) and Michael Miller (Team Leader-Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England	<p>Key Topic Highways England and Natural England held a teleconference to discuss outstanding responses/comments following recent engagement. This was followed up by an email from Highways England to Natural England to summarise the discussion. The discussion included:</p> <p>1) Progress of the updated LoNIs Natural England provided updated LoNIs for the Draft great crested newt licence Part A - Burgham Park and Draft great crested newt licence Part A - River Coquet licence (email dated 11/02/2021, see above). Further to Highways England's email dated 16/02/2021 (see above), Highways England requested confirmation from Natural England that the LoNI for the Draft great crested newt licence Part A - River Coquet licence covers the additional temporary woodland loss that would arise should the Change Request (bank stabilisation works) be accepted by the ExA.</p> <p>Further to Highways England's email dated 11/02/2021 (see above), Highways England requested a timeframe of when it is anticipated that the updated LoNIs for the below draft licences would be provided (these relate to the Scheme name: A1 in Northumberland: Morpeth to Ellingham (Part A/Part B as appropriate) and PINS reference: TR010059 only):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft badger licence Part A - Draft bat licence Part B – Northern woodland near Charlton Hall Road - Draft bat licence Part B – Charlton Mires <p>Natural England confirmed that it had not been possible to update these to date due to resource availability. Highways England offered to make the edits within the PDF documents of the LoNIs and issue these to Natural England for approval and agreement. Highways England issued the updated LoNIs to Natural England within the follow up email after the call.</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
		<p>Highways England also confirmed that the updated Draft bat licence for Part A was nearly ready for issue to Natural England for review and subsequently issued the documents on 24/03/2021 (see below).</p> <p>Highways England issued a LoNI tracker spreadsheet to Natural England so that both parties could keep track of progress.</p> <p>2) Review of the great crested newt verification survey report [REP1-017]</p> <p>Further to comments from Natural England on 11/02/2021 (see above) for other species verification reports issued at Deadline 1, Highways England requested an update on when comments would be received for the great crested newt verification survey report [REP1-017].</p> <p>3) Highways England's Responses to Natural England's comments on the species verification reports issued at Deadline 1</p> <p>Within an email dated 16/02/2021 (see above), Highways England provided responses to comments received from Natural England following their review of the Appendix 9.26 Wintering Bird Verification Survey Report Part A [APP-252] and the bat verification survey reports [REP1-015 and REP1-016]. Highways England requested an update on when a response to this email would be received. Natural England confirmed that a response would be provided as soon as possible.</p> <p>4) Updated documents for Change Request</p> <p>Highways England provided a copy of the updated Ancient Woodland Strategy for Change Request [REP4-054 and 055], Updated Habitats Regulations Assessment [REP4-057] and updated Biodiversity No Net Loss Assessment for the Scheme [REP4-059] that all relate to the proposed changes to the Scheme for Natural England's comment.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>1) Progress of the updated LoNIs</p> <p>A response regarding the LoNIs was provided in an email on 11/05/2021 (see below). 2) Review of the great crested newt verification survey report [REP1-017]</p> <p>Natural England confirmed during the phone call that the great crested newt verification survey report had been reviewed and that comments would be provided. A response was provided in an email on 11/05/2021 (see below). 3) Highways England's Responses to Natural England's comments on the species verification reports issued at Deadline 1</p> <p>Natural England provided a response to Highways England's comments for Appendix 9.26 Wintering Bird Verification Survey Report Part A [APP-252] following the teleconference (see below, email 17/03/2021).</p> <p>4) Updated documents for Change Request</p> <p>Highways England received comment on the updated Biodiversity No Net Loss Assessment for the Scheme for Change Request [REP5-038 and 039] on 24/05/2021 (see below). Comments for the Updated Habitats Regulations Assessment [REP4-056 and 057] were received on 07/05/2021 (see below) and comments for the Ancient Woodland Strategy for Change Request [REP4-054 and 055] were received on 23/05/2021 (see below).</p>
17/03/2021	Email from Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Following the teleconference earlier in the day (see above, 17/03/2021), Natural England provided comment in response to Highways England's email dated 16/02/2021 (see above) regarding the verification reports.</p> <p>In relation to Appendix 9.26 Wintering Bird Verification Survey Report Part A [APP-252], Natural England acknowledged that the transect lines used for the verification survey were the same as for the original survey undertaken in 2016/17 but that their length was shortened to reflect the finalised road route/design. Natural England confirmed that this is acceptable.</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
		<p>Key Outcome No action necessary.</p> <p>Key Topic Natural England provided comment in response to Highways England’s email dated 16/02/2021 (see above) regarding the need to update the Biodiversity No Net Loss Assessment for the Scheme [REP2-009] as a result of the proposed changes to the Scheme (bank stabilisation and southern access works). Natural England acknowledged that the should the proposed changes to the Scheme be accepted, compensation for the area of woodland damaged/destroyed would be addressed in the Ancient Woodland Strategy. Natural England also confirmed that they understand that impacts on the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI as a result of the proposed changes would be dealt with separately and is excluded from the biodiversity no net loss assessment.</p> <p>Key Outcome No action necessary.</p>
23/03/2021	Emails from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser) and Michael Miller (Team Leader- Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England	<p>Key Topic Highways England issued a courtesy email to Natural England with links to the Examination Library for relevant documents submitted at Deadline 4. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ancient Woodland Strategy for Change Request – clean and tracked [REP4-054 and 055] - Updated HRA Report for Change Request – clean and tracked [REP4-056 and 057] - Biodiversity No Net Loss for the Scheme for Change Request – clean and tracked [REP4-058 and 059] - Updated ES Addenda for the Stabilisation Works [REP4-063] and Southern Access Works [REP4-064] - Updated Ancient Woodland Strategy (without Change Request) – clean and tracked [REP4-008 and 009] <p>Key Outcome Highways England received comment on the updated Biodiversity No Net Loss Assessment for the Scheme for Change Request [REP5-038 and 039] on 24/05/2021 (see below). Comments for the Updated HRA Report for Change Request [REP4-056 and 057] were received on 07/05/2021 (see below) and comments for the Ancient Woodland Strategy for Change Request [REP4-054 and 055] were received on 23/05/2021 (see below). Comments to the Updated ES Addenda have been captured within written representations from Natural England and Highways to the ExA.</p>
24/03/2021	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser) and Michael Miller (Team Leader-	<p>Key Topic Highways England issued the updated Draft bat licence Part A to Natural England for their review and comment, and to support the update of the existing draft LoNI.</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
	Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England	<p>Key Outcome</p> <p>A response was provided in an email on 11/05/2021 (see below).</p>
26/03/2021	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser) and Michael Miller (Team Leader-Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Further to Natural England’s review of the Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Verification Survey Report [REP1-015], Highways England confirmed that they had completed further survey (aerial climb and inspection and/or an inspection of features with the use of a camera on a telescopic pole) of the trees that were previously surveyed in 2016/17 and have increased in suitability to Moderate or High, or were additional trees recorded in 2020 that were classified as Moderate or High roosting suitability that will either be felled or subject to high levels of disturbance during construction.</p> <p>As a correction to the report, Highways England confirmed the number of trees should be 26 (not 27 as T105A was listed twice, in error, in Table 4-1 [REP1-015]).</p> <p>Highways England provided a summary of the findings (below) and requested comment from Natural England:</p> <p>Access was not achieved for a single tree (T20.17). This tree therefore remains of Moderate roosting suitability, as identified within the Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Verification Survey Report [REP1-015]. A further 18 trees were downgraded from High to Moderate roosting suitability or maintained a Moderate roosting suitability classification following the further survey (T2A, T29A, T44A, T53A, T55A, T68A, T105A, T20.9, T20.52, 20.57, T20.58, T20.77, T20.97, T20.107, T20.122, T20.123, T20.132 and T20.135).</p> <p>Measure S-B7 of the Outline CEMP [REP4-013 and 014] has been updated to confirm that these trees would be subject to further survey (dusk emergence/dawn re-entry surveys) to confirm the presence/likely absence of roosting bats. The surveys would be undertaken pre-construction, between May and September and in accordance with good practice guidelines published by the Bat Conservation Trust. In addition, as detailed within the existing text of S-B7, “... those trees where suitability for roosting bats remains (Moderate or High suitability), although presence of a roost has not been confirmed, should be soft-felled under ecological supervision (by the ECoW [Ecological Clerk of Works] suitably experienced and licensed)). This will consist of the removal of major branches and limbs followed by section felling of the main trunk, with these lowered to the floor for inspection by the ECoW.” If the surveys identify a bat roost(s), the Applicant would liaise with Natural England and obtain a licence to permit the lawful destruction of the roost(s).</p> <p>Five trees (T108A, T109A, T110A, T111A and T20.76) were downgraded from Moderate roosting suitability to Low roosting suitability. In accordance with best practice, these trees shall be subject to a pre-fell inspection to confirm that there have been no changes in roosting suitability. This pre-fell inspection is detailed in measure S-B7 of the Outline CEMP [REP4-013 and 014].</p> <p>Two of the trees (T20.72 and T20.73) were downgraded from Moderate to Negligible roosting suitability. As such, no further survey or mitigation is required.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Highways England did not receive a response to the email and the proposed mitigation was subsequently documented in the Updated Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Verification Survey Report [REP6-22 and 023] issued to the ExA at Deadline 6 (4 May 2021). The updated report was issued to Natural England for comment on 06/05/2021 via email (see below).</p>
26/03/2021	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser) and Michael Miller (Team Leader-	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Within Natural England’s email dated 11/02/2021 (see above), Natural England provided comment on Biodiversity No Net Loss for the Scheme [REP2-009], although highlighted that they had not been in a position to study the documents in detail. A subsequent email on this topic was provided by Natural England on 17/03/2021. Highways England asked Natural England to confirm if their comments on the Biodiversity No Net Loss for the Scheme [REP2-009] within their email dated 17/03/2021 represented a full review of the document.</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
	Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England	<p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England provided a response via email on 26/03/2021 (see below).</p>
26/03/2021	Email from Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>In response to Highways England’s email (26/03/2021, see above) relating to Natural England’s review of the Biodiversity No Net Loss for the Scheme [REP2-009], Natural England confirmed that their emails on 11/02/2021 and 17/03/2021 did not represent a full review of the report. Natural England confirmed that they intend to fully review the Biodiversity No Net Loss for the Scheme [REP2-009] as soon as possible.</p> <p>Natural England also confirmed that they intend to provide comment on the documents issued at Deadline 4, following Highways England’s email on 23/03/2021 (see above).</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Highways England received comment on the updated Biodiversity No Net Loss Assessment for the Scheme for Change Request [REP5-038 and 039] on 24/05/2021 (see below). Comments for the Updated HRA Report for Change Request [REP4-056 and 057] were received on 07/05/2021 (see below) and comments for the Ancient Woodland Strategy for Change Request [REP4-054 and 055] were received on 23/05/2021 (see below).</p>
26/03/2021	Email from Michael Miller (Team Leader- Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Natural England confirmed that they intend to provide a response as soon as possible to Highway’s England’s email dated 26/03/2021 (see above) regarding the results of the aerial climb and inspection of trees and proposed mitigation. Natural England confirmed that their availability had been impacted by a couple of incidents (not related to the Scheme) that required urgent action.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Highways England did not receive a response to the email and the results of the aerial climb and pole camera inspection and proposed mitigation was subsequently documented in the Updated Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Verification Survey Report [REP6-22 and 023] issued to the ExA at Deadline 6 (4 May 2021). The updated report was issued to Natural England for comment on 06/05/2021 via email (see below).</p>
31/03/2021	Phone call and subsequent email between Highways England and Michael Miller (Team Leader- Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>The position of both Highways England and Natural England regarding the approach to the air quality assessment, particularly impacts on the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI. Within the ExA’s further written questions [PD-011], the ExA requested both Highways England and Natural England to provide an update on discussions on the matter and an indication of how matters can be successfully resolved (AQ.2.3). Natural England was also asked to respond to BIO.2.4 to provide general comment on the Updated Biodiversity Air Quality Assessment at Deadline 3 [REP3-010], particularly in respect of impacts on the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI.</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
		<p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Both parties agreed to provide joint positions stating the matter is under discussion at a national level between the Highways England's and Natural England's national specialists, with this national level approach being agreed by both parties as the preferable way forward. However, it has also been agreed that it may be necessary to seek agreement at a scheme level (i.e. for this Scheme) depending on the timescales of discussions at a national level.</p>
14/04/2021	Email from Highways England to and Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser) and Michael Miller (Team Leader-Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Highways England queried whether Natural England would be attending Issue Specific Hearing 3 (21 and 22 April) and requested a meeting to discuss the air quality assessment further, particularly impacts on the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI, as this was on the agenda for the hearing.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England provided a response via email on 14/04/2021 (see below).</p>
14/04/2021	Email from Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Further to Highways England's email dated 14/04/2021 (see above), Natural England confirmed that they would not be attending Issue Specific Hearing 3 (21 and 22 April). Natural England confirmed that they had not received any comment back from their national specialists regarding their views on the air quality assessment. Natural England confirmed that they would provide a follow up email with suggested dates for a meeting.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England provided a follow up email on 20/04/2021 (see below).</p>
19/04/2021	Phone call between Highways England and Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>A without prejudice phone call. Natural England submitted a written representation to the ExA on 16/04/2021 regarding their position on the impacts of the Stabilisation Works and Southern Access Works (Change Request). Natural England confirmed within their written representation that the permanent loss of riverbank habitat of the River Coquet (part of the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI) represents a significant effect and requires compensation. Natural England also stated within their written representation that <i>"it strongly disagrees with the applicant's assessment and conclusions that the provision of compensation is not required for the loss natural riverbank habitat within the SSSI."</i></p> <p>Highways England confirmed to Natural England that the loss of riverbank habitat as a result of proposed permanent scour protection is identified as a significant effect (Moderate adverse) and acknowledged that compensation should be provided. Highways England confirmed that they were and continue to explore opportunities for compensation for the loss of riverbank habitat through discussion with landowners. This may involve the restoration of bankside habitat elsewhere along the River Coquet or removal of an existing structure (such as a weir), two opportunities suggested by Natural England during the meeting held on 16/12/2020 (see above). However, at the time of assessment, compensation for the loss of riverbank habitat has not been identified or secured.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
		Natural England acknowledged that Highways England continue to seek opportunities to secure compensation for the loss of riverbank habitat. Natural England confirmed that they believe the significance of effect to be greater than Moderate adverse.
20/04/2021	Email from Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Further to Natural England’s email dated 14/04/2021 (see above), Natural England confirmed that their next availability would be the week commencing 3rd May.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Highways England scheduled a meeting for 6th May to discuss the Scheme in general and arranged a separate meeting to discuss air quality matters on 17th May (see below).</p>
26/04/2021	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Michael Miller (Team Leader- Sustainable Development and Marine) and Carolyn Simpson (Lead Adviser – Sustainable Development), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Further to an email from Highways England on 23/03/2021 (see above) with links to documents submitted at Deadline 4, Highways England requested confirmation of when comment would be received for the Updated HRA Report for Change Request [REP4-056 and 057]. This was requested so that an update could be provided to the ExA at Deadline 6 (4th May).</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England provided a holding response on 26/04/2021 (see below).</p>
26/04/2021	Email from Carolyn Simpson (Lead Adviser – Sustainable Development), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Further to Highways England’s request for when comment would be received for the Updated HRA Report for Change Request [REP4-056 and 057] (email dated 26/04/2021, see above), Natural England confirmed that Mr Cussen was on site and therefore had not had the opportunity to discuss with colleagues. Natural England confirmed that their team will provide confirmation as soon as possible.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England provided comment by email on 06/05/2021 (see below).</p>
05/05/2021	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Michael Miller (Team Leader- Sustainable Development and Marine) and Carolyn Simpson (Lead Adviser – Sustainable Development), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Highways England provided a consultation tracker, with outstanding matters for discussion during the meeting scheduled for 06/05/2021 (see below).</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England responded by email on 05/05/2021 (see below) and matters were discussed during the meeting on 06/05/2021 (see below).</p>
05/05/2021	Email from Carolyn Simpson (Lead Adviser – Sustainable Development), Natural	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Natural England acknowledged receipt of the consultation tracker issued by Highways England on 05/05/2021 (see above). Natural England requested confirmation of when final comments on the Biodiversity No Net Loss Assessment [REP5-038 and 039] are required.</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
	England to Highways England	<p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Highways England requested during the meeting of 06/05/2021 (see below) comments the week commencing 17/05/2021 so that engagement could be captured within the SoCG for Deadline 8 (25/05/2021). Highways England received comment on the updated Biodiversity No Net Loss Assessment for the Scheme for Change Request [REP5-038 and 039] on 24/05/2021 (see below)</p>
06/05/2021	Email from Highways England to Michael Miller (Team Leader- Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Following issue of a consultation tracker to Natural England (see email on 05/05/2021 above), Highways England provided Natural England with the Updated Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PBRA) Verification Survey Report [REP6-022 and 023], which was issued to the Inspectorate at Deadline 6 on Tuesday (4 May 2021). Highways England requested comment from Natural England on the report, particularly the proposed mitigation.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England provided a response on 28/05/2021 (see below).</p>
06/05/2021	Meeting between Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Michael Miller (Team Leader- Sustainable Development and Marine) and Carolyn Simpson (Lead Adviser – Sustainable Development), Natural England and Highways England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Meeting to discuss outstanding matters from previous engagement and agree timescales, where necessary.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Comment on Great Crested Newt Verification Survey Report [REP1-017]. Natural England confirmed the report had been reviewed and would provide an email to confirm following the meeting. 2) Progress of LoNIs. Natural England confirmed that the LoNI for the Draft Great Crested Newt Licence Part A – River Coquet does include the Change Request and that the LoNI for the Draft Bat Licence Part A does cover tree T148A. Natural England confirmed they would provide a follow up email to confirm. 3) Comment on Highways England’s email dated 16/02/2021 (see above) containing responses to Natural England’s comments on the bat verification reports [REP1-015 and 016]. Natural England confirmed agreement with the responses and have no further issues. 4) Comment on the Ancient Woodland Strategy for Change Request [REP4-054 and 044]. Natural England confirmed they would provide comment either the end of week commencing 10 May or early week commencing 17 May. During the meeting, Natural England raised three queries: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Is the pedestrian access via the southern slope the same as the right of way under the bridge? Highways England confirmed that the pedestrian access would be temporary for the construction phase and is different to the permanent right of way under the bridge. b. What would the practices be following the proposed 50-year management period? Highways England confirmed that after the initial 50-year management period, practices would default to standard Highways England management for woodland on their estate. Not anticipated to require significant intervention after 50 years. c. Soil sampling would be required for the Replanted Area and there may be potential issues with salvage and translocating the soils as this area may be impacted by construction of the original bridge. Highways England confirmed that soil sampling is proposed in the Replanted Area and therefore if the soils were deemed inappropriate for translocation (due to contamination for example), the soils would not be translocated. 5) Comment on the Updated HRA Report for Change Request [REP4-056 and 057]. Natural England committed to providing comment by COP 07/05/2021.

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
		<p>6) Comment on the Biodiversity No Net Loss for the Scheme for Change Request [REP5-038 and 039]. Both parties agreed for Natural England to provide comment the week commencing 17/05/2021 so that engagement could be captured within the SoCG for Deadline 8 (25/05/2021).</p> <p>7) Comment on the Updated Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PBRA) Verification Survey Report [REP6-22 and 023] provided to Natural England on 05/05/2021. Natural England confirmed that this would be passed onto their specialist bat team for comment.</p> <p>Also during the meeting, the loss of riverbank (riparian) habitat on the River Coquet as a result of the Change Request was discussed. Natural England confirmed they had engaged with the Environment Agency regarding the two proposals that the Environment Agency have provided to Highways England for funding an improvement project as compensation. Natural England also raised that they would support the funding of a River Restoration Strategy for the River Coquet.</p> <p>Natural England acknowledged the efforts that Highways England had taken to date to identify potential compensation measures through discussions with landowners and acknowledged the difficulties of secured a physical measures that Highways England could implement. As such, Natural England would be in support of the option for a financial contribution as compensation for the loss of riverbank habitat.</p> <p>Key Outcomes</p> <p>Natural England provided an email regarding the Great Crested Newt Verification Survey Report [REP1-017] (item 1) and LoNIs (item 2) on 11/05/2021 (see below).</p> <p>Highways England received comment on the updated Biodiversity No Net Loss Assessment for the Scheme for Change Request [REP5-038 and 039] on 24/05/2021 (see below). Natural England provided comment on the Updated HRA Report for Change Request [REP4-056 and 057] (item 5) by email on 07/05/2021 (see below) and comments for the Ancient Woodland Strategy for Change Request [REP4-054 and 055] were received on 23/05/2021 (see below).</p> <p>Highways England continue to engage with Natural England and the Environment Agency regarding compensation for the loss of riverbank habitat associated with the Change Request.</p>
07/05/2021	Email from Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Updated HRA Report for Change Request [REP4-056 and 057].</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England confirmed agreement with the conclusions of the Updated HRA Report for Change Request [REP4-056 and 057] “i.e. that the mitigation strategy proposed in the Appropriate Assessment (stage 2) of the Updated HRA is considered to be sufficient to ensure that the proposals set out in the Change Request will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the European sites listed in the Updated HRA Report.”</p> <p>Natural England provided several comments on the Avoidance and Mitigation section (Section 4.2 [REP4-056 and 057]) of stage 2 of the Updated HRA relating to the protection of the water quality in the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI. The SSSI is a site of national importance and therefore not assessed within the HRA (which addresses European sites). Natural England’s comments and Highways England’s responses are presented below in the email dated 11/05/2021.</p>
11/05/2021	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen	<p>Key Topic</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
	(Lead Adviser), Natural England	<p>Highways England provided a response to Natural England’s comments regarding the Avoidance and Mitigation section of the Updated HRA Report for Change Request [REP4-056 and 057] in relation to the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI. The comments provided by Natural England are provided in italics and bold below, with responses by Highways England below each item.</p> <p><i>Paragraph 4.2.1 (a) With regard to the use of the seeded mats highlighted in this section it should be noted that the seeds need to be appropriate to understory of the NVC woodland classification for the site.</i></p> <p>This is noted and agreed.</p> <p><i>Paragraph 4.2.1 (f) Given the sloping nature of the site it would be appropriate to consider increasing the minimum distance (i.e. 10m) from the watercourse for the location of any concrete mixing and washing areas. Ideally, these areas would be located as far as possible from the watercourse to further minimise the risk.</i></p> <p>The 10m limit is a “no closer than” and would only be used where there is an unavoidable specific need to (e.g. south side of the River Coquet if necessary). However, it is confirmed that these activities would be sited as far as possible away from the watercourse.</p> <p>It is proposed to amend the wording of measure S-B14 of the Outline CEMP as follows (proposed amendments in bold and underlined):</p> <p>“Dry working areas will be created when using concrete, allowing concrete to dry before it is exposed to water. <u>The exceptions to this would be piling works where there is ground water present and construction of headwalls.</u> The use of quick drying cement will be used where appropriate. <u>Concrete mixing or washing areas would be located as far as possible from watercourses and no closer than 10m from the watercourse, unless there is an unavoidable specific need (such as on the south side of the River Coquet).</u>”</p> <p><i>Paragraph 4.2.1 (g) As with the location of concrete mixing and washdown areas highlighted above in 4.2.1 (f), consideration should be given to increasing the minimum distance for the storage areas for fuel, oils and chemicals to further minimise the risk to the water course.</i></p> <p>It is not intended to store fuels or oils in the River Coquet valley itself. It is proposed to amend the wording of measure S-B14 of the Outline CEMP as follows (proposed amendments in bold and underlined):</p> <p>“Chemicals and fuels must be stored in secure containers located away from watercourses and waterbodies (<u>as far as possible from the watercourse and</u> at least 10 m away if possible). <u>At the River Coquet, chemicals and fuels shall be stored outside the valley slopes.</u>”</p> <p>It should be noted that the piling rig on the south side of the River Coquet will have to be refuelled in that location (to cross the bridge it has to be partially de-rigged which isn’t practical each time it needs fuel). Fuels/ oils would be brought into the valley only under controlled measures for the minimum duration required.</p> <p><i>Paragraph 4.2.1 (k) Installation of cut off ditches may not be feasible at this location due to the nature of the works in a constrained site on sloping ground immediately adjacent to the water course, so the measures set out in 4.2.1 (q) will need to be sufficiently robust to cope with persistent heavy rainfall events.</i></p> <p>Noted. It is the intention of the delivery contractor (Costain) to refine their plans further at detailed design in consultation with the EA and Natural England, based on the measures currently identified in the Outline CEMP. The measures outlined in 4.2.1 (k) and (q) are captured by measures S-W10 and A-W15, respectively, of the Outline CEMP.</p>

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		<p>Paragraph 4.2.1 (m) Natural England is not aware of any sewer infrastructure near the existing bridge location so it is likely that any water surface water runoff or water from excavations would need to be discharged to the R. Coquet following the appropriate treatment which would be detailed in an Environment Agency discharge permit that will be required for the proposed disposal method.</p> <p>Noted. Whilst there is a surface water suff to the east of the work area, it does directly enter the River Coquet. All works within the River Coquet valley would be subject to Environment Agency permitting and licensing, including discharge.</p> <p>Paragraph 4.2.1 (p) Any planting of backfill areas/made ground needs to be in line with the woodland restoration strategy for the site i.e. appropriate plants for the NVC woodland type.</p> <p>This is noted and agreed.</p> <p>Paragraph 4.2.1 (q) The implementation of a robust sediment control strategy across the valley sides on both sides of the river is crucial to minimising the risk of sediment loss to the river over the 16 month work period of the proposed bridge build. The systems put in place will need to be constantly monitored to ensure their continued effectiveness and need to designed to have sufficient capacity to operate effectively during periods of heavy rainfall at times when the site is not active (e.g. at night, weekends and holiday). The systems also need to be easily adaptable to cope the unforeseen changes to overland flow pathways and sediment loads. Regular maintenance and/or replacement sediment barriers/traps will be required to ensure that the systems put in place remain fit for purpose throughout the lifetime of the construction works.</p> <p>This is noted and agreed. As detailed in the response to 4.2.1 (k) above, it is the intention of the delivery contractor to refine their plans further at detailed design in consultation with the Environment Agency and Natural England, based on the measures currently identified in the Outline CEMP. The measures outline in 4.2.1 (q) are captured by measure A-W15 of the Outline CEMP.</p> <p>Paragraph 4.2.2 (e) See comment 4.2.1 (q) above.</p> <p>Noted. The Applicant has committed to the production of a site-specific drainage management plan to attenuate (where feasible/practicable), treat and discharge runoff. As detailed above, is the intention of the delivery contractor to refine their plans further at detailed design in consultation with the Environment Agency and Natural England.</p> <p>Paragraph 4.2.2 (g) It is important that the measures must be put in place to minimise the loss of any construction aggregate from the bridge, river training works and the piling platforms to the river. These measures must be sufficiently robust to last the duration of the works and should be subject to regular inspection and maintenance, as and when required.</p> <p>This is noted and agreed. A geotextile or other suitable materials would be utilised to contain aggregates within the working platforms. This is secured by measures SW-W6 and SAW-W5 of the Outline CEMP. It is proposed to amend the wording of these measures as follows (proposed amendments in bold and underlined):</p> <p><u>“Install a suitable geomembrane between the river training works and piling platform to minimise the release of construction aggregate associated with the piling platform. <u>These measures will be designed to be sufficiently robust to last the duration of the works and will be subject to regular inspection and maintenance, as and when required during construction.</u>”</u></p> <p>It is the intention of the delivery contractor to refine their plans further at detailed design in consultation with the Environment Agency and Natural England.</p>

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		<p>Paragraph 4.2.2 (h) A containment screen or some other method of preventing materials from falling from the underside of the bridge into the R. Coquet will be necessary.</p> <p>The delivery contractor has confirmed that the bridge will have a solid floor and the sides will be partially hoarded, with a regular cleaning, inspection and maintenance regime implemented to prevent material getting into the River. It is not possible to place anything under the bridge to act as a screen due to the demand this would put on maintenance access forcing people to have to enter the watercourse, the risk of catching debris or becoming entangled with debris in times of flood.</p> <p>The surface water drainage system (as referenced in 4.2.2 (h)) shall be developed at detailed design in consultation with the Environment Agency and Natural England. This is secured by measures SAW-B7 and SAW-W5 of the Outline CEMP.</p> <p>Highways England requested further comment from Natural England.</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England provided a holding response on 11/05/2021 (see below) and provided a full response on 22/05/2021 (see below).</p>
11/05/2021	Email from Michael Miller (Team Leader- Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic Natural England provided a letter via email stating the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Confirmation that the changes in the Great Crested Newt Verification Report (REP1-017) are considered acceptable to Natural England. - Change request to Draft Great Crested Newt licence Part A – River Coquet is considered acceptable to Natural England. - Confirmation of issue of the LoNI for the Draft Badger Licence Part A, Draft Bat Licence Part B – Charlton Hall and Draft Bat Licence Part B – Charlton Mires - Confirmation of review of the Updated Draft Bat Licence for Part A (including works to tree T148A) and that the LoNI for the Draft Bat Licence Part A covers tree T148A <p>Key Outcome Highways England requested clarification regarding the Great Crested Newt Verification Report (REP1-017) review and LoNI for the Draft Bat Licence Part A within an email on 18/05/2021 (see below).</p>
11/05/2021	Email from Carolyn Simpson (Lead Adviser – Sustainable Development), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic Natural England confirmed that they were in the process of reviewing the Biodiversity No Net Loss Report [REP5-038 and 039] and also the Outline CEMP. Natural England raised that they were aiming to provide comment on the Biodiversity No Net Loss Report and Outline CEMP by Monday 17th May.</p> <p>Key Topic Highways England confirmed by reply that comments by Monday 17th May would be suitable so that engagement could be captured within the SoCG for Deadline 8 (25th May). Highways England received comment on the updated Biodiversity No Net Loss Assessment for the Scheme for Change Request [REP5-038 and 039] on 24/05/2021 (see below).</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
17/05/2021	Meeting between Highways England and Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser) and Carolyn Simpson (Lead Adviser – Sustainable Development), Natural England	<p>Without Prejudice</p> <p>Key Topic</p> <p>The Updated Biodiversity Air Quality DMRB Sensitivity Assessment [REP3-010] was discussed, particularly in relation to the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI.</p> <p>Natural England confirmed their position. Natural England have concerns with LA 105 Air Quality (updated DMRB guidance) at a national level. Natural England confirmed that discussions are ongoing between Highways England’s and Natural England’s national specialists.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England and Highways England agreed that the increased nitrogen deposition as a result of the Scheme delays (rather than reverses) the downward trend in vehicle emissions (due to the anticipated switch from diesel/petrol to electric vehicles). Further, Natural England and Highways England agreed that the predicted increases in nitrogen deposition would not result in the physical loss of woodland habitat.</p> <p>Natural England acknowledged that mitigation measures (such as a physical barrier or reducing speed limits, as per LA 105 Air Quality) are not feasible for the SSSI.</p> <p>The Applicant’s position remains that the increase in nitrogen deposition as a result of the Scheme would not result in a significant effect to the SSSI, as set out at paragraphs 8.1.5 to 8.1.31 of the Updated Biodiversity Air Quality DMRB Sensitivity Assessment [REP3-010].</p> <p>Natural England confirmed that they consider the area of the SSSI impacted by vehicle emissions to be relatively small (in comparison to the wider SSSI/SSSI unit). In light of the above confirmations, Highways England asked Natural England to clarify if they are content with the conclusion of no significant effect to the SSSI, or if Natural England consider a significant effect would occur and are therefore seeking compensation. Natural England confirmed that this would be discussed with their national specialists to confirm and clarify their position. Natural England provided a response via email on 24/05/2021 (see below).</p>
18/05/2021	Email from Highways England to Michael Miller (Team Leader- Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Response to Natural England’s letter (via email) provided on 11/05/2021 (see above).</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>As per other LoNIs (see teleconference on 17/03/2021 and email from Highways England on 24/03/2021 above), Highways England provided an edited version of the Draft Bat Licence Part A, correcting the Scheme name and updating the date of issue for Natural England’s agreement. Natural England confirmed during a short phone call on 19/05/2021 that wording would be added to the LoNI confirming that the proposed update surveys to inform the future licence applicant will need to confirm species roosting. Natural England confirmed approval of the updated LoNI on 28/05/2021 (see below).</p> <p>Highways England also requested confirmation that Natural England have no comments to make on the Great Crested Newt Verification Survey Report [REP1-017] and agrees with the conclusions of the verification report and that the impact assessment and mitigation detailed in Chapter 9: Biodiversity Part A [APP-048] remains valid. Natural England provided a response on 28/05/2021 (see below).</p> <p>Highways England requested a response by Friday 21 May so that these matters could be resolved in the SoCG. Natural England acknowledged receipt of the email and confirmed that, due to annual leave (Michael Miller – Team Leader), a senior manager had been contacted to confirm if the requested timeframe was achievable.</p>

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19/05/2021	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser) and Carolyn Simpson (Lead Adviser – Sustainable Development), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Follow up email to the air quality meeting on 17/05/2021 (see above) to agree a timescale is set for Natural England’s responses to the queries raised in the meeting. Highways England requested Natural England clarify their position by 28 May 2021, allowing the week commencing 31 May 2021 for Highways England and Natural England to discuss further in advance of the hearings.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England provided a response via email to the queries raised in the meeting on 24/05/2021 (see below).</p>
22/05/2021	Email from Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Response from Natural England to Highways England’s email dated 11/05/2021 (see above) with responses to Natural England’s comments on the avoidance and mitigation detailed within Section 4 of the Updated HRA Report for Change Request [REP4-056 and 057] in relation to the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI (email dated 11/05/2021, see above).</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>In relation to measure S-B14 of the Outline CEMP, Natural England commented “<i>For the construction of headwalls in a watercourse where concrete is being used the normal best practice is to bund off the area and pump out the water (over pumping if necessary) allowing concrete to be poured in the dry to reduce the risk to water quality. Given that most, if not all, of the riverbed is made up of bed rock in this area, it should be feasible to construct headwalls in a dry bunded area. Is there a specific reason why this is not possible in this situation?</i>” Highways England responded to Natural England’s email on 25/05/2021 (see below).</p> <p>Natural England confirmed that “<i>for all the other points raised ... Natural England is content with the statements made and the proposed amendments to the Outline CEMP.</i>” Highways England updated the Outline CEMP at Deadline 8 to capture the proposed amendments detailed within their email to Natural England on 11/05/2021 (see above).</p>
23/05/2021	Email from Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Natural England’s comment on the Ancient Woodland Strategy for Change Request [REP4-054 and 055].</p> <p>Natural England confirmed they had “<i>limited comments to make regarding the updated made as a result of the Change Request plus a few additional suggestions relating to the original text of the strategy</i>”. Natural England made comments on the finer details of the strategy rather than the broad objectives and activities secured by the strategy. These comments are captured in Table 3-1 Issues Related to the Scheme.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>At the time of writing, Highways England is reviewing Natural England’s comments and preparing a full response.</p>
24/05/2021	Email from and Carolyn Simpson (Lead Adviser – Sustainable Development),	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Comments on the Biodiversity No Net Loss for the Scheme for Change Request [REP5-038 and 039].</p>

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	Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Highways England is reviewing Natural England’s comments and preparing a response.</p>
24/05/2021	Email from Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Following the meeting on 17/05/2021 (see above), Natural England confirmed their position on the assessment presented in the Updated Biodiversity Air Quality DMRB Sensitivity Assessment [REP3-010] with regard to the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI.</p> <p>Natural England confirmed that they consider the area of the SSSI impacted by vehicle emissions to be relatively small (in comparison to the wider SSSI/SSSI unit). In light of the above confirmations, the Applicant asked Natural England to clarify if they are content with the conclusion of no significant effect to the SSSI, or if Natural England consider a significant effect would occur and are therefore are seeking compensation. Following the meeting, Natural England confirmed their position within an email dated 24 May 2021. Natural England confirmed that for the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI specifically, they accept the conclusion of no likely significant effect. Natural England confirmed that this decision is based on the following factors and not based on the metric of “loss of one species” as detailed in LA 105 Air Quality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the current long-term downward trend in nitrogen deposition at the SSSI that would be delayed rather than reversed by the Scheme - the temporary nature of the increased nitrogen deposition experienced by the Scheme - “the additional deposition resulting from the Scheme will not impact the decline of background levels too substantially, therefore SSSI objectives will still be met in the long-term” - The relatively small area of the SSSI impacted by the predicted increase in nitrogen deposition as a result of the Scheme - The difficulty in measuring the effects of the predicted increased nitrogen deposition levels on the SSSI woodland habitat - Assumptions around the timeframe for electric vehicles being phased in and non-renewables (petrol and diesel) being phased out (in line with government policy) <p>Natural England also commented that they would still encourage and welcome the woodland planting discussed during the meeting on 17/05/2021 (see above) as a biodiversity enhancement, confirming that this would represent a voluntary measure.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Highways England acknowledge that Natural England agree with the conclusion of no significant effect to the SSSI as a result of increased nitrogen deposition due to the Scheme. Highways England issued a response regarding the biodiversity enhancement on 27/05/2021 (see below).</p>
25/05/2021	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Response to Natural England’s email dated 22/05/2021 (see above) in relation to the wording of measure S-B14 of the Outline CEMP.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Highways England confirmed that, on reflection, the “and construction of headwalls” can be removed from the proposed additional sentence detailing exceptions to dry working areas for measure S-B14. Highways England confirmed that for the construction of</p>

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		<p>headwalls, a dry working area would be created and that this is captured elsewhere in the Outline CEMP by measures S-W10, S-W14 and A-W17.</p> <p>Natural England provided a response by email on 25/05/2021 confirming agreement with the proposed amendment to S-B14 of the Outline CEMP. Measure S-B14 of the Outline CEMP was amended at Deadline 8 in line with the discussion with Natural England.</p>
26/05/2021	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Carolyn Simpson (Lead Adviser – Sustainable Development) and Michael Miller (Team Leader- Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England	<p>Key Topics</p> <p>Highways England provided a copy of the draft SoCG issued at Deadline 8 for Natural England’s reference and comment.</p> <p>Highways England also provided an update in relation to compensation for the loss of riverbank habitat of the River Coquet associated with the Change Request (without prejudice). Highways England confirmed that following the discussion of options to fund delivery of off-site compensation by the Environment Agency, a legal agreement was being prepared to secure this. Highways England confirmed that once the document had been drafted, the agreement would be shared with both the Environment Agency and Natural England to obtain comment.</p> <p>Key Outcomes</p> <p>Natural England provided a response for the Deadline 8a SoCG via email on 26/05/2021 (see below).</p>
26/05/2021	Email from Carolyn Simpson (Lead Adviser – Sustainable Development), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Minor comments on the draft SoCG issued at Deadline 8 regarding an error in the entry on 19/05/2021 (Key Outcome – “Highways England” should read “Natural England”) and a query of whether it is relevant to also reference an email dated 22/05/2021 from Natural England within the entry dated 26/02/2021 (relating to the Biodiversity No Net Loss for the Scheme [REP2-009]).</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Highways England provided a response, confirming the actions taken, on 27/05/2021 (see below).</p>
27/05/2021	Email from Highways England to Carolyn Simpson (Lead Adviser – Sustainable Development), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Natural England’s comments on the draft SoCG issued at Deadline 8 (as per the email dated 26//05/2021 (see above)).</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Highways England acknowledged the error in the entry on 19/05/2021 and corrected this within the submission at Deadline 8a. In relation to the entry on 26/03/2021, Highways England confirmed that only referenced an email from 07/05/2021 so that the narrative of emails is followed with the table.</p>
27/05/2021	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Carolyn Simpson (Lead Adviser – Sustainable Development)	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Compensation for air quality impacts in relation to Borough Wood LNR/ancient woodland and Well Wood ancient woodland [REP3-010]. The email intended to provide additional information following a direct email correspondence between Northumberland County Council’s Ecologist and Natural England.</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
	<p>and Michael Miller (Team Leader- Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England</p> <p>Engagement followed an email from Northumberland County Council's Ecologist to Natural England.</p>	<p>Highways England confirmed that the Updated Biodiversity Air Quality DMRB Sensitivity Assessment [REP3-010] concluded significant effects at Borough Woods LNR/ancient woodland and Well Wood ancient woodland as a result of increased nitrogen deposition from vehicle emissions due to the Scheme. Both Borough Woods and Well Wood (contiguous with Plessey Woods Country Park) are located outside of the Order limits and therefore Highways England have proposed to provide funding for habitat improvement works to be undertaken by Northumberland County Council.</p> <p>Highways England explained that Northumberland County Council had identified options for habitat improvements as compensation for the theoretical degradation to woodland habitat as a result of the Scheme. Highways England requested comment on the proposed measures.</p> <p>Key Outcome At the time of writing, Highways England is awaiting a response.</p>
27/05/2021	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Response to Natural England's email dated 24/05/2021 (see above) regarding air quality impacts and biodiversity enhancement. Highways England confirmed that Natural England's proposed voluntary measure of further woodland planting would be considered when developing the strategy of biodiversity enhancements (as detailed and secured by measure S-B20 of the Outline CEMP).</p> <p>Highways England confirmed that it is proposed to include 0.1ha of woodland planting as compensation for the for the significant effects concluded in relation to two veteran trees (T682 and T701, as detailed in the Updated Biodiversity Air Quality DMRB Sensitivity Assessment [REP3-010]). The proposed woodland planting would be located to the northwest of the River Coquet Bridge, within an area not predicted to experience significant increases in nitrogen deposition. This has been included within the Landscape Mitigation Masterplan Part A issued at Deadline 8a.</p> <p>Highways England also confirmed that they remain in discussion with Northumberland County Council to agree and secure funding for habitat improvements as compensation for the significant effects concluded in relation to Borough Wood LNR/ancient woodland and Well Wood ancient woodland [REP3-010], further to Highways England's email dated 27/05/2021 (see above).</p> <p>Highways England requested comment on the proposed measures.</p> <p>Key Outcome At the time of writing, Highways England is awaiting a response.</p>
27/05/2021	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Carolyn Simpson (Lead Adviser – Sustainable Development) and Michael Miller (Team Leader- Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Highways England issued a draft of the Legal Agreement between Highways England and the Environment Agency intended to secure a financial contribution as compensation for a) loss of open watercourse channel due to culverting and b) the loss of riverbank habitat along the River Coquet (SSSI), as a result of the Scheme.</p> <p>Highways England requested comment from Natural England and also confirmed that the draft agreement had also been issued to the Environment Agency for their comment.</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England provided an email with an initial comment on 28/05/2021 (see below).</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
28/05/2021	Emails from Michael Miller (Team Leader- Sustainable Development and Marine), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Further to Highways England’s email dated 18/05/2021, Natural England confirmed approval of the updated LoNI for the Draft Bat Licence Part A and also confirmed that Natural England have no further comment to make regarding the Great Crested Newt Verification Survey Report [REP1-017] and agree that the impact assessment and mitigation detailed in Chapter 9: Biodiversity Part A [APP-048] remains valid.</p> <p>Natural England also confirmed that, following their review, “Natural England does not require any further information and agrees with the conclusions of the Updated Bat Roost Assessment (PBRA) Verification Survey [REP6-022 and 023].</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>No further action required.</p>
28/05/2021	Email from Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Initial comment on the draft Legal Agreement between Highways England and the Environment Agency intended to secure a financial contribution as compensation for a) loss of open watercourse channel due to culverting and b) the loss of riverbank habitat along the River Coquet (SSSI), as a result of the Scheme.</p> <p>Natural England confirmed they would provide further comments in due course.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Highways England provided a response to Natural England’s query on 01/06/2021 (see below). At the time of writing, Highways England is awaiting a full response from Natural England.</p>
01/06/2021	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Response to Natural England’s initial query raised by email on 28/05/2021 (see above).</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Highways England responded to Natural England’s initial comment.</p> <p>At the time of writing, Highways England has not received any further comments from Natural England.</p>
Engagement Relating to Part A		
01/11/2017	Meeting between Andrew Whitehead (Team Leader – Sustainable Development & Marine) and Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England and Highways England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Highways England discussed the proposed design of the new River Coquet Bridge which would carry the new carriageway of the A1 over the river.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England commented that no structures should be in the river itself and those that are provided should be as far back from the river as possible. Highways England has considered this comment during the design of the bridge, with further consultation made on the</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
		<p>matter (see Item 11, Table 3-2). The northern pier of the new River Coquet bridge has been well set-back from the river. The placement of the southern pier is adjacent to the river, with mitigation proposed in relation to the installation of the pier (see EM014 of Table 9-23, Chapter 9: Biodiversity Part A [APP-048]) Some in-river elements of the design are unavoidable.</p> <p>Natural England stated that consideration should also be given to the provision of compensatory habitat to address vegetation loss (ancient woodland), monitoring/aftercare, air quality impacts and additional run off from the new carriageway.</p>
20/03/2018	Meeting between Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser) and Abby Halstead (Wildlife Lead Adviser), Natural England and Highways England	<p>Key Topic Highways England confirmed that lack of access to buildings that may be impacted by Part A was presenting restrictions in assessing their suitability for and presence of roosting bats.</p> <p>Key Outcome Highways England agreed with Natural England that data collected during other nearby bat surveys would be used to inform impact assessment. It was agreed that precautionary and, if necessary, worst-case scenario approaches were to be considered and appropriate mitigation developed to assess the impact of these.</p> <p>Key Topic Highways England raised deviation in methodology from guidance for the DEFRA transects (extended duration of surveys) and DEFRA Local Scale (crossing point) surveys (reduced number of survey visits, extended duration of surveys and surveys completed along the existing A1 only).</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England confirmed they would comment on the crossing point surveys and deviations from methodology following the meeting (see email response of 24/08/2018 set out below).</p> <p>Key Topic Highways England confirmed that a bird survey was not undertaken within the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI, with transects undertaken along the woodland edge due to health and safety associated with access constraints (steep topography).</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England confirmed that the absence of direct survey effort within the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) was not a significant issue, given that the impacts of the proposed development are relatively small. Breeding birds on the SSSI citation are not the primary reason for qualification and the area to be impacted by the proposed new bridge over the River Coquet is not considered to hold value for nesting kingfisher.</p> <p>Key Topic Highways England raised the age of the bird survey data, which dated back to 2016, to inform the impact assessment of Part A.</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
		<p>Key Outcome Natural England confirmed they would provide comments following the meeting (see email response of 07/08/2018 set out below).</p> <p>Key Topic Highways England sought to deviate from the guidance of a 1.5km survey area for barn owls to a proposed 500m survey area from the Order Limits of Part A. This proposal was to undertake a proportionate and pragmatic study, based on professional judgement from knowledge of similar schemes.</p> <p>Key Outcome National England confirmed that further justification for the deviation would be required. Highways England provided this on 04/09/2018 and Natural England provided their email response on 24/09/2018, as set out below.</p>
09/05/2018	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England	<p>Key Topic Highways England issued a template Ancient Woodland Salvage Plan document to Natural England for comment.</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England provided a response on 07/08/2018, as set out below.</p>
03/08/2018	Telephone call between Highways England and Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England	<p>Key Topic Highways England requested comment from Natural England regarding the age of the breeding bird survey data (survey undertaken in 2016) and its suitability to inform the ecological impact assessment. Highways England also confirmed that the steep topography of the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI (southern bank of the River Coquet) prevented access and completion of a transect within the boundaries of the SSSI. However, Highways England clarified that a survey was achieved adjacent to the SSSI and requested comment from Natural England regarding the validity of the data.</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England provided a response via email on 07/08/2018, detailed below.</p>
07/08/2018	Email from Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic Email response provided by Natural England following a telephone call held on 03/08/2018, see above, in relation to the age of the breeding bird survey data.</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England confirmed the survey undertaken in 2016 is considered current thus suitable to inform the impact assessment assuming there has not been any significant changes in the way the land has been used within the intervening time period.</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
		<p>Highways England are not aware of any significant land use changes. Further correspondence regarding the validity of survey data was discussed on 15/12/2020 (see 'Engagement Record for the Scheme' section above), when Natural England confirmed that the ecological surveys (in general) undertaken to date for the Scheme were appropriate, including methodologies, timing and extent.</p> <p>Key Topic Email response provided by Natural England following a telephone call held on 03/08/2018, see above, in relation to the bird survey not undertaken within River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI, with transects undertaken along the woodland edge.</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England confirmed that the bird survey (which included effort along the boundaries of the SSSI) was considered to be of good quality and it was noted that it would be used to inform appropriate mitigation, as necessary.</p> <p>Key Topic Natural England provided comments on the Ancient Woodland Salvage Plan, following issue of a skeleton document on 09/05/2018 (see above).</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England provided detailed comments/suggestions on the proposed strategy and information to be included to address the impacts to ancient woodland. The comments provided were used to develop the Ancient Woodland Strategy [APP-247] submitted with the DCO Application.</p>
24/08/2018	Email from Andrew Whitehead (Team Leader – Sustainable Development & Marine), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic Deviation from guidelines in relation to bat DEFRA surveys and bat survey work (initially raised during a meeting on 20/03/2018, as detailed above).</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England confirmed the bat survey data is sufficient to effectively understand the impacts of Part A and design mitigation within the ES.</p>
24/08/2018	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England	<p>Key Topic Highways England presented a plan showing the proposed location of woodland planting for the purposes of compensation in relation to the impacts to ancient woodland.</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England provided a response on 24/09/2018, as set out below.</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
04/09/2018	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Further to the meeting held between Highways England and Natural England on 20/03/2018 (see above), Highways England presented further justification for the reduction in the barn owl survey area; from a 1.5km survey area to a 500m survey area from the Order limits of Part A.</p> <p>Highways England confirmed that their professional judgement was based on the following:</p> <p>A low number of barn owl desk study records. Habitat suitability within the Order limits of Part A – areas of optimal (Type 1) and sub-optimal (Type 2) habitat are sparsely distributed within the survey area and therefore poor barn owl habitat occupies the majority of the 500m buffer. The low concentration of potentially suitable features barn owl may use for roosting/nesting. The presence of physical barriers within the landscape that may limit barn owl movement (such as the A1 and A697, major roads). The average barn owl home range - in the winter barn owl homes ranges can be up to 5,000 hectares but in summer, when there's more food about, the area barn owl use most shrinks to about 350 hectares. This equates to an approximate 1km radius around the nest when they are breeding (Barn Owl Trust - https://www.barnowltrust.org.uk/barn-owl-facts/barn-owl-home-range/). Therefore, the survey area of a 1km corridor (500m buffer) is considered proportionate. The anticipated potential construction and operation impacts.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England provided a response via email on 24/09/2018, as set out below.</p>
24/09/2018	Email from Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Email response provided by Natural England following discussion at the meeting of 20/03/2018 in relation to the deviation of survey area for barn owl (500m from the Order limits of Part A) in comparison to guidance (1.5km survey area).</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England confirmed that following review of the justification for the reduction in the survey area (see email dated 04/09/2018 above), they are satisfied that the survey area of 500m from the Order Limits of Part A should be sufficient to inform the impact assessment.</p> <p>Key Topic</p> <p>Natural England provided an email response in relation to the proposed location of the ancient woodland compensation area (southwest of the River Coquet bridge), which was provided by Highways England via email on 24/08/2018 (see above).</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England confirmed that the proposed location of ancient woodland compensation was acceptable. The proposed location of woodland creation was used within the Ancient Woodland Strategy [APP-247] submitted with the DCO Application.</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
26/09/2018	Email from Highways England to Andrew Whitehead (Team Leader – Sustainable Development & Marine) and Silas Walton (Lead Advisor), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Highways England issued a document detailing the proposed approach to the impact assessment associated with building B101A due to refusal of access, which is presented in Appendix D of Appendix 9.9: Bat Survey Report 2018 Part A [APP-235]. The approach involved the assumption of the presence of roosting bats equivalent to an adjacent building with bat roosts; building B84A.</p> <p>Building B84A had a higher suitability for roosting bats in comparison to B101A. B84A was subject to a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) in 2017 and three emergence/re-entry surveys, in 2017 (July, August and September). The surveys identified common species roosting within the building; including day roosts supporting a single common pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>, a single soprano pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i> and a single brown long-eared bat <i>Plecotus auritus</i>. As such, it was assumed that building B101A also supported day roosts of low numbers of common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and brown long-eared bats. There was no evidence to suggest that either building supported a maternity roost, given individual bats were recorded during surveys conducted within the peak maternity season. In addition, B84A did not contain roosting features suitable for a hibernation roost and the same was assumed for B101A (due to lack of potential roost features recorded from external vantage points, the building is inhabited and therefore internally heated and the type and condition of the building).</p> <p>Both buildings B84A and B101A are retained by the Scheme, although located adjacent to a proposed slip road connecting to a new junction (West Moor Junction), approximately 100 m to the north. The document identified the potential for disturbance impacts during both construction and operation.</p> <p>The document detailed the proposed mitigation measures to reduce the potential impacts of disturbance, which were timing of construction activities, use of suitable lighting (temporarily) during construction and landscape design to screen the roosts from the junction and guide bats to suitable crossing points.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England provided a response on 04/10/2018, as set out below.</p>
04/10/2018	Email from Andrew Whitehead (Team Leader – Sustainable Development & Marine), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Email response provided by Natural England following the issue by Highways England of a proposed impact assessment with regards to bats and building B101A on 26/09/2018 (as detailed above), due to refusal of access. Highways England were seeking agreement to the proposed approach to inform the impact assessment detailed in Chapter 9: Biodiversity Part A of the ES [APP-048].</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England confirmed they agreed with the approach taken to assume presence of roosting activity within B101A and the mitigation proposed to address potential impacts. Natural England considered that the approach proposed demonstrated that there is no satisfactory alternative and that the works will not adversely affect the favourable conservation status of the bats assumed to be present.</p>
10/10/2018	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Highways England issued a draft HRA screening report for Part A for Natural England's review and comments. Highways England were seeking agreement to the approach and conclusions of the assessment.</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
		<p>Key Outcome Natural England provided a response on 23/11/2018, as set out below.</p>
23/11/2018	Email from Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic Email response from Natural England regarding the approach taken and conclusions of no likely significant effects detailed within the draft HRA screening report for Part A, following issue of the document on 10/10/2018 (as detailed above).</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England requested additional information regarding impacts of aerial emissions. Natural England suggested it would be appropriate to highlight the inclusion of pollution prevention and control measures to avoid the risk of polluted surface water runoff during construction and network of detention basins during operation. The additional information requested and suggested was incorporated into a revised HRA Report issued to Natural England for comment on 02/05/2019; reply received 09/05/2019 (set out below). Overall, Natural England concurred with the conclusions of the report that the proposal is not likely to have a significant impact on the coastal and marine Natura 2000 (European) sites.</p>
01/03/2019	Meeting between Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England and Highways England	<p>Key Topic Highways England presented a draft of an Ecological Mitigation Plan for Part A, seeking agreement from Natural England to the approach and proposals.</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England confirmed that their initial review was the draft ecological mitigation was proportionate and Natural England will provide additional comment, where appropriate, following receipt of the ES. Following a review of the draft ES in July 2019, Natural England confirmed in an email dated 08/08/2018 that <i>“all the relevant surveys and the mitigation outlined for the species and habitats that are likely to be impacted by the proposed scheme are in line with current guidance and best practice.”</i> Upon review of the final ES submitted with the DCO application, Natural England has not provided further comment.</p> <p>Key Topic Highways England provided an update regarding impacts to ancient woodland as a result of Part A and confirmed the Order limits had been reduced, thereby reducing the loss of ancient woodland. Highways England confirmed that the then latest calculations identified the loss of approximately 0.27ha of ancient woodland within the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI (previously 0.37ha) and loss of 0.41ha of woodland within the Coquet River Felton Park LWS (not designated ancient woodland but treated as ancient woodland for the purposes of mitigation, as detailed in paragraph 2.1.2 of the Ancient Woodland Strategy Part A [APP-247]). It was therefore predicted that Part A would result in the loss of 0.68ha of ancient woodland. Highways England confirmed that they propose to compensate at a 1:12 ratio, resulting in woodland creation to the value of 8.16ha. This ratio was applied within the Ancient Woodland Strategy Part A [APP-247].</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England confirmed that they are satisfied with the area (8.16ha) and location of the proposed compensation woodland planting.</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
		<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Highways England presented a list of high levels tasks that were proposed as part of an Ancient Woodland Strategy, as per the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Receptor site¹ - Test soil conditions/nutrient levels 2. Receptor site - Manipulate soils 3. Receptor site - Re-test to confirm achieved 4. Donor site² – translocate ground flora to wider SSSI/ancient woodland. Salvage saplings (by hand) if achievable. 5. Donor site – fell woodland (retain material for use on receptor site) 6. Donor site – soil strip 7. Receptor site – spread stripped soils 8. Receptor site – sow hay meadow seed mix and plant nursery transplants (60-90cm) and salvaged saplings (if achieved) 9. Wider woodland – collect and transplant saplings by hand into the receptor site) 10. Manage and maintain receptor site <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. During which, ground flora seed obtained and grown on, ready to be transplanted at suitable time (trigger – when canopy of woodland has developed and hay meadow grassland has started to die back/recede). <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England confirmed that the steps in the high-level task list are appropriate and that translocation of ground flora to the wider SSSI and collection of tree saplings from wider SSSI would require SSSI Assent. This confirmation and additional comments and advice on individual elements of the strategy (provided within an email dated 08/08/2019, see below and discussed in detail within Chapter 3 Issues, Table 3-2) were used to inform the Ancient Woodland Strategy Part A [APP-247] submitted with the DCO Application.</p>
02/05/2019	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Highways England issued a revised HRA Report for Part A for Natural England’s review and comment. Highways England were seeking agreement with Natural England to the information and conclusions presented.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England provided a response on 09/05/2019, as set out below.</p>
09/05/2019	Email from Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Email response from Natural England regarding the information presented within the updated HRA Report for Part A, following issue of the document on 02/05/2019 (as detailed above).</p>

¹ Compensatory woodland planting area

² Area within red line boundary

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
		<p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England acknowledged that comments made on 23/11/2018 with regards to the earlier draft have been addressed. Natural England confirmed agreement with the conclusions of the report, in that the proposal is not likely to have a significant impact on the coastal and marine Natura 2000 (European) sites. The agreed version of the HRA Report was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate as part of the DCO application [APP-342].</p>
17/07/2019	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Highways England issued a draft Chapter 9: Biodiversity for Part A of the Scheme and the accompanying technical appendices (Appendix 9.1 to 9.25 [APP-227 to APP-251]).</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>An initial response was received from Natural England on 08/08/2019, as detailed below. Natural England comments on the draft documents are also presented within Table 3-2 Issues Related to Part A Only alongside a response from Highways England.</p>
25/07/2019	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser) and Andrew Whitehead (Team Leader – Sustainable Development & Marine), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Highways England issued a draft SoCG relating to Part A to Natural England for their consideration and amendment, as required.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England provided a response on 07/08/2019, as detailed below.</p>
07/08/2019	Email from Andrew Whitehead (Team Leader – Sustainable Development & Marine), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Natural England stated that they were unable to provide meaningful comment on the contents of the draft SoCG for Part A due to the lack of details and suggested that a specific section(s) is included to make clear which areas have been agreed / work is ongoing / remain in dispute.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Highways England provided a response on 10/09/2019, as detailed below.</p>
07/08/2019	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Highways England informed Natural England that targeted surveys for brown hare were not undertaken or proposed as part of the baseline assessment of the Scheme and requested agreement to the approach.</p> <p>Highways England also requested comment or agreement to the outcomes of the air quality assessment on designated sites, detailed within the draft Chapter 9: Biodiversity issued on 17/07/2019 (as detailed above).</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England provided a response on 08/08/2019, as set out below.</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
08/08/2019	Email from Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Email response from Natural England to the email dated 07/08/2019 (detailed above) regarding the approach to assessment of brown hare.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England acknowledged that targeted surveys have not been undertaken for brown hare. Natural England confirmed that the proposed mitigation to encourage dispersal from within the Order Limits and the overall design of the scheme should be sufficient to ensure that the local brown hare population is not significantly impacted by the proposal.</p> <hr/> <p>Key Topic</p> <p>Email response from Natural England to the email dated 07/08/2019 (detailed above) regarding the approach to air quality assessment and impact conclusions regarding the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Approach to assessment changed following this consultation. Outcome no longer relevant. This matter is discussed further below in relation to the email dated 18/10/2019.</p>
08/08/2019	Email from Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Email response from Natural England with comment on the draft ES submission, issued via email on 17/07/2019 (detailed above).</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England confirmed that <i>“all the relevant surveys and the mitigation outlined for the species and habitats that are likely to be impacted by proposed scheme are in line with current guidance and best practice.”</i> It was also commented that <i>“the various comments and advice given by Natural England in the many detailed discussions and consultations regarding the proposals over the last 18 months have been taken on board. In particular, the considerable amount of time spent consulting on the specifics of the woodland compensation area have resulted in a detailed Ancient Woodland Strategy which will hopefully prove to be reasonable compensation for the unfortunate, but unavoidable, loss of an area of Ancient and Semi-Natural woodland within the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI.”</i></p> <p>With regards to the Ancient Woodland Strategy, Natural England stated they <i>“would like to acknowledge the resource and effort that Highways England and their consultants have put into to developing the Ancient Woodland Strategy and looks forward to helping further refine the design of the Woodland Creation Area at the detailed design stage.”</i></p> <p>Several items were raised, which were considered and used to update Chapter 9:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inclusion of bullhead with regards to biosecurity. - Use of aquatic vegetation consistent with what is existing within watercourses within proposed planting.

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inclusion of a badger sett approximately 360m west of the River Coquet bridge within the proposed pre-commencement walkover survey. - Minor comments on the Ancient Woodland Strategy. <p>Natural England confirmed that they welcome the additional enhancements listed in Section 3.2.19 – 3.2.24 of the Ancient Woodland Strategy Part A [APP-247].</p> <p>These items are discussed further in Chapter 3 of this document.</p>
21/08/2019	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Highways England provided responses to the comments raised by Natural England on 08/08/2019 (see above), following review of the draft ES documents for Part A.</p> <p>The response confirmed that the proposed river training measures to facilitate the construction of the southern pier of the new River Coquet Bridge were temporary. The response also acknowledged that several suggested additions/amendments to the Ancient Woodland Strategy [APP-247] had been actioned.</p> <p>Highways England requested if Natural England would be able to provide any advice and guidance on how management of the SSSI works in practice and, if a third party is contracted, whether it would be possible to obtain contact details to assist discussions.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England provided a response on 18/10/2019, as set out below.</p> <p>Key Topic</p> <p>Following the issue of the draft Chapter 9: Biodiversity for Part A of the Scheme on 17/07/2019, Highways England presented an updated impact assessment for the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI in relation to operational air quality. The updated assessment accounted for the loss of SSSI woodland during construction of the Scheme (addressed by the Ancient Woodland Strategy [APP-247]) and changed the conclusion of significance of effect from Slight adverse (not significant) to Neutral (not significant).</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England provided a response on 18/10/2019, as set out below.</p>
10/09/2019	Email from Highways England to Andrew Whitehead (Team Leader –	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Highways England provided a response to the email from Natural England dated 08/08/2019 (see above) in relation to the draft SoCG for Part A.</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
	Sustainable Development & Marine), Natural England	<p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Highways England confirmed that the SoCG for Part A shall be updated to capture any recent changes in section/table references for the ES, but it is intended that the structure of the SoCG would remain the same. The updated SoCG for Part A was issued to Natural England on 20/09/2019, see below.</p>
20/09/2019	Email from Highways England to Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser) and Andrew Whitehead (Team Leader – Sustainable Development & Marine), Natural England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Highways England requested an update and comment to the email dated 21/08/2019 regarding the updated air quality assessment for the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England provided a response on 18/10/2019, as set out below.</p> <p>Key Topic</p> <p>Highways England issued an updated draft SoCG for Part A following the email dated 10/09/2019 (detailed above) for Natural England’s consideration and amendment, as required.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England provided a response on 14/10/2019, as detailed below.</p>
14/10/2019	Email from Andrew Whitehead (Team Leader – Sustainable Development & Marine), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Advice from the Natural England Wildlife Licensing Team confirming the information required with respect to the protected species licences in order to provide Letters of No Impediment (LoNI).</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England requested a full draft licence application with as much information as the Applicant can provide at the time. This would include a draft Application Form, Method Statement and Reasoned Statement. Also, where possible and appropriate; a master plan, work schedule and appropriate, labelled supporting figures should be provided.</p> <p>Natural England recognised that the full project design may not be known at the time. However, the more information Natural England can assess at this stage, the greater confidence Natural England’s advisers can have in their consideration of whether the proposals are likely to meet licensing requirements.</p> <p>This email was further supported by an email on 18/10/2019, as set out below, regarding specific advice for the bat draft licence applications. Natural England requested that the following be included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reference to all buildings within the Order Limits and if they have been ruled out of the licence application in relation to bat suitability. Please say why and what type of survey this is based on.

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
		<p>- Provide an explanation of the buffer zone and say why it is needed or rule it out if necessary.</p> <p>Natural England confirmed that this was preliminary advice and that further comments may be raised following assessment of the draft licence application. Highways England prepared draft species licences for great crested newts, bats and badger. These were submitted to Natural England on 23/01/2020 (as detailed below).</p>
18/10/2019	Email from Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Email to address responses from Highways England (issued on 21/08/2019, detailed above) to the comments provided by Natural England following review of Chapter 9 and appendices (see email dated 08/08/2019).</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England provided thanks for the clarifications given regarding the comments on the draft ES. Natural England confirmed that the only outstanding query regarding the clarifications provided relates to Section 4.5.12 of the Ancient Woodland Strategy [APP-247] and the question of the long-term management of the Woodland Creation Area and whether this would be in perpetuity. Highways England confirmed that the Woodland Creation Area will be retained as a woodland in perpetuity, as detailed within Item 49 of Table 3-2 of this SoCG.</p> <p>Natural England noted that the revised assessment (provided by email on 21/08/2019, see above) concludes that while the critical load threshold for NOx is exceeded within 15m to the east of the existing bridge, it falls below the threshold at the Order limits. The area affected by NOx levels exceeding the critical load lies within the SSSI woodland that will be compensated for by the provision of the Woodland Creation Area (as part of the Ancient Woodland Strategy Part A [APP-247]). Natural England also confirmed that the conclusion that the Scheme would result in effects of overall Neutral significance to the River Coquet and Coquet Valley SSSI as a result of changes to air quality is supported by the evidence provided (within the email dated 21/08/2019, see above).</p>
18/10/2019	Email from Abby Halstead (Wildlife Lead Adviser), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Following a brief phone call, advice from Natural England prior to the submission of a draft bat licence for building B4A for the LoNI.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>Natural England advised that the method statement should make reference to all of the buildings within the Order limits, what surveys have been undertaken and an explanation why other buildings have been ruled out of the licence in relation to bat suitability. The advice provided by Natural England was used to inform and update the Bat Method Statement for Part A [APP-248].</p>
04/11/2019	Email from Andrew Whitehead (Team Leader – Sustainable Development & Marine), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic</p> <p>Natural England requested that the draft SoCG for Part A (issued on 20/09/2019 (see above)) be updated to detail consultation responses provided to date following review of the ES and associated documents provided. Of importance are the comments made regarding air quality and the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI.</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
		<p>Key Outcome Highways England provided an updated SoCG for Part A on 15/01/2020, see below.</p>
15/01/2020	Email from Highways England to Andrew Whitehead (Team Leader – Sustainable Development & Marine) and Bob Cussen (Lead Adviser), Natural England	<p>Key Topic Highways England issued an updated SoCG for Part A following comments received by Natural England on 04/11/2019 (see above).</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England provided a response on 05/02/2020, set out below.</p>
20/01/2020	Email from Highways England to Andrew Whitehead (Team Leader – Sustainable Development & Marine), Natural England	<p>Key Topic Highways England issued pre-submission screening forms to Natural England for the four draft species licences for Part A, a procedural action. This included: Bat draft licence (building B4A) [APP-248] Badger draft licence [APP-249] Great crested newt River Coquet draft licence [APP-250] Great crested newt Burgham Park draft licence [APP-251]</p> <p>Key Outcome Highways England issued the draft species licences for Part A to Natural England on 23/01/2020.</p>
23/01/2020	Email from Highways England to Andrew Whitehead (Team Leader – Sustainable Development & Marine), Natural England	<p>Key Topic Highways England issued the four draft species licences for Part A to Natural England to support a request for LoNIs. Highways England confirmed that, as detailed within the documentation, the draft licences are intended to support the DCO application and LoNIs only and do not represent licence applications. Future licence applications would be based on the information provided within the draft documentation, detailed design and update surveys. As such, Highways England confirmed there were sections of the Application Forms and Method Statements, such as Named Ecologist details and declarations, which have not been provided as these would be confirmed within the future licence application.</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England requested further information/clarification at later dates, which are detailed below (see 05/02/2020 (request for reasoned statements), 26/03/2020 (requested clarification for the draft bat licence) and 06/04/2020 (comment on draft great crested newt licences)). Natural England issued LoNIs for the four draft licences on 19/02/2020 (see below).</p>
05/02/2020	Email from Andrew Whitehead (Team Leader – Sustainable Development & Marine), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic Natural England confirmed that, following review of the updated SoCG for Part A issued on 15/01/2020 (detailed above) that they had no further comments to make in relation to the content and looked forward to receiving the final version for signing.</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
		<p>Key Outcome Highways England issued the SoCG for Part A for signing on 04/03/2020, see below.</p>
05/02/2020	Email from Claire Storey (Wildlife Licensing Lead Adviser), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic Natural England requested reasoned statements to support the draft bat and great crested newt licences, to satisfy the No Satisfactory Alternative and Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest tests.</p> <p>Key Outcome Highways England issued the requested reasoned statements on 24/03/2020, as detailed below.</p>
18/02/2020	Email from Claire Storey (Wildlife Licensing Lead Adviser), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic Natural England questioned if there were any issues relating to otters and if a draft licence would be issued.</p> <p>Key Outcome Highways England confirmed via email on 19/02/2020 there are no licensable impacts predicted to otter within the ES and therefore a licence application is not proposed. No response was received by Natural England on this matter.</p>
04/03/2020	Email from Highways England to Andrew Whitehead (Team Leader – Sustainable Development & Marine), Natural England	<p>Key Topic Highways England issued the finalised SoCG for Part A of the Scheme to Natural England for signing.</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England signed and returned the SoCG for Part A to Highways England on 19/03/2020, see below.</p>
19/03/2020	Email from Andrew Whitehead (Team Leader – Sustainable Development & Marine), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic Natural England signed and returned the SoCG for Part A to Highways England.</p> <p>Key Outcome Following the return of the SoCG for Part A, Part A and Part B were combined into a single Application for the Scheme, which was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 07/07/2020. The previous signed SoCG for Part A is considered an interim version and an account of consultation and agreement between Natural England and Highways England as of 19/03/2020. The interim SoCG for Part A (presented in Appendix A) has been used to inform this SoCG, which is a full and final account for the Scheme in its entirety.</p>
24/03/2020	Email from Highways England to Claire Storey (Wildlife Licensing Lead Adviser), Natural England	<p>Key Topic Highways England issued the reasoned statements for the draft bat and great crested newt licences to Natural England to support the request for LoNIs.</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
		<p>Key Outcome Natural England provided a response to the draft licences on 19/05/2020, see below.</p>
26/03/2020	Email from Annie Ivison (Wildlife Lead Adviser), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic Natural England requested clarification for the draft bat licence submitted on 23/01/2020 (main documents) and 24/03/2020 (reasoned statement), see above. This included the location of the 6.1km offline development (i.e. start and end points) and the number of buildings in the vicinity of the offline works. Natural England confirmed that they were trying to ascertain what the roost potential of the buildings in the vicinity of the new section was or if there were any buildings that are known to host a roost.</p> <p>Key Outcome Highways England provided a response on 26/03/2020, as set out below.</p>
26/03/2020	Email from Highways England to Annie Ivison (Wildlife Lead Adviser), Natural England	<p>Key Topic In response to the email from Natural England on 26/03/2020, see above, Highways England provided an annotated plan identifying the location of the on and offline sections of Part A. Highways England also confirmed that building B4A was the only building known to support a roost that would be lost to the Scheme. Highways England confirmed that there are other buildings and tree along the Scheme that support roosting which may be subject to disturbance, although this has been addressed in the ES (Chapter 9: Biodiversity Part A [APP-048]) and mitigation has been proposed.</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England acknowledged receipt of the response and confirmed this had helped their understanding on 26/03/2020. Natural England issued a LoNI for the draft bat licence on 19/02/2020 (see below).</p>
06/04/2020	Email from Isabelle Pashley (Wildlife Lead Adviser), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic Two emails from Natural England following review of the two draft great crested newt licences [APP-250 and APP-251]. Within the emails, Natural England outlined amendments to the draft licence application that would be required as part of the formal (future) licence application and that would need to be agreed in order to provide LoNIs. Natural England confirmed that Highways England was not required to resubmit the draft method statements.</p> <p>Key Outcome Highways England confirmed the requested amendments would be included within the formal licence applications on 15/04/2020.</p>
15/04/2020	Email from Highways England to Isabelle Pashley (Wildlife Lead Adviser), Natural England	<p>Key Topic Highways England provided a response to Natural England's email of the 06/04/2020 and confirmed the requested amendments to the two draft great crested newt licences would be included within the formal licence applications. Highways England requested confirmation from Natural England that the responses provided was sufficient to inform the LoNI for the two draft great crested newt licences.</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
		<p>Key Outcome Natural England confirmed the responses provided were sufficient to inform the LoNIs for the two draft great crested newt licences, which were issued by Natural England on 19/05/2020, see below.</p>
14/05/2020	Email from Highways England to Claire Storey (Wildlife Licensing Lead Adviser), Natural England	<p>Key Topic Highways England requested an update on the LoNIs following email correspondence with the individual wildlife licence assessors on 26/03/2020 (above, in relation to the draft bat licence) and 15/04/2020 (above, in relation to the two draft great crested newt licences).</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England provided a response on 19/05/2020, detailed below.</p>
19/05/2020	Email from Andrew Whitehead (Team Leader – Sustainable Development & Marine), Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic Natural England issued a LoNI for the draft badger licence and LoNIs with caveats for each of the draft bat licence and two draft great crested newt licences. The caveats associated with each of the bat and great crested newt licences are detailed in Chapter 3 Issues, Table 3-2.</p> <p>Key Outcome No actions taken. The LoNIs for Part A issued by Natural England in May 2020 are considered interim LoNIs. The interim LoNIs have subsequently been updated to reflect the correct Scheme name (A1 in Northumberland: Morpeth to Ellingham) and, with reference to the draft bat licence and draft great crested newt – River Coquet licence, in response to changes to the draft licence documentation.</p> <p>Highways England has agreed that each caveat item will be addressed within the formal licence applications.</p>
Engagement Relating to Part B		
07/11/19	Email from Andrew Whitehead (Team Leader – Sustainable Development & Marine), Natural England with Lisa Southwood (Licensing Team Leader), Natural England CC'd to Highways England	<p>Key Topic Discussion of implications to protected species, particularly bats and birds, from the Scheme and requirements for licensing to support DCO. Brief discussion about arranging a review of the HRA for Part B by the Natural England.</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England provided contact details for appointed licensing team member to discuss protected species and licensing requirements for project. Highways England also confirmed to send a draft copy of the HRA for Natural England's review and comment.</p>
18/11/19	Email from Highways England to Andrew Whitehead (Team Leader –	<p>Key Topic Submission of draft HRA document to Natural England for Review and comment</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
	Sustainable Development & Marine), Natural England)	Key Outcome Copy of draft HRA for Part B submitted to Natural England for review and comment.
27/11/19	Email from Andrew Whitehead (Team Leader – Sustainable Development & Marine) Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic Reply from Natural England addressing their review of draft HRA.</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England agree with the conclusions of the draft HRA for Part B, of no significant impacts on any European designated sites as a result of the development and “<i>We do not consider it necessary to undertake an Appropriate Assessment</i>”.</p>
11/12/2019	Meeting between Natural England (Lisa Southwood, Licensing Team Lead; Abby Halstead; Annie Ivison and Nick White) and Highways England	<p>Key Topic Meeting with representatives from Natural England to discuss approach to survey effort and mitigation for protected species and implications for draft licensing.</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England provided feedback and comment on Highways England’s approach to surveys and mitigation. Following explanation of the approach to surveys and assessment of protected species and those receptors omitted from assessment, Natural England were happy with the approach taken and the justifications given for those receptors omitted from assessment (namely terrestrial invertebrates, hare and hedgehog).</p> <p>Natural England provided comment on: The approach to mitigation for bats, stating their desire to see a land agreement/legal agreement to ensure protection of mitigation (namely relocation of bat boxes) for bats for a minimum of 10 years in respect of the maternity roost; however, being content with the proposed approach to mitigation and relocation of bat boxes. The approach to mitigation for the loss of bat roosts associated with the demolition of Charlton Mires and East Cottage, being content with mitigation proposed. Recommendations for a revision to bat box monitoring strategy, recommending the adoption of a ‘staggered’ monitoring approach – e.g. years 1, 3 and 5 etc. The approach to Letters of No Impediment for the scheme, citing specificity in timing/proposals/extent of mitigation and works being key for draft licence applications.</p>
20/12/2019	Email from Highways England to Lisa Southwood (Licensing Team Lead) Natural England	<p>Key Topic Submission of link to Biodiversity Chapter and supporting appendices to Natural England for review and comment.</p> <p>Key Outcome Document submission to Natural England with request for review and comment.</p>
07/01/2020	Email from Lisa Southwood (Licensing Team Lead)	<p>Key Topic Comment on meeting minutes from meeting between Natural England and Highways England on the 11th December 2019 received from Natural England with regards mitigation for bats:</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
	Natural England to Highways England	<p>In reference to Item 8 – <i>“This was a suggestion of something it would be good to see rather than a requirement under the licence. It could be argued that these bat boxes are above and beyond the compensation requirements, but if some were erected in advance of the current boxes being moved it would allow bats to become familiar with their presence. If they are agreed to, I don’t think we would need to insist the bat boxes need to show signs of occupation prior to the originals being moved.”</i></p> <p>In reference to Item 9 of the meeting minutes – <i>“Monitoring in year one can help identify early on any issues with the adequacy/suitability of compensation (e.g. temperatures in loft void being much colder than expected, or new building/planting/growth has obstructed flight lines to bat boxes). Staggered years 1, 3 and 5 may therefore be appropriate.”</i></p> <p>Key Outcome Amendments to meeting minutes required to provide further clarity in respect of both Items 8 and 9 raised and subsequent reissue of meeting minutes to Natural England for review and agreement.</p>
17/01/2020	Email from Abby Halstead (Wildlife Lead Advisor) Natural England to Highways England	<p>Key Topic Email from Natural England confirming accuracy of items and points discussed during meeting held 11th December 2019 within issued meeting minutes.</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England response confirming that meeting minutes are an accurate representation of what was discussed and agreed during meeting 11th December 2019.</p>
21/01/2020	Email from Highways England to Andrew Whitehead (Team Leader – Sustainable Development & Marine) and Lisa Southwood (Licensing Team Leader), Natural England	<p>Key Topic Email to Natural England to request comment on the use of a ‘Less than Local’ category when defining importance of an ecological receptor within Chapter 9: Biodiversity of the ES [APP-049] impact assessment methodology (see Table 9-4 – Importance Criteria of Chapter 9).</p> <p>Key Outcome Highways England request by email for comment by Natural England on the use of a ‘Less than Local’ category when defining importance of an ecological receptor as part of the impact assessment methodology. Natural England provided a response via email on 10/02/2020 (see below).</p>
10/02/2020	Email from Andrew Whitehead (Team Leader – Sustainable Development & Marine)	<p>Key Topic Reply from Natural England providing comments following review of the Biodiversity Chapter following its submission to Natural England on 20/12/2019 (see above). Response also included a reply to the query issued by Highways England on 21/01/2020 regarding the use of a ‘Less than Local’ category within the importance criteria of the impact assessment methodology.</p> <p>Natural England provided several comments, as detailed below, regarding a number of aspects of the Biodiversity Chapter and addressing the query surrounding the use of a ‘Less than Local’ category:</p>

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key Topics Discussed and Key Outcomes
		<p>In terms of your query regarding the ‘less than local’ categorisation – the logic behind this appears sound, and assuming there is assuming there is an equivalent in the survey guidelines which you’ve been using I don’t see there being any objection to you using this approach;</p> <p>Paragraph 9.5.1 – we usually accept surveys up to 3 years old as being valid to support an application, and so it would be helpful to see what advice we have offered in this regard;</p> <p>Paragraph 9.6.2 – we agree with the distance criteria used for identifying sites which may potentially be impacted by the proposals;</p> <p>Table 9.6 – it is noted in the ornithology section that the breeding and wintering bird surveys were carried out in 2015/16, and so are now 4 years old – please see my previous comment regarding the age of survey data;</p> <p>Section 9.7 – a map showing the proposal limits, including construction compound locations, in relation to designated sites would be useful;</p> <p>Table 9.7 – It is noted that the main construction compound will be 0.5km south of the River Coquet SSSI – as the proposal boundaries are north of the River Coquet, presumably there will be construction traffic from the main compound frequently crossing the SSSI. Has the potential impact from exhaust fumes from the construction traffic on the SSSI interest features been considered?</p> <p>Paragraph 9.7.4 – we note the statement that no ancient woodland will be affected as none falls within the 200m buffer, but it is unclear if this buffer includes travel from the main construction compound. River Coquet SSSI includes ancient woodland, immediately adjacent to the A1 crossing, but it is unclear if impacts from exhaust fumes from construction traffic on this habitat has been considered when making the statement above;</p> <p>Table 9.10 – Red squirrel & Bats (RS01 & BAT03) – we note the comment that a species protection plan would be produced in consultation with Natural England for these species. Presumably any species licenses issued would cover mitigation and compensation requirements, which could then be transposed into a SPP, without the need for further NE input?</p> <p>Key Outcome</p> <p>The above items and points were addressed within subsequent revisions of Chapter 9: Biodiversity [APP-049] for Part B. Highways England contacted Natural England on 08/02/2021 (see above within “Engagement Relating to the Scheme” section) to confirm how comments raised have been addressed. Natural England provided agreement that the above items had been addressed within an email dated 11/02/2021 (see above within “Engagement Relating to the Scheme” section).</p>

2.1.5. It is agreed that this is an accurate record of the key meetings and consultation undertaken between (1) Highways England and (2) Natural England in relation to the issues addressed in this SoCG.

3 ISSUES

Table 3-1 - Issues Related to the Whole Scheme

Item	ES Chapter/Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
1a.	Updated Biodiversity Air Quality DMRB Sensitivity Assessment [REP3-010]			Natural England does not agree with the approach to the air quality assessment detailed in the updated DMRB (LA 105) and therefore the assessment in Updated Biodiversity Air Quality DMRB Sensitivity Assessment [REP3-010].	Highways England and Natural England do not agree on the approach to air quality assessment detailed in the updated DMRB.	Agreed
1b.				Natural England agree that the increased nitrogen deposition as a result of the Scheme delays (rather than reverses) the downward trend in vehicle emissions (due to the anticipated switch from diesel/petrol to electric vehicles). Natural England agree that the predicted increases in nitrogen deposition would not result in the physical loss of woodland habitat.	Agreed	Agreed
1c.				Natural England acknowledged that mitigation measures (such as a physical barrier or reducing speed limits, as per LA 105 Air Quality) are not feasible for the SSSI.	Agreed. Highways England has explored opportunities for mitigation, in consultation with Natural England, but no viable opportunities have been identified.	Agreed
1d.				Highways England continues to engage with Natural England (and Northumberland County Council) to agree and provide funding for habitat improvements as compensation for the significant effects concluded in relation to Borough Wood LNR/ancient woodland and Well Wood ancient woodland (as detailed in Updated Biodiversity Air Quality DMRB Sensitivity Assessment [REP3-010]).		Under discussion
1e.				Natural England confirm that for the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI specifically, they accept the conclusion of no likely significant effect. Natural England confirmed that this decision is based on the following factors and not based on the metric of "loss of one species" as detailed in LA 105 Air Quality: - the current long-term downward trend in nitrogen deposition at the SSSI that	The Applicant's position is that the increase in nitrogen deposition as a result of the Scheme would not result in a significant effect to the SSSI, as set out at paragraphs 8.1.5 to 8.1.31 of the Updated Biodiversity Air Quality DMRB Sensitivity Assessment [REP3-010].	Agreed

Item	ES Chapter/Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
				<p>would be delayed rather than reversed by the Scheme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the temporary nature of the increased nitrogen deposition experienced by the Scheme - “the additional deposition resulting from the Scheme will not impact the decline of background levels too substantially, therefore SSSI objectives will still be met in the long-term” - The relatively small area of the SSSI impacted by the predicted increase in nitrogen deposition as a result of the Scheme - The difficulty in measuring the effects of the predicted increased nitrogen deposition levels on the SSSI woodland habitat - Assumptions around the timeframe for electric vehicles being phased in and non-renewables (petrol and diesel) being phased out (in line with government policy) 		
2.	Environmental Statement Addendum: Stabilisation Works [REP4-063]	8.10.6		<p>It is Natural England’s opinion that in comparing the extent of the impacted natural riverbank to the overall SSSI unit length the assessment does not fully evaluate the context of the habitat and the rarity of the gorge setting in Unit 5 where the works are proposed. Thus, while the length of riverbank impacted is relatively small on a unit scale, the scarcity of this habitat has not been taken into consideration when determining the significance of the effect of the works which the applicant has deemed to be permanent Moderate Adverse.</p>	<p>The proposed works are considered unlikely to change the river typology which is determined by the confined gorge like channel and substantially bedrock bed. Site information collated by the Applicant would support the argument that the reach is more modified than is suggested. The impacts are local to the works and therefore unlikely to impact the form or function of the river upstream or downstream beyond the immediate locality of the works. A Slight Adverse impact on geomorphology has been determined. Within the context of the SSSI, these localised geomorphological impacts are considered unlikely to extend significantly beyond the locality of the works and are therefore unlikely to significantly affect the supporting the features of the SSSI. As such, the Applicant considers a Moderate adverse impact to be appropriate.</p>	Under discussion
	Environmental Statement Addendum: Southern Access Works [REP4-064]	7.10.6				

Item	ES Chapter/Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
3.	Environmental Statement Addendum: Stabilisation Works [REP4-063]	Chapter 8 Biodiversity		The proposed scour protection represents a permanent loss of SSSI habitat feature and permanent damage to the form and function of the river (also and SSSI interest feature) and therefore, in Natural England's opinion, the proposals represent a significant impact on the designated site at this location that cannot be mitigated for.	The Applicant agrees that the permanent loss of riverbank habitat from within the SSSI represents a significant effect that cannot be avoided through mitigation alone. The Applicant acknowledges that as a Habitat of Principal Importance (HPI) and habitat of a SSSI, compensation should be provided for the loss of riverbank habitat to the extent appropriate having regard to the impacts of the Scheme. The Applicant has explored opportunities for compensation for the loss of riverbank habitat through discussion with landowners. However, this has not identified viable opportunities. The Applicant has considered options provided by the Environment Agency in relation to the funding of an improvement project as compensation. Highways England continues to engage with both Natural England and the Environment Agency to conclude an agreement to provide such funding.	Under discussion
	Environmental Statement Addendum: Southern Access Works [REP4-064]	Chapter 7 Biodiversity		Natural England acknowledge the efforts that the Applicant has taken to identify opportunities for compensation through discussions with landowners.		
4.	Environmental Statement Addendum: Stabilisation Works [REP4-063]	Chapter 9 Road Drainage and the Water Environment		Natural England does not agree with the conclusions of the geomorphological assessment. Natural England consider the proposed bank stabilisation works and the scour protection works will constitute a break in the connectivity between the terrestrial (bank slopes) and riverine habitat (channel) that will have long-term implications for local sediment supply in this area. Natural England do not agree that the permanent loss of natural riverbank constitutes a minor adverse impact and that a significant impact would occur.	The Applicant agrees that the north bank proposals may have the potential to decouple the slopes from the channel. For the south bank the slopes are steeper and are not requiring stabilisation works. It is not anticipated that the south bank slope processes would be decoupled from the channel. The location of the Stabilisation Works are intended to be local to the proposed north pier location, and for the south bank works are again in the immediate vicinity to proposed works associated with the southern pier. The Applicant disagrees that the impacts of the Stabilisation Works and Southern Access Works should be considered significant in terms of geomorphology. When assessing the proposed works (the combined impact of both the Stabilisation Works and the Southern Access Works), it was determined that the magnitude of impact on geomorphology is of minor adverse magnitude, as a result of the localised nature and limited extent of any changes.	Under discussion
	Environmental Statement Addendum: Southern Access Works [REP4-064]	Chapter 8 Road Drainage and the Water Environment				
5.	Ancient Woodland Strategy for Change Request [REP4-054 and 055]	4.2.10		Regarding the removal from the compensation area of any stones larger than 50 mm, on reflection it is not necessary to remove all stones from the compensation area as these will add to the structure of the site. Large stones are present throughout the existing SSSI woodland and any that need to be	Noted and agreed.	Agreed

Item	ES Chapter/Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
6.		4.5.12		<p>removed from the redline boundary could be retained for the compensation area.</p> <p>Natural England gratefully acknowledges that both the proposed Woodland Creation Area and the Replanted Area will be retained as woodland in perpetuity. However, it is not clear from the strategy who will be responsible for the management of the woodland after the 50-year long term management plan has elapsed. Can Highways England give an assurance that both sites will continue to be managed (as an when required) after the long-term management plan has come to an end?</p>	Highways England are considering this comment.	Under discussion
7.		5.2.1(d)		<p>The boundary (rabbit and deer proof) fencing is due to be removed after the initial 5 year period of intensive management of the Woodland Creation Area but, on reflection, it would be appropriate to leave the deer fence in place for up to 10 years, which is roughly the life span of a fence anyway. This will help ensure that maximum time is allowed for establishment of the new woodland in the absence of grazing animals.</p>	Noted and agreed.	Agreed
8.		5.3.1		<p>Indicates that tree guards will be used in the Replanted Area due to the small area and the constraints of fencing close to the river. The management plan will need to set out at what stage these tree guards will be removed, how they will be disposed of and what measures will be put in place to ensure that the guards do not end up in the River Coquet.</p>	Noted. This level of detail would be developed at detailed design.	Under discussion
9.		5.4.1		<p>This paragraph refers to neonicotinoids which is most likely an error as these are insecticides not herbicides. Also, it is worth noting that the use of this type of insecticide would be detrimental to the insect fauna of both the Woodland Creation Area and the Replanted area.</p>	Highways England acknowledge that this represents an error and the reference to neonicotinoids can be removed.	Under discussion

Item	ES Chapter/Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
10.		Appendix A		For the suggested tree planting mix which is to be reviewed and agreed, I think that Natural England will most likely suggest that horse chestnut, and possibly also beech, are omitted from the proposed species mix as they are not likely to be appropriate for the NVC woodland type.	Noted and accepted.	Agreed
11	Biodiversity No Net Loss for the Scheme for Change Request [REP5-038 and 039]			Natural England's comments are currently under review. However, Natural England has acknowledged that biodiversity net gain (and no net loss) only applies to developments under the Town & Country Planning act (TCPA). It does not apply to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs), though Natural England continues to advocate net gain for such developments.	Highways England are currently reviewing Natural England's comments, but acknowledge that Natural England recognise that biodiversity net gain (and no net loss) does not apply to NSIPs, such as the Scheme.	Under discussion

Table 3-2 - Issues related to Part A Only

Item	ES Chapter/Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
1.	Chapter 9: Biodiversity Part A of the ES [APP-048]	9.9.1 to 9.9.11 Including Table 9-22 and 9-23	Design, Mitigation and Enhancement Measures	Table 9-23. Reference is made to the installation of the cofferdam within the river to facilitate the construction the southern pier for the new bridge (EM014). Natural England understand that this is a temporary measure to allow for the construction of the southern pier, which is out with but immediately adjacent to the river. The table does not indicate that the cofferdam is temporary in nature and is due to be removed once the work on the pier is completed. Can you confirm that this understanding is correct and that the in-river works will be temporary in nature?	The proposed construction methodology for the southern pier no longer requires the installation of a cofferdam extending up to 5 m into the River Coquet. The embedded mitigation entails the installation of sheet piles following pre-augering into the bedrock. These sheet piles, located outside of the assumed bank full channel, would then serve two functions: firstly, as a cofferdam to create a dry working area for construction [river training measures]; and, secondly, would form part of the permanent framework for the new pile cap. Once constructed, the sheet piles would be burnt off to the pile cap level. The above is extracted from paragraph 5.1.7 of Appendix 10.4 Geomorphology Assessment River Coquet Part A [APP-257]. The extract has been incorporated into EM014, Table 9-34 of Chapter 9: Biodiversity – Part A [APP-048].	Agreed

Item	ES Chapter/ Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
2.				<p>Table 9-22. Chapter 9: Biodiversity [APP-048] and Appendix 9.3: Aquatic Ecology Survey Report Part A [APP-229] of the ES indicate that bullhead have been recorded on the River Lyne. This species has not been recorded on any of the other tributaries and particularly in the Coquet catchment, although there is one as yet unconfirmed report of this species from the main river at Guyzance. Although this species is native to the UK, there are very limited number of rivers in Northumberland where it is present and it is important to ensure that the proper biosecurity measures (Check, Clean, Dry) are put in place to eliminate the risk of the species being accidentally introduced to other water courses where in river works are proposed for this scheme.</p>	Reference to bullhead has been added to measure DM010 of Table 9-23 Chapter 9: Biodiversity Part A [APP-048] with regards to biosecurity.	Agreed
3.				<p>Table 9-23. EM041 indicates that new channels will be planted with aquatic vegetation. Where this is deemed to be necessary the aquatic vegetation needs to be consistent with what is found in the existing watercourse/catchment and the sourcing of plants needs to be from suppliers that are free from aquatic Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS). Advice should potentially be sought from the Environment Agency with regard to any relevant protocols for the sourcing of aquatic plants</p>	The text of the EM041 has been extended to capture the comment: <i>“The channels would also be planted with aquatic vegetation consistent with the existing floral community of the watercourse/catchment. The sourcing of any plants would be confirmed at detailed design but would be from suppliers that are free from aquatic invasive non-native species. Advice would be sought from the Environment Agency, if required, about relevant protocols for the sourcing of aquatic plants.”</i>	Agreed
4.		9.10.1 to 9.10.47 Including Table 9-24	Assessment of Likely Significant effects	<p>Paragraph 9.10.14. Whilst it is true that nitrogen is not the limiting nutrient in most river systems (where phosphorus is the limiting nutrient) any increases in nitrogen will ultimately end up in the estuary and marine environment (where there are a number of designated sites) where nitrogen is the limiting nutrient. Clarification is requested on the following:</p> <p>a) Whilst the direct nitrogen deposition on to the River Coquet is likely to be insignificant, the impact of the nitrogen levels from the carriage way runoff from the section of the proposal that drains into the Coquet</p>	<p>a) Chapter 10: Road Drainage and the Water Environment Part A [APP-050] addresses effects as a result of drainage and run-off, proposing suitable mitigation to reduce the potential impacts and concluding effects of Neutral significance (not significant). Text has been added to Chapter 9: Biodiversity [APP-048] to reference this assessment and its conclusions.</p> <p>b) With regards to downstream impacts of increased nitrogen levels on the marine environment, this is captured separately within the HRA Report for the Scheme [APP-342].</p>	<p>a) Agreed b) Agreed</p>

Item	ES Chapter/ Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
				<p>catchment also needs to be considered. Particularly as all the drainage network is likely to be within the zone of heaviest aerial deposition, all the nitrogen will ultimately end up in the river except for any that is stripped out by vegetation growing in the balancing ponds (pond design that include appropriate vegetation could help significantly here not only to strip out nutrients but also to help trap sediment from the carriageway surface). This potential issue may have been addressed in the Road Drainage and Water Environment chapter of the ES. If so, it should be cross referenced.</p> <p>b) The downstream impact of increased nitrogen levels on the marine environment from the carriageway runoff is not considered in this chapter of the ES but it may have been covered in Chapter 10 Road Drainage and Water Environment. This potential issue is something we discussed with regard to the HRA screening and it may be appropriate to reiterate that this risk will be minimised by appropriate pollution prevention and control measures deployed during the construction phase and by the network of stilling/balancing ponds during the operational phase bearing in mind the comment about the pond design given above.</p>		
5.				<p>One general point, there are several references to the proposed scheme resulting in a decrease in levels of deposition at a number of locations. It may be worth exploring/explaining how this occurs as it is counter intuitive to most people's understanding increases in traffic. Natural England understand that mitigation built into the design can help to alter where and how much deposition occurs, but it may be worth clarifying the mechanisms by which the proposed scheme may actually reduce deposition in certain locations.</p>	<p>The following has been added to Chapter 9 for Eco9 (the first instance where a reduction in total N deposition is presented): <i>"The decrease in total nitrogen deposition is due to the ability of the Scheme (A1) to draw traffic from other roads within the local network. Therefore, this causes a reduced traffic flow on some roads radiating from the A1, thereby a reduction in associated nitrogen deposition."</i></p>	Agreed

Item	ES Chapter/ Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
6.		9.10.48 to 9.10.51 Including Table 9-25	Assessment of Likely Significant Effects – Updated DMRB Guidance	Superseded by the Updated Biodiversity Air Quality DMRB Sensitivity Assessment [REP3-010]. See Items 1a to 1d of Table 3-1 above.		
7.	Appendix 9.10 Badger Survey Report Part A [APP-236]	Full Document		The report indicates that there is an active sett approximately 360m west of the River Coquet bridge (Table 4, sett no.12). This active sett was noted in this area during surveys undertaken in 2004 when the duelling of the A1 from Morpeth to Felton was last proposed. Additionally, Natural England note badger activity at this sett complex in the summer of 2018. This sett is out with the 100m buffer distance from the works area for the new bridge over the Coquet and thus unlikely to be damaged or disturbed by the works. However, Natural England recommend this area is included in the pre-commencement walkover to ensure that no new setts have been excavated closer to the bridge. Additionally, extra vigilance will be required around any excavations associated with the new bridge piers as there is a risk that both otter and badger will be active in this area.	The recommendation is captured within the pre-commencement walkover measures detailed within Table 9-22, DM003. Whilst not extending to a distance of 100 m, the measure confirms a pre-commencement walkover of the works area (which would extend further than the construction area where excavation may occur) to confirm there are no changes to baseline conditions. The follow up action would be as follows: <i>“Should badger activity be confirmed within the Order Limits or within a zone of influence determined by the ECoW, a Natural England licence would be applied for/ mitigation developed, as required, in advance of the commencement of Part A.”</i> In response to the comment regarding vigilance in association with otter and badger around the River Coquet bridge, pre-commencement walkover surveys for both species are proposed to ensure changes in baseline conditions are identified and appropriate measures can be put in place to avoid/reduce impacts. These are secured within the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [APP-346]; A-B17 (otter) and S-B6 (badger).	Agreed
	Appendix 9.21 Ancient Woodland Strategy Part A [APP-247]		Full document	Natural England confirmed within an email on 10/03/2021 that <i>“the Ancient Woodland Strategy is considered to be acceptable to Natural England. The strategy has been drawn up following detailed discussion and collaboration with Natural England. Finer details of the strategy will be developed at the detailed design stage and agreed with Natural England.”</i> The items detailed below provide an account of matters raised by Natural England prior to their agreement with the document and how these have been addressed.	No comment	Agreed

Item	ES Chapter/ Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
8.			Section 2.2.11.	Japanese knotweed is present in Felton Village in the carpark of the public house on the south bank of the river.	This information has been added to the document, captured in Paragraph 2.2.10.	Agreed
9.			Section 3.2.7.	The haul road mentioned in this section is referred to as the 'temporary' haul road in Section 3.2.15. From previous discussions Natural England understood that, whilst a decision had yet to be finalised, it was likely that there was a preference for this to be retained as a permanent access to allow inspection and maintenance of the southern section of the bridges. Has a decision been made regarding the possible retention of the road as a permanent structure?	Reference to "temporary" in relation to the haul road has been removed. It is understood that the haul road would likely be permanent, due to the nature of its installation, although permanent future use of the road is yet to be confirmed. As such, the assessment assumes the haul road to be permanent.	Agreed
10.				As discussed previously, the design of the haul road will need to take into consideration the risk of erosion caused by any drainage or run-off associated with such a steep track. Additionally, assurance will need to be sought from Highways England that the track will be used for the only by their employees/contractors and will not be accessible to the general public.	Comments relating to the design of the haul road (at detailed design) regarding consideration of the risk of erosion are acknowledged. Discussions have been held with Highways England (Area 14) regarding the use of this route as a maintenance track following construction, but Area 14 has indicated that they will not be using it. The haul route will not be accessible to the general public.	Agreed
11.			Section 3.2.8.	Protective fencing referenced needs to be resilient to flooding as the lower sections of the fence are likely to be subject to periodic flood events.	The following has been added to Paragraph 3.2.8 to address this comment; <i>"Any protective fencing would also be designed to be resilient to flooding as the lower sections of the fence may be subject to periodic flood events."</i>	Agreed
12.			Section 3.2.11.	The risk of the spread of INNS to/within the designated site and the wider countryside cannot be overemphasized, particularly when the project involves the large scale use of earth moving machinery moving between various water courses across different river catchments. Therefore, it is vital that the Biosecurity Method Statement is robust and strictly adhered to by all the contractors working on the project.	Both the Ancient Woodland Strategy and Chapter 9 of the ES detail the requirement for a Biosecurity Method Statement, which would be developed at detailed design. This is also captured within the Outline CEMP for the Scheme [APP-346].	Agreed
13.			Section 3.2.18.	The open habitat within the Woodland Creation Area is likely regenerate as woodland over time	The high-level management measures detailed in Section 5.2 outline that an annual hay cut of the grassland would be	Agreed

Item	ES Chapter/ Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
				and the management of the neutral grassland will need to accommodate this gradual succession to native woodland.	undertaken. Cessation of this would be triggered by natural die-off of the grassland as a woodland canopy develops.	
14.			Section 4.3.12 and Section 4.5.5.	It may be appropriate to consider using natural regeneration as a tool for the creation of the woodland on a portion of the site, most likely adjacent to the existing woodland edge to the north of the Woodland Creation Area. Trees that generate naturally from adjoining woodlands tend to be more vigorous and would be genetically suited to the local area. This is something that Natural England would like to explore further at the detailed design stage.	A paragraph in relation to this comment has been added to the strategy (Paragraph 4.3.13), confirming that Natural England have expressed an interest in exploring this further at detailed design stage.	Agreed
15.			Section 4.5.12.	Natural England notes that long term management for a minimum of 50 years is proposed. After this period has elapsed, it is assumed that the management of the woodland will be continued as necessary within the normal woodland management operations that Highways England undertakes in woodlands within its land holding. It is also assumed that the Woodland Creation Area will be retained as a woodland in perpetuity. Can you confirm that these assumptions are correct?	Highways England confirm that the Woodland Creation Area will be retained as a woodland in perpetuity. This has been secured within an update to the Ancient Woodland Strategy Part A issued at Deadline 4. Land associated with the creation of new woodland will be permanently acquired by the Applicant (see Land Plans [APP-006]).	Agreed
16.			Section 5.2.1.	Boundary fencing will probably need to be retained for a period longer than the 5 years mentioned in this section, particularly if natural regeneration is to be used as a tool for the establishment of woodland in parts of the Woodland Creation Area.	A comment has been added within the high-level management overview against the removal of the boundary fence to identify that the timing of this action (currently year 5) may be delayed should natural regeneration be used as a tool.	Agreed
17.			Section 5.3.1.	Reference is made to the use of tree guards in contradiction to proposed fencing option set out in Section 4.2.11, which is the preferred option already agreed in earlier consultations. Tree tubes/guards are also referenced in Section 5.3.3.	This was an error following updates of the document. Reference to tree tubes/guards has been removed.	Agreed

Item	ES Chapter/ Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
18.			Section 5.3.6 and 5.4.1.	Herbicide should be used sparingly and only when it is deemed to be absolutely necessary. A protocol for the use of herbicides should be developed and set out in the Ancient Woodland Management and Monitoring Plan (AWMMP).	Text has been added to Paragraph 5.3.4 to confirm use of herbicides sparingly and in accordance with a protocol developed and set out in the AWMMP.	Agreed
19.	Appendix 9.22 Bat Method Statement Part A [APP-248]	Method Statement		Natural England requested clarification on 26/03/2020 of the location of the 6.1km offline development (i.e. start and end points) and the number of buildings in the vicinity of the offline works. Natural England confirmed that they were trying to ascertain what the roost potential of the buildings in the vicinity of the new section was or if there were any buildings that are known to host a roost.	Highways England provided an annotated plan identifying the location of the on and offline sections of Part A. Highways England also confirmed that building B4A was the only building known to support a roost that would be lost to the Scheme. Highways England confirmed that there are other buildings and trees along the Scheme that support roosting which may be subject to disturbance, although this has been addressed in the ES (Chapter 9: Biodiversity Part A [APP-048]) and mitigation has been proposed.	Agreed
20.				The following caveats are detailed within the LoNI issued by Natural England on 20/05/2020. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The ecologist must have been named on a bat mitigation licence in the last 3 years. Additionally, they must hold a Level 2 Class Survey Licence (at least two years required). Alternatively, if the applicant ecologist cannot provide the aforementioned evidence, they may provide two references. 2) A further (top up) survey of building 4A must be undertaken in the season prior to application. Additionally, a walkover survey must be undertaken no more than 12 weeks prior to the submission of the formal application. 3) Figure E3 (compensation measures) must show proposed bat box locations. 4) Figure C5b (survey locations) must show surveyor positions for all dusk and dawn surveys on building 4A. 	Highways England confirmed that the items raised by Natural England would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed

Item	ES Chapter/ Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
				<p>5) Figure 2A must be provided, clearly showing where all capture and exclusion activities will take place.</p> <p>6) Landowner permission for the installation of bat boxes on adjunct trees must be evidenced within the formal licence application.</p>		
21.	Appendix 9.24 Great Crested Newt Method Statement – River Coquet Part A [APP-250]	Method Statement		Natural England requested via an email dated 06/04/2020 a statement of confirmation from Highways England that the following information would be included/amended within the formal licence. Natural England confirmed that it was not necessary for Highways England to resubmit the draft method statement. The below items represent the caveats detailed within the LoNI issued by Natural England on 19/05/2020.	N/A	N/A
22.			Application form	<p>Section 2 and Section 10: Please confirm that a suitably experienced named ecologist will be proposed at formal submission (refer to the web link at the top of Section 10 in the application form, for guidance regarding ecologist experience and references).</p>	Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
23.				<p>Section 16: Confirm that the Declarations in this section will be signed and dated.</p>	Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
24.			Method statement and figures	<p>Section C1 – Pre-existing survey information: Confirm that at formal submission this section of the Method Statement will refer to the results of a data search or other pre-existing records known for the River Coquet site, rather than referring to the Burgham Park site.</p>	Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
25				<p>Figure C3.4 – Photographs: Confirm that photographs showing the habitats on-site will be provided at formal submission.</p>	Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed

Item	ES Chapter/ Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
26.				<p>Section D1 – Habitat impact tables:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Temporary habitat loss is currently calculated as being the area between the Scheme Footprint and the Order Limits – this is acknowledged as an overestimate. Please confirm that the areas of temporary habitat loss will be calculated accurately in the formal application and will not include any retained (unaffected) habitats. 2) The A1 is considered to represent a significant barrier to GCN dispersal (except for a potential movement pathway beneath a bridge over the River Coquet located to the south of Pond A19). Given the distance of this bridge from Pond A19 (c.200m), the presence of good-quality terrestrial habitat around the pond, the absence of ponds to the east of the A1 and the size of the GCN population, it is considered highly unlikely that GCNs will be utilising habitats to the east of the A1. It's not therefore considered necessary to include habitat losses in this area within the calculations (nor would it be appropriate to compensate for the impacts of the development in this area). Please therefore confirm that the impact totals will be revised prior to formal submission to exclude any habitat losses to the east of the A1. 	<p>Highways England confirmed that items 1 and 2 would be addressed within the formal licence application.</p>	Agreed
27.				<p>Section D4 – Post-development interference impacts:</p> <p>The management and maintenance of compensatory habitats should not result in the killing / injuring of GCNs. Confirm this impact will be removed from this section of the Method Statement at formal submission.</p>	<p>Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.</p>	Agreed

Item	ES Chapter/ Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
28.				<p>Figure D – Impacts:</p> <p>Confirm that the following comments will be addressed in the formal application:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Areas to be permanently lost and temporarily damaged will be more clearly differentiated – currently the black and dark blue hatched overlay makes it difficult to distinguish between these two impact types. 2) Impacts to the: (1) east of the A1 and (2) south of the River Coquet will be removed from the map as these features are considered to be significant barriers to dispersal. 	Highways England confirmed that items 1 and 2 would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
29.				<p>Section E3 – Habitat creation, restoration and/or enhancement:</p> <p>Compensatory habitat located to the east of the A1 should be excluded from the habitat creation calculations as the A1 is considered to be a significant barrier to dispersal. An ecological justification for the net loss of habitat based solely upon compensatory habitat to the west of the road will still be possible given that habitat loss to the east of the A1 can be dismissed and long-term permanent habitat loss to the west of the road is not substantial. Please therefore confirm that the compensation totals (provided in Table E3 and Table E3.2*) will be amended prior to formal submission to exclude this area from the compensation area calculations.</p> <p>*The terrestrial habitat measures detailed in Tables E3 and E3.2 must be consistent.</p>	Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
30.				<p>Section E3.2 – Terrestrial habitat measures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Confirm that the difference between the woodland planting creation (1.2ha) and reinstatement / enhancement (0.5ha) will be clarified in the formal application. 	Highways England confirmed that items 1 to 4 would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed

Item	ES Chapter/ Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
				<p>2) Confirm that the relaxed grassland mowing regime will be to a height of no less than 150mm.</p> <p>3) Confirm that two hibernacula (rather than one hibernacula and one refugia) will be created – hibernacula offer better long-term habitat provision for GCNs.</p> <p>4) Confirm that details of the GCN habitat to be reinstated will be included in Table E3 and Table E3.2 of the formal application (reinstated habitats should also be shown clearly on the relevant maps).</p>		
31.				<p>Figure E3.1 – Habitat measures: Confirm that the following comments will be addressed in the formal application:</p> <p>1) Revision will be undertaken to reflect the updated proposals. To include the creation of two hibernacula and the removal of the compensatory habitat to the east of the A1.</p> <p>2) All of the habitat measures detailed in Sections E1, E3.1 and E3.2 of the Method Statement will be detailed on the map. Currently this figure does not show the reinstatement / enhancement (depending on what is proposed) of the woodland habitat.</p> <p>3) The ‘Woodland Creation Area (Ancient Woodland Strategy)’ will be removed from the figure. This area is separated from the impacted GCN population by a significant barrier to dispersal (the River Coquet) and cannot therefore be categorised as compensation.</p>	<p>Highways England confirmed that items 1 to 3 would be addressed within the formal licence application.</p> <p>Regarding item 3, the Woodland Creation Area and habitats to the south of the River Coquet have not been included within the habitat measures detailed in Sections E1, E3.1 and E3.2 or calculations of the Method Statement.</p>	Agreed
32.				<p>Section E4 – Capture, exclusion and translocation:</p> <p>1) Given the distance from Pond A19 and the presence of a significant barrier to</p>	<p>Highways England confirmed that items 1 and 2 would be addressed within the formal licence application.</p>	Agreed

Item	ES Chapter/ Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
				<p>dispersal (the A1), Natural England would be satisfied for no capture or exclusion to take place on the eastern side of the A1 - this can be confirmed in the formal application.</p> <p>2) Natural England is concerned, given the size of the area to be trapped, that the capture proposals will not effectively clear GCNs from the area to the west of the A1 in the absence of drift fencing to compartmentalise the impacted area. Please therefore confirm, in the formal application, that drift fencing will be employed to help clear GCNs from the site.</p>		
33.				<p>Figure E4a – Capture and exclusion: Confirm that the following comments will be addressed in the formal application: The figure will be amended to show the location of drift fencing (as requested above) and any site access points and measures (e.g. newt grids) to prevent newts re-entering the development site at these points.</p>	Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
34.				<p>Section E5.1 – Habitat management and maintenance: No details of the habitat management and maintenance measures to be undertaken have been provided. Please confirm that appropriate management and maintenance measures will be provided with the formal application (and shown on Figure E5.1) and will include both aquatic and terrestrial habitat management and maintenance.</p>	Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
35.				<p>Figure E5.1 – Post-development management and maintenance: Confirm that the following comments will be addressed in the formal application:</p>	Highways England confirmed that items 1 to 3 would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed

Item	ES Chapter/ Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
36.				<p>1) Revision will be undertaken to reflect the updated proposals. To include the creation of two hibernacula and the removal of the compensatory habitat to the east of the A1.</p> <p>2) All of the proposed compensatory habitat will be shown on this figure. Currently this figure does now show the reinstated / enhanced (depending on what is proposed) woodland habitat.</p> <p>3) The 'Woodland Creation Area (Ancient Woodland Strategy)' will be removed from the figure. This area is separated from the impacted GCN population by a significant barrier to dispersal (the River Coquet) and cannot therefore be categorised as compensation.</p> <p>Section E5.2 – Post-development population monitoring: Confirm that the population monitoring proposed in the formal application will be in accordance with the recommendations in the GCNMG (dependent upon results from the updated surveys).</p>	<p>Regarding item 3, the Woodland Creation Area and habitats to the south of the River Coquet have not been included within the habitat calculations of the Method Statement.</p> <p>Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.</p>	Agreed
37.				<p>Section E5.3 – Site safeguard: Confirm that a site safeguard mechanism will be provided at formal submission.</p>	<p>Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.</p>	Agreed
38.				<p>Figure F1 – Final layout: Confirm that the following comments will be addressed in the formal application:</p> <p>1) Revision will be undertaken to reflect the updated proposals. To include the creation of two hibernacula and the removal of the compensatory habitat to the east of the A1.</p> <p>2) All of the proposed compensatory habitat will be shown on this figure. Currently this</p>	<p>Highways England confirmed that items 1 to 4 would be addressed within the formal licence application.</p>	Agreed

Item	ES Chapter/ Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
39.				<p>figure does now show the reinstated / enhanced (depending on what is proposed) woodland habitat.</p> <p>3) The ‘Woodland Creation Area (Ancient Woodland Strategy)’ will be removed from the figure.</p> <p>4) Pond A19 will be correctly labelled (currently shown as Pond A12).</p> <p>Section I – Declarations: Confirm that the declarations will be completed at formal submission, and that landowner consent(s) will be confirmed.</p>	Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
40.				<p>Sections E6a & E6b - Work schedule: Confirm that the following amendments will be made to this document in the formal application:</p> <p>1) Site checks and maintenance during construction: State in the comments box that monthly site checks will be undertaken by the ecologist during the active season (as a minimum).</p> <p>2) Drift fence removal: The date for this activity will be included.</p> <p>3) Newt fence removal: These activities will be timed to take place outside of the newt hibernation period (i.e. excluding November – February).</p> <p>4) Habitat reinstatement: An end date will be provided for this activity.</p> <p>5) Post construction mitigation / compensation on dev’t site: Start and end dates for post-development management and maintenance (as detailed in Section E5.1 of the Method Statement) will be covered within Section E6b of the work schedule (not in this row which relates to mitigation / compensation works only).</p>	Highways England confirmed that items 1 to 6 would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed

Item	ES Chapter/ Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
				6) Start and end dates for all habitat creation and enhancement works will be included in the Work schedule.		
41.			General	<p>Additional comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) All of the required information should be included within the Method Statement and associated figures – the assessor should not be directed to the Environmental Statement for further information. 2) The suitability of the proposals in this application have been assessed based on the current survey data (a small population). Revision to the application may be required depending on the results from the updated surveys. 3) Updated surveys should be conducted on all ponds within 500m of GCN ponds found to support GCNs in 2016 (unless separated by significant barriers to dispersal or totally unsuitable for GCNs). 4) Any survey constraints must be acknowledged in the formal application and a sound ecological explanation provided to justify why the constrained results are considered to accurately reflect the size and distribution of the population present. 	Highways England acknowledged these notes and confirmed that the comments would be used to inform the formal licence application.	Agreed
42.	Appendix 9.25 Great Crested Newt Method Statement – Burgham Park Part A [APP-251]	Method Statement		Natural England requested via an email dated 06/04/2020 a statement of confirmation from Highways England that the following information would be included/amended within the formal licence. Natural England confirmed that it was not necessary for Highways England to resubmit the draft method statement. The below items represent the caveats detailed within the LoNI issued by Natural England on 19/05/2020.	N/A	N/A

Item	ES Chapter/ Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
43.			Application form	Section 2 and Section 10: Please confirm that a suitably experienced named ecologist will be proposed at formal submission (refer to the web link at the top of Section 10 in the application form, for guidance regarding ecologist experience and references).	Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
44.				Section 16: Confirm that the Declarations in this section will be signed and dated.	Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
45.			Method statement and figures	Figure C3.2a – Survey map: Confirm that the following comments will be addressed in the formal application: 1) The location of all ponds (including pond A13) will be shown on the figure. 2) A clear distinction will be made between surveyed and un-surveyed ponds.	Highways England confirmed that items 1 and 2 would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
46.				Figure C3.4 – Photographs: Confirm that photographs showing the habitats on-site will be provided with the formal application.	Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
47.				Section C4.3 – Aquatic amphibian survey tables: Confirm that Pond A13 will be surveyed during the updated surveys (if it's found to be holding water).	Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
48.				Section D1 – Habitat impact tables: 1) Given that the A1 is considered to be a significant barrier to dispersal, it is not clear why the arable land to the north-east of the existing A1 has been categorised as GCN habitat to be damaged (as shown in Figure D). Confirm that the Impact tables and Figure D will be updated in the formal	Highways England confirmed that items 1 and 2 would be addressed within the formal licence application. Regarding item 1, the categorisation of arable land to the northeast of the existing A1 is an error on Figure D. The impacts tables of the method statement do not include habitat associated with the area shown to the northeast of the A1 in Figure D.	Agreed

Item	ES Chapter/ Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
				<p>application to exclude this area from the calculations.</p> <p>2) Temporary habitat loss is currently calculated as being the area between the Scheme Footprint and the Order Limits – this is acknowledged as an overestimate. Please confirm that the areas of temporary habitat loss will be calculated accurately in the formal application and will not include any retained (unaffected) habitats.</p>		
49.				<p>Section D4 – Post-development interference impacts:</p> <p>Consideration should be given as to whether the new A1 alignment poses increased traffic related risks to GCNs as a consequence of being closer to the breeding ponds. Please confirm that this potential impact will be taken into account and addressed (if necessary) in the formal application.</p>	Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
50.				<p>Figure D – Impacts:</p> <p>Confirm that the following comments will be addressed in the formal application:</p> <p>1) Areas to be permanently lost and temporarily damaged will be more clearly differentiated – currently the black and dark blue hatched overlay makes it difficult to distinguish between these two impact types.</p> <p>2) Habitats to the north-east of the existing A1 will not be shown as being impacted in the formal application - the A1 is considered to be a significant barrier to dispersal (see the 1st bullet point under Section D1 above).</p>	<p>Highways England confirmed that items 1 and 2 would be addressed within the formal licence application.</p> <p>Regarding item 2, as per above in relation to item 1 of Section D1, the presentation of habitats to the northeast of the existing A1 is an error on Figure D.</p>	Agreed
51.				Section E1 – The mitigation solution:	Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed

Item	ES Chapter/ Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
52.				<p>It would be preferable to locate both of the proposed new ponds within 250m of the existing breeding ponds in areas that are not fragmented by road systems. Please therefore confirm that the second pond (currently to be located 370m to the south of pond A12) and the associated hibernacula, will be created in the mitigation area to the north of Ponds A11 and A12. This approach would negate the requirement for a tunnel* and provide the impacted population with more accessible breeding, resting and overwintering habitat.</p> <p>*Natural England is cautious about the use of tunnels as their effectiveness is largely unproven. They should therefore be considered only as a last resort when all other options have been exhausted.</p> <p>Section E3 – Habitat creation, restoration and/or enhancement:</p> <p>Compensatory habitat located to the south of East Road should be excluded from the habitat creation calculations given that this road is considered to be a partial dispersal barrier. An ecological justification for the net loss of habitat based solely upon compensatory habitat to the north of the road will still be possible given the creation of a significant amount of high quality terrestrial and breeding habitat within the core and intermediate areas around the existing breeding ponds. Please therefore confirm that the compensation totals (provided in Table E3 and Table E3.2*) will be amended prior to formal submission to exclude this area from the compensation area calculations (Section E1 will also require revision to reflect these changes).</p> <p>*The terrestrial habitat measures detailed in Tables E3 and E3.2 must be consistent.</p>	<p>Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.</p>	<p>Agreed</p>
53.				<p>Section E3.2 – Terrestrial habitat measures:</p> <p>1) To help compensate for the net loss of habitat, large hibernacula with minimum</p>	<p>Highways England confirmed that items 1 to 3 would be addressed within the formal licence application.</p>	<p>Agreed</p>

Item	ES Chapter/ Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
				<p>dimensions of 5m long x 2m wide x 1m high, will be created in association with each of the new ponds – these will provide much better resting/overwintering opportunities than currently proposed. The provision of large hibernacula will negate the requirement to create refugia which provide only a relatively short term benefit to the impacted population.</p> <p>2) Confirm that the relaxed grassland mowing regime will be to a height of no less than 150mm.</p> <p>3) Confirm that details of the GCN habitat to be reinstated will be included in Table E3 and Table E3.2 of the formal application (reinstated habitats should also be shown clearly on the relevant maps).</p>		
54.				<p>Figure E3.1 – Habitat measures: Confirm that the following comments will be addressed in the formal application:</p> <p>1) All of the habitat measures detailed in Sections E3.1 and E3.2 of the Method statement will be detailed on the map. Currently the figure does not show the species-rich grassland creation or the location of the grassland to be managed for GCN.</p> <p>2) Revision will be undertaken to reflect the updated proposals. To include the new location of the second pond, the creation of large hibernacula and the removal of the compensatory habitat to the south of East Road etc.</p>	Highways England confirmed that items 1 and 2 would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
55.				<p>Section E3.3 – Integration with roads and other hard landscapes:</p> <p>1) Confirm that any reference to an underpass beneath East Road will be removed. This is not required as all of</p>	Highways England confirmed that items 1 and 2 would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed

Item	ES Chapter/ Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
				<p>the habitat measures will be created to the north of this barrier (see Section E3 above).</p> <p>2) Confirm that an explanation will be provided (if necessary) to detail how you propose to mitigate for the increased risk of harm posed to GCNs by the close proximity to the new road layout (see Section D4 above).</p>		
56.				<p>Figure E3.3 – Connectivity map: Confirm that the following amendments will be made to this map in the formal application:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Reference to the amphibian underpass and compensatory habitat to the south of East road will be removed (see Sections E3 and E3.3 above). 2) Measures proposed to mitigate for the increased risk of harm posed to GCNs by the close proximity to the new road layout will be shown on the map (e.g. newt-friendly traffic and drainage measures – if necessary). 3) The terrestrial and aquatic habitat measures shown on this figure will be consistent with the updated Figure E3.1. 	<p>Highways England confirmed that items 1 to 3 would be addressed within the formal licence application.</p>	Agreed
57.				<p>Section E4 – Capture, exclusion and translocation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Unless pitfall trapping is undertaken late in the season (Sept/Oct) to capture both adult and juvenile emigration from the pond, bottle trapping of Pond A12 (in accordance with recommendations in Section 8.4.2 of the Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines - GCNMG) will be expected to ensure that GCNs have been cleared from the ring fenced area – it is not acceptable to allow GCNs to remain within this area throughout construction. Please confirm either pitfall 	<p>Highways England confirmed that items 1 to 4 would be addressed within the formal licence application.</p>	Agreed

Item	ES Chapter/ Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
				<p>trapping in Sept/Oct* (in combination with ring fencing) or bottle trapping (in accordance with recommendations in the GCNMG) will be included in the formal application.</p> <p>*Trapping elsewhere can take place at any time during the active season to allow construction outside of the ring fenced-pond to take place without delay.</p> <p>2) According to Figure D, the area of woodland to the south of East Road is to be damaged during construction however no exclusion fencing or pitfall trapping is proposed in this area. Please confirm one of the following options in the formal submission: (1) this area of woodland / GCNs will not be impacted by the works or (2) exclusion fencing / pitfall trapping will be undertaken in this area. Revision to the relevant figures (D and / or E4a) may be required.</p> <p>3) Natural England is concerned, given the size of the area to be trapped, that the capture proposals will not effectively clear GCNs from the impacted area in the absence of compartmentalisation using drift fencing. Please therefore confirm, in the formal application, that drift fencing will be employed to help clear GCNs from the site.</p> <p>4) Given the suboptimal quality of the arable fields to the south of the site, their distance from the breeding ponds and the presence of a dispersal barrier (East Road), Natural England would be satisfied for hand / destructive searches only to be undertaken in these areas – this can be confirmed in the formal application. If necessary, the better-quality woodland area may need trapping out (see the 2nd bullet point immediately above).</p>		

Item	ES Chapter/ Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
58.				<p>Figure E4a – Capture and exclusion: Confirm that the following comments will be addressed in the formal application:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The figure will be amended to show the location of drift fencing (as requested above), the fencing / trapping of the woodland area to the south of East Road (if this area is to be impacted by the works) and any site access points and measures (e.g. newt grids) to prevent newts re-entering the development site at these points. 2) Areas to be cleared by hand / destructive searches only will be shown clearly on the map. 	Highways England confirmed that items 1 and 2 would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
59.				<p>Section E5.1 – Habitat management and maintenance: No details of the habitat management and maintenance measures to be undertaken have been provided. Please confirm that appropriate management and maintenance measures will be provided with the formal application (and shown on Figure E5.1) and will include both aquatic and terrestrial habitat management and maintenance.</p>	Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
60.				<p>Figure E5.1 – Post development management and maintenance: Confirm that the following comments will be addressed in the formal application:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) All of the proposed compensatory habitat will be shown on the figure. The map does not currently show the species-rich grassland or the location of the grassland to be managed for GCNs. 2) Revision will be undertaken to reflect the updated proposals. To include the new location of the second pond, the creation of large hibernacula, removal of the 	Highways England confirmed that items 1 and 2 would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed

Item	ES Chapter/ Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
61.				<p>amphibian underpass / compensatory habitat to the south of East Road etc.</p> <p>Section E5.2 – Post-development population monitoring:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Confirm that the newly created ponds will be monitored (in addition to ponds A11 and A12). 2) Confirm that the population monitoring proposed in the formal application will be in accordance with the recommendations in the GCNMG (dependent upon results from the updated surveys). 	Highways England confirmed that items 1 and 2 would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
62.				<p>Figure E5.2 – Post-development population monitoring:</p> <p>Confirm that this map will be updated to include both the existing and newly created ponds.</p>	Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
63.				<p>Section E5.3 – Site safeguard:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Confirm that a site safeguard mechanism will be detailed in the formal application. 2) Confirm that the mitigation / compensation land will be free from future development. 	Highways England confirmed that items 1 and 2 would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
64.				<p>Figure F1 – Final layout:</p> <p>Confirm that the following comments will be addressed in the formal application:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) All proposed compensatory habitat will be shown on the figure. Currently this map does not show the species-rich grassland or the location of the grassland to be managed for GCN. 2) Revision will be undertaken to reflect the updated proposals. To include the new location of the second pond, the creation of large hibernacula, removal of the 	Highways England confirmed that items 1 and 2 would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed

Item	ES Chapter/ Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
65.				<p>amphibian underpass / compensatory habitat to the south of East Road etc.</p> <p>Section I – Declarations: Confirm that the Declarations will be completed at formal submission, and that landowner consent(s) will be confirmed.</p>	<p>Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.</p>	<p>Agreed</p>
66.				<p>Sections E6a & E6b - Work schedule: Confirm the following amendments will be made to this document in the formal application:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Construction of underpass: This activity will be removed from the Work schedule. 2) Destructive searches: This activity will be timed to take place following all other capture efforts (including pitfall trapping and hand searches). 3) Site checks and maintenance during construction: Monthly site checks will be undertaken by the ecologist during the active season (as a minimum). 4) Drift fence removal: The date for this activity will be included. 5) Newt fence removal and ring fence removal: These activities will be timed to take place outside of the newt hibernation period (i.e. excluding November – February). 6) Habitat reinstatement: An end date will be provided for this activity. 7) Post construction mitigation / compensation on dev't site: Start and end dates for post-development management and maintenance (as detailed in Section E5.1 of the Method Statement) will be covered within Section E6b of the work schedule (not in this row which relates to mitigation / compensation works only). 	<p>Highways England confirmed that items 1 to 8 would be addressed within the formal licence application.</p>	<p>Agreed</p>

Item	ES Chapter/ Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
				8) Start and end dates for all habitat creation and enhancement works will be included in the Work schedule.		
67.			General	<p>Additional comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) All of the required information should be included within the Method Statement and associated figures – the assessor should not be directed to the Environmental Statement for further information. 2) Please note that the suitability of the proposals in this application have been assessed based on the current survey data (a medium population). Revision to the application may be required depending on the results from the updated surveys. 3) Updated surveys should be conducted on all ponds within 500m of GCN ponds found to support GCNs in 2016 (unless separated by significant barriers to dispersal or totally unsuitable for GCNs). 	Highways England acknowledged these notes and confirmed that the comments would be used to inform the formal licence application.	Agreed
68.	Appendix 9.27 Biodiversity DMRB Sensitivity Test Part A [APP- 253]			Superseded by the Updated Biodiversity Air Quality DMRB Sensitivity Assessment [REP3-010]. See Items 1a to 1d of Table 3-1 above.		

Table 3-3 - Issues related to Part B Only

Item	ES Chapter/ Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
1.	Draft bat licence: Northern Woodland near Charlton Hall Road			The following caveats are detailed within the LoNI issued by Natural England on 14/10/2020.	Highways England confirmed that the items raised by Natural England would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
2.			Application Form	<p>Section 1: Please provide the name and contact details for the applicant.</p> <p>Section 2: Please provide the name and contact details for the named ecologist and the alternative ecologist.</p> <p>Section 4(g): Please complete the tick box.</p> <p>Please complete sections 10, 11, 12, 14 and 16.</p>	Highways England confirmed the items raised would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
3.			Method Statement	<p>Section C5b:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Please provide details of the weather conditions at the time of the update surveys within the table C5b 2) Please include updated survey information for surveys carried out, where possible, during the activity period immediately prior to the submission of the licence application 3) Please provide the date of walkover survey, and details of any changes found. The walkover survey should be carried out within 3 months prior to the application submission 	Highways England confirmed the three items would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
4.				<p>Section C6:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Please provide details of the species of pipistrelle present within bat boxes Green 108 and Green 101 for example by DNA testing or physical identification 	Highways England confirmed the two items would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed

Item	ES Chapter/ Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
				2) Please clarify or remove, if not relevant, the wording from the 'note/observations' box: "Bat box either a 2F or 2FN unable to confirm during last visit due to climb and inspect not taking place."		
5.				Figure C6 – Survey Results: Please submit a revised figure C6 for the survey results and include correct referencing of the bat boxes as described in the Method Statement in table C6, and for the trees as they are labelled on Figure D, so that the locations and identity of each of the bat boxes which contain active roosts and the location and identity of each relevant tree can be seen on figure C6.	Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
6.				Section C7: Please provide clarification regarding which Natterer's bat maternity roosts are the same colony - for example table C6 says bat boxes Green 104 and Red 60 have the same colony but table C7 says bat boxes Green 82 and Red 60 have the same colony.	Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
7.				Figure D – Impacts Plan: Please include the locations of the individual roosts on the Figure D as will be shown on the revised figure C6.	Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
8.				Section E2.2: Please confirm the number of Natterer's bats which are expected to be captured at the time the works will be done. Section E2.2 states up to 35 Natterer's bats expected to be captured and SECTION 9 (a) of the application form states 10 Natterer's bats expected to be captured.	Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
9.				Figure E3 – Specification for mitigation/compensation:	Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed

Item	ES Chapter/ Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
				<p>Please resubmit the Figure E3 showing further detail of the proposed bat boxes. This should include a description of the numbers of each type of bat box including the new boxes and the translocated boxes and whether the boxes will be erected on tree or poles, and the approximate locations of these poles or trees.</p>		
10,				<p>Section E4.1: Please include confirmation that the land where the new bat boxes and the translocated bat boxes are to be installed will be protected and the bat boxes can remain in place for a minimum of 10 years following the completion of the road scheme.</p>	Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
11.				<p>Figure E4 – Monitoring: Please resubmit the Figure E4 showing more detail of the proposed bat boxes. This should include a description of the numbers of each type of bat box including the new boxes and the translocated boxes and whether the boxes will be erected on tree or poles, and the approximate locations of these poles or trees.</p>	Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
12.				<p>Section F1.1: Please include confirmation that the relevant landowner consents required for the compensation roosts have been granted.</p>	Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
13.				<p>Figure E5a and b – Timetable of Works:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Please provide a date of submission on this document 2) Please revise the timings for the relocation of the bat boxes. The maternity season including: May, June, July and August, should be fully avoided for any works likely to impact bat maternity roosts. The Timetable should be resubmitted with the timings of 	Highways England confirmed the six items would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed

Item	ES Chapter/ Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
				<p>relocation of the bat boxes to be shown outside the sensitive maternity season.</p> <p>3) Please include timings for the capture of any bats during the works as capturing of bats during the works cannot be ruled out.</p> <p>4) Please include timings for soft demolition which will cover the relocation of the bat boxes.</p> <p>5) Please include timings for mechanical demolition.</p> <p>6) Please remove the references to the habitat reinstatement and the hedgerow and woodland planting from the Post Construction mitigation/compensation section of the work schedule as, although this enhancement is welcomed by Natural England, and may form part of the planning conditions, this is not required as part of the licence and should not be included in the Figure E5a and b.</p>		
14.	Draft bat licence: Charlton Mires, Charlton Mires Estate, A1 near B6347			<p>The following caveats are detailed within the LoNI issued by Natural England on 14/10/2020.</p>	<p>Highways England confirmed that the items raised by Natural England would be addressed within the formal licence application.</p>	Agreed
15.			Application Form	<p>Section 1: Please provide the name and contact details for the applicant.</p> <p>Section 2: Please provide the name and contact details for the named ecologist and the alternative ecologist.</p> <p>Section 9: Please correct section 9 for the correct pipistrelle species.</p> <p>Please complete sections 10, 11, 12, 14 and 16.</p>	<p>Highways England confirmed the items raised would be addressed within the formal licence application.</p>	Agreed

Item	ES Chapter/ Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
16.			Method Statement	Section C4: Please provide a description of the buildings on site explaining why some buildings have been considered to be unsuitable for bat roosts and stating why these 4 structures are the subject of this licence application, and please ensure that the 4 structures are referenced consistently as on Figure C6.	Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
17.				Section C5b: 1) Please provide the names of surveyors including the Class Licence Registration number if applicable, for any future surveys carried out to support the licence application. 2) Please include updated survey information for surveys carried out, where possible, during the activity period immediately prior to the submission of the licence application. 3) Please provide the date of the walk over survey, and details of any changes found. The walk over survey should be carried out within 3 months prior to the application submission.	Highways England confirmed the three items would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
18.				Figure C6: Please provide the numbers and locations of surveyors on the Figure C6, and please provide a photograph of the Building B6M showing the location of the roost as shown for the other buildings.	Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
19.				Figure D: Please include the locations of the individual roosts on the Figure D as they will be shown on the revised Figure C6	Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
20.				Figure E3: Please resubmit the Figure E3 showing further detail of the proposed bat boxes. This should	Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed

Item	ES Chapter/ Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
				include a description of each type of bat box and the numbers of each type of bat box and whether the boxes will be erected on tree or poles, and the approximate locations of these poles or trees.		
21.				Section E4.1: Please include confirmation that the land where the new bat boxes are to be installed will be protected and the bat boxes can remain in place for a minimum of 5 years following the completion of the road scheme.	Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
22.				Section E4.2b: For the type of roosts involved in this licence application, only a single presence / absence survey at an appropriate time of year is required to be undertaken within the 5-year licence period. This should not take place in the first year following completion of the development. Please revise the amount of monitoring described in this section and make relevant changes to the Figure E5a and b.	Highways England confirmed this item would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed
23.				Figure E5a and b – Timetable of Works: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Please provide a date of submission on this document 2) Please include reference to and timings for, a check/survey immediately before soft demolition is scheduled to begin. 3) Please remove the references to the habitat reinstatement and the hedgerow and woodland planting from the Post Construction mitigation/compensation section of the work schedule as, although this enhancement is welcomed by Natural England, and may form part of the planning conditions, this is not required as part of the licence and should not be included in the Figure E5a and b. 	Highways England confirmed the four items would be addressed within the formal licence application.	Agreed

Item	ES Chapter/ Document	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
				4) Please make the relevant changes to the number of years of monitoring (1 year is required) as requested above.		

WITHOUT PREJUDICE

Appendix A

INTERIM SOCG

A1 in Northumberland: Morpeth to Felton

Statement of Common Ground between Highways England and Natural England

Planning Act 2008
Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedures)
Rules 2010 as amended

Document Reference: TR010041/APP/7.4c
PINS Reference: TR010041

CONFIDENTIAL

Date: March 2020

Version 0.4

Document Control

Document Title	A1 in Northumberland: Morpeth to Felton. Statement of Common Ground between Highways England and Natural England
Author	Jack Fenwick
Owner	Highways England
Distribution	MP Project Teams
Document Status	Final

Revision History

Version	Date	Description	Author
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0.2	11/09/2019	Second Draft	Jack Fenwick
0.3	09/01/2020	Third Draft	Jack Fenwick
0.4	04/03/2020	Final	Jack Fenwick

Reviewer List

Name	Role
Darlene Proctor	

Approvals

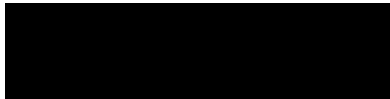
Name	Signature	Title	Date of Issue	Version
Mark Stoneman		Project Manager	04/03/2020	0.4

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STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

This Statement of Common Ground has been prepared and agreed by (1) Highways England Company Limited and (2) Natural England.

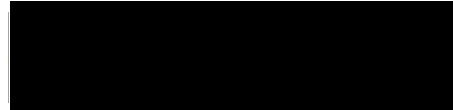
Signed

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the Project Manager.A small black rectangular redaction box covering the name of the Project Manager.

Project Manager
on behalf of Highways England

Date: 04 March 2020

Signed:

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the Team Leader.A small black rectangular redaction box covering the name of the Team Leader.

Team Leader – Sustainable Development and Marine
on behalf of Natural England

Date: 19 March 2020

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

- 1.1.1. This Statement of Common Ground ("SoCG") has been prepared in respect of the proposed The A1 in Northumberland: Morpeth to Felton ("Application") made by Highways England Company Limited ("Highways England") to the Secretary of State for Transport ("Secretary of State") for a Development Consent Order ("DCO") under section 37 of the Planning Act 2008 ("PA 2008").
- 1.1.2. The SoCG does not seek to replicate information which is available elsewhere within the Application documents. All documents are available in the deposit locations and/or the Planning Inspectorate website.
- 1.1.3. The SoCG has been produced to confirm to the Examining Authority where agreement has been reached between the parties to it, and where agreement has not (yet) been reached. SoCGs are an established means in the planning process of allowing all parties to identify and so focus on specific issues that may need to be addressed during the examination.
- 1.1.4. Guidance on the purpose and possible content of SoCGs is given in paragraphs 58 - 65 of the Department for Communities and Local Government's "Planning Act 2008: Guidance for the examination of applications for development consent" (March 2015). Paragraph 58 confirms the basic function of SoCGs as follows:
- "A statement of common ground is a written statement prepared jointly by the applicant and another party or parties, setting out any matters on which they agree. As well as identifying matters which are not in real dispute, it is also useful if a statement identifies those areas where agreement has not been reached. The statement should include references to show where those matters are dealt with in the written representations or other documentary evidence."*
- 1.1.5. SoCGs therefore are a useful and established means of ensuring that the evidence at the post-application examination focuses on the material differences between the main parties, and so aim to help facilitate a more efficient examination process.

1.2 PARTIES TO THIS STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

- 1.2.1. This SoCG has been prepared by (1) Highways England as the Applicant and (2) Natural England.
- 1.2.2. Highways England became the Government-owned Strategic Highways Company on 1 April 2015. It is the highway authority in England for the strategic road network and has the necessary powers and duties to operate, manage, maintain and enhance the network. Regulatory powers remain with the Secretary of State. The legislation establishing Highways England made provision for all legal rights and obligations of the Highways Agency, including in respect of the Application, to be conferred upon or assumed by Highways England.
- 1.2.3. Natural England is the government's adviser for the natural environment in England, helping to protect England's nature and landscapes for people to enjoy and for the services they provide. Within England, they are responsible for:
- promoting nature conservation and protecting biodiversity
 - conserving and enhancing the landscape
 - promoting access to the countryside and open spaces and encouraging open-air recreation
 - contributing in other ways to social and economic well-being through management of the natural environment, e.g. changes to wildlife licensing to improve flexibility for developers

1.3 TERMINOLOGY

- 1.3.1. In the table(s) in the issues chapter of this SoCG, “Not Agreed” indicates a final position and “Under Discussion” where these points will be the subject of on-going discussion wherever possible to resolve or refine the extent of disagreement between the parties. “Agreed” indicates where an issue has been resolved.
- 1.3.2. It can be taken that any matters not specifically referred to in the Issues Chapter of this SoCG are not of material interest or relevance to Natural England and therefore have not been the subject of any discussions between the parties. As such, those matters can be read as agreed, only to the extent that they are either not of material interest or relevance to Natural England.

1.4 SCHEME DESCRIPTION

- 1.4.1. The Scheme is located within the County of Northumberland and forms part of the Applicant's strategic road network. The Scheme is located between Warreners House Interchange at Morpeth and the dual carriageway at Felton and is approximately 12.6 km in length. The local authority for the area of the Scheme is Northumberland County Council (NCC).
- 1.4.2. The Order Limits, which comprises 165.1 ha of permanent land and a further 76 of temporary land required to build, operate and maintain the Scheme is shown on the Scheme Location Plan (**Application Document Reference: TR010041/APP/2.1**).
- 1.4.3. A more detailed description of the Scheme, including a description of the proposed design and features, total size, environmental context and construction can be found in the **Chapter 2: The Scheme** of Volume 1 (**Application Document Reference: TR010041/APP/6.1**) of the ES.

2 RECORD OF ENGAGEMENT

2.1.1. A summary of the meetings and correspondence that have taken place between Highways England and Natural England in relation to the Application is outlined in Table 2-1.

Table 2 **Error! No text of specified style in document..1 - Record of Engagement**

Date	Form of correspondence	Key topics discussed and key outcomes (the topics should align with the issues tables)
01/11/2017	Meeting (Appendix A)	<p>Key Topic Design of the proposed River Coquet Bridge (second crossing).</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England commented that no structures should be in the river itself and those that are provided should be as far back from the river as possible. Consideration should also be given to the provision of compensatory habitat to address vegetation loss, monitoring/aftercare, air quality impacts and additional run off from the new carriageway.</p>
20/03/2018	Meeting (Appendix B)	<p>Key Topic Lack of access to buildings that may be impacted by the scheme to assess their suitability for and presence of roosting bats.</p> <p>Key Outcome Data collected during other nearby bat surveys to be used to inform impact assessment. Precautionary and, if necessary, worst-case scenario approaches to be considered and appropriate mitigation developed to assess the impact of these.</p> <p>Key Topic Deviation in methodology from guidance for the DEFRA transects and DEFRA Local Scale (crossing point) surveys.</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England to comment on surveys and deviations from methodology following meeting (see 24/08/2018 - Email).</p> <p>Key Topic Bird survey not undertaken within River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI, with transects undertaken along the woodland edge.</p> <p>Key Outcome Absence of direct survey effort within the SSSI not a significant issue, given that the impacts of the proposed development are relatively small. Breeding birds on the SSSI citation are not the primary reason for qualification and the area to be impacted by the proposed new bridge over the River Coquet is not considered to hold value for nesting kingfisher.</p>

Date	Form of correspondence	Key topics discussed and key outcomes (the topics should align with the issues tables)
		<p>Key Topic Age of the bird data (2016) to inform the impact assessment of the scheme.</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England to provide comment following meeting (see 07/08/2018 - Email).</p> <p>Key Topic Deviation of survey area for barn owl (500m from scheme) in comparison to guidance (1.5 from scheme).</p> <p>Key Outcome Further justification required (see 24/09/2018 - Email).</p>
07/08/2018	Email (Appendix C)	<p>Key Topic Age of breeding bird data.</p> <p>Key Outcome The survey undertaken in 2016 is considered current thus suitable to inform the impact assessment assuming there has not been any significant changes in the way the land has been used within the intervening time period.</p> <p>Key Topic Bird survey not undertaken within River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI, with transects undertaken along the woodland edge.</p> <p>Key Outcome The survey was considered to be of good quality and it was noted that it would be used to inform appropriate mitigation, as necessary.</p> <p>Key Topic Ancient woodland salvage plan, following issue of skeleton document.</p> <p>Key Outcome Detailed comments/suggestions on the proposed strategy and information to be included to address the impacts to ancient woodland. Email available.</p>
24/08/2018	Email (Appendix D)	<p>Key Topic Deviation from guidelines in relation to bat DEFRA surveys and bat survey work.</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England believe the bat survey data is sufficient to effectively understand the impacts of the project and design mitigation within the ES.</p>
24/09/2018	Email (Appendix E)	<p>Key Topic Deviation of survey area for barn owl (500m from scheme) in comparison to guidance (1.5 from scheme).</p> <p>Key Outcome</p>

Date	Form of correspondence	Key topics discussed and key outcomes (the topics should align with the issues tables)
		<p>Following review of justification for the reduction in the survey area, Natural England is satisfied that the survey should be sufficient to inform the impact assessment.</p> <p>Key Topic Location of ancient woodland compensation area (southwest of the River Coquet bridge). Shown in Appendix F (which was appended to the email issued to Natural England in Appendix E).</p> <p>Key Outcome Confirmation that location acceptable.</p>
04/10/2018	Email (Appendix G)	<p>Key Topic Impact assessment with regards to bats and building B101A, due to refusal of access.</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England agree with the approach taken to assume presence of roosting activity and the mitigation proposed to address potential impacts (presented in Appendix H). Approach demonstrates that there is no satisfactory alternative and that the works will not adversely affect the favourable conservation status the bats assumed to be present.</p>
23/11/2018	Email (Appendix I)	<p>Key Topic Habitat Regulations Assessment (Screening Report) – approach taken and conclusions of no likely significant effects, following issue of draft document.</p> <p>Key Outcome Requested additional information regarding impacts of aerial emissions. Suggested appropriate to highlight the inclusion of pollution prevention and control measures to avoid the risk of polluted surface water runoff during construction and network of detention basins during operation. Overall, concur with the conclusions of the report that the proposal is not likely to have a significant impact on the coastal and marine Natura 2000 (European) sites.</p>
01/03/2019	Meeting (Appendix J)	<p>Key Topic Ecological mitigation for the scheme.</p> <p>Key Outcome The draft ecological mitigation seems to be proportionate and Natural England will provide additional comment, where appropriate, following receipt of the ES.</p> <p>Key Topic Ancient woodland compensation planting area to address impacts to 0.68ha of ancient woodland.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p>

Date	Form of correspondence	Key topics discussed and key outcomes (the topics should align with the issues tables)
		<p>Natural England confirms that it is satisfied with the area (8.16ha) and location of the proposed compensation woodland planting.</p> <p>Key Topic Approach to Ancient Woodland Strategy, as per following high level tasks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Receptor site¹ - Test soil conditions/nutrient levels 2. Receptor site - Manipulate soils 3. Receptor site - Re-test to confirm achieved 4. Donor site² – translocate ground flora to wider SSSI/ancient woodland. Salvage saplings (by hand) if achievable. 5. Donor site – fell woodland (retain material for use on receptor site) 6. Donor site – soil strip 7. Receptor site – spread stripped soils 8. Receptor site – sow hay meadow seed mix and plant nursery transplants (60-90cm) and salvaged saplings (if achieved) 9. Wider woodland – collect and transplant saplings by hand into the receptor site) 10. Manage and maintain receptor site <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. During which, ground flora seed obtained and grown on, ready to be transplanted at suitable time (trigger – when canopy of woodland has developed and hay meadow grassland has started to die back/recede). <p>Key Outcome The steps in the high-level task list are appropriate. Translocation of ground flora to the wider SSSI and collection of tree saplings from wider SSSI would require SSSI Assent. Additional comments and advice on individual elements of the strategy. Email available.</p>
09/05/2019	Email (Appendix K)	<p>Key Topic Habitat Regulations Assessment (Screening Report) – approach taken and conclusions of no likely significant effects, following issue of updated document.</p> <p>Key Outcome Acknowledged that comments made on 23/11/2018 with regards to the earlier draft have been addressed. Confirmation of agreement with the conclusions of the report that the proposal is not likely to have a significant impact on the coastal and marine Natura 2000 (European) sites.</p>
08/08/2019	Email (Appendix L)	<p>Key Topic Approach to assessment with regards to brown hare.</p> <p>Key Outcome</p>

¹ Compensatory woodland planting area

² Area within red line boundary

Date	Form of correspondence	Key topics discussed and key outcomes (the topics should align with the issues tables)
		<p>Acknowledged that targeted surveys have not been undertaken for brown hare. Natural England confirmed that the proposed mitigation to encourage dispersal from within the Order Limits and the overall design of the scheme should be sufficient to ensure that the local brown hare population is not significantly impacted by the proposal.</p> <p>Key Topic Approach to air quality assessment and impact conclusions regarding the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI.</p> <p>Key Outcome Approach to assessment changed following this consultation. Outcome no longer relevant. This matter is discussed further below in relation to the email dated 18/10/2019 (Appendix O).</p>
08/08/2019	Email (Appendix M)	<p>Key Topic Comment on draft ES submission.</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England confirmed that “<i>all the relevant surveys and the mitigation outlined for the species and habitats that are likely to be impacted by proposed scheme are in line with current guidance and best practice.</i>” It was also commented that “<i>the various comments and advice given by Natural England in the many detailed discussions and consultations regarding the proposals over the last 18 months have been taken on board. In particular, the considerable amount of time spent consulting on the specifics of the woodland compensation area have resulted in a detailed Ancient Woodland Strategy which will hopefully prove to be reasonable compensation for the unfortunate, but unavoidable, loss of an area of Ancient and Semi-Natural woodland within the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI.</i>”</p> <p>With regards to the Ancient Woodland Strategy, Natural England stated they “<i>would like to acknowledge the resource and effort that Highways England and their consultants have put into to developing the Ancient Woodland Strategy and looks forward to helping further refine the design of the Woodland Creation Area at the detailed design stage.</i>”</p> <p>Several items were raised, which were considered and used to update Chapter 9:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inclusion of bullhead with regards to biosecurity. - Use of aquatic vegetation consistent with what is existing within watercourses within proposed planting. - Inclusion of a badger sett approximately 360m west of the River Coquet bridge within the proposed pre-commencement walkover survey. - Minor amendments to the Ancient Woodland Strategy. <p>These items are discussed further in Section 3 of this document.</p>

Date	Form of correspondence	Key topics discussed and key outcomes (the topics should align with the issues tables)
14/10/2019	Email (Appendix N)	<p>Key Topic Advice from the Natural England Wildlife Licensing Team confirming the information required with respect to the protected species licences in order to provide Letters of No Impediment (LoNI).</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England request a full draft licence application with as much information as the applicant can provide at the time. This will include a draft Application Form, Method Statement and Reasoned Statement. Also, where possible and appropriate; a master plan, work schedule and appropriate, labelled supporting figures should be provided.</p> <p>Natural England recognise that the full project design may not be known at this time. However, the more information Natural England can assess at this stage, the greater confidence Natural England’s advisers can have in their consideration of whether the proposals are likely to meet licensing requirements.</p> <p>This email was further supported by an email on 18/10/2019 (Appendix P) regarding specific advice for the bat draft licence applications. Natural England requested that the following is included: - Reference to all buildings within the Order Limits and if they have been ruled out of the licence application in relation to bat suitability. Please say why and what type of survey this is based on. - Provide an explanation of the buffer zone and say why it is needed or rule it out if necessary.</p> <p>Natural England confirmed that this was preliminary advice and that further comments may be raised following assessment of the draft licence application.</p>
18/10/2019	Email (Appendix O)	<p>Key Topic Reply to address responses to the comments provided by Natural England following review of Chapter 9 and appendices (see email dated 08/08/2019, Appendix M).</p> <p>Key Outcome Natural England provide thanks for the clarifications given regarding the comments on the draft ES. Natural England confirm that the only outstanding query regarding the clarifications provided relates to Section 4.5.12 of the Ancient Woodland Strategy (Appendix 9.21) and the question of the long-term management of the Woodland Creation Area.</p>

2.1.2. It is agreed that this is an accurate record of the key meetings and consultation undertaken between (1) Highways England and (2) Natural England in relation to the issues addressed in this SoCG.

3 ISSUES RELATED TO CHAPTER 9 BIODIVERSITY

Document Reference	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
Chapter 9: Biodiversity of the ES	9.1.1 to 9.1.2	Introduction	No Comment	No Comment	Agreed
	9.2.1 Including Table 9-1	Competent Expert Evidence	No Comment	No Comment	Agreed
	9.3.1 to 9.3.24 Including Tables 9-2 and 9-3	Legislative and Policy Framework	No Comment	No Comment	Agreed
	9.4.1 to 9.4.44 Including Tables 9-4, 9-5 and 9-6	Assessment Methodology	No Comment	No Comment	Agreed
	9.5.1 to 9.5.5	Assessment Assumptions and Limitations	No Comment	No Comment	Agreed
	9.6.1 to 9.6.4	Study Area	No Comment	No Comment	Agreed

Document Reference	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
	9.7.1 to 9.7.111 Including Tables 9-7 to 9-18	Baseline Conditions	Section 9.7.20. As per the consultation email dated 08/08/2019 (Appendix L), Natural England acknowledge that targeted surveys have not been undertaken for brown hare. Natural England confirm that brown hares are considered widespread across all suitable habitats in Northumberland and common in certain areas of the county. Natural England confirm that the approach is considered appropriate based on the proposed mitigation during construction and operation.	No Comment	Agreed
			Table 9-10: Summary of Ecological Survey Methods and Dates of Surveys. Natural England confirm that all relevant surveys are in line with current guidance and best practice. Any deviation, such as the survey distance for barn owl and methodology, is accepted and agreed as appropriate in this instance.	No Comment	Agreed
	9.7.112 to 9.7.114	Future Baseline	No Comment	No Comment	Agreed
	9.8.1 to 9.8.10 Including Tables 9-19, 9-20 and 9-21	Potential Impacts	No Comment	No Comment	Agreed
	9.9.1 to 9.9.6 Including Table 9-22	Design, Mitigation and Enhancement Measures	Table 9-22. Reference is made to the installation of the cofferdam within the river to facilitate the construction the southern pier for the new bridge (EM014). Natural England understand that this is a temporary measure	The proposed construction methodology for the southern pier no longer requires the installation of a cofferdam extending up to 5 m into the River Coquet. The embedded	Agreed

Document Reference	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
			<p>to allow for the construction of the southern pier, which is out with but immediately adjacent to the river. The table does not indicate that the cofferdam is temporary in nature and is due to be removed once the work on the pier is completed. Can you confirm that this understanding is correct and that the in river works will be temporary in nature?</p>	<p>mitigation entails the installation of sheet piles following pre-augering into the bedrock. These sheet piles, located outside of the assumed bankfull channel, would then serve two functions: firstly, as a cofferdam to create a dry working area for construction [river training measures]; and, secondly, would form part of the permanent framework for the new pile cap. Once constructed, the sheet piles would be burnt off to the pile cap level.</p> <p>The above is extracted from the geomorphological assessment of the River Coquet, which is an appendix to Chapter 10: Road Drainage and Water Environment. The extract has been added into Chapter 9, with reference to the appendix.</p>	
			<p>Table 9-22. Chapter 9 and the Aquatic Ecology Report (Appendix 9.3 of Volume 3 (Application Document Reference: TR010041/APP/6.3) of the ES) indicate that bullhead have been recorded on the River Lyne. This species has not been recorded on any of the other tributaries and particularly in the Coquet catchment, although there is one as yet unconfirmed report of this species from the main river at Guyzance. Although this species is native to the UK, there are very limited number of rivers in Northumberland where it is present and it is important to</p>	<p>Reference to bullhead has been added to measure DM010 of Table 9-22 with regards to biosecurity.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>

Document Reference	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
			ensure that the proper biosecurity measures (Check, Clean, Dry) are put in place to eliminate the risk of the species being accidentally introduced to other water courses where in river works are proposed for this scheme.		
			Table 9-22. EM041 indicates that new channels will be planted with aquatic vegetation. Where this is deemed to be necessary the aquatic vegetation needs to be consistent with what is found in the existing watercourse/catchment and the sourcing of plants needs to be from suppliers that are free from aquatic Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS). Advice should potentially be sought from the Environment Agency with regard to any relevant protocols for the sourcing of aquatic plants.	The text of the EM041 has been extended to capture the comment: <i>“The channels would also be planted with aquatic vegetation consistent with the existing floral community of the watercourse/catchment. The sourcing of any plants would be confirmed at detailed design but would be from suppliers that are free from aquatic invasive non-native species. Advice would be sought from the Environment Agency, if required, about relevant protocols for the sourcing of aquatic plants.”</i>	Agreed
	9.9.7	Mitigation – Ancient Woodland	No Comment	No Comment	Agreed
	9.9.8 and Table 9-23	Design and Mitigation Measures and their Delivery Mechanisms	No Comment	No Comment	Agreed
	9.10.1 to 9.10.46	Assessment of Likely	Section 9.10.14. Whilst it is true that nitrogen is not the limiting nutrient in most river	a) Chapter 10 addresses effects as a result of drainage and run-off,	a) Agreed

Document Reference	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
	Including Table 9-24	Significant Effects	<p>systems (where phosphorus is the limiting nutrient) any increases in nitrogen will ultimately end up in the estuary and marine environment (where there are a number of designated sites) where nitrogen is the limiting nutrient. Clarification is requested on the following:</p> <p>a) Whilst the direct nitrogen deposition on to the River Coquet is likely to be insignificant, the impact of the nitrogen levels from the carriage way runoff from the section of the proposal that drains into the Coquet catchment also needs to be considered. Particularly as all the drainage network is likely to be within the zone of heaviest aerial deposition, all the nitrogen will ultimately end up in the river except for any that is stripped out by vegetation growing in the balancing ponds (pond design that include appropriate vegetation could help significantly here not only to strip out nutrients but also to help trap sediment from the carriageway surface). This potential issue may have been addressed in the Road Drainage and Water Environment chapter of the ES. If so, it should be cross referenced.</p> <p>b) The downstream impact of increased nitrogen levels on the marine environment from the carriageway runoff is not considered in this chapter of the ES but it may have been covered in Chapter 10 Road Drainage and Water</p>	<p>proposing suitable mitigation to reduce the potential impacts and concluding effects of Neutral significance (not significant). Text has been added to Chapter 9 to reference this assessment and its conclusions.</p> <p>b) With regards to downstream impacts of increased nitrogen levels on the marine environment, this is captured separately within the HRA for the Scheme.</p>	b) Agreed

Document Reference	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
			Environment. This potential issue is something we discussed with regard to the HRA screening and it may be appropriate to reiterate that this risk will be minimised by appropriate pollution prevention and control measures deployed during the construction phase and by the network of stilling/balancing ponds during the operational phase bearing in mind the comment about the pond design given above.		
			Natural England note that the revised assessment for Eco 1 concludes that while the critical load threshold for NOx is exceeded within 15m to the east of the existing bridge, it falls below the threshold at the Order Limits. The area affected by NOx levels exceeding the critical load lies within the SSSI woodland that will be compensated for by the provision of the Woodland Creation Area. Based on the information provided in the air quality assessment text for the three areas of the ARN (Eco 1, Eco 9 and Eco 12) located within 200m of the SSSI, the overall conclusion that the scheme will result in effects of overall neutral significance on the SSSI as a result of changes to air quality is supported by the evidence provided.	No Comment	Agreed
			One general point, there are several references to the proposed scheme resulting in a decrease in levels of deposition at a number of locations. It may be worth	The following has been added to Chapter 9 for Eco9 (the first instance where a reduction in total N deposition is presented): " <i>The decrease in total</i>	Agreed

Document Reference	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
			exploring/explaining how this occurs as it is counter intuitive to most people's understanding increases in traffic. Natural England understand that mitigation built into the design can help to alter where and how much deposition occurs but it may be worth clarifying the mechanisms by which the proposed scheme may actually reduce deposition in certain locations.	<i>nitrogen deposition is due to the ability of the Scheme (A1) to draw traffic from other roads within the local network. Therefore, this causes a reduced traffic flow on some roads radiating from the A1, thereby a reduction in associated nitrogen deposition."</i>	
	9.11	Biodiversity No Net Loss	No Comment	No Comment	Agreed
	9.12	Monitoring	No Comment	No Comment	Agreed
Appendix 9.1 Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Report	Full document		No Comment	No Comment	Agreed
Appendix 9.2 National Vegetation Classification Survey Report	Full document		No Comment	No Comment	Agreed
Appendix 9.3 Aquatic Ecology Survey Report	Full document		No Comment	No Comment	Agreed

Document Reference	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
Appendix 9.4 Great Crested Newt Environmental DNA and Habitat Suitability Index Survey Report	Full document		No Comment	No Comment	Agreed
Appendix 9.5 2017 Great Crested Newt Survey Report	Full document		No Comment	No Comment	Agreed
Appendix 9.6 2018 Great Crested Newt Survey Report	Full document		No Comment	No Comment	Agreed
Appendix 9.7 Bat Roost Potential Survey Report	Full document		No Comment	No Comment	Agreed
Appendix 9.8 2017 Bat Activity Survey Report	Full document		No Comment	No Comment	Agreed
Appendix 9.9 2018 Bat	Full document		No Comment	No Comment	Agreed

Document Reference	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
Activity Survey Report					
Appendix 9.10 Badger Survey Report	Full document		<p>The report indicates that there is an active sett approximately 360m west of the River Coquet bridge (Table 4, sett no.12). This active sett was noted in this area during surveys undertaken in 2004 when the duelling of the A1 from Morpeth to Felton was last proposed. Additionally, Natural England note badger activity at this sett complex in the summer of 2018. This sett is out with the 100m buffer distance from the works area for the new bridge over the Coquet and thus unlikely to be damaged or disturbed by the works. However, Natural England recommend this area is included in the pre-commencement walkover to ensure that no new setts have been excavated closer to the bridge. Additionally, extra vigilance will be required around any excavations associated with the new bridge piers as there is a risk that both otter and badger will be active in this area.</p>	<p>The recommendation is captured within the pre-commencement walkover measures detailed within Table 9-22, DM003. Whilst not extending to a distance of 100 m, the measure confirms a pre-commencement walkover of the works area (which would extend further than the construction area where excavation may occur) to confirm there are no changes to baseline conditions. The follow up action would be as follows: "Should badger activity be confirmed within the area of works or within a zone of influence determined by the ECoW, a Natural England licence would be applied for/mitigation developed, as required, in advance of Scheme commencement."</p> <p>In response to the comment regarding vigilance in association with otter and badger around the River Coquet bridge, pre-commencement walkover surveys for both species are proposed to ensure changes in baseline conditions are identified and appropriate measures can be put in place to avoid/reduce impacts.</p>	Agreed.

Document Reference	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
Appendix 9.11 Badger Bait Marking Survey Report	Full document		No Comment	No Comment	Agreed
Appendix 9.12 Barn Owl Survey Report	Full document		No Comment	No Comment	Agreed
Appendix 9.13 Breeding Bird Survey Report	Full document		No Comment	No Comment	Agreed
Appendix 9.14 Wintering Bird Survey Report	Full document		No Comment	No Comment	Agreed
Appendix 9.15 Reptile Survey Report	Full document		No Comment	No Comment	Agreed
Appendix 9.16 Red Squirrel Survey Report	Full document		No Comment	No Comment	Agreed
Appendix 9.17 Water Vole and Otter Survey Report	Full document		No Comment	No Comment	Agreed

Document Reference	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
Appendix 9.18 2018 Otter Monitoring Survey Report	Full document		No Comment	No Comment	Agreed
Appendix 9.19 Terrestrial Invertebrate Survey Report	Full document		No Comment	No Comment	Agreed
Appendix 9.20 Biodiversity No Net Loss Report	Full document		No Comment	No Comment	Agreed
Appendix 9.21 Ancient Woodland Strategy	Full document		Natural England would like to acknowledge the resource and effort that Highways England and their consultants have put into to developing the Ancient Woodland Strategy and looks forward to helping further refine the design of the Woodland Creation Area at the detailed design stage.	No Comment	N/A
			Section 2.2.11. Japanese knotweed is present in Felton Village in the carpark of the public house on the south bank of the river.	This information has been added to the document, captured in Section 2.2.10.	Agreed
			Section 3.2.7. The haul road mentioned in this section is referred to as the 'temporary' haul road in Section 3.2.15. From previous discussions Natural England understood that, whilst a decision had yet to be finalised, it was	Reference to "temporary" in relation to the haul road has been removed. It is understood that the haul road would likely be permanent, due to the nature of its installation, although permanent	Agreed

Document Reference	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
			likely that there was a preference for this to be retained as a permanent access to allow inspection and maintenance of the southern section of the bridges. Has a decision been made regarding the possible retention of the road as a permanent structure?	future use of the road is yet to be confirmed.	
			As discussed previously, the design of the haul road will need to take into consideration the risk of erosion caused by any drainage or run-off associated with such a steep track. Additionally, assurance will need to be sought from Highways England that the track will be used for the only by their employees/contractors and will not be accessible to the general public.	Comments relating to the design of the haul road (at detailed design) regarding consideration of the risk of erosion are acknowledged. Discussions have been held with Highways England (Area 14) regarding the use of this route as a maintenance track following construction, but Area 14 has indicated that they will not be using it. The haul route will not be accessible to the general public.	Agreed
			Section 3.2.8. Protective fencing referenced needs to be resilient to flooding as the lower sections of the fence are likely to be subject to periodic flood events.	The following has been added to Section 3.2.8 to address this comment; <i>“Any protective fencing would also be designed to be resilient to flooding as the lower sections of the fence may be subject to periodic flood events.”</i>	Agreed
			Section 3.2.11. The risk of the spread of INNS to/within the designated site and the wider countryside cannot be overemphasized, particularly when the project involves the large scale use of earth moving machinery moving between various water courses across	Both the Ancient Woodland Strategy and Chapter 9 of the ES detail the requirement for a Biosecurity Method Statement, which would be developed at detailed design. This is also	Agreed

Document Reference	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
			different river catchments. Therefore, it is vital that the Biosecurity Method Statement is robust and strictly adhered to by all the contractors working on the project.	captured within the Outline CEMP for the Scheme.	
			Section 3.2.18. The open habitat within the Woodland Creation Area is likely regenerate as woodland over time and the management of the neutral grassland will need to accommodate this gradual succession to native woodland.	The high-level management measures detailed in Section 5.2 outline that an annual hay cut of the grassland would be undertaken. Cessation of this would be triggered by natural die-off of the grassland as a woodland canopy develops.	Agreed
			Section 3.2.19 – 3.2.24. Natural England welcomes the additional enhancements listed in this section.	No Comment.	N/A
			Section 4.3.12 and Section 4.5.5. It may be appropriate to consider using natural regeneration as a tool for the creation of the woodland on a portion of the site, most likely adjacent to the existing woodland edge to the north of the Woodland Creation Area. Trees that generate naturally from adjoining woodlands tend to be more vigorous and would be genetically suited to the local area. This is something that Natural England would like to explore further at the detailed design stage.	A paragraph in relation to this comment has been added to the strategy (Section 4.3.13), confirming that Natural England have expressed an interest in exploring this further at detailed design stage.	Agreed
			Section 4.5.12. Natural England notes that long term management for a minimum of 50 years is proposed. After this period has elapsed, it is assumed that the management	Highways England confirm that the Woodland Creation Area will be retained as a woodland in perpetuity.	Agreed

Document Reference	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
			of the woodland will be continued as necessary within the normal woodland management operations that Highways England undertakes in woodlands within its land holding. It is also assumed that the Woodland Creation Area will be retained as a woodland in perpetuity. Can you confirm that these assumptions are correct?		
			Section 5.2.1. Boundary fencing will probably need to be retained for a period longer than the 5 years mentioned in this section, particularly if natural regeneration is to be used as a tool for the establishment of woodland in parts of the Woodland Creation Area.	A comment has been added within the high-level management overview against the removal of the boundary fence to identify that the timing of this action (currently year 5) may be delayed should natural regeneration be used as a tool.	Agreed
			Section 5.3.1. Reference is made to the use of tree guards in contradiction to proposed fencing option set out in Section 4.2.11, which is the preferred option already agreed in earlier consultations. Tree tubes/guards are also referenced in Section 5.3.3.	This was an error following updates of the document. Reference to tree tubes/guards has been removed.	Agreed
			Section 5.3.6 and 5.4.1. Herbicide should be used sparingly and only when it is deemed to be absolutely necessary. A protocol for the use of herbicides should be developed and set out in the Ancient Woodland Management and Monitoring Plan (AWMMP).	Text has been added to Section 5.3.4 to confirm use of herbicides sparingly and in accordance with a protocol developed and set out in the AWMMP.	Agreed

Document Reference	Paragraph Reference	Sub-section	Natural England Comment	Highways England Response	Status
Appendix 9.22 Bat Method Statement	Full document		As per Appendix N , Natural England require a full draft licence application for review in order to provide comment and a LoNI.	Documentation to be updated. Agreement with the information to be secured through the LoNI.	Agreed
Appendix 9.23 Badger Method Statement	Full document		As per Appendix N , Natural England require a full draft licence application for review in order to provide comment and a LoNI.	Documentation to be updated. Agreement with the information to be secured through the LoNI.	Agreed
Appendix 9.24 Great Crested Newt Method Statement – River Coquet	Full document		As per Appendix N , Natural England require a full draft licence application for review in order to provide comment and a LoNI.	Documentation to be updated. Agreement with the information to be secured through the LoNI.	Agreed
Appendix 9.25 Great Crested Newt Method Statement – Burgham Park	Full document		As per Appendix N , Natural England require a full draft licence application for review in order to provide comment and a LoNI.	Documentation to be updated. Agreement with the information to be secured through the LoNI.	Agreed

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Meeting Minutes 17/10/2017

MEETING NOTES & ACTION SUMMARY		Date:	01/11/17
Meeting: Natural England – AiN Scheme Introduction		File Ref:	HE551459-WSP-GEN-ZZ-MI-LE-0175-P1
Attendees		Distribution	
Natural England	Andrew Whitehead (A1A)	[Redacted]	
Natural England	[Redacted]		
Highways England, A1 in Northumberland Assistant Project Manager	[Redacted]		
WSP, A1 in Northumberland Environmental Lead	[Redacted]		
WSP, A1 Morpeth to Felton Environmental Specialist	[Redacted]		
Apologies	[Redacted]		
Notes Prepared by:		Agreed By:	
[Redacted]		[Redacted]	

Ref.	Meeting Notes	ACTIONS BY	
		Name	Date
1.	<p><u>A1 Alnwick to Ellingham – Scheme Introduction</u></p> <p>NM and KS presented an introduction to the Scheme, together with relevant drawings. Discussed current status of ecological surveys, timescales for DCO and potential licence requirements.</p> <p>AW queried the proposed form of the central reservation, indicating that it should not be grassed to avoid use by barn owl. Action 1: NM to highlight to relevant WSP contacts (PM, A2E environmental lead, highways).</p>	NM	31/10/17
2.	<p><u>A1 Morpeth to Felton – Scheme Introduction</u></p> <p>NM and KS presented a more detailed introduction to the Scheme, together with relevant drawings. Discussed current status of ecological surveys and presented a summary of the findings so far. Also discussed timescales for DCO and potential licence requirements.</p> <p>AW informed that a ‘letter of no impediment’ would be issued by Natural England once they are happy with the proposed scheme and mitigation required. Action 2: NM to add this to the programme (applies to both schemes).</p> <p><i>[Specific discussions on this Scheme are summarised below.]</i></p>	NM	27/10/17

3.	<p><u>M2F Ground Investigation</u></p> <p>NM indicated that the majority of the GI for the Scheme was complete, with the exception of a few outstanding areas. NM informed attendees that the GI in the area of the River Coquet bridge had not been done and WSP would like to begin the work at the beginning of February 2018. The works are likely to require vegetation clearance but to be confirmed once contractor appointed.</p> <p>NM asked Natural England to confirm what WSP would need to complete to allow the work to go ahead.</p> <p>AW / BC informed that WSP would require a SSSI Assent (S28G), which contains what we will do, how, why, where etc. BC informed that access will be an issue on the southern side due to a steep cliff; northern side is easier as there is a public footpath and potential access directly of the highway (although to note that on inspection this would still be steep). We can provide the Assent application directly to BC and AW. In order to meet the programme Natural England will need this all in place before Christmas, so will need application for Assent to be submitted at the end of November.</p> <p>BC informed that if access had to pass through the river (from the norther side), an Environment Agency permit would be required. If an EA permit is required for works within the SSSI then a separate NE assent is not required for any works covered by the EA's permit. However, if some elements of the works with in the SSSI are not covered by the EA's permit, then the assent of NE would still be required for the element of works not covered by the EA's permit e.g. vegetation clearance and test drilling within the SSSI not immediately adjacent to the main river.</p> <p>Another option would be to crane down the GI equipment from the bridge. This may also require an EA permit.</p> <p>All pollution prevention considerations would have to be implemented. Consideration of invasive species would be required to prevent any spread into the river and any of the burns and bio-security methods highlighted within the contractors CEMP.</p> <p>Action 3: NM to pass information on to relevant WSP contacts and seek advice from the EA.</p> <p>Action 4: BC / AW to provide Grid Reference for the badger sett near the river.</p>	<p>NM</p> <p>AW / BC</p>	<p>27/10/17</p> <p>Complete</p>
4.	<p><u>M2F River Coquet Bridge (structures and mitigation)</u></p>		

	<p>NM presented information relating to the River Coquet including survey findings within the area, current options for structures of the bridge, potential impacts as a result of the Scheme and potential enhancement and mitigation options.</p> <p><i>Structures options</i> All attendees reviewed the options for the River Coquet bridge structure. AW / BC had the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No structures should be in the river itself, and should be as far back as possible (need to consider flood events, reduce pollution risk and ensure minimal intervention). • In order to mitigate for vegetation clearance, ideally tree seed from within the SSSI should be grown to ensure local provenance. Although NE may consider wider local providence (local Northumberland stock). Action 5: BC / AW to obtain advice on types from national specialists. • Needs to be monitoring / aftercare. If the planting is offsite a local agreement will be required. • Queried whether air quality impacts would be considered on the SSSI. NM / KS informed that this would be considered through the ES. • Need to consider additional runoff from the new carriageway, including consideration of increased gritting in winter. <p><i>Mitigation and Enhancement</i> Taken from the Jacobs Stage 2 work, NM informed that the following mitigation / enhancement could be recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land purchase for woodland replacement planting. • Soil translocation for flora and ancient woodland indicator species. • Coppiced stump translocation. • Dead wood relation / creation of standing dead wood. <p>BC informed that Natural England would prefer the mitigation of loss adjacent to the SSSI (on a more than 'like for like' basis). Referred to use of HS2 biodiversity metric and Defra metric for net gain. Consultation with the Forestry Commission would be required. Natural England will need to know exactly what is being lost.</p> <p>As previously stated Natural England would require advice from national specialists in relation to relocation and translocation. However there is potential for such in a nearby arable field to the west of the bridge, which lies adjacent to existing woodland (would need to buy the land and square off a field). Consideration would need to include which side of</p>	BC / AW	27.10.17
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	<p>the road is optimal, e.g. in relation to prevailing wind etc. Action 6: NM to distribute map showing area to relevant contacts.</p> <p>KS raised the issue of potential for using HE designated funding for enhancement opportunities and queried whether there were any current issues that could be enhanced through such funding. BS state that Natural England would need to consider this further, but an example could be clearing the existing sweet chestnut which is not a local species. Action 7: BC / AW to consider potential enhancement ideas.</p> <p>Action 8: NM to pass information on to relevant WSP contacts.</p>	<p>NM</p> <p>BC / AW</p> <p>NM</p>	<p>End Oct</p> <p>27/10/17</p> <p>End Nov</p>
5.	<p><u>AOB</u></p> <p>No other business raised.</p>		

Appendix B – Meeting Minutes 20/03/2018



AGENDA & MEETING NOTES

PROJECT NUMBER	70038006	MEETING DATE	20 March 2018
PROJECT NAME	A1 in Northumberland – Morpeth to Felton	VENUE	Natural England Office, Newcastle
CLIENT	Highways England	RECORDED BY	[REDACTED]
MEETING SUBJECT	Natural England Consultation		

PRESENT	[REDACTED]
APOLOGIES	[REDACTED]
DISTRIBUTION	As above
CONFIDENTIALITY	Confidential

ITEM	MEETING NOTES
1	<p><u>A1 in Northumberland: Morpeth to Felton – Prior to Meeting (16th March 2018)</u></p> <p>Prior to the consultation meeting, JF supplied an overview document (excel spreadsheet) of the ecological survey effort understood to date. This document was accompanied by figures extracted from the relevant Jacobs survey reports for reference of findings. It is noted that WSP are awaiting further updates from Jacobs regarding the survey work completed.</p> <p>In addition, a proposed itinerary was put forward, with key discussion points as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Scheme design2) Bats:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access restrictions. This includes an absence of data for Blackwood Hall and West Moor and revoked access for several buildings, resulting in a lack of emergence/ re-entry surveys for these structures. Discussion will also include the potential for adopting a precautionary approach if access cannot be achieved, as the scheme may result in the loss of at least one structure that has not been surveyed. This is considered of particular importance with regards to EPS licensing• Crossing point methodology• Defra landscape scale effect methodology

<p>1</p>	<p>3) Breeding Birds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age of data (2016) • Dates of survey effort – (March, April, May and July) • Survey effort in relation to the River Coquet and Coquet valley Woodlands SSSI <p>4) Barn Owl</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey area (500 m) - not in line with Shawyer (2011) <p>5) Ancient Woodland / SSSI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salvage plan • Ratio to be adopted for “compensation” land
<p>2</p>	<p><u>A1 in Northumberland: Morpeth to Felton – Scheme Introduction</u></p> <p>JF and NM commenced the meeting with a run through of the scheme to allow all parties to become more familiar with the proposal prior to further discussion of the species survey effort.</p> <p>This included presentation of the latest red line boundary (Design Freeze 3 (DF3)), with NM confirming that this will be superseded in late March/ early April by the next iteration. The next iteration of the red line boundary (RLB) will be the “worst-case scenario” with regards to its area coverage and extent. The figure presented to BC and AH showed the DF3 RLB overlaid onto the area assessed within the Scoping Report, for reference.</p> <p>JF and NM explained that the RLB encompassed the proposed new off-line section, the existing A1 that is to be “de-trunked”, working footprint and areas set aside for mitigation and compensation. The area to the southeast of the existing River Coquet bridge was highlighted, which has currently been chosen as the “compensation” area for the proposed loss of ancient woodland/ SSSI habitat (discussed further below).</p> <p>Further discussion was then held on the following topics.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p><u>Bat Assessment</u></p> <p>JF firstly explained the issues that are present with access to several locations within the RLB, principally Blackwood Hall and West Moor. Repeated attempts through various avenues have been made to try and gain access; however, to date this has not been successful. These attempts have also been undertaken over several years, since site assessments commenced.</p> <p>Of particular importance are two structures on the western edge of the Blackwood Hall plot, one of which is considered likely lost to the scheme (within RLB). JF explained that, from aerial imagery alone, this building appeared small in nature and it is unknown whether it represents a building-type structure or storage container. The remaining inaccessible buildings at Blackwood and West Moor will be subject to potential disturbance due to their proximity to the scheme. AH explained that, as guidance, disturbance impacts at 100 m distance are usually negligible, but are potential at 50 m.</p> <p>JF and NM requested discussion regarding a scenario where no access can be gained to these buildings and therefore feasibility of assuming a worst-case scenario for the purposes of the impact assessment within the Environmental Statement (ES). JF explained that nearby surveyed building at West Moor had recorded the presence of roosting common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and brown long-eared bats. AH stated that a worst-case scenario may need to adopt an assumption of a maternity roost for these species (also Natterer’s bat may be supported by buildings in the area), with a mitigation and compensation strategy to reflect this. This may need to include a structure to compensate for an assumed maternity roost of brown long-eared bats, which could be costly. AH stated that further discussions will be undertaken with Natural England colleagues and specialists to discuss what routes have been taken in similar situations on previous projects to provide some guidance and stance on this matter.</p>

	<p>Action 1: AH to discuss possible acceptable approaches for the impact assessment in the event that access is not obtained.</p> <p>It was agreed, following suggestion by NM, that JF and NM would discuss a cut-off date for first access (progress has been made since the meeting). In the event that a full assessment could not be undertaken, it is suggested that an overview of any assumptions would be put together, along with proposed mitigation and compensation, for issue to BC and AH for comment. This would ensure an agreement of proposed actions in the event of no further access for input into the ES.</p> <p>Action 2: In the event of no further access, JF to put together a proposal of assumptions and mitigation/ compensation to address impacts, accompanied by justification. To be issued to AH for comment.</p> <p>BC suggested discussion with the parish council may assist in allowing access or alternatively, the options or use of drone photography. In addition, a previous proposal for the A1 may shed light on bat data gathered for the inaccessible buildings (contact - White Young Green).</p> <p>Action 3: NM to pass information onto project team and further investigate access as necessary.</p> <p>JF raised the methodology for both the crossing point surveys and Defra transect surveys, which deviated from the guidelines. AH and BC stated that they did not have knowledge of the Defra methods or guidelines and therefore would need to take this point away for further review and discussion.</p> <p>Given that crossing point data has only been collected for the existing A1 and not for the new off-line section, it was discussed whether similar assumptions could be adopted to inform mitigation development. JF raised that certain mitigation, such as bat gantries/ wires, are known to be ineffective and therefore research into alternative options for mitigation was being undertaken in relation to this scheme.</p> <p>Action 4: AH and BC to provide comment on Defra assessments and deviations from methodology, particularly in relation to the use of crossing points along the existing A1 only. JF to issue assumed/ potential crossing points along the new offline section to AH and BC for comment on the feasibility of applying assumptions to develop the mitigation strategy.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p><u>Breeding Bird Assessment</u></p> <p>The first two key discussion points were raised, age of data (2016) and dates of survey effort, which BC confirmed would need to be directed to a bird specialist.</p> <p>Action 5: BC to discuss with specialists as appropriate to provide response on suitability of data collected.</p> <p>Regarding the survey effort in relation to the River Coquet SSSI, JF raised that the surveyors (Jacobs) have not undertaken any direct survey effort within the woodland, however, have completed transects along the woodland edge on both the northern and southern sides of the River Coquet. JF confirmed that a single kingfisher (a notable species within the SSSI citation) was recorded on one occasion.</p> <p>JF questioned whether the lack of direct internal survey effort of the woodland was considered a significant issue particularly with regards to obtaining SSSI Assent. JF highlighted that Jacobs, as the surveyors, were confident in the assessment undertaken. BC did not believe that the absence of direct survey effort within the SSSI woodland was a significant issue, given that the impacts of the proposed development are relatively small in area. BC highlighted that the breeding birds of the SSSI citation are not the primary reason for qualification and also raised that the area to be impacted by the proposed new bridge over the River Coquet was not considered to hold value for nesting kingfisher to his knowledge (although kingfisher are known to be along the river and hold territory).</p> <p>BC highlighted that the primary concern will be the completion of works outside the breeding bird season or, if planned during this period, the provision of pre-commencement survey(s). JF confirmed that this would be included within the mitigation strategy.</p> <p>Whilst it was not considered a significant issue, BC confirmed that a further discussion would be held</p>

MEETING NOTES

	<p>with the bird specialist to confirm the response.</p> <p>Action 6: BC to discuss bird data collected and impact to the SSSI further with colleagues and provide a response regarding suitability of data to inform the impact assessment.</p>
5	<p><u>Barn Owl Assessment</u></p> <p>JF indicated that the Jacobs surveys had considered a 500 m boundary around the Scheme, which does not meet current guidance of 1.5 km. JF indicated that Jacobs were confident for their justification, which was mainly due to the fact that records are confirmed.</p> <p>Action 7. JF to provide BC and AH with additional information regarding the justification in the reduction of the Survey Area (once received from Jacobs) so they can determine whether the deviation from guidance is acceptable.</p>
6	<p><u>Ancient Woodland / SSSI</u></p> <p>JF and NM talked through the current proposed area of compensation land, located to the southeast of the River Coquet, to seek agreement in principle of this area. This is located at the opposite side that Natural England originally suggested. In order to agree the area to the southeast, BC requested some more information relating to nitrogen deposition and whether the southeast would experience increased deposition due to the prevailing wind. BC did agree that the proximity of the current proposed compensation land to the SSSI/ ancient woodland was positive.</p> <p>BC indicated that consideration should be given to establishing the compensation land prior to removal of trees to facilitate the new bridge, including planting of seeds collected from the existing woodland now. NM informed that the southeast area would also be used as a temporary compound for the construction of the River Coquet bridge and so planting would have to be phased around that. BC said there could be potential to wait until after the construction works have finished, and potentially plant sapling trees instead of seeds.</p> <p>BC questioned about the management of the compensation land.</p> <p>BC raised that water quality to the River Coquet (SSSI) is of particular concern and consideration should be given not only to impacts to the river itself but also to tributaries and burns that feed into the Coquet.</p> <p>Action 8. NM to look into management options,</p> <p>Action 9. NM / JF to provide BC and AH with additional justification for the use of the southeast side, including (as far as practicable at this stage) consideration of nitrogen deposition and phasing of the construction works etc.</p> <p>Action 10. BC to seek opinions from Natural England woodland specialists in relation to the southeast proposed area.</p>
7	<p><u>Designated Funds</u></p> <p>NM sought whether Natural England had further thoughts of potential use of designated funds (including off-site areas). BC discussed options, for example removal of non-native trees from the SSSI woodlands (namely sycamore and sweet chestnut).</p> <p>Action 11: BC and NM/ JF to consider options for use of designated funds.</p>
8	<p><u>Salt Gritting</u></p> <p>BC asked whether this would be considered in the ES. NM indicated that this issue has been passed to the water team for consideration.</p>
9	<p><u>Natural England Assent</u></p> <p>NM asked whether a separate Natural England assent would be needed for the River Coquet ground investigation (GI) works and the construction of the main Scheme. BC confirmed two separate assents would be required.</p>

MEETING NOTES

10	<u>Arboriculture Surveys</u> NM informed that these were being undertaken in April. BC requested the findings once available. Action 12. NM to issue survey findings once undertaken.
11	<u>Circular path near River Coquet</u> NM informed of the current consideration of a circular path around the River Coquet. BC had concerns about encouraging increased people / dogs into the SSSI and ancient woodland. Action 13. NM to issue BC with a map showing the potential path (together with design aspects) for consideration, once available. Action 14. BC to speak to coastal path specialist for information.
12	<u>River Coquet Badger Sett</u> BC raised that there is a known and well-established badger sett approximately 100 m upstream of the current River Coquet bridge, close to the watercourse. Action 15. JF to review the badger survey report to confirm presence and ensure impacts are addressed within the ES.
13	<u>General Ecology Survey Reports</u> BC would like to review the aquatics report. Action 16. JF to send BC the aquatics report. BC asked for a list of all reports so he can then identify additional ones to review. Action 17. JF to send a list to BC.
14	<u>Impact Assessment</u> In addition to those items raised above, BC questioned whether the ES would review impacts from the addition of the new off-line section in combination with the existing A1 carriageway, which will be de-trunked but remain active. JF confirmed that this would be addressed within the ES.
15	<u>AOB</u> No other business raised.

NEXT MEETING

An invitation will be issued if an additional meeting is required.

Appendix C – Email 7/08/2018

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 07 August 2018 00:44
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: A1 M2F - Consultation Call overview

Hi [REDACTED]

Thank you for the notes of our telephone conversation last week.

I have set out below my comments on the Barn Owl survey, breeding bird survey and the Ancient Woodland Salvage Plan which confirm discussions we had last week. Apologies for getting this to you so late in the day.

Barn Owl survey:

The main concern with the survey relates to the decision by the Jacobs to opt for a survey area of 500m rather than the 1.5km advised by best practice guidance. The survey report indicates that professional judgement was used to determine the size of the survey area having taken into account desk study results, habitat types within the wider landscape, average barn owl home range etc.

A clearer justification is required as to why best practice guidelines were not followed with regard to the survey area. Although 500m may potentially be sufficient to identify roosts and breeding sites vulnerable to noise disturbance from construction and traffic noise, there may be an increase in the risk of traffic-related mortality for birds roosting/breeding further away. There might be a significant risk of increased road deaths if there are more birds breeding up to 1.5km away given that barn owls can have a home range of up to about 4km.

If part of the consultants reasoning was that the habitat quality in the wider landscape mirrored that found within the survey area and was thus unlikely to support anything other than a low density of barn owls then this would need to be fully evidenced in the survey report.

Apart from the above issue, the survey seems to be of reasonable quality and suggests that there is a relatively low barn owl density in the survey area primarily due to the lack of suitable foraging habitats. I note the conclusion that due consideration needs to be given to this particular species when finalising the design and overall mitigation strategy for the scheme. In our discussions last week we touched on the risk of an increase traffic-related barn owl mortality as a result to of the proposal and how this could potentially be mitigated for through design changes that would hopefully ensure that the birds would fly at a safe distance above the proposed road carriageway.

One further thought, if the line of the proposed new route is likely to damage/destroy Type 1 or 2 foraging habitat, are there any proposals to mitigate or compensate?

Breeding Bird Survey:

The main issues raised in relation to the survey relate the age of the survey information and the lack of transects through the woodland impacted by the proposed new crossing over the R. Coquet. Both of these issues are dealt with below.

Survey age:

The survey was undertaken in 2016, which although not very recent, is still considered to be current and thus suitable to inform the impact assessment assuming that there has not been any significant changes in the way the land within the survey has been used within the intervening time period. Natural England is

not aware of any major changes in land use in this area of Northumberland and thus consider that, in this instance, the survey data from 2016 is acceptable.

Lack of survey transects with within R. Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI:

The survey transects undertaken skirted the edge of the section of semi natural ancient woodland in the area where the new crossing is proposed but did not transect through the section of woodland likely to be impacted by the proposal. However, given the narrow strip of woodland involved, it is considered that as long as the surveyors are confident that conditional at the time of the surveys allowed them to conclude that the data is sufficiently robust to conclude that no species were missed then the lack of a transect through the SSSI woodland is not a significant issue.

While birds are not a notified interest feature of the SSSI, if works are required within the woodland within the breeding season then checking surveys will be required prior to works commencing. From our recent conversation I noted that access to the south bank of the river may now potentially be achieved by the use of a bailey bridge constructed from the northern bank where access is easier. If this access option is to be used additional checks will need to be undertaken for kingfisher (which are known to breed along the lower Coquet) in this area. I suspect that the while the southern bank is largely unsuitable nesting habitat for kingfisher, the northern bank is likely to be more suitable.

The survey itself appears to be of good quality and I note that it will be used to inform appropriate mitigation as necessary.

Ancient Woodland Salvage Plan:

I have set out below the relevant comments for each of the sections of the plan.

Impacts

Direct Loss

I understand that the area of semi-natural ancient woodland to be lost is likely to be approximately 0.35ha. This includes both woodland lost directly under the new bridge crossing, any adjacent work area required for cranes platforms etc., and any area associated with new access route beneath the bridges. Any trees felled within the redline boundary should either be left in the adjacent woodland or used as a source of dead wood for the compensatory planting sites.

The current compensation ratio now being looked at is approximately 1-9 with two land parcels adjacent to the SSSI boundary on the south side of the river being considered for the delivery of compensatory planting i.e. part of the grass field immediately east of the existing A1 and part of the arable field immediately to the west of the A1.

Indirect Impacts

- Soil Compaction:
 - On the southern side of the river, within the SSSI woodland, it appears that the bed rock is either at, or close to, the surface in several locations and so impacts of construction and machine access are likely to vary depending on soil depth. Ideally, construction would be organised so as to avoid any impacts on the works areas required on the downstream side of the proposed new bridge but where this cannot be avoided e.g. for the proposed crane platform, any compaction will have to be alleviated once the construction works have been completed.
 - If the works site on the southern bank is to be accessed via a bailey bridge consideration will need to be given as to how both the northern bank and southern bank of the river are to be restored once the access has been removed. The northern bank of the river is steeper and appears to have a greater soil depth and so the stability of the river bank and soil compaction is likely to be more of an issue on this bank of the SSSI. Please note that although all the SSSI woodland is found on the southern side of the river, both banks of the river are included within the SSSI.
- Dust:

- Any dust generated during the construction of the new bridge crossing is likely to find its way into the river where it has the potential to alter the water chemistry of the river immediately downstream of the site, the substrate type of the river bed by increasing the level of fine sediment inputs and the soil composition of the woodland immediately adjacent to the construction site. Sufficient dust suppression should be put in place to keep dust levels entering the water course and surrounding habitats to a minimum.
- Storage of materials:
 - Materials should be stored out with the SSSI if at all possible.
 - Any materials which have the potential to constitute a pollution risk to the SSSI e.g. fuels, lubricants, chemicals including cement etc., should not be stored within the SSSI but should be brought on to site only when necessary.
 - Given the location of the site is situated in a gorge of a very flashy river catchment the flood risk in the lower sections of the site should not be underestimated in either the design of bailey bridge access or the placement of machinery or materials. Any machines or materials that cannot be removed from within the SSSI outside working hours should be moved sufficiently far back from the river so as not to be at risk from a sudden high flow event.
- Temporary site compound:
 - My understanding is that this will be out with the SSSI on the south side of the river in the grass field immediately east of the existing A1.
- Spread of invasive species:
 - As discussed, INNS (Invasive Non-Native Species) are a significant issue on many of the rivers in Northumberland. Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed have become established on the lower Coquet a short distance downstream of the A1 bridge at Felton. It is vitally important that all necessary measures are taken to ensure that all machines and materials imported to the site and all personnel working on project follow the Check, Clean, Dry protocol to help ensure that no new INNS are introduced to the system or that those already present on the system are not spread any further in the system as a result of the works within the R. Coquet catchment.

Avoidance

- Efforts made to retain habitat e.g. design of drainage outflow and footbridge design:
 - While the positioning of the footbridge underneath the road bridges will reduce the impact on the woodland habitats, perhaps more of a concern with this element of the proposal may inadvertently introduce access to an area of the woodland which at present shows little sign of human disturbance. If possible the footbridge and access steps should be designed in such a way as to reduce the likelihood of people and their dogs straying from the access route and potentially disturbing otters (an interest feature of the site), badgers (there is a substantial set a short distance upstream of the existing bridge) and other wildlife.
 - Introducing access to this area is also likely to hasten the spread of the INNS species found along the access paths in the Felton area.

Construction Mitigation Requirements

- Construction Environment Management Plan:
 - The significance of the SSSI should be clearly highlighted in the CEMP to ensure that all personnel working on the project are aware of the sensitivities of both the river and associated semi-natural ancient woodland.
 - The CEMP should clearly define what works are going to be undertaken within the SSSI, the risks associated with these works and how the impacts of works are to be mitigated. In particular, attention should be drawn to the potential impacts of possible contamination of soil or water, the introduction/spread of INNS and the risk of entrapment/injury of otters/badgers using the woodland in this area.

- Machine movements:
 - Machine movements must be restricted to an agreed works area adjacent to the new bridge. The works area should be clearly delineated with some sort of visible barrier to ensure that machine drivers do not accidentally stray into the woodland beyond the works area.
 - All machines are to be in good working order with refuelling taking place out with the SSSI in an appropriately bunded area away from the river.
- Use of the crane and platform:
 - If the crane is to remain onsite for any period of time such that refuelling is required within the SSSI the appropriate measures will need to be put in place to ensure that the risk of contamination of the site during refuelling is eliminated. Such measures will need to be agreed with both Natural England and the Environment Agency.
 - If material needs to be imported for the crane platform, all materials will need to be removed on completion of the works and the site appropriately restored.

Location of Donor Site

The selection of the donor sites has been discussed in some detail previously and is touched on briefly above. Natural England would like to acknowledge the efforts being made by WSP to secure the preferred donor site located in arable lands to the west of the existing highway as part of the compensation area. The lands to the west of the A1 are likely to suffer less of an impact from nitrogen deposition associated with the motorway due to the direction of the prevailing wind. Additionally, new planting in this area would increase the buffer between intensive arable operations and the SSSI reducing the potential flow of nutrients into the designated site. If this site can be secured it would also allow the establishment of one of the compensatory planting area to begin almost immediately which would help to deliver some compensatory habitat prior to the loss of the existing woodland within the redline boundary.

Detailed Botanical Survey

- Arbs and ground flora surveys:
 - The detailed surveys of the tree and ground flora should aim to cover not just the area within the redline boundary but the area of woodland both upstream and downstream of the existing bridge. This is to ensure that the results of the survey provide an accurate representation of the woodland within the river reach where the bridge is located rather than concentrating solely the area immediately adjacent to the bridge, some of which appears to have been significantly impacted when the existing A1 bridge was installed over 40 years ago.
 - The results of the survey will help inform the tree composition of the compensatory planting areas, density of planting and the ground flora that is likely to be found in the compensatory areas in the medium to long term.
 - It would also be useful if the survey could determine how prevalent ash die back disease is in the woodland as this will also help to inform the planting plan for the compensatory areas.

Donor Site Preparation

- Soil conditions:
 - Nutrient levels in the two proposed donor sites are likely to be different to those found in the existing woodland with higher nutrient levels (mainly P but also potentially for N) likely to be present in both her arable and grass field donor sites.
 - Soil testing will be required for the two compensation sites and for a number of locations in the woodland around the bridge to help inform what soil management may be required to ensure that the soil conditions in the compensatory sites are as close to that in the woodland as possible.
 - Soil parameter to be tested should include, pH, Total P, N, K and Mg.

Soil Preparation

- Nutrient levels:

- It is likely that both sites will have elevated levels of P due to the nature of current agricultural practices and if this proves to be the case soil stripping is likely to be required. The outcome of the soil testing will help to inform the level of stripping required and this may be in the region of 10cm for the grass field with possibly a slightly greater depth of stripping required from the arable field where nutrient applications are likely to have been greater.

Salvage Effort

- Soil translocation:
 - While the volumes of soil that are likely to be displaced by the proposed bridge design are likely to be small, it will be potentially worth while collecting this soil for spreading on the compensation sites unless there are good biosecurity reasons (i.e. the potential to spread ash die back disease to the compensation sites) for not using displaced soils from within the woodland.
 - WSP will seek the advice of the Plant Health England with regard to the risks associated with soil harvesting from the works area.
- Seed bank collection:
 - Ideally, seed from the existing woodland would be used to propagate the trees for the two proposed compensatory sites. This would give the best genetic match suited to local conditions and also would ensure that there are no issue with the securing the appropriate tree of local provenance for the site.
 - Given that ash dieback has been found within the woodland, this species should be excluded from the planting mix for the compensatory sites. In any event, it is more than likely ash is will seed into these sites of its own accord.
 - Assuming that there are no plant health reasons why seeds from other species can't be harvested from with the SSSI woodland. Seed harvesting should begin this season and be grown on in an appropriate nursery, or potentially even on one of the compensatory sites, to ensure that we have stock ready for the compensatory planting sites.
- Tree sapling translocation:
 - Collection of saplings of the appropriate species from within the works area should be attempted if at all possible.
 - Collection of saplings from the wider woodland area is acceptable provided that the level of collection does not impact on the overall ability of the woodland to regenerate.
 - Ideally, the root ball with the surrounding soil would be removed intact but this may not be possible given the presence of ash die back in the woodland.
 - Any saplings collected could potentially be transplanted directly into the proposed compensatory area west of the A1, assuming that this land is secured for compensatory planting. This would negate the need to find temporary storage for the saplings.
- Ground flora:
 - The establishment of understory ground flora is likely to be difficult in the newly established woodland blocks due to the lack of shade and competition from other species. It might be worth exploring the possibility of sowing a Coquet Valley hay meadow mix amongst the saplings as hay meadows have a number of species in common with woodland ground flora. This would also help to suppress weeds and over time allow ground flora from the adjacent woodland to colonise. Once the trees close canopy additional plant species could be transplanted from the adjacent woodland if they did not manage to colonise naturally.
- Timber collection:
 - Some of the timber felled within the redline boundary should be used to improve the habitat quality of the compensatory sites.

Improvement to Existing Woodland

- Removal of non-native tree species, thinning, deer management etc.:

- Potential management options to help mitigate for the impacts of the proposed development will need to be carefully considered and may be informed, in part by the arbs survey currently being conducted. The presence of ash die back in the forest will naturally create openings on the canopy thus reducing the need to thin/create openings within the existing woodland.
- Previous attempts to reduce the density of non-native tree species such as sycamore have not proved to be successful and indeed there is potentially a climate change argument for retaining sycamore as it has been suggested that it is likely to be one of the trees species is adaptable enough to cope with predicted future climate change. It may however be worth considering removing/reducing the density of other non-native trees e.g. sweet chestnut.
- Meaningful management of deer and rabbits is unlikely to be possible within the existing woodland due to the size of the woodland and the difficult terrain involved and efforts to control the damage caused by graziers should be concentrated on the two compensatory sites which are relatively small and easily fenced.
- There is potential for INNS control to be undertaken at the Felton edge of the woodland and possibly further upstream depending on how far they have spread into the woodland.

Proposed Woodland Establishment

- Planting plan, establishment and protection of the woodland :
 - As previously discussed, Natural England's first preference is to use seed collected from the species representative of the NVC woodland community for which the site is notified (W9a) which would then be grow and used to plant the compensatory planting areas. This could be supplemented by sapling collected from within the SSSI woodland. If it proves impossible to use seed collected from the SSSI woodland in this area due to the presence of ash die back disease then consideration should be given to sourcing seed from an alternative source of the relevant species in the wider Coquet catchment. If neither of the above options are possible then sourcing the relevant species of local provenance from local nurseries can be considered.
 - If the two areas of land proposed for compensatory planting can be obtained they it should be possible to establish the woodland on the western section relatively quickly with the site to the east of the new carriage way coming on stream once the compound is no longer required. This would allow Highways England to provide some upfront compensation for the loss semi-natural ancient woodland.
 - The design of the woodland planting would need to be carefully considered to ensure that existing mature trees, which include some large oaks, on the edge of the SSSI woodland are not crowded out by any new planting.
 - A robust deer fence would be required to protect the newly created woodland and this would need to be maintained until the canopy is beyond browse height.

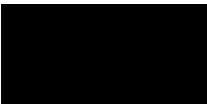
Monitoring and Management

Many of the topics in this section have already been covered under the various heading above. The length of time for which Highways England will be responsible for the management of the compensatory woodlands needs to be discussed further but Natural England's view is that these sites should be looked after in perpetuity and managed along with other woodlands on the Highways England estate.

I hope the above comments on the salvage plan prove to be a useful in furthering the development of the proposals to compensate for the loss of semi-natural ancient woodlands with in the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI.

If you would like to discuss any of the above comments further feel free to contact me but please note that I will be on leave from two weeks from the 10th August.

All the best



Lead Adviser

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 03 August 2018 12:18

[REDACTED]
Subject: A1 M2F - Consultation Call overview

Hi [REDACTED]

Many thanks for your time over the phone yesterday. Please find a quick overview of our discussion for reference, prior to a more detailed breakdown to be received from you on Monday.

Barn Owls

- It was discussed that a barn owl specialist has been consulted regarding the reduced survey area adopted in comparison to the Shawyer guidance. You confirm that further expansion on the justification bullet points contained within the barn owl report is required in order to fully understand the rationale for reducing the survey area. Action – JF to provide full justification upon receipt from Jacobs.

- I raised that WSP are aiming to consult specialist groups and the wildlife trust for Northumberland to attain any additional baseline data regarding the distribution of barn owls within 1.5 km of the Scheme. This would then be used to inform placement of mitigation boxes (to compensate for the functional loss of nesting locations recorded within close proximity of the Scheme).
- The above consultation would also aim to understand any areas currently being considered for the placement of barn owl boxes, also using this information to inform the mitigation location design.

Breeding Birds

- It was confirmed that, unless the habitat composition or usage has changed significantly since the survey work in 2016 (both agreed that this is unlikely), then the age of the data is suitable to inform the impact assessment.
- It was also confirmed that, as long as the surveyors are confident that they captured all bird calls within and around the SSSI from the transect routes adopted (Jacobs have confirmed they are happy with the robustness of the survey work completed), then the absence of survey effort from directly within the SSSI is not considered a significant constraint. In addition, the SSSI is not cited for any particular breeding bird species.

Bats

- Comments regarding survey work to be provided by Abi Halstead upon return from leave.

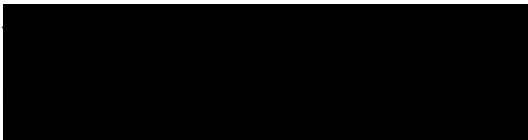
Ancient Woodland Strategy

- Ground investigation is likely required to understand the potential impacts of soil compaction.
- Dust suppression too be incorporated into mitigation (CEMP) to prevent impacts, particularly to the watercourse.
- Storage of materials – ideally outside the SSSI. Refuelling of a crane (if the case) would need to be considered in CEMP.
- Invasive species – importantly Himalayan balsam (HB) and Japanese knotweed (JK)
 - o Both known to be downstream near Felton – not believed that HB has moved upstream as far as the bridge
 - o Check, clean, dry protocol to be implemented as minimum
 - o Materials brought in (e.g. spoil and plants) – source to be confirmed to ensure they are clean and free of invasive materials
- Minimisation of footbridge impacts
 - o Prevent access to the woodland – possibility of enclosing walkway
 - o Also important to prevent access of walkers from Felton, which may incur spread of invasives
- Treatment of run-off – salt and grit – to be undertaken through balancing pond (TBC)
- Current compensation ratio approximately 1:9, with discussions ongoing
 - o Compensation land to west preferred, due to likely lower levels of N deposition from prevailing winds
 - o Nutrient levels likely higher on west side (arable)
 - Sampling of soils and nutrient stripping likely
- Ash die back discussed – unlikely to be able to plant in compensation areas
 - o Alternative species (i.e. those already found within woodland to be lost and also wider woodland) to be used
 - o Possible control of spread through “cordon sanitaire” or similar – Action – JF to discuss with arbs and Plant Health England
- Phased preparation of compensation planting areas – possibly prepare east early to allow this to be used as nursery and also become established. Then prepare east following removal of temporary site compound, then plant in this area.
- Soil testing – possibly also test for potassium and magnesium
- Soil stripping – understood to be 10cm depth in grassland fields, possible deeper for arable
- Woodland understorey
 - o Option to plant compensation areas with Coquet Valley Haymeadow species mix
 - o Once tree canopy established, then try to plant understorey/ ground flora and/ or encourage natural colonisation from existing woodland

- Mature oaks along existing west woodland edge – compensation planting will need to consider avoidance of over-crowding these (stand-off distances)
- Preferable to source seeds from existing woodland – Action: JF to discuss feasibility given the presence of ash die back to be discussed with Plant Health England
 - o Source acorns, seeds, etc?
- Sycamore – possible substitute of ash, although recognised as a non-native. Action – BC to look into opportunities of using sycamore. Gut feeling is to not use.
 - o Discussed potential to use initially to establish the woodland canopy and once other more desirable species are well-established, start to remove sycamore and manage – potential difficulties
- Soil strip for compound, before or after removal – Action: JF to discuss with engineers to confirm
- Species composition – review broader area, not just woodland block being lost. Action – JF to speak to arbs to understand possible species mix for compensation planting
- Sapling translocation – may have to remove soils from root stock to prevent spread of ash die back
 - o Potential to obtain saplings from further into woodland (to be informed by outbreak map of ash die back)
 - o Able to collect saplings from SSSI woodland as long as this doesn't have impact on overall health of woodland/ SSSI
- Improvements to existing woodland
 - o SSSI assent required for sapling translocation
 - o Creation of temporary open spaces – possibly not. Likely natural due to ash die back
 - o Removal of sycamore – possible not
 - o Deer management and rabbit – more important for new compensation planting areas
 - o Interested to understand what arbs team would suggest for woodland enhancement (Action – JF to discuss with arbs)
 - o Possibly tackle issues with invasive species
 - o Sycamore and sweet chestnut
 - o Action – BC to discuss and advise other opportunities for enhancement in existing woodland to support ancient woodland strategy
- Timeframes – once the west compensation area (if to be used) is prepared, start planting straight away (Action – JF to discuss timeframes with project team)
- Monitoring and management
 - o Initial sapling collection – possibly retain some, store in nursery and use for additional planting (in subsequent years)
 - o Would expect strategy to include management and maintenance of fencing, rabbit guards, etc.
- Soil collection – sooner rather than later, collect now? (Action – JF to discuss timeframes with project team)

I look forward to your response on Monday and further discussions.

Kind regards,



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Appendix D – Email 24/08/2018

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 August 2018 11:46
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Natural England comments on A1 bat surveys

Hi [REDACTED]

Apologies for the delay in getting this across to you, but please find below our comments on the bat surveys provided – as you'll see there are a couple of areas where some further clarification would be helpful:

Following review of the A1 bat activity report (A1 in Northumberland Bat Activity Survey Report March 2018) Natural England believe it is sufficient to effectively understand the impacts of the project and design mitigation within the ES.

Jacobs used an amalgamation of survey techniques which, although didn't follow guidance explicitly within each individual method, carried out a broad range of survey techniques based on industry standard. These included BCT guidance bat activity transects and emergence/re-entry surveys of suitable structures and Defra style guidance with respect to infrastructure.

One concern would be the lack of crossing point surveys along the proposed offline section of the scheme, in line with Defra style guidance, where it will sever current commuting routes. However given the scope of the additional activity transects, point counts and static monitoring and the continuation from the current road scheme of waterways and woodland belts this could be extrapolated effectively from the data, especially when combined with CP data from the current route.

All known roosts locations (to building or tree scale) are highlighted by emergence and re-entry surveys/inspections conducted. The details of weather conditions etc. are recorded in the appendix but details regarding number of surveyors used, methodology on the night and exact roost location is unclear. We would like clarification that WSP has this data if these features are to be affected (directly or indirectly by the development).

Overall the combination of techniques and the data presented within the report allows the local population and site usage to be understood in a way that allows mitigation to be designed effectively.

Mitigation is to be dealt with as part of the ES but should include:

- Crossing structures as per the Defra guidance at key crossing location and along key commuting routes to be severed to allow contiguous features across the landscape. Bat gantries to be avoided.
- Where access wasn't possible to assess buildings all works to be carried to a method statement and mitigation to assume roosts are present.
- Light pollution to be minimised during and post construction at known crossing points.
- Felling works to trees that retained a moderate to high bat roost potential following further survey (activity survey or climbing assessment) where roosts where not confirmed to be carried out to a precautionary method statement for bats.
- Where roosts are identified in trees or buildings then relevant licences in place and mitigation designed/provided prior to works if they are to be affected.
- Continuation of survey during and post construction, as per the DEFRA style guidance, to assess impact.

As I'm sure you're aware we are unable to issue any licences for protected species until the DCO has been granted. However, assuming all of the required information is available we are happy to work towards the production of letter(s) of no impediment to inform the Examiner when the application is submitted.

I hope you find this helpful.

Regards



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Tel: 

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Appendix E – Email 24/09/2018

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 September 2018 14:20
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: M2F - Ancient woodland compensation area
Attachments: 2018-09-24 Dukes Bank Woodland NVC survey 2009.pdf

Hi [REDACTED]

As per our conversation this morning, I have discussed the proposed compensation area and location with Marion Bryant, one of Natural England's national woodland specialists, and can confirm that both the proposed size of the compensatory planting and location are acceptable from a Natural England perspective.

It is useful to know Plant Health England's advice regarding soil translocation. I will chase up this with Marion to see how this has been dealt with elsewhere. She had indicated that this had cropped up as an issue with some of the woodlands impacted by HS2.

Attached is the relevant section of the Thompson Ecology 2009 Woodland NVC survey of Dukes Bank Woodland which will give the most recent species list for the SSSI unit. It would be good to try to replicate the species mix for the canopy and shrub layer except for ash, sweet chestnut and sycamore (which will no doubt find its way in over time). Marion, who also happens to be a hay meadow expert, thought that the sowing of a hay meadow mix would be an appropriate option for the reasons we discussed previously. She suggested the use of green hay was likely to give better results than a seed mix option.

With regard to the Barn Owl Survey, thank you for the additional justification provided by Jacobs. The justification provided indicates that, as we thought, the quality of the habitat (from a barn owl perspective) out with the survey area within the wider landscape is of poor quality much like the habitat within the survey area. It would be appropriate to give some percentage cover values to evidence this point. I can confirm that Natural England is satisfied that the survey should be sufficient to inform the impact assessment.

In relation to the culvert design and ecological mitigation documentation format, if you can send me the same consultation documents that you will be supplying to the EA that would be great.

Finally, let me know which dates would suit you best for a meeting regarding developments on the compensation plan, bridge design etc., and I will do my best to free up a date as early as possible.

All the best

[REDACTED]

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email: [REDACTED]

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 August 2018 11:14
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: M2F - Ancient woodland compensation area

Hi [REDACTED]

There has been progression in discussions regarding land acquisition to facilitate woodland planting as part of the strategy to address loss of ancient woodland for the M2F scheme. Please see the attached figure; it is intended to include the hatched area within the red line boundary and use this for compensatory planting.

In combination with the two areas shown below in yellow (preferable area highlighted by Natural England) and orange, this provides approximately 9 ha for woodland planting. It is proposed to use these areas to address loss of both ancient woodland (as discussed previously, approximately 0.37 ha) and woodland belonging to the Local Wildlife Site along the northern bank (estimated at also 0.37 ha) – agreement to be sought with Northumberland County Council.

Could you confirm if this area would be agreeable as an acceptable location for compensatory planting. The acquired land takes into consideration your comments regarding the likely reduction in nitrogen deposition from traffic given the prevailing winds against use of land to the east of the A1. This area is also located adjacent to the existing woodland and provides opportunity to create a substantial extension to the existing woodland habitat.

I look forward to your response.

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

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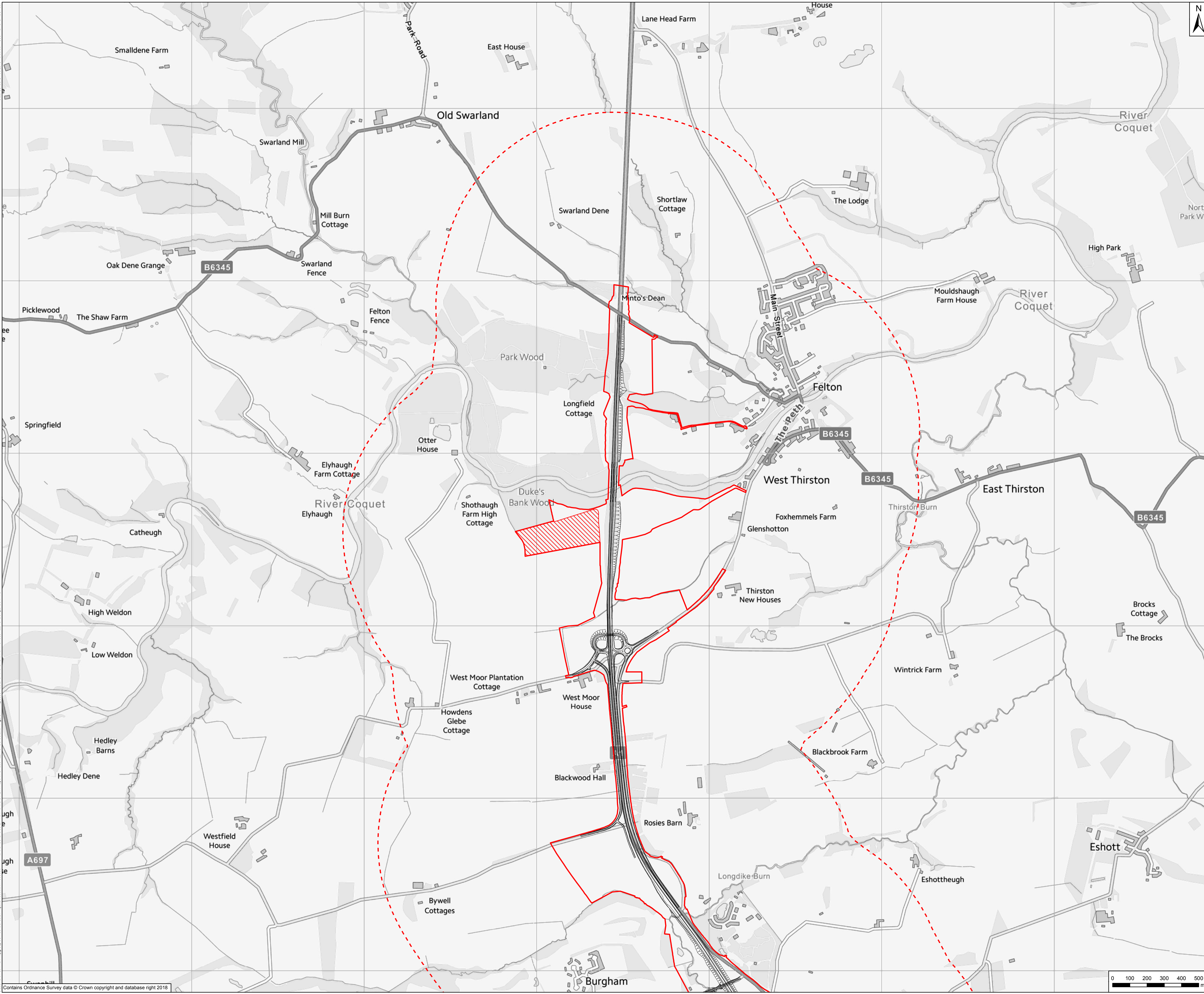
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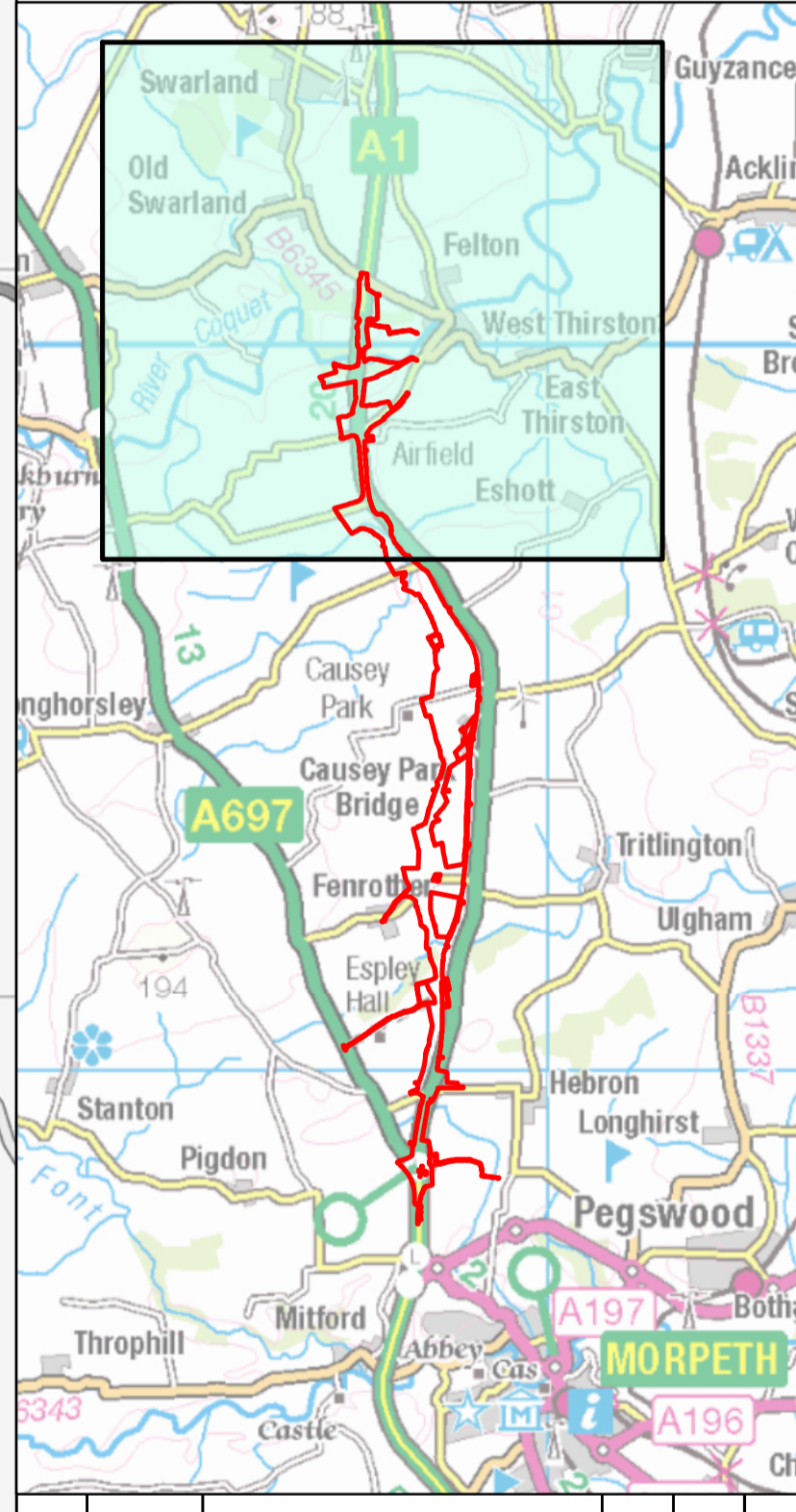
Appendix F – Proposed Ancient Woodland Compensation Area

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Key

- Extents of Scheme
- 1km Study Area
- Additional Site Area



Rev	Date	Description	By	CHKD	Apprd
P01	08/08/2018	First Issue	GH	NM	KS

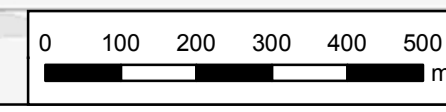
Client

Project Title: A1 in Northumberland: Morpeth to Felton Scheme

Drawing Title: Figure 1 Proposed Red Line Amendment

Scale	1:10,000	Drawn	GH	Checked	NM	Approved	KS	Authorised	NR	
Original Size	A1	Date	08/08/2018	Date	08/08/2018	Date	08/08/2018	Date	08/08/2018	
Drawing Status	For Information								Suitability	S1

Drawing Number	Project	Originator	Volume	Project Ref. No.
M2F	HE551459	WSP		70036004
Location	Type	Role	Number	Revision
				P01



Appendix G – Email 04/10/2018

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 04 October 2018 10:59
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: A1 Morpeth to Felton - building bat roost assumption

Hi [REDACTED]

Apologies for the delay in providing comments, but we've now had a chance to have a look at the information you provided, and our comments are provided below:

The mitigation proposed, based on an assumed roost site that won't be physically altered as a result of the development, is considered proportionate. Especially given the roost site won't be physically altered and only the potential commuting and foraging habitats in the immediate vicinity will be affected over a short time frame which is primarily during the winter hibernation period.

Comments;

- The building is low suitability and risk of a roost being present is low, although roosts are present in the adjacent building. The suggested recent conversion/works going on at the time of assessment from nearby roads would support that the building has a low risk of supporting roost features.
- Works won't lead to isolation as potential commuting routes are already severed by the existing A1. Also there is no significant loss of potential commuting routes long term. Potential for some temporary loss of small section of potential commuting route (hedgerow along the A1) but it is not considered an essential attribute to the local bat population and is along the highly disturbed A1 which looking at the transect and static monitoring is a very low use feature when compared to areas away from the A1. Landscaping is suggested to be designed in a manner that supports movement of bats across the landscape to better crossing points such as the Coquet. The woodland immediately adjacent to the buildings should be left intact and necessary tree protection plans/measures implemented before the start of work to ensure this feature is retained and not damaged, especially via compaction.
- Temporal factors have been considered which can be seen in the suggested timings for works out with the summer roosting period which will minimise any potential disturbance to bats roosting in the building.

Overall WSP have demonstrated that there is no satisfactory alternative and that the works will not adversely affect the favourable conservation status of the bats assumed to be present. The mitigation is proportionate to the importance of the population discussed within this assumption and supported by low risk involved with the building discussed, especially given recent renovation works on this building.

I hope you find this helpful – please let us know if you need anything further.

Regards

[REDACTED]

Team Leader – Sustainable Development, Marine & Wildlife Licensing
Northumbria Area Team,
Natural England,
Lancaster House,
Hampshire Court,
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 7YH

Tel: [REDACTED]

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To help Developers consider the environment Natural England offers two chargeable services:
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- the [Pre-submission Screening Service \(PSS\)](#) for European Protected Species mitigation licence applications.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 03 October 2018 11:41
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: A1 Morpeth to Felton - building bat roost assumption

Dear [REDACTED]

Further to my email below, have you had chance to review the document?

I'd appreciate your comments at the earliest opportunity as the ES Chapter is currently being drafted.

Kind Regards,
[REDACTED]



T [REDACTED]
M [REDACTED]

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 26 September 2018 09:12
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: A1 Morpeth to Felton - building bat roost assumption

Dear [REDACTED]

Many thanks for your previous correspondence in relation to bat survey work completed as part of the A1 Morpeth to Felton (M2F) scheme. Further to previous emails and discussions, access has been refused to a single building as part of the baseline surveys for the scheme. It has therefore not been possible to undertake a bat survey to inform the impact assessment.

As such, the attached document outlines the proposed assumption in relation to this building, which would be adopted to inform the impact assessment. In addition, an outline of the proposed mitigation is also documented.

Please could you review and provide comment on the attached with a view to agreeing the approach taken.

If you have any queries, please feel free to get in contact.

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]



T [REDACTED]
M [REDACTED]

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Appendix H – Proposed Approach to Assumption of Bat Roost Presence in Building B101A



MEMO

TO	[REDACTED]	FROM	[REDACTED]
DATE	25 September 2018	CONFIDENTIALITY	Confidential
SUBJECT	A1 in Northumberland, Morpeth to Felton Scheme – Assumption of Bat Roost Presence in Building B101A		

INTRODUCTION

During the 20th March 2018 consultation meeting regarding the A1 Morpeth to Felton scheme (hereafter referred to as ‘the Scheme’), the reliance on assumed presence of roosting bats to inform mitigation design was discussed (attendees included [REDACTED])

[REDACTED] The discussion included the agreement that, if access could not be obtained for the completion of emergence/re-entry surveys of specific building(s), an assumption of roost presence could be made.

Despite repeated attempts to agree access, permission has not been granted to a single building (referenced as B101A¹, Figure 1). As such, the below outlines the proposed assumption to inform the impact assessment and mitigation proposals for your review and comment.

BACKGROUND & SURVEY EFFORT

During the bat roost potential survey conducted in 2016 by Jacobs², access was not permitted to building B101A for the completion of an internal or external survey to determine the potential for roosting bats. An external assessment was undertaken by Jacobs from the neighbouring road to the north, which recorded the following:

“Single-storey, stone-walled dwelling with a two-pitched interlocking tile roof. The dwelling was approximately 15 m long and 9 m wide. The windows were uPVC. A flat-roofed conservatory was attached to the western side of the dwelling, and a small felt-roofed porch was attached to the eastern side. Soffit boxes were present, and lead flashing was located around the chimneys.”

With regards to the presence of Potential Roost Features (PRF), the survey confirmed:

“None were observed, but features may have been present on the southern aspect of the building that could not be viewed.”

Overall, B101A was considered to have Low Roost Suitability for bats and would, under best practice guidelines³, require a single emergence or re-entry survey to confirm presence/ likely absence of a roost.

Access was not permitted in 2017 to Jacobs for the emergence/ re-entry survey⁴. WSP attempted to arrange access in 2018, which was again denied by the tenant of B101A. As such, it has not been possible to undertake the single

¹ Jacobs (2018). *A1 in Northumberland, Bat Roost Potential Survey Report 2017*, Version 2.1, March 2018.

² Jacobs (2018). *A1 in Northumberland, Bat Roost Potential Survey Report 2017*, Version 2.1, March 2018.

³ Collins, J. (ed.) (2016). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (3rd edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London,

⁴ Jacobs (2018). *A1 in Northumberland, Bat Activity Survey Report*, Version 1.1, March 2018.



emergence or re-entry survey. An external view of B101A achieved during emergence/ re-entry surveys of an adjacent building in 2018 by WSP identified no changes to the above description and supports the Low Roost Suitability status.

Jacobs also document that the building was being renovated and possibly in the process of conversion. A review of the MAGIC mapping tool (accessed 25th September 2018) did not identify the presence of a European Protected Species (EPS) Licence in relation to the building or surrounding buildings⁵.

ASSUMPTION PROPOSAL

The adjacent building to the south (referenced as B84A, Figure 1) supports greater value for bats with multiple PRFs. The building was subject to a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) in 2017 and three emergence/ re-entry surveys, in 2017 (July, August and September). The surveys identified common species roosting within the building; including a single common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, a single soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* and a single brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*.

For the purposes of undertaking an impact assessment as part of the Scheme, it is proposed that a precautionary approach is taken and the same confirmed roosting status B84A is also assumed for B101A. It would be assumed that buildings B84A and B101A support day roosts of low numbers of common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and brown long-eared bats. There is no evidence to suggest that either building supports a maternity roost, given individual bats were recorded during surveys conducted within peak maternity season. In addition, B84A did not contain PRF considered suitable for a hibernation roost and the same is considered for B101A (due to lack of PRF recorded from the external vantage points, the building is inhabited and therefore internally heated and the type and condition of the building).

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

CONSTRUCTION

Buildings B84A and B101A are located directly adjacent to a proposed slip road connecting to a new junction (West Moor Junction, hereafter referred to as the 'Junction') approximately 100 m to the northeast (Figure 1). It is considered that during the construction phase, there will be a temporary increase in disturbance due to increased noise and vibration levels. This may result in a potential temporary functional loss of the roosts through desertion during the construction period. Initial intrusive ground works (including any piling) have been scheduled between late September 2020 (28th) and January 2021. These works are considered to incur the greatest disturbance impacts and their timing avoids the summer period when bats are known to occupy the roost. The buildings are also not considered to have value for hibernation roosting.

The embankments and road construction are then scheduled to commence in January 2021, with completion in August 2021. The construction of the overbridge section of the junction, approximately 200 m to the northeast of the buildings, is scheduled for completion by June 2021. It is likely that most of the works expected to incur significant disturbance (ground preparations and initial construction) would be completed prior to first occupation of the roosts (late Spring/ early Summer). Due to the current scheduled timeframes for development in proximity to Buildings B84A and B101A, the potential impact is considered minor adverse but temporary during a single season (2021).

Construction has the potential to increase light spill onto the buildings and habitats of value to bats in the vicinity (such as hedgerows, tree lines and woodland blocks), both for foraging and commuting.

Mitigation is proposed below to reduce and avoid the potential impacts of increased light spillage and the potential damage of a resting place (particularly in relation to the brown long-eared bats in B84A and B101A (assumed)). As the buildings will remain as part of the development and therefore the roosting space retained (although potential temporary desertion acknowledged), compensatory roosting is not considered necessary in relation to impacts during the construction period.

⁵ Acknowledged that the EPS Database on MAGIC has not been updated since 2016.

OPERATION

The buildings are currently located approximately 110 m from the busy A1 and, upon completion, the distance between the buildings and the A1 carriageway will remain approximately the same. Therefore, the bats are likely to be habituated to traffic disturbance levels (particularly noise) from the A1 carriageway long-term. A new slip road is proposed to the east (approximately 70 m). Studies have shown that noise levels decrease significantly with distance from a road, with 89% of the change occurring within the first 50 m (Berthinussen and Altringham, 2012⁶). The A1 carriageway and new slip road would also be screened from the building by the existing woodland to the immediate east. The woodland is tall and dense, creating a screen to impacts of lighting and noise from passing vehicles. Overall, no permanent significant impacts during the operational phase are considered and therefore compensatory roosting is not proposed.

PROPOSED MITIGATION

TIMING

Intrusive works are currently scheduled during the autumn/ winter period (September 2020 and January 2021), with general construction of the Junction to commence during winter (January 2021), prior to bats occupying the roosts. In addition to the scheduled timing, works could be undertaken during daylight hours to reduce the impact of construction works on the foraging and commuting behaviour of bats.

LIGHTING

It is understood that there will be no permanent lighting of the road network upon completion. Any temporary lighting during construction should be designed to avoid direct lighting of either building and habitats of value to foraging and commuting bats in the vicinity (such as hedgerows, trees and woodland). A lighting strategy would be implemented in accordance with the following advice:

- Avoidance of light spillage using direction and/ or baffled lighting;
- Avoidance of blue-white short wavelength lights and high UV content;
- Creation of light barriers utilising physical screening;
- Reduce the spacing and height of units to decrease the density of lighting units and reduce the spread of the light to minimise the illuminated area; and
- Avoid lighting above a 90° to 100° angle to avoid the upward spread of light above the horizontal plane.

The lighting strategy would be developed in accordance with guidance promoted by the Bat Conservation Trust and Natural England (Stone, 2013⁷).

Currently, it is known that the site compound to the northeast of the buildings on the other side of the existing A1 (approximately 400 m) will be lit 24 hours a day. Temporary stock piled soil mounds are proposed to create screening during the construction phase, helping to mitigate light spill within the wider area. Stock piles will be restricted to a maximum height of 2 m. The compound will also be screened from B84A and B101A by the existing woodland block between the buildings and the existing A1. The impacts of light spillage from the site compound are likely to be negligible due to distance and natural/ artificial screening. The lighting within the site compound would also be subject to the same lighting strategy recommendations as outlined above.

LANDSCAPE DESIGN

The landscape plan is designed to encourage bats to move away from the road network, particularly the new junction, to decrease the likelihood of traffic collision. This is currently achieved by the creation of new linear features (hedgerows

⁶ Berthinussen, A. and Altringham, J. (2012). *The effect of a major road on bat activity and biodiversity*, Journal of Applied Ecology, 49, 82-89

⁷ Stone, E. L. (2013). *Bats and Lighting. Overview of current advice and mitigation*.



and tree lines), which could be used to guide the bats to suitable crossing points (designed within the scheme), for example the River Coquet valley to the north. Landscaping also currently includes woodland screening around the junction, to screen the buildings from the road network, reducing disturbance levels from traffic.

CONCLUSION

The buildings support roosts of low numbers of common species. The Scheme will not result in the damage or destruction of a breeding or resting place and as such, will not result in the capture, injury or killing of a bat. The proximity of the works to the buildings B84A and B101A that contain the bat roosts means that there will be no obstruction of access to the resting or sheltering places.

Whilst there is a possibility of temporary functional loss of the roosts, the availability of the roosting space will remain long-term as the Scheme does not result in the loss of either building. The mitigation above has also been designed to reduce the disturbance impacts of the Scheme. As such, the Scheme is not considered to incur an effect on the Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) of any of the three roosting species and therefore compensation is not proposed.

The mitigation outlined is considered suitable to reduce the impact of the scheme during the construction phase.

Your comment and response to the above would be much appreciated.

Yours Faithfully,

Senior Ecologist

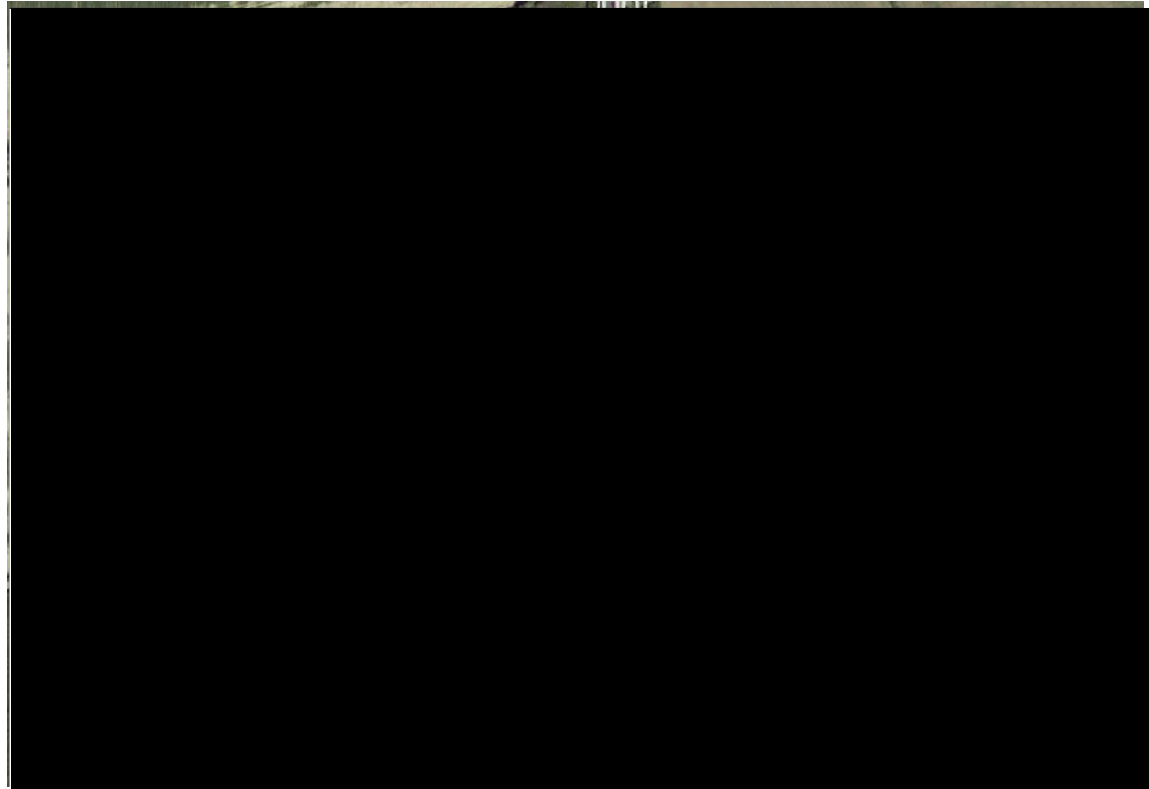


Figure 1. Location of buildings B101A (red) and B84A (blue) in proximity to the proposed West Moor Junction to the northeast.

© Google, Image © 2018 Getmapping plc. Accessed 29th August 2018.

Appendix I – Email 23/11/2018

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 November 2018 12:30
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: A1 in Northumberland M2F - HRA Screening Report

Hi [REDACTED]

Apologies again for the delay in getting back to you with comments on the above.

I have looked through the HRA Screening report for the proposal and the only area where I would suggest that the HRA may need some additional comment is the Annex C Screening Matrix section relating to emissions which would help to support the overall conclusion of the report.

This section of the report does not appear to address the potential risks of aerial emissions. Given that there is going to be an increase in the number of vehicles using the upgraded road the potential impacts of aerial emissions on the N2K sites distant from the scheme should be referenced. I am assuming that the air quality assessments that have been carried out have indicated that any increase in aerial deposition will occur relatively close to the road and thus would be unlikely to impact on the N2K sites due to the distances involved. If this is the case then it would be appropriate to be evidenced this in the report.

Additionally, with regard to the risk of polluted surface water runoff, it may be appropriate to highlight that the risk of this occurring as a result of the proposal will be minimised by appropriate pollution prevention and control measures deployed during the construction phase and by the network of stilling/balancing ponds during the operational phase rather than relying solely on distance and natural dilution rates as a reason to screen out potential impacts on hydrology.

Apart from the above comments, I concur with the overall conclusion of the report that the proposal is not likely to have a significant impact on the coastal and marine N2K sites located to the east of the proposed scheme.

Happy to discuss further if necessary.

All the best

[REDACTED]
Lead Adviser
Northumbria Area Team
Natural England
Lancaster House
Hampshire Court
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE4 7YH

Tel: [REDACTED]
ema [REDACTED]

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 22 November 2018 09:59
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: A1 in Northumberland M2F - HRA Screening Report

Many thanks for the confirmation Bob.

[REDACTED]



T [REDACTED]
M [REDACTED]

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 22 November 2018 09:54
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: A1 in Northumberland M2F - HRA Screening Report

Hi [REDACTED]

I have downloaded the documents and will get back to you with comments by COP tomorrow.

All the best

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Lead Adviser
Northumbria Area Team
Natural England
Lancaster House
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NE4 7YH

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 22 November 2018 09:18
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: A1 in Northumberland M2F - HRA Screening Report



Hi [REDACTED]

Please find a link below to the HRA Screening report for M2F. I appreciate confirmation of a response by COP tomorrow.

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]

Your credentials:

[REDACTED]

The login above will expire on 2018-12-22 00:00:00 , the site and all its data are deleted automatically after it expires.

No backups are done of the FTP server. Keep a copy of your data to avoid any inconvenience.

Contact us at [REDACTED] or by email at ITCanada-ServiceDesk@wspgroup.com for modification of the site.

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Appendix J – Meeting Minutes 01/03/2019



AGENDA & MEETING NOTES

PROJECT NUMBER	70044136	MEETING DATE	01 March 2019
PROJECT NAME	A1 in Northumberland – Morpeth to Felton	VENUE	Natural England Office, Newcastle
CLIENT	Highways England	RECORDED BY	[REDACTED]
MEETING SUBJECT	Natural England Consultation – Ecological Mitigation		

PRESENT	[REDACTED]
APOLOGIES	Click here to enter text.
DISTRIBUTION	[REDACTED]
CONFIDENTIALITY	Confidential

ITEM	MEETING NOTES
1	<p>Prior to the meeting, JF issued the latest Draft Ecological Mitigation Plan for review (appended for reference). Items in BOLD reference key discussion points/take away messages. Items in RED detail actions to be completed following the meeting.</p>
2	<p>Prior to the discussion of ecological mitigation, a brief discussion was had regarding the proposed ground investigation (GI) around the River Coquet bridge and Post-Tensioned Special Investigation (PTSI) of the existing bridge itself.</p> <p>JF confirmed that the EA Flood Risk Activity Permit (FRAP) had been issued (or was to be issued imminently) for the GI works, including ecological mitigation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Pre-start walkover to confirm no change to site conditions. Includes a check for badger, red squirrel, otter and invasive species (none of which have been previously recorded within the works area);- Appointment of an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) to oversee the works;- Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP);- Precautionary working methods on the northern side of the river in relation to great crested newts (to include ECoW supervised habitat clearance); and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Habitat clearance with regards to nesting birds (clearance outside bird nesting season or pre-commencement survey if undertaken within, protective buffer adopted and ecological support provided if active nest(s) found). <p>BC queried whether a licence assessor had been consulted with regards to the GCN mitigation proposals. JF confirmed that contact had not been achieved prior to submission of the permit application.</p> <p>With regards to PTSI works, JF confirmed that the Environment Agency (EA) had confirmed the requirement for a FRAP. Currently under discussion.</p> <p>BC and JF identified and agreed primary routes of impact were the risk of materials/matter released into the watercourse. JF confirmed that a CEMP would be developed to address this.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>The Draft Ecological Mitigation Plan was systematically discussed, working from south to north of the scheme. The following were presented by JF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Following consultation with the EA, fish passage and mammal passage have been considered and incorporated, where possible, into all culverts (not just those where fish or riparian mammals were recorded during baseline surveys). Only a couple of instances where it has not been possible to incorporate a natural bed (fish passage) or a mammal shelf due to site constraints. - Demolition of North Gate House (B4A) – single common pipistrelle day roost. Compensation to include a bat box installed on a nearby tree. Details to be presented within a method statement. - Wildlife culverts incorporated at several locations along the scheme to provide suitable crossing points. These are designed as 600mm diameter, in line with recommended specifications for badger tunnels (which also accommodate other species). - Balancing ponds within junctions will not be enhanced through planting, to discourage wildlife from entering the junction network and at risk of collision with vehicles. The habitat will be established using grassland mixes and maintained to avoid development of scrub and trees. - Badger fencing has been included at two locations along the scheme, to discourage badgers crossing the road. The southern location (north of Highlaws Junction – online section) aims to prevent badgers crossing the road (active outlier and subsidiary setts recorded either side of carriageway. The northern location (Causey Park – offline section) aims to encourage and direct badger movement to a culvert with a mammal shelf for safe crossing beneath the road. - A new culvert, under the offline route, is proposed along the River Lyne that supports fish passage (natural bed and low-flow channel). Following consultation with the EA, it is proposed to install fish pass features (such as baffles) on the existing culvert under the current A1 downstream of the new culvert (improvement). - Following consultation with the EA, It shall be recommended that the new channel to be created to the north and west of Fenrother Junction is designed (likely at detailed design stage) to create a meandering channel with changes in flows and conditions, rather than a continuous straight channel. The channel passes through the Fenrother Junction and, to discourage wildlife from becoming entrapped within the junction, an alternative wildlife culvert (600mm diameter) has been provided nearby to the west. Through habitat design, the wildlife culvert will connect the new channel to two proposed balancing ponds. - The offline section of the scheme passes between an occupied barn owl breeding site (west of scheme) and active roost (east of the scheme) at approximate chainage 16100. Excess spoil will be used to create bunds on either side of the carriage way between 15900 to 16400 and 16700 to 16950. This aims to encourage barn owl to fly higher over the carriageway, above risk of collision with vehicles. The outer slopes of the bunds (i.e. those away from the carriageway) will be planted with woodland planting to further increase the height profile either side of the road in the long-term. The inner slopes (i.e. those facing the carriageway) will be maintained as conservation grassland to discourage barn owl foraging along the road side (risk of collision) and discourage bats from crossing the road (encourage flight lines parallel with the road).

- The baseline surveys recorded four barn owl breeding sites (three confirmed, one potential) within the surveyed area. It is proposed to provide compensation for these features in the form of barn owl boxes within buildings/tree-mounted, located at least 1km from main roads (target area identified to the northeast of the scheme). WSP is currently in discussions with the AONB Partnership, who have offered their assistance in identifying potential receptor sites for mitigation, installation of the features and future monitoring (5-year period). Detail to support the DCO for securing the barn owl mitigation to be confirmed.
- A wildlife culvert is proposed at approximate chainage 18300 to facilitate mammal crossing under the scheme, including potential for bats. However, due to site constraints to the dimensions of the culvert (1500mm diameter), the culvert is currently described as experimental mitigation. There are no known sources to confirm that a culvert of this size would be readily used by bats as a commuting feature (further literature being reviewed) to allow the culvert to be classed as “mitigation”.
- A medium sized metapopulation (11-100 individuals) of great crested newts (two ponds) is present at Burgham Park Golf Course. The scheme will result in a greater habitat loss than is feasible to create (in terms of area), due to land availability (location adjacent to golf course). As such, it is proposed to create woodland and grassland habitats, enhance existing habitats through inclusion of refugia piles/hibernacula, create two new ponds and include an amphibian tunnel under a single-track road to provide connectivity between mitigation habitat (including one of the two proposed ponds). **BC recommended that woodland creation is not densely planted, particularly around the proposed pond (open woodland design).** The temporary exclusion fence shown on the Draft Ecological Mitigation Plan is considered a worst-case scenario, enclosing all land within 500m of the great crested newt ponds. However, at detailed design, the fence layout would be discussed further with Natural England to inform a licence application and it is considered that this could be reduced (particularly to exclude trapping of the arable field to the north).
 - o Longdike Burn passes between the scheme and the great crested newt ponds. The watercourse is several meters wide, however, during site visits did not appear to have a significant flow. As such, this is considered as a partial barrier to great crested newt movement, reducing the impacts of the scheme.
- The northern culvert along Longdike Burn (existing) will be extended as part of the scheme, continuing the arch culvert design to maintain a natural bed for fish passage. A mammal ledge is also to be installed within the new section of culvert and retrospectively fit to the existing section.
- There are two bat boxes on the western headwall of the northern culvert along Longdike Burn, the origin of which is unknown. It is proposed to remove the bat boxes, extend the culvert and reinstall the boxes on the new headwall (subject to a Natural England licence if bats are found to be occupying during a pre-commencement survey).
- The southern existing culvert along Longdike Burn (no construction works proposed) currently supports wooden baffles for fish passage. Following discussion with the EA, it is proposed to replace these with a longer-lasting material (to be confirmed) to improve the life span and efficiency of the features.
- The two balancing ponds to the southwest of Eshott Airfield will be maintained as short grassland (similar management and maintenance to those balancing ponds found within junctions) to address the perceived risk of bird collision with planes/gliders that may occur if these are ecological enhanced.
- Area 14 (highways management) expressed an interest in the design of the 8-lane screening to the west of Eshott Airfield (within the central reservation), to be more natural and softer than the standard metal fencing. The screening would be designed with this in mind, but to be inert and not attractive to wildlife to discourage movement into the road network (risk of vehicle collision).
- Ancient woodland compensation area – detail presented in Item 4 below.
- It is proposed to install bat boxes along the southern woodland edge of the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI and northern boundary of the ancient woodland compensation area as

	<p>compensation for the temporary functional loss of pipistrelle roosts along the scheme. This includes four tree roosts and a roost in the existing River Coquet Bridge, which are all retained but will be temporarily disturbed during construction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A small population of great crested newts is present to the north west of the River Coquet Bridge. It is proposed to compensate through the creation of scrubby grassland from an area which is currently intensively grazed. Grazing during restricted times of the year may form part of habitat management, although this is subject to further discussion/agreement between landowners and the client. The temporary exclusion fence shown on the Ecological Mitigation Plan is considered a worst-case scenario, enclosing all land within 500m of the great crested newt pond. However, at detailed design, the fence layout would be discussed further to inform a licence application and it is considered that this could be reduced. - An area of woodland planting is proposed on the eastern side of the carriageway, north of the River Coquet Bridge, to maintain the connection between the river valley woodland and Felton Park woodland to the north. The current connective woodland strip would be lost as a result of the scheme. - Parkwood Subway was identified as an important underpass for wildlife movement during the baseline survey, particularly for bats and badger. The subway is to be extended to accommodate the widening of the road, but the underpass will be maintained post-construction. - There are two badger setts to the east of Parkwood Subway that will be lost as a result of the scheme (one active outlier and one inactive outlier). A licence will be obtained for the exclusion and destruction of the setts. As the setts represent outliers and there is an expanse of suitable habitat in the wider area, no artificial setts are proposed. Depending on scheme design and impacts, it is possible that a third inactive outlier in the same vicinity would be included within the licence. - The location of the balancing pond at the north end of the scheme (east side of carriageway) is under review and may be relocated to the western side of the carriageway, outside the red line boundary. This would require a licence due to loss of great crested newt habitat and suitable mitigation and compensation. If the relocation does occur, the red line boundary is likely to be brought in on the eastern side.
<p>4</p>	<p>Ancient Woodland Strategy</p> <p>JF confirmed that, since previous discussions, it has been possible to bring the red line boundary (working footprint) in around the proposed River Coquet Bridge, thereby reducing the loss of ancient woodland. As previously discussed and agreed, the strategy is compensating for the loss of designated ancient woodland within the SSSI (south side of the river) but also compensating for loss of woodland within the Local Wildlife Site (LWS) located within the red line boundary. The latter is not designated as ancient woodland although supports ancient woodland character (such as indicator species).</p> <p>Latest calculations show the loss (area within the red line boundary) to be 0.27ha of SSSI woodland (previously 0.37ha) and 0.41ha of LWS woodland (previously 0.37ha, giving a <u>total loss of 0.68ha of ancient woodland</u>. Applying the ratio previously agreed (August 2018) of 1:12, the strategy will include <u>8.16ha of compensatory woodland planting</u>.</p> <p>JF explained that the Ancient Woodland Strategy document has been progressed, but still includes the range of possible actions that <u>could be undertaken</u>, as previously presented. It is now intended to finalise the document to show what <u>will be undertaken</u> as part of the strategy. As such, the following high-level task list is proposed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Receptor site¹ - Test soil conditions/nutrient levels 2. Receptor site - Manipulate soils 3. Receptor site - Re-test to confirm achieved 4. Donor site² – translocate ground flora to wider SSSI/ancient woodland (BC confirmed this action requires SSSI Assent). Salvage saplings (by hand) if achievable.

¹ Compensatory woodland planting area

² Area within red line boundary

5. Donor site – fell woodland (retain material for use on receptor site)
6. Donor site – soil strip
7. Receptor site – spread stripped soils
8. Receptor site – sow hay meadow seed mix and plant nursery transplants (60-90cm) and salvaged saplings (if achieved)
9. Wider woodland – collect and transplant saplings by hand into the receptor site) (**BC confirmed this action requires SSSI Assent**)
10. Manage and maintain receptor site
 - a. During which, ground flora seed obtained and grown on, ready to be transplanted at suitable time (trigger – when canopy of woodland has developed and hay meadow grassland has started to die back/recede).

JF explained that it has not been possible to undertake the soil sampling to date and therefore the strategy will stipulate this as a prerequisite to inform soil manipulation actions (such as nutrient stripping). The details of soil manipulation would be subject to the results of the sampling and therefore the strategy will detail the aims, objectives and high-level options for soil manipulation (to replicate conditions, as closely as possible, to the donor site) rather than present a detailed methodology. **BC recommended that any soils taken from the receptor site (as part of soil manipulation/treatment) are reused, either by providing to the farmer or alternative local use, rather than sent to landfill. Preferred option.**

JF explained that the strategy identifies the optimal period for undertaking soil treatment (August), however, this can be undertaken at other times of the year. **BC highlighted the priority is to avoid damaging underlying, retained soils. Also, soil treatment is subject to weather conditions. JF suggested that the strategy could recommend soil treatment is undertaken within the optimal period, however, may be undertaken outside this during suitable weather conditions (to provide some flexibility with programme). BC agreed.**

JF explained that, due to programme timeframes, it would not be possible to collect woody seed and grow on to establish the compensation woodland. The client is unlikely to want to commit to commencing actions under the strategy until the scheme has been through DCO and there is assurance that the scheme is going ahead. As such, assuming an estimated DCO decision of December 2019, the next suitable timeframe for seed collection would be September 2020. The saplings would then not be suitable to transplant until at least 2023 (ideally 2025 or 2030 for slow growing species, such as oak). Given the timeframes, it is not considered appropriate to rely on seed grown-on to establish the woodland. **JF and BC agreed that the compensation woodland establishment would rely on transplants with local provenance sourced from local nurseries and, if achievable, salvaged saplings from the donor site.**

BC questioned the density of trees within the compensatory woodland planting area; JF could not confirm. **BC suggested that the density replicates that found in the existing woodland (both within and outside the red line boundary).**

BC asked what the species list of the compensatory woodland area is; JF confirmed that this replicates the SSSI woodland, except for ash and sycamore. **JF to send species list to BC. BC to provide recommendations for additional species.**

BC raised a possible supplier for sourcing an appropriate seed mix to establish the hay meadow. **BC to provide details.** JF explained that this would likely be finalised at detailed design but could be presented in the strategy document for assistance. JF explained that management would include a summer hay cut of the hay meadow grassland. BC raised the potential difficulties of achieving this around the tree planting – depends on density of trees. Logistics to be discussed with team. **BC to provide feedback/advice following discussion with Natural England colleagues.** BC suggested that it may be appropriate to cut in less dense areas and accept that dense areas of tree planting cannot be cut.

BC questioned if the Forestry Commission (FC) had been consulted regarding whether the compensatory woodland planting area requires a woodland creation licence. JF was unsure - consultation with the FC had been completed by the WSP Arbs team. BC suspected a licence would not be a requirement. **JF to discuss with Arbs team, BC to take away for discussion and provide guidance.**

	<p>JF explained that it is proposed to fence the compensation area to protect from rabbit and deer grazing, rather than use guards on each sapling tree. BC agreed this was sensible and suggested adding one-way deer gate(s) into the fence in case a deer does find its way into the enclosed area.</p>
5	<p>Haul Road</p> <p>JF explained that a haul road is proposed on the southern bank of the River Coquet to facilitate construction of the proposed new bridge. However, Area 14 have expressed an interest in retaining the haul road for use as a permanent maintenance access. As such, the haul road is being assessed as a permanent structure with the final design to be developed at detailed design stage.</p> <p>It is understood that the haul road would largely be cut into rock.</p> <p>BC raised the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concerns that the permanent haul road would allow, or possibly encourage, unwanted public access into the SSSI (which at present is relatively undisturbed). - Drainage needs to be considered – anything from the haul road is likely to be washed straight into the river. Concern regarding water quality (also in combination with discharge from the nearby detention basin). JF to speak to water team. - Haul road would possibly require an agreement for management (as it is contained within a SSSI) and a long-term agreement in relation to access for future works. - Would the haul road be gated? It may be attractive to dog walkers, off-road bikers etc. that would result in potential damage to the SSSI. - The preference would be for HE access (and possibly land owner) only, not publicly accessible. Restricted access to be considered.
6	<p>New River Coquet Bridge construction</p> <p>JF confirmed that whilst the southern pier of the new bridge would be outside the water, construction required river training measures (BC confirmed he was aware and receipt of the draft methodologies provided previously). This may include a sheet-piled cofferdam. JF explained that the ES currently proposes a highly restrictive time constraint due to disturbance to fish; works to be conducted outside period September to May.</p> <p>BC highlighted that the “in river works” period is usually end April to end September. Recent feedback from the EA Fisheries Officer (JF to confirm name) is that the impacts may be negligible given the short duration of the works (2 weeks) and that fish movement is generally in higher flows and at night. BC to discuss further with colleagues and EA, but would agree that this may be correct and therefore timeframes currently imposed could be relaxed.</p> <p>JF to review and send BC construction programme timeframes regarding bridge construction for reference.</p>
7	<p>JF confirmed that licence method statements are being prepared in the interests of presenting the mitigation strategies for European protected species (bats and great crested newts) and badger. These <u>are not</u> intended to inform a licence application and are intended to inform the DCO only. Future licence applications would be supported by update baseline surveys.</p>
8	<p>Current Landscaping Plan was taken to the meeting and referenced as appropriate. JF explained that landscaping had been developed collaboratively with the ecological mitigation to achieve similar aims; such as stripping back vegetation around overbridges/underbridges to discourage bats crossing the road or using excess earth material to create bunds to encourage barn owls to fly higher over the road.</p> <p>JF explained that woodland creation would be with native broadleaved species across the scheme. BC stated that inclusion of Scots pine would be acceptable and encouraged.</p>

MEETING NOTES

	<p>BC also recommended that created woodlands are not over planted – example to avoid being the embankment tree planting adjacent to the new A1 junction at Morpeth, with dense rows of tree planting that are likely to fail. Would prefer to see open woodlands created.</p> <p>BC confirmed that tree protection (individual guards/rabbit fencing) would need to be removed before the end of the management period.</p>
9	<p>Habitat Compensation and Biodiversity Metric</p> <p>JF confirmed that habitat compensation is being informed by a metric (DEFRA metric with reference to CHE Memo). Currently awaiting final red line boundary and scheme design (expected 8th March), following which the biodiversity calculations would be completed to understand the impacts of the scheme in relation to no net loss/net gain.</p> <p>JF confirmed that the scheme commenced prior to the latest NPPF revision (February 2018) and therefore the scheme is working towards no net loss. This can only be confirmed following the completion of the biodiversity calculations.</p> <p>The mitigation hierarchy has been applied to avoid and/or reduce impacts to habitats where possible. Compensation is focussed on Priority Habitats as identified under NERC 2006. The landscape plan is currently achieving a 2:1 ratio for hedgerow compensation and a 3.6:1 ratio for woodland compensation. Woodland loss includes a mixture of types and conditions (including coniferous plantation), whereas woodland creation will all be native broadleaved woodland (of higher ecological value).</p>
10	<p>DCO Documentation Review</p> <p>JF confirmed that it is currently intended to issue the ES along with the Statement of Common Ground (SOCG) at the end of May/start of June. A DCO submission is scheduled for end of June and therefore a response is required within <u>one or two weeks</u> of issue.</p> <p>BC raised that the EPS Method Statements may need to be reviewed by the licensing team and therefore may be subject to different timeframes. BC to discuss with licensing team. JF confirmed that if the EPS Method Statements are available prior to the issue date for the ES, these would be issued at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>BC to discuss with colleagues/line manager to schedule in reviews in accordance with the above.</p>
11	<p>AOB</p> <p>Other comments raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- BC - Do the detention basins discharge into watercourses or just retain water? Need to consider the impacts of discharging salts from the roads and the impacts on the watercourses (particularly the River Coquet and its tributaries). <p>JF asked whether there were any issues or concerns with the information presented and discussed. BC confirmed there were no issues at that time.</p> <p>No other business.</p>

NEXT MEETING

An invitation will be issued if an additional meeting is required.

Appendix K – Email 09/05/2019

[REDACTED]

From:

Sent:

[REDACTED]
09 May 2019 11:13

To:

Cc:

Subject:

[REDACTED]
RE: A1 in Northumberland: Morpeth to Felton - HRA Screening Report

Hi [REDACTED]

Thank you for supplying the HRA Screening Report relating to the proposed upgrade to the A1 from Morpeth to Felton.

I have checked through the report and I note that the comments made in my email of 23-11-2018 with regard to the earlier draft of the report relating to the potential impact of aerial emissions and surface water runoff have been addressed in the latest draft.

With regard to the consideration of the impact of aerial emissions it may be worth considering highlighting why the potential impacts of aerial emissions beyond the distance of 200m from the Affected Road Network (ARN) are not considered to be significant i.e. that beyond this distance from the ARN the accepted scientific evidence suggests that there will not be a significant impact on sensitive habitats or species. This will no doubt be highlighted in the Environmental Statement (ES) but given that the HRA Screening Report will be publically available document and that there is likely to be considerable public interest in the proposed scheme, it may be worth clarifying why the use of the 200m distance as a benchmark for screening out significant impacts of aerial emissions is important.

I can confirm that I concur with the overall conclusion of the HRA Screening Report that the proposal is not likely to have a significant effect on the coastal and marine N2K sites located to the east of the proposed scheme.

On the issue of potential hydrological impacts of the proposal on the R. Coquet SSSI, although the proposal is unlikely have any hydrological impacts on the N2K sites due to their considerable distance downstream, the ES will need to fully consider the potential impacts of both the construction and operational phases of the proposal on the water quality of the SSSI downstream (unit 5) of the proposed crossing point. As discussed previously, it should also be noted that the SSSI standards for water quality for the R. Coquet will need to be complied with and that for some of these parameters the targets may be more stringent than their corresponding WFD targets.

If you have any queries regarding the above please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

[REDACTED]
Lead Adviser
Northumbria Area Team
Natural England
Lancaster House
Hampshire Court
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE4 7YH

Tel: [REDACTED]
ema [REDACTED]

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- the [Pre-submission Screening Service \(PSS\)](#) for European Protected Species mitigation licence applications.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 02 May 2019 17:01
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: A1 in Northumberland: Morpeth to Felton - HRA Screening Report

Hi [REDACTED]

Further to your previous review of the HRA Screening Report for the A1 M2F scheme last year, the report has been updated to address your comments and include additional information from the impact assessment process. The report is now considered finalised.

Please could you review and provide comment on the attached within one week. Apologies for the relatively short timescale, however, this is required to maintain the current programme and upcoming deadlines.

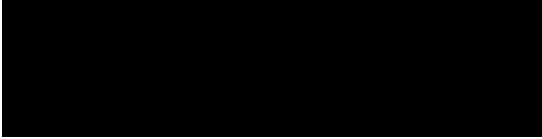
Attached is your previous email response, for reference. In response to your comments:

- Information relating to aerial emissions is presented within the 'Emissions' section on pages 6-8. Impacts from aerial emissions have been screened out as the modelling has calculated that there are no roads within 200m of the N2K sites that exceed the assessment thresholds.
- The network of detention basins and their associated treatment features has been referenced as an additional measure to minimise risk of polluted surface water runoff. It is acknowledged in Section 1.3.2 that pollution control/prevention measures are embedded into the scheme. However, in accordance with case law (People vs Wind), the screening assessment was undertaken without taking these into account to determine if LSE would occur in the absence of mitigation. No impacts anticipated due to distance.

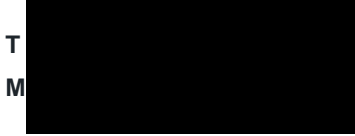
The majority of the report remains as previously reviewed, with the same conclusion that the scheme is not likely to have a significant impact on the coastal and marine N2K sites.

If you have any queries, please feel free to get in contact.

Kind Regards,



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Appendix L – Email 08/08/2019

[REDACTED]

From:

Sent:

[REDACTED]
08 August 2019 11:05

To:

Cc:

Subject:

[REDACTED]
RE: A1 in Northumberland - Morpeth to Felton

Hi [REDACTED]

I will get you with additional comments on the ES Chapter later today (probably late this evening) but, specifically, with regard to the two questions in your email I have set out my thoughts below.

Brown hares:

To the best of my knowledge this species is considered to be widespread across all suitable habitats in Northumberland where the mixed agricultural systems seems to favour brown hares. They are common in certain areas of the county (upper Coquetdale and in the R. Till catchment around the Cheviot where I have regularly seen up to 8 individuals in riparian fields adjacent to the R. Glen in the Kirknewton area of NW Northumberland in the early spring).

There are not any licence requirements for the species in relation to developments as far as I am aware and the main thing that we would be looking to ensure is that you have mitigated for any likely impacts during construction and the operational phase of the proposal. The proposed mitigation pre construction to encourage dispersal from within the Order Limits and the overall design of the scheme to mitigate against RTA caused by wildlife should be sufficient to ensure that the local brown hare population is not significantly impacted by the proposal.

Air quality assessment:

Four main points to make here, one of which, relating to water quality, we have discussed previously.

- With regard to section 9.10.13, while it is true that nitrogen is not the limiting nutrient in most river systems (where phosphorus is the limiting nutrient) any increases in nitrogen will ultimately end up in the estuary and marine environment (where there are a number of designated sites) where nitrogen is the limiting nutrient. I think that there are number of issues here which may need to be clarified further: a) while the direct nitrogen deposition on to the River Coquet is likely to be insignificant, the impact of the nitrogen levels from the carriage way runoff from the section of the proposal that drains into the Coquet catchment also needs to be considered. Particularly as all the drainage network is likely to be with in the zone of heaviest aerial deposition, all the nitrogen this will ultimately end up in the river except for any that is stripped out by vegetation growing in the balancing ponds (pond design that include appropriate vegetation could help significantly here not only to strip out nutrients but also to help trap sediment from the carriageway surface). This potential issues may have been addressed in the Road Drainage and Water Environment chapter of the ES and if so it should be crossed referenced in this table. b) The downstream impact of increased nitrogen levels on the marine environment from the carriageway runoff is not considered in this chapter of the ES but it may have been covered in Ch10. This potential issue is something we discussed with regard to the HRA screening and it may be appropriate to reiterate that this risk will be minimised by appropriate pollution prevention and control measures deployed during the construction phase and by the network of stilling/balancing ponds during the operational phase bearing in mind the comment about the pond design given above.
- Section 9.10.17 relating to the % area of the SSSI affected. The SSSI is broken up into 16 units for monitoring purposes and the impacts of the proposal need to be considered in terms of the units

impacted the proposal (units 5 and 13) rather than against the entire area of the SSSI. As a percentage the overall area of the units impacted is still likely to be relatively small but this should be set out with regard to these specific units so that the impact on the units can be clearly illustrated.

- Section 9.10.20 relating to the area of 0.13 ha of SSSI adversely impacted by nitrogen deposition (also referenced in section 9.10.17). It is not clear how exactly this area was calculated or if this adverse impact on this area has been compensated for through the Ancient Woodland Strategy.
- Sections 9.10.21 and 9.10.22 – indicate that the increase in nitrogen deposition i.e. 35m to the east (which equates to 0.2 ha) is compensated by the Ancient Woodland Strategy. What is not clear in my mind is whether or not this 35m falls within the Order Limits of the site? I assume that the 35m is east of the new bridge and Ecological mitigation plan in Figure 9.2 appears to show that this is the case and assuming that this is correct then it may be worth explaining this in a bit more detail in the this section. If, however, this is not the case and the 35m extends beyond the Order Limits then potentially the portion of the SSSI woodland impacted out with the Order Limits has not been covered by the compensation agreed in the Ancient Woodland Strategy.

One general point, there are several references to the proposed scheme resulting in a decrease in levels of deposition at a number of locations. It may be worth exploring/explaining how this occurs as it is counter intuitive to most people's understanding increases in traffic. I understand that mitigation built into the design can help to alter where and how much deposition occurs but it may be worth clarifying the mechanisms by which the proposed scheme may actually reduce deposition in certain locations.

I will include all of the above in my overall comments later today but I hope this proves to be useful.

All the best

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 07 August 2019 15:51

To: [Redacted]

Cc: [Redacted]

[Redacted]

Subject: A1 in Northumberland - Morpeth to Felton

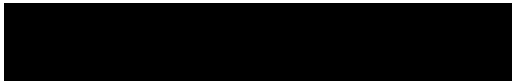
Hi [Redacted]

I hope the review of the ES Chapter and Appendices is going okay. Further to internal discussions, please could I request your comment specifically to the items below via reply to this email:

- Targeted surveys for brown hare were not undertaken as part of the baseline assessment of the Scheme. Brown hare were recorded incidentally when encountered during other surveys completed, with the Order Limits comprising habitats suitable to support the species. Due to the distribution and abundance of suitable habitat in the wider area and the known widespread distribution of brown hare nationally and within Northumberland, survey effort was not considered necessary to inform mitigation design. Mitigation includes habitat manipulation prior to commencement of construction to encourage natural dispersal into the wider suitable habitat. The impact assessment with respect to brown hare is considered valid.
- Please could you provide comment and/or confirm agreement with the outcomes of the air quality assessment on designated sites, detailed within the Assessment of Likely Significant Effects section of the ES.

Kind Regards,

[Redacted]



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Appendix M – Email 08/08/2019

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 08 August 2019 23:41
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: A1 in Northumberland - Morpeth to Felton

Hi [REDACTED]

Apologies for getting this to you so late in the day.

Natural England has considered all the sections of the ES submitted on CD which was received on the 26th July 2019 and can confirm that all the relevant surveys and the mitigation outlined for the species and habitats that are likely to be impacted by proposed scheme are in line with current guidance and best practice. The various comments and advice given by Natural England in the many detailed discussions and consultations regarding the proposals over the last 18 months have been taken on board. In particular, the considerable amount of time spent consulting on the specifics of the woodland compensation area have resulted in a detailed Ancient Woodland Strategy which will hopefully prove to be reasonable compensation for the unfortunate, but unavoidable, loss of an area of Ancient and Semi-Natural woodland within the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI.

Further to the comments given in the email below earlier today, I would like to make the following additional comments which are set out below under the relevant chapter/appendices headings.

Chapter 9: Biodiversity

Table 9-22, pg. 76 (last row) refers to the installation of the cofferdam within the river to facilitate the construction the southern pier for the new bridge. It is my understanding that this is a temporary measure to allow for the construction of the southern pier which is out with but immediately adjacent to the river. The table on does not indicate that they coffer dam is temporary in nature and is due to be removed once the work on the pier is completed. Can you confirm that my understanding is correct and that the in river works will be temporary in nature?

Table 9-22, pg. 77 Table (first row) and the Aquatic Ecology Report (Appendix 9.3) indicate that bullhead have been recorded on the R. Lyne. This species has not been recorded on any of the other tributaries and particularly in the Coquet catchment, although there is one as yet unconfirmed report of this species from the main river at Guyzance. Although this species is native to the UK, there are very limited number of rivers in Northumberland where it is present and it is important to ensure that the proper biosecurity measures (Check, Clean, Dry) are put in place to eliminate the risk of the species being accidentally introduced to other water courses where in river works are proposed for this scheme.

Table 9-22, pg. 81 (row two) indicates that new channel will be planted with aquatic vegetation. Where this is deemed to be necessary the aquatic vegetation needs to be consistent with what is found in the existing watercourse/catchment and the sourcing of plants needs to be from suppliers that are free from aquatic Invasive Non Native Species (INNS). Advice should potentially be sought from the Environment Agency with regard to any relevant protocols for the sourcing of aquatic plants.

Badger Survey Report Appendix 9.10

The report indicates that there is an active set approx. 360m west of the bridge ((Table 4 no.12). This active sett were noted in this area in the surveys undertaken in 2004 when the duelling of the A1 from Morpeth to Felton was last proposed. Additionally, I noted badger activity at this set complex in the

summer of 2018. Although this sett is out with the 100m buffer distance from of the works area for the new bridge over the Coquet and thus unlikely to be damaged or disturbed by the works, it will be worth including this area in the pre-commencement walkover to ensure that no new setts have been excavated closer to the bridge. Additionally, extra vigilance will be required around any excavations associated with the new bridge piers as there is a risk that both otter and badger will be active in this area.

Appendix 9.23 Ancient Woodland Strategy

Natural England would like to acknowledge the resource and effort that Highways England and their consultants have put into to developing the Ancient Woodland Strategy and looks forward to helping further refine the design of the Woodland Creation Area at the detailed design stage.

Section 2.2.11 Japanese knotweed is present in Felton Village in the carpark of the public house on the south bank of the river.

Section 3.2.7 The haul road mentioned in this section is referred to as the 'temporary' haul road in section 3.2.15. From previous discussions I understood that, while a decision had yet to be finalised regarding the haul road immediately to the east of the proposed new bridge, it was likely that there was a preference for this to be retained as a permanent access to allow inspection and maintenance of the southern section of the bridges. Has a decision been made regarding the possible retention of the road as a permanent structure?

As discussed previously, the design of the haul road will need to take into consideration the risk of erosion caused by any drainage or run off associated with such a steep track. Additionally, assurance will need to be sought from Highways England that the track will be used for the only by their employees/contractors and will not be accessible to the general public.

Section 3.2.8. Protective fencing referenced needs to be resilient to flooding as the lower sections of the fence are likely to be subject to periodic flood events.

Section 3.2.11. The risk of the spread of Invasive Non Native Species (INNS) to/within the designated site and the wider countryside cannot be overemphasized, particularly when the project involves the large scale use of earth moving machinery moving between various water courses across different river catchments. Therefore, it is vital that the Biosecurity Method Statement is robust and strictly adhered to by all the contractors working on the project.

Section 3.2.18. The open habitat within the Woodland Creation Area is likely regenerate as woodland over time and the management of the neutral grassland will need to accommodate this gradual succession to native woodland.

Section 3.2.19 – 3.2.24. Natural England welcomes the additional enhancements listed in this section.

Section 4.3.12 and Section 4.5.5. It may be appropriate to consider using natural regeneration as a tool for the creation of the woodland on a portion of the site, most likely adjacent to the existing woodland edge to the north of the Woodland Creation Area. Trees that generate naturally from adjoining woodlands tend to be more vigorous and would be genetically suited to the local area. This is something that Natural England would like to explore further at the detailed design stage.

Section 4.5.12. Natural England notes that long term management for a minimum of 50 years is proposed. After this period has elapsed, it is assumed that the management of the woodland will be continued as necessary within the normal woodland management operations that Highways England undertakes in woodlands within its land holding. It is also assumed that the Woodland Creation Area will be retained as a woodland in perpetuity. Can you confirm that these assumptions are correct?

Section 5.2.1 Boundary fencing will probably need to be retained for a period longer than the 5 years mentioned in this section, particularly if we wish to use natural regeneration as a tool for the establishment of woodland in parts of the Woodland Creation Area.

Section 5.3.1 Makes reference to the use of tree guards in contradiction to proposed fencing option set out in Section 4.2.11 which is the preferred option already agreed in earlier consultations. Tree tubes/guards are also referenced in Section 5.3.3. I suspect that the reference to tree guards/tuber in the above may be a cut and paste error.

Section 5.3.6 and Section 5.4.1 Herbicide should be used sparingly and only when it is deemed to be absolutely necessary. A protocol for the use of herbicides should be developed and set out in the Ancient Woodland Management and Monitoring Plan (AWMMP).

I hope the above comments prove to be useful and I would be happy to discuss any of the above further if necessary but please note that I am going to be on annual leave for the next three weeks and will be back in the office in the first week in September.

All the best

[Redacted signature]

Lead Adviser
Northumbria Area Team
Natural England
Lancaster House
Hampshire Court
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE4 7YH

Tel: [Redacted]
ema [Redacted]

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From: [Redacted]
Sent: 08 August 2019 11:05
To: [Redacted]
Cc: [Redacted]

Subject: RE: A1 in Northumberland - Morpeth to Felton

Hi [REDACTED]

I will get you with additional comments on the ES Chapter later today (probably late this evening) but, specifically, with regard to the two questions in your email I have set out my thoughts below.

Brown hares:

To the best of my knowledge this species is considered to be widespread across all suitable habitats in Northumberland where the mixed agricultural systems seems to favour brown hares. They are common in certain areas of the county (upper Coquetdale and in the R. Till catchment around the Cheviot where I have regularly seen up to 8 individuals in riparian fields adjacent to the R. Glen in the Kirknewton area of NW Northumberland in the early spring).

There are not any licence requirements for the species in relation to developments as far as I am aware and the main thing that we would be looking to ensure is that you have mitigated for any likely impacts during construction and the operational phase of the proposal. The proposed mitigation pre construction to encourage dispersal from within the Order Limits and the overall design of the scheme to mitigate against RTA caused by wildlife should be sufficient to ensure that the local brown hare population is not significantly impacted by the proposal.

Air quality assessment:

Four main points to make here, one of which, relating to water quality, we have discussed previously.

- With regard to section 9.10.13, while it is true that nitrogen is not the limiting nutrient in most river systems (where phosphorus is the limiting nutrient) any increases in nitrogen will ultimately end up in the estuary and marine environment (where there are a number of designated sites) where nitrogen is the limiting nutrient. I think that there are number of issues here which may need to be clarified further: a) while the direct nitrogen deposition on to the River Coquet is likely to be insignificant, the impact of the nitrogen levels from the carriage way runoff from the section of the proposal that drains into the Coquet catchment also needs to be considered. Particularly as all the drainage network is likely to be with in the zone of heaviest aerial deposition, all the nitrogen this will ultimately end up in the river except for any that is stripped out by vegetation growing in the balancing ponds (pond design that include appropriate vegetation could help significantly here not only to strip out nutrients but also to help trap sediment from the carriageway surface). This potential issues may have been addressed in the Road Drainage and Water Environment chapter of the ES and if so it should be crossed referenced in this table. b) The downstream impact of increased nitrogen levels on the marine environment from the carriageway runoff is not considered in this chapter of the ES but it may have been covered in Ch10. This potential issue is something we discussed with regard to the HRA screening and it may be appropriate to reiterate that this risk will be minimised by appropriate pollution prevention and control measures deployed during the construction phase and by the network of stilling/balancing ponds during the operational phase bearing in mind the comment about the pond design given above.
- Section 9.10.17 relating to the % area of the SSSI affected. The SSSI is broken up into 16 units for monitoring purposes and the impacts of the proposal need to be considered in terms of the units impacted the proposal (units 5 and 13) rather than against the entire area of the SSSI. As a percentage the overall area of the units impacted is still likely to be relatively small but this should be set out with regard to these specific units so that the impact on the units can be clearly illustrated.
- Section 9.10.20 relating to the area of 0.13 ha of SSSI adversely impacted by nitrogen deposition (also referenced in section 9.10.17). It is not clear how exactly this area was calculated or if this adverse impact on this area has been compensated for through the Ancient Woodland Strategy.

- Sections 9.10.21 and 9.10.22 – indicate that the increase in nitrogen deposition i.e. 35m to the east (which equates to 0.2 ha) is compensated by the Ancient Woodland Strategy. What is not clear in my mind is whether or not this 35m falls within the Order Limits of the site? I assume that the 35m is east of the new bridge and Ecological mitigation plan in Figure 9.2 appears to show that this is the case and assuming that this is correct then it may be worth explaining this in a bit more detail in the this section. If, however, this is not the case and the 35m extends beyond the Order Limits then potentially the portion of the SSSI woodland impacted out with the Order Limits has not been covered by the compensation agreed in the Ancient Woodland Strategy.

One general point, there are several references to the proposed scheme resulting in a decrease in levels of deposition at a number of locations. It may be worth exploring/explaining how this occurs as it is counter intuitive to most people's understanding increases in traffic. I understand that mitigation built into the design can help to alter where and how much deposition occurs but it may be worth clarifying the mechanisms by which the proposed scheme may actually reduce deposition in certain locations.

I will include all of the above in my overall comments later today but I hope this proves to be useful.

All the best

[Redacted]
From: [Redacted]
Sent: 07 August 2019 15:51
To: [Redacted]

[Redacted]
Subject: A1 in Northumberland - Morpeth to Felton

Hi [Redacted]

I hope the review of the ES Chapter and Appendices is going okay. Further to internal discussions, please could I request your comment specifically to the items below via reply to this email:

- Targeted surveys for brown hare were not undertaken as part of the baseline assessment of the Scheme. Brown hare were recorded incidentally when encountered during other surveys completed, with the Order Limits comprising habitats suitable to support the species. Due to the distribution and abundance of suitable habitat in the wider area and the known widespread distribution of brown hare nationally and within Northumberland, survey effort was not considered necessary to inform mitigation design. Mitigation includes habitat manipulation prior to commencement of construction to encourage natural dispersal into the wider suitable habitat. The impact assessment with respect to brown hare is considered valid.
- Please could you provide comment and/or confirm agreement with the outcomes of the air quality assessment on designated sites, detailed within the Assessment of Likely Significant Effects section of the ES.

Kind Regards,

[Redacted]



T [Redacted]
M [Redacted]

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Appendix N – Email 14/10/2019

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 14 October 2019 13:37
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: RE: LoNI Morpeth to Felton Upgrade A1

Hi [REDACTED]

Further to your request for LoNIs to be produced for the A1 scheme I've had the advice below back from our Wildlife Licensing team.

You may well have already have provided this, and if so if you could direct me to the correct documents I can highlight with the licensing team.

Apologies for the delay in getting back to you, and hopefully this is a clear but if you need anything further please let me know.

Thank you

Regards

[REDACTED]

Team Leader – Sustainable Development & Marine
Northumbria Area Team,
Natural England,
Lancaster House,
Hampshire Court,
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 7YH

Tel: [REDACTED]
Please note I work a 9 day fortnight, with alternate Fridays off.

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- the [Pre-submission Screening Service \(PSS\)](#) for European Protected Species mitigation licence applications.

Sent: 01 October 2019 16:40

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: LoNI Morpeth to Felton Upgrade A1

Hi [REDACTED]

Following on from our conversation yesterday, and after discussing this at length with the advisers who will be assessing and writing the LoNI:

We will need to be provided with a draft licence application with as much information as the applicant can provide at the time. This will include a draft:

- Application form
- Method statement
- Reasoned statement

Also, where possible and appropriate, a master plan, work schedule and appropriate, labelled supporting figures should be provided.

We recognise that the full project design may not be known at this time, however the more information we can assess at this stage, the greater confidence our advisers can have in their consideration of whether the proposals are likely to meet licensing requirements.

Please see below a link to our guidance for PSS submissions, which is applicable to the LoNI:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pre-submission-screening-service-advice-on-planning-proposals-affecting-protected-species>

After reviewing the guidance you forwarded, I direct attention to paragraph 2, page 2:

“in order to gain a LONI, NE must determine a full draft licence application (which is typically considered PSS) even if discretionary advice has been given before the case gets to the draft licence stage (eg where non-licensing advice is also provided on other protected species).”

We aim to be able to produce a decision within 30 working days of receipt of the draft application documents.

If you want to discuss anything else with myself or the team, I will be in the office all week and available on Jabber.

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]
Support Advisor

Natural England Wildlife Licensing Service (DT2)

Tel: [REDACTED]

My associated office is Newcastle but please send my post to **Lancaster House, Hampshire Court, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 7YH** marked for my attention.

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Appendix O – Email 18/10/2019

[REDACTED]

From:

Sent:

[REDACTED]
18 October 2019 12:10

To:

Cc:

Subject:

[REDACTED]
RE: A1 in Northumberland - Morpeth to Felton

Hi [REDACTED]

Apologies for the long delay in getting back to you regarding your queries below.

Thank you for the clarifications given regarding my original comments on the ES documents supplied in July. The only outstanding query regarding your clarifications relates to the Section 4.5.12 and the question of the long term management of the Woodland Creation Area. As you will be aware it is Natural England's view that this area must be managed as a woodland in perpetuity. Have Highways England come to a decision about the future management arrangements for the Woodland Creation Area?

With regard to the two main queries I have set out come comments below:

Would Natural England be able to provide any advice and guidance on how management of the SSSI works in practice? If a third party is contracted, is it possible to obtain contact details to assist discussions?

Woodland management operations and changes to management within the SSSI are listed as an operation requiring Natural England's (NE) consent (in the past this list has been known as operations likely to damage the special interest or potentially damaging operations). None of the listed operations can be carried out or permitted without Natural England's prior written consent or the consent of another public body (provided that the other body has formally consulted Natural England first).

In practice what this means is that when the owner/occupier of the SSSI wants to carry out woodland management operations they need to consult with Natural England to agree the specific management and get written consent from NE for the agreed management. In situations where the proposed woodland management is already covered by a permission/licence/consent of another public body (e.g. a Forestry Commission (FC) woodland management plan) and NE has been formally consulted prior to the permission/licence/consent being granted, then the consent of NE is not required.

In the past Natural England has agreed and consented management plans for a number of the SSSI woodland units along the R. Coquet with the respective land managers but, having looked through the files, we do not appear to have consented to any management plans for Duke's Bank Woods. This is not that unusual as these woodlands have traditionally not had required a lot of management. More recently woodland management plans for the SSSIs come through from the FC as they are the principle statutory authority responsible for woodland management regardless of whether the woodland is part of a designated site or not. In cases where the levels of management required is minor enough not to warrant an authorisation from FC then Natural England

For a public body like the Highways England (referred to as a Section 28G authority in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)) the permission for works within an SSSI is known as a section 28h *assent*. However, assuming that all the aspects of the work being undertaken within the SSSI are outlined within the Ancient Woodland Strategy that has been submitted and agreed as part of the planning process, then additional assents would only be required for any works that had not already been agreed as part of the planning process.

The permission for the planned works associated with the improvements to the A1 and the delivery of the compensatory planting through the Ancient Woodland Strategy would cover any contractors working for Highways England and this would include third parties such as charitable organisations that may be contracted to manage the proposed compensatory woodland into the future as they would effectively be delivering Highways England's management commitments as set out in the proposed scheme.

I hope the above sets out how management works within SSSI's operate in practice but I am happy to discuss further if required. With respect to part of the query that refers to obtaining contact details to assist discussions, I am not sure if I understand what you are looking for here. Highways England will already have all the contact details of the land owners/managers in question and I am assuming that you are free to share these with your contractors if necessary.

Air quality assessment

Thank you for providing the amended text of the air quality section of the Assessment of Likely Significant Effect. All the comments provided to date by Natural England have been based on the air quality information outlined in Chapter 9 of the ES. We have not been provided with Chapter 5 relating to air quality so it is difficult to comment on the approach taken to the change in the assessment.

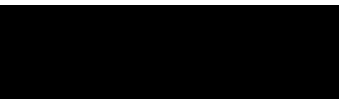
However, I note that the revised assessment for Eco 1 concludes that while the critical load threshold for NOx is exceeded within 15m to the east of the existing bridge it falls below the threshold at the order limits and that this area lies within the SSSI woodland that will be compensated for by the provision of the Woodland Creation Area. Based on the information provided in the amended air quality assessment text for the three areas of the ARN (Eco 1, Eco 9 and Eco 12) located within 200m of the SSSI, the overall conclusion that the scheme will result in effects of overall neutral significance on the SSSI as a result of changes to air quality is supported by the evidence provided.

SOCG

With regard to the SOCG, I need to discuss this in a bit more detail with Andrew Whitehead before providing a response. I hope to be able to go through this with Andrew at the end of next week and will get back to you during the week of 28th Oct.

If you have any queries regarding any of the above comments please get in touch.

All the best



Lead Adviser
Northumbria Area Team
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From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 17 October 2019 11:23

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: A1 in Northumberland - Morpeth to Felton

Dear [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Has a response to the below email been provided? I haven't seen anything come through. It would be greatly appreciated if you provide comment to the responses detailed in green following your review of the A1 in Northumberland: Morpeth to Felton ES. As detailed in the email below, please also find attached an updated Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) for your consideration and amendment as required. Section 3 of the SoCG allows comment on Chapter 9: Biodiversity of the ES in addition to the ES Appendices. The appendices of the SoCG relate to meeting minutes and email correspondence. These have not been attached to this email but would be inserted into the final PDF document. Should you require a copy of any of the referenced appendices, please let me know.

[REDACTED] with regards to the LoNI, your email has been received and we are awaiting instruction from the client on how to proceed.

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]

Advanced notice of annual leave – I am away w/c 21st October, returning to the office on Monday 28th October.



T [REDACTED]
M [REDACTED]

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From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 20 September 2019 15:40

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: A1 in Northumberland - Morpeth to Felton

Dear [REDACTED]

Further to the below email, please could I request your response to my email dated 21st August 2019 as soon as possible (email chain below).

Please also find attached an updated Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) for your consideration and amendment as required. Section 3 of the SoCG allows comment on Chapter 9: Biodiversity of the ES in addition to the ES Appendices. The appendices of the SoCG relate to meeting minutes and email correspondence. These have not been attached to this email but would be inserted into the final PDF document. Should you require a copy of any of the referenced appendices, please let me know.

[REDACTED] - to confirm, as agreed during our call earlier last week, please proceed with review and provision of Letters of No Impediment in relation to the protected species method statements (single bat, single badger and two GCN). As discussed, please note that the method statements are intended to inform the DCO application for the Scheme only and not an EPS licence application. As discussed during consultation, it was considered that the most practical and efficient way of presenting the information of the method statement was to use the Natural England EPS licence template. A future EPS licence application following DCO approval would be subject to updated surveys. The future EPS licence application would be informed by this method statement and appropriate updates at detailed design.

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]



T [REDACTED]
M [REDACTED]

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From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 11 September 2019 12:19

To: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Subject: RE: A1 in Northumberland - Morpeth to Felton

Dear [REDACTED]

Please could you provide a response at your earliest convenience to the below email. The email provides responses to your comments on the draft ES.

If you have any queries, please feel free to get in contact.

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]



T [REDACTED]
M [REDACTED]

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From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 21 August 2019 08:43

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: A1 in Northumberland - Morpeth to Felton

Dear [REDACTED]

I hope you enjoyed your time off. Many thanks for your comments. Please find responses below in green, as appropriate, to both emails. One query for assistance is in relation to the maintenance and management of the Woodland Creation Area. As detailed in the response below, Highways England are exploring the logistics of putting the Ancient Woodland Strategy into practice. Are you able to provide any advice and guidance on how this works in relation to the SSSI? If a third party is appointed, is it possible to obtain contact details?

Following discussions with the air quality team, the impact assessment with regards to the River Coquet and Coquet Valley SSSI has changed since your review of the ES. Attached is the amended text of the *Assessment of Likely*

Significant Effects section in relation to the SSSI for operational impacts. Those sections where wording is amended or new text is added are highlighted in green.

The Ancient Woodland Strategy provides compensatory planting for the loss of all SSSI woodland (ancient woodland) within the Order Limits adjacent to the existing A1. As such, the closest point affected by increased NOx levels from the existing A1 is at the Order Limits boundary, approximately 15 m distance. At this distance, NOx levels do not exceed the threshold (30µg/m3). Therefore, in accordance with DMRB, no further assessment in terms of impact is required at Eco1.

In-combination with Eco9 and Eco12, which both result in a reduction in NOx levels although only significant at 0m from the A1, the effect has changed from adverse with Slight significance (not significant) to Neutral significance. The same level of significance is therefore applied to Duke's Bank Wood ancient woodland and the Coquet River Felton Park LWS for the same reasons.

Please could you provide comment on the approach taken to the amended air quality assessment and its conclusions.

Following the responses to your comments detailed within this email, is it possible to complete and sign the Statement of Common Ground?

Kind Regards,

[Redacted signature block]



T [Redacted]
M [Redacted]

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From: [Redacted]

Sent: 08 August 2019 23:41

To: [Redacted]

[Redacted email body content]

Subject: RE: A1 in Northumberland - Morpeth to Felton

Hi [Redacted]

Apologies for getting this to you so late in the day.

Natural England has considered all the sections of the ES submitted on CD which was received on the 26th July 2019 and can confirm that all the relevant surveys and the mitigation outlined for the species and habitats that are likely to be impacted by proposed scheme are in line with current guidance and best practice. The various comments and advice given by Natural England in the many detailed discussions and consultations regarding the proposals over the last 18 months have been taken on board. In particular, the considerable amount of time spent consulting on the specifics of the woodland compensation area have resulted in a detailed Ancient Woodland Strategy which will hopefully prove to be reasonable compensation for the unfortunate, but unavoidable, loss of an area of Ancient and Semi-Natural woodland within the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI.

Further to the comments given in the email below earlier today, I would like to make the following additional comments which are set out below under the relevant chapter/appendices headings.

Chapter 9: Biodiversity

Table 9-22, pg. 76 (last row) refers to the installation of the cofferdam within the river to facilitate the construction the southern pier for the new bridge. It is my understanding that this is a temporary measure to allow for the construction of the southern pier which is out with but immediately adjacent to the river. The table on does not indicate that they coffer dam is temporary in nature and is due to be removed once the work on the pier is completed. Can you confirm that my understanding is correct and that the in river works will be temporary in nature?

The proposed construction methodology for the southern pier no longer requires the installation of a cofferdam extending up to 5 m into the River Coquet. The embedded mitigation entails the installation of sheet piles following pre-augering into the bedrock. These sheet piles, located outside of assumed bankfull channel, would then serve two functions: firstly, as a cofferdam to create a dry working area for construction [river training measures]; and, secondly, would form part of the permanent framework for the new pile cap. Once constructed, the sheet piles would be burnt off to the pile cap level.

The above is extracted from the geomorphological assessment of the River Coquet, which is an appendix to Chapter 10: Road Drainage and Water Environment. The extract has been added into Chapter 9, with reference to the appendix.

Table 9-22, pg. 77 Table (first row) and the Aquatic Ecology Report (Appendix 9.3) indicate that bullhead have been recorded on the R. Lyne. This species has not been recorded on any of the other tributaries and particularly in the Coquet catchment, although there is one as yet unconfirmed report of this species from the main river at Guyzance. Although this species is native to the UK, there are very limited number of rivers in Northumberland where it is present and it is important to ensure that the proper biosecurity measures (Check, Clean, Dry) are put in place to eliminate the risk of the species being accidentally introduced to other water courses where in river works are proposed for this scheme.

Noted. Bullhead has now been specifically referenced within the biosecurity measure of Table 9-22.

Table 9-22, pg. 81 (row two) indicates that new channel will be planted with aquatic vegetation. Where this is deemed to be necessary the aquatic vegetation needs to be consistent with what is found in the existing watercourse/catchment and the sourcing of plants needs to be from suppliers that are free from aquatic Invasive Non Native Species (INNS). Advice should potentially be sought from the Environment Agency with regard to any relevant protocols for the sourcing of aquatic plants.

Noted. The text of the chapter has been extended to capture the comment: "The channels would also be planted with aquatic vegetation consistent with the existing floral community of the watercourse/catchment. The sourcing of any plants would be confirmed at detailed design but would be from suppliers that are free from aquatic invasive non-native species. Advice would be sought from the Environment Agency, if required, about relevant protocols for the sourcing of aquatic plants."

Badger Survey Report Appendix 9.10

The report indicates that there is an active set approx. 360m west of the bridge ((Table 4 no.12). This active sett were noted in this area in the surveys undertaken in 2004 when the duelling of the A1 from Morpeth to Felton was last proposed. Additionally, I noted badger activity at this set complex in the summer of 2018. Although this sett is out with the 100m buffer distance from of the works area for the new bridge over the Coquet and thus unlikely to be damaged or disturbed by the works, it will be worth including this area in the pre-commencement walkover to ensure that no new setts have been excavated closer to the bridge. Additionally, extra vigilance will be required around any excavations associated with the new bridge piers as there is a risk that both otter and badger will be active in this area.

Comment noted. This is captured within the pre-commencement walkover measures detailed within Table 9-22, DM003. Whilst not extending to a distance of 100 m, the measure confirms a pre-commencement walkover of the works area (which would extend further than the construction area where excavation may occur) to confirm there are no changes to baseline conditions. The follow up action would be as follows: "Should badger activity be confirmed within the area of works or within a zone of influence determined by the ECoW, a Natural England licence would be applied for/ mitigation developed, as required, in advance of Scheme commencement."

In response to the comment regarding vigilance in association with otter and badger around the River Coquet bridge, pre-commencement walkover surveys for both species are proposed to ensure changes in baseline conditions are identified and appropriate measures can be put in place to avoid/reduce impacts.

Appendix 9.23 Ancient Woodland Strategy

Natural England would like to acknowledge the resource and effort that Highways England and their consultants have put into to developing the Ancient Woodland Strategy and looks forward to helping further refine the design of the Woodland Creation Area at the detailed design stage.

Many thanks for your comment, much appreciated.

Section 2.2.11 Japanese knotweed is present in Felton Village in the carpark of the public house on the south bank of the river.

Noted. This has been included in paragraph 2.2.10.

Section 3.2.7 The haul road mentioned in this section is referred to as the 'temporary' haul road in section 3.2.15. From previous discussions I understood that, while a decision had yet to be finalised regarding the haul road immediately to the east of the proposed new bridge, it was likely that there was a preference for this to be retained as a permanent access to allow inspection and maintenance of the southern section of the bridges. Has a decision been made regarding the possible retention of the road as a permanent structure?

Reference to "temporary" in relation to the haul road has been removed. It is understood that the haul road would likely be permanent, due to the nature of its installation, although permanent future use of the road is yet to be confirmed.

As discussed previously, the design of the haul road will need to take into consideration the risk of erosion caused by any drainage or run off associated with such a steep track. Additionally, assurance will need to be sought from Highways England that the track will be used for the only by their employees/contractors and will not be accessible to the general public.

Noted regarding the design of the haul road (at detailed design) to consider the risk of erosion. Discussions have been held with Highways England (Area 14) regarding the use of this route as a maintenance track following construction, but Area 14 has indicated that they will not be using it. The haul route will not be accessible to the general public.

Section 3.2.8. Protective fencing referenced needs to be resilient to flooding as the lower sections of the fence are likely to be subject to periodic flood events.

Noted. Sentence added to para 3.2.8 to capture the above.

Section 3.2.11. The risk of the spread of Invasive Non Native Species (INNS) to/within the designated site and the wider countryside cannot be overemphasized, particularly when the project involves the large scale use of earth moving machinery moving between various water courses across different river catchments. Therefore, it is vital that the Biosecurity Method Statement is robust and strictly adhered to by all the contractors working on the project.

Understood. Both the Ancient Woodland Strategy and ES document the requirement for a Biosecurity Method Statement, which would be developed at detailed design. This is also captured within the Outline CEMP for the Scheme.

Section 3.2.18. The open habitat within the Woodland Creation Area is likely regenerate as woodland over time and the management of the neutral grassland will need to accommodate this gradual succession to native woodland.

Noted. The high level management measures detailed in Section 5.2 detail that an annual hay cut of the grassland would be undertaken. Cessation of this would be triggered by natural die off of the grassland as a woodland canopy develops.

Section 3.2.19 – 3.2.24. Natural England welcomes the additional enhancements listed in this section.

Section 4.3.12 and Section 4.5.5. It may be appropriate to consider using natural regeneration as a tool for the creation of the woodland on a portion of the site, most likely adjacent to the existing woodland edge to the north of the Woodland Creation Area. Trees that generate naturally from adjoining woodlands tend to be more vigorous and would be genetically suited to the local area. This is something that Natural England would like to explore further at the detailed design stage.

Noted. A paragraph in relation to this has been added to the strategy (para 4.3.13), confirming that Natural England have expressed an interest in exploring this further at detailed design stage.

Section 4.5.12. Natural England notes that long term management for a minimum of 50 years is proposed. After this period has elapsed, it is assumed that the management of the woodland will be continued as necessary within the normal woodland management operations that Highways England undertakes in woodlands within its land holding. It is also assumed that the Woodland Creation Area will be retained as a woodland in perpetuity. Can you confirm that these assumptions are correct?

Discussions are ongoing with Highways England regarding the logistics of putting the Ancient Woodland Strategy into practice. WSP shall seek confirmation from Highways England that the Woodland Creation Area would be retained as a woodland in perpetuity. **Would Natural England be able to provide any advice and guidance on how management of the SSSI works in practice? If a third party is contracted, is it possible to obtain contact details to assist discussions?**

Section 5.2.1 Boundary fencing will probably need to be retained for a period longer than the 5 years mentioned in this section, particularly if we wish to use natural regeneration as a tool for the establishment of woodland in parts of the Woodland Creation Area.

Noted. A comment has been added within the high level management overview against the removal of the boundary fence to identify that the timing of this action (currently year 5) may be delayed should natural regeneration be used as a tool.

Section 5.3.1 Makes reference to the use of tree guards in contradiction to proposed fencing option set out in Section 4.2.11 which is the preferred option already agreed in earlier consultations. Tree tubes/guards are also referenced in Section 5.3.3. I suspect that the reference to tree guards/tuber in the above may be a cut and paste error.

Many thanks. Reference to tree tubes/guards has been removed.

Section 5.3.6 and Section 5.4.1 Herbicide should be used sparingly and only when it is deemed to be absolutely necessary. A protocol for the use of herbicides should be developed and set out in the Ancient Woodland Management and Monitoring Plan (AWMMP).

Noted. This advice has been incorporated into the AWS.

I hope the above comments prove to be useful and I would be happy to discuss any of the above further if necessary but please note that I am going to be on annual leave for the next three weeks and will be back in the office in the first week in September.

All the best

[Redacted]
Lead Adviser
Northumbria Area Team
Natural England
Lancaster House
Hampshire Court
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE4 7YH

Tel: [Redacted]
ema [Redacted]

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From: [Redacted]
Sent: 08 August 2019 11:05
To: [Redacted]

[Redacted]

Subject: RE: A1 in Northumberland - Morpeth to Felton

Hi [REDACTED]

I will get you with additional comments on the ES Chapter later today (probably late this evening) but, specifically, with regard to the two questions in your email I have set out my thoughts below.

Brown hares:

To the best of my knowledge this species is considered to be widespread across all suitable habitats in Northumberland where the mixed agricultural systems seems to favour brown hares. They are common in certain areas of the county (upper Coquetdale and in the R. Till catchment around the Cheviot where I have regularly seen up to 8 individuals in riparian fields adjacent to the R. Glen in the Kirknewton area of NW Northumberland in the early spring).

There are not any licence requirements for the species in relation to developments as far as I am aware and the main thing that we would be looking to ensure is that you have mitigated for any likely impacts during construction and the operational phase of the proposal. The proposed mitigation pre construction to encourage dispersal from within the Order Limits and the overall design of the scheme to mitigate against RTA caused by wildlife should be sufficient to ensure that the local brown hare population is not significantly impacted by the proposal.

Many thanks for your response.

Air quality assessment:

Four main points to make here, one of which, relating to water quality, we have discussed previously.

- With regard to section 9.10.13, while it is true that nitrogen is not the limiting nutrient in most river systems (where phosphorus is the limiting nutrient) any increases in nitrogen will ultimately end up in the estuary and marine environment (where there are a number of designated sites) where nitrogen is the limiting nutrient. I think that there are number of issues here which may need to be clarified further: a) while the direct nitrogen deposition on to the River Coquet is likely to be insignificant, the impact of the nitrogen levels from the carriage way runoff from the section of the proposal that drains into the Coquet catchment also needs to be considered. Particularly as all the drainage network is likely to be with in the zone of heaviest aerial deposition, all the nitrogen this will ultimately end up in the river except for any that is stripped out by vegetation growing in the balancing ponds (pond design that include appropriate vegetation could help significantly here not only to strip out nutrients but also to help trap sediment from the carriageway surface). This potential issues may have been addressed in the Road Drainage and Water Environment chapter of the ES and if so it should be crossed referenced in this table. b) The downstream impact of increased nitrogen levels on the marine environment from the carriageway runoff is not considered in this chapter of the ES but it may have been covered in Ch10. This potential issue is something we discussed with regard to the HRA screening and it may be appropriate to reiterate that this risk will be minimised by appropriate pollution prevention and control measures deployed during the construction phase and by the network of stilling/balancing ponds during the operational phase bearing in mind the comment about the pond design given above.

Chapter 10 addresses effects as a result of drainage and run-off, proposing suitable mitigation to reduce the potential impacts and concluding effects of Neutral significance (not significance). Text has been added to Chapter 9 to reference this assessment and its conclusions, presented within the attached document.

With regards to downstream impacts of increased nitrogen levels on the marine environment, this is captured separately within the HRA for the Scheme.

- Section 9.10.17 relating to the % area of the SSSI affected. The SSSI is broken up into 16 units for monitoring purposes and the impacts of the proposal need to be considered in terms of the units impacted the proposal (units 5 and 13) rather than against the entire area of the SSSI. As a percentage the overall area of the units impacted is still likely to be relatively small but this should

be set out with regard to these specific units so that the impact on the units can be clearly illustrated.

Due to the change in assessment, the text this comment refers to is no longer present. However, noted for future reference with other projects.

- Section 9.10.20 relating to the area of 0.13 ha of SSSI adversely impacted by nitrogen deposition (also referenced in section 9.10.17). It is not clear how exactly this area was calculated or if this adverse impact on this area has been compensated for through the Ancient Woodland Strategy.

Due to the change in assessment, the text this comment refers to is no longer present.

- Sections 9.10.21 and 9.10.22 – indicate that the increase in nitrogen deposition i.e. 35m to the east (which equates to 0.2 ha) is compensated by the Ancient Woodland Strategy. What is not clear in my mind is whether or not this 35m falls within the Order Limits of the site? I assume that the 35m is east of the new bridge and Ecological mitigation plan in Figure 9.2 appears to show that this is the case and assuming that this is correct then it may be worth explaining this in a bit more detail in the this section. If, however, this is not the case and the 35m extends beyond the Order Limits then potentially the portion of the SSSI woodland impacted out with the Order Limits has not been covered by the compensation agreed in the Ancient Woodland Strategy.

Due to the change in assessment, the text this comment refers to is no longer present. However, the amended text provides clarity regarding the woodland compensated by the Scheme (that within the Order Limits) and the subsequent assessment. In response to a comment following review by the lawyers, a justification for use of the compensatory planting within the assessment of significant effects has also been detailed.

One general point, there are several references to the proposed scheme resulting in a decrease in levels of deposition at a number of locations. It may be worth exploring/explaining how this occurs as it is counter intuitive to most people's understanding increases in traffic. I understand that mitigation built into the design can help to alter where and how much deposition occurs but it may be worth clarifying the mechanisms by which the proposed scheme may actually reduce deposition in certain locations.

Noted. The following has been added to Chapter 9 for Eco9 (the first instance where a reduction in total N deposition is presented): "The decrease in total nitrogen deposition is due to the ability of the Scheme (A1) to draw traffic from other roads within the local network. Therefore, this causes a reduced traffic flow on some roads radiating from the A1, thereby a reduction in associated nitrogen deposition."

I will include all of the above in my overall comments later today but I hope this proves to be useful.

All the best

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 07 August 2019 15:51
To: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

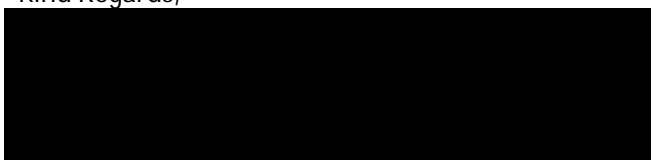
Subject: A1 in Northumberland - Morpeth to Felton

Hi [REDACTED]

I hope the review of the ES Chapter and Appendices is going okay. Further to internal discussions, please could I request your comment specifically to the items below via reply to this email:

- Targeted surveys for brown hare were not undertaken as part of the baseline assessment of the Scheme. Brown hare were recorded incidentally when encountered during other surveys completed, with the Order Limits comprising habitats suitable to support the species. Due to the distribution and abundance of suitable habitat in the wider area and the known widespread distribution of brown hare nationally and within Northumberland, survey effort was not considered necessary to inform mitigation design. Mitigation includes habitat manipulation prior to commencement of construction to encourage natural dispersal into the wider suitable habitat. The impact assessment with respect to brown hare is considered valid.
- Please could you provide comment and/or confirm agreement with the outcomes of the air quality assessment on designated sites, detailed within the Assessment of Likely Significant Effects section of the ES.

Kind Regards,



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M

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Appendix P – Email 18/10/2019

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 18 October 2019 12:55
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: A1 Morpeth to Felton-draft bat licence submission

18/10/2019

Hi [REDACTED] following on from our conversation just now, this is just an informal message/heads up, for when you submit the draft bat licence docs for the LONI. I have had a quick look at the method statement which was originally submitted.

When you submit the draft bat licence docs for the LONI could you include in the MS reference to all of the buildings within the Red Line boundary and if they have been ruled out of the licence application in relation to bat suitability etc. please say why and what type of survey this is based on.

Could you also include an explanation of the buffer zone and say why it is needed or rule it out if necessary.

Sorry this is brief I just thought it might help when you come to do the submission, of course there may be other points I need to raise when I fully assess the draft submission.

Regards [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Wildlife Lead Adviser
Natural England Wildlife Licensing Service DT2

Tel: [REDACTED]
ema [REDACTED]

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