

A1 in Northumberland: Morpeth to Ellingham

Scheme Number: TR010059

ES Addendum: Southern Access Works

Rule 8(1)(c)

Planning Act 2008

Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010

Infrastructure Planning

Planning Act 2008

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

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

Development Consent Order 20[xx]

ES Addendum: Southern Access Works

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
SCOPE	1
SOUTHERN ACCESS WORKS	2
BENEFITS	6
CONSTRUCTION	6
AIR QUALITY	6
NOISE AND VIBRATION	7
LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL	7
BIODIVERSITY	8
ROAD DRAINAGE AND THE WATER ENVIRONMENT	10
POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH	11
MATERIAL RESOURCES	11
CLIMATE	12
ASSESSMENT OF CUMULATIVE EFFECTS	13
CONCLUSION	14
WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?	15

FIGURES

Figure 1 - Stabilisation Works Location Plan	2
Figure 2 - Stabilisation Works	3

INTRODUCTION

An application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) was submitted by Highways England (the Applicant) to the Secretary of State for Transport via the Planning Inspectorate on 7 July 2020. The DCO would, if made, grant consent for the A1 in Northumberland: Morpeth to Ellingham, Part A (between Morpeth and Felton) and Part B (between Alnwick and Ellingham). The application was accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES) which considered if there would be significant effects on the environment as a result of the Scheme.

Further design development has continued to be undertaken by the Applicant in order to realise efficiencies and design benefits. This is particularly important in optimising a scheme being delivered by the public sector in the public interest. During this process an alternative construction access to south bank of the River Coquet has been proposed (the Southern Access Works). This would include a temporary bridge across the River Coquet which would be used to access the south bank of the River Coquet from the temporary works on the north bank. The works could also include the installation of scour protection¹ around the southern bridge pier.

These proposed amendments are dependent on the land stabilisation works to the north of the River Coquet (the Stabilisation Works). This means that if the Stabilisation Works did not go ahead then the Southern Access Works would not be progressed. Further details of the Stabilisation Works can be found in the NTS for the Stabilisation Works.

In order to assess any environmental effects of this new option, an environmental impact assessment has been carried out. This Non-Technical Summary (NTS) presents a summary of the outcome of the assessment in non-technical language. It is not a duplication of the NTS of the ES [APP-337] submitted with the application and so should therefore be read in conjunction with it. A copy of the NTS submitted with the application can be found at:

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/projects/TR010059/TR010059-000737-Environmental%20Statement%20Non-Technical%20Summary.pdf>

SCOPE

An environmental impact assessment (EIA) scoping exercise was carried out to identify those environmental topics that might be different with Southern Access Works and Stabilisation Works compared to those assessed previously. This exercise identified that only the following topics required a full environmental assessment:

- Air Quality

¹ Scour protection is a method of preventing the erosion of banks and is usually implemented below a structure such as a bridge.

- Noise and Vibration
- Landscape and Visual
- Biodiversity
- Road Drainage and the Water Environment
- Population and Human Health
- Material Resources
- Climate

In order to assess the combined effects of the Southern Access Works and Stabilisation Works on the same environmental topic (i.e. within topic combined effects), where relevant, the assessment of each topic presented in this NTS has considered the following:

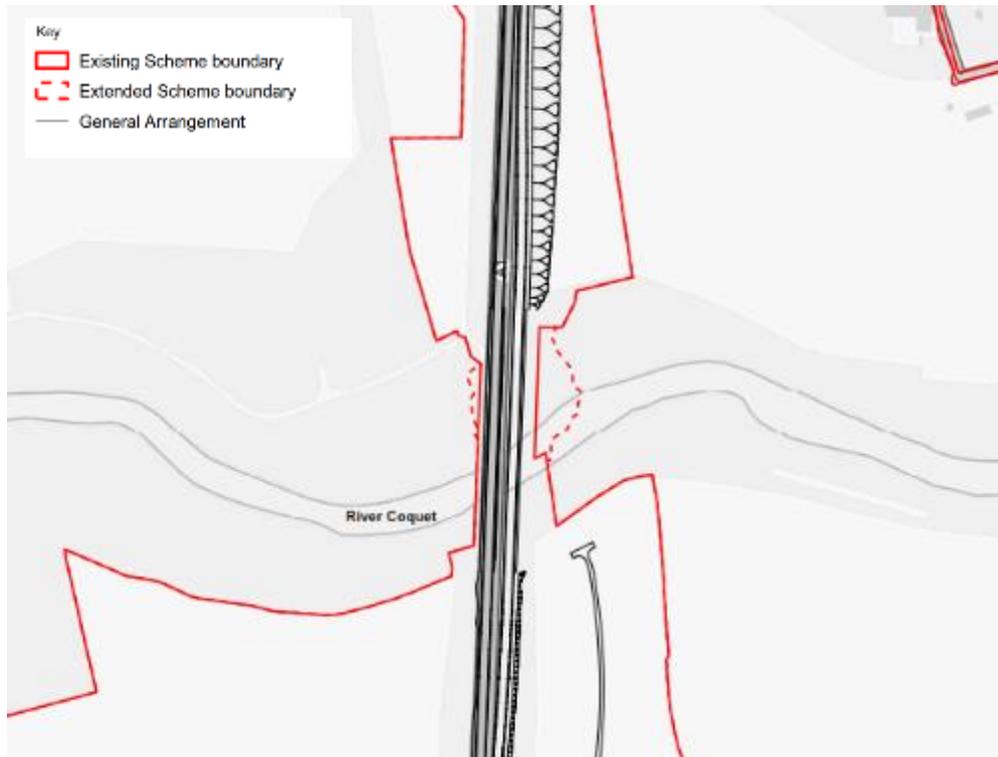
- The baseline conditions described account for the Stabilisation Works (e.g. piling, working area platform creation, north bank temporary river training and north bank scour protection).
- The baseline conditions described account for the Southern Access Works (foundation manhole support rings, working area platform creation, south bank temporary retaining wall and south bank scour protection).
- The assessment of likely significant effects considers the combined effects of both Stabilisation Works and Southern Access Works together on the same receptor.

The potential for cumulative and combined effects from different environmental topics on the same receptors (i.e. cross topic combined effects) has also been considered for the Southern Access Works.

An ES Addendum has been produced which presents the outcome of the assessment of the likely significant effects for these topics as a result of the Southern Access Works.

SOUTHERN ACCESS WORKS

The location of works associated with the Southern Access Works are located on the northern end of Part A of the Scheme and are shown on **Figure 1 - Southern Access Works Location Plan** below.

Figure 1 - Southern Access Works Location Plan

The Southern Access Works present an opportunity to provide a temporary bridge to the south bank of the River Coquet from the north bank instead of creating an access track down the southern river embankment as described in **Chapter 2: The Scheme** of the ES [APP-037]. The proposed temporary bridge is shown in **Figure 2 – Southern Access Works** below.

Figure 2 – Southern Access Works

Rights over the River Coquet would be required outside of the Scheme boundary (approximately 360 m²) to construct and operate the temporary bridge. The temporary construction bridge would replace the need to have vehicular access to the south bank of the River Coquet down the southern river embankment, an area of approximately 500 m². As such, the proposals would result in a net reduction in the Scheme Footprint of approximately 140 m². The amended Scheme Footprint is shown in **Figure 1 - Southern Access Works Location Plan**.

Foundation supports for the temporary bridge (manhole rings filled with approximately 50 m³ of concrete or stone) would be placed in the riverbank on each side of the river. The temporary bridge would have a span of approximately 38 m.

Erosion protection measures have been proposed to offer protection to the reinstated ground disturbed by the construction works close to the river edge (see **Figure 2 – Southern Access Works**). A temporary retaining wall approximately 70 m long, 4 m high and 2 m deep, would be installed in the river around the south bank temporary working area. Ground investigation information has highlighted the potential need for permanent scour protection on the existing southern River Coquet bridge pier. This would provide consistency with the existing structure and assures the structural integrity of the new pier. This assessment has assumed that the permanent scour protection would be approximately 70 m long, up to 3 m wide and up to 4 m high (see **Figure 2 – Southern Access Works**).

As detailed above, the Southern Access Works are dependent on the Stabilisation Works. Therefore, where relevant, the assessment of each topic presented in this NTS has considered both the Southern Access Works and Stabilisation Works. **Figure 3 – Southern Access Works and Stabilisation Works** shows both the Southern Access Works and Stabilisation Works together on the same plan.

Figure 3 – Southern Access Works and Stabilisation Works



BENEFITS

The benefits for this proposed change for both Part A and Part B of the Scheme would be:

- Reduce impact on the south bank of the River Coquet (and consequently the SSSI) by removing the need for vehicular access from the south.
- Reduce long-term impact to the surrounding landscape.
- Reduced the spatial impact of construction activity, leaving some areas undisturbed and reducing the amount of full vegetation clearance to reduce disturbance to the Site of Specific Scientific Interest and ancient woodland. This undisturbed area equates to circa 500 m². The additional area over the river is 360 m², showing a net benefit of 140 m².
- Protect the new bridge pier from the risk of channel movement.
- Offer protection to the reinstated ground disturbed by the construction works close to the river edge.

CONSTRUCTION

It is expected that the works would begin in July 2022, with removal of the temporary works following construction being completed by early 2024.

The Southern Access Works would involve the creation of a dry area to allow reparation of the riverbed to accept the temporary river training works and the permanent scour protection.

Additional construction traffic that would be generated from the Southern Access Works includes:

- Approximately 124 Heavy Good Vehicles movements would be required to install the 70 m temporary training wall along the south bank and then remove it on completion.
- Approximately 62 Heavy Good Vehicles movements would be required to install the 70 m permanent scour protection along the south bank.

Additional construction plant would include a 750 tonne crane situated on the north bank of the River Coquet to manoeuvre the temporary access bridge into position.

AIR QUALITY

OVERVIEW

The air quality assessment considered the impacts and effects of the Southern Access Works and Stabilisation Works on local air quality during construction. The additional works are located in a predominantly rural location, with few nearby sources of air pollution. The additional works are not located within an Air Quality Management Area (areas that do not meet a national air quality objective indicating that air quality in these areas requires improvement).

The Study Area consists of a 200 m corridor about the Scheme boundary, which has been extended slightly as a result of the amended Scheme boundary. However, there are no additional receptors within the extended Study Area.

CONSTRUCTION

No additional impacts on air quality were identified as a result of the works. Despite the change to the Scheme boundary, there are no additional receptors and therefore all impacts relating to construction dust remain the same as those proposed in the original ES. Best practice measures would be incorporated into the Construction Environmental Management Plan (which the main contractor would be required to follow), and therefore there would be no significant air quality effects. This means there would be no change in the assessment reported in the original ES.

NOISE AND VIBRATION

OVERVIEW

The noise and vibration assessment considered the impacts and effects of the construction of the Southern Access Works and Stabilisation Works on noise and vibration levels at nearby sensitive receptors. Sensitive receptors can include residential properties and health and education facilities. There are no Noise Important Areas (defined as areas along roads which have been identified through high-level noise mapping as having high noise levels) within the vicinity of the additional works. The additional works are located in a predominantly rural location, with few nearby sources of noise and vibration.

The Study Area is 300 m from the boundary of any construction activity associated with the Scheme. Given the Southern Access Works requires an extension to the Scheme boundary, the Study Area has been extended to incorporate these additional areas. However, there are no additional receptors within the extended Study Area.

CONSTRUCTION

The main construction activity which could cause noise and vibration impacts is the operation of a 750 tonne crane, which would lift the temporary bridge into place. This would take place concurrently with the Stabilisation Works, and it has been estimated that the combined noise and vibration effects generated by these activities would not cause any significant adverse effects, due to the distance of the works to the closest receptor.

Best practice measures would be incorporated into the Construction Environmental Management Plan (which the main contractor would be required to follow), and therefore there would be no significant noise and vibration effects as a result of the additional works.

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

OVERVIEW

The landscape and visual assessment considered the impacts and effects of the Southern Access Works and Stabilisation Works on visual amenity areas such as footpaths. The area

surrounding the Scheme is predominantly rural with some nearby residential, commercial and recreational users.

The Study Area is the same as that used in the original ES assessment, which means no additional receptors would be affected.

CONSTRUCTION

There might be some minor changes to the impacts felt to visual receptors during the construction of the Southern Access Works. Users of some footpaths (422/020 and 422/002) would be affected by an increased awareness of the construction activities in this area including the installation and use of the temporary construction bridge, as well as the presence and use of the crane. However, the significance of the effect would remain the same as previously assessed. Users of the St Oswald's Way might also be affected by an increased awareness of the construction activities in this area including the installation and use of the temporary construction bridge, as well as the presence and use of the crane. However, it is expected that these would be partially obscured by the retained woodland vegetation which exists between the footpath and the construction works. Again, the significance of the effect would remain the same as previously assessed.

Overall, it is considered that there would not be any change in the significance of the effects felt during construction as a result of the Southern Access works when compared to the assessment of construction effects reported in the ES.

OPERATION

It is anticipated that there would be a slight change in some operational visual impacts as a result of the Southern Access works, when compared to the original ES assessment.

For the users of footpaths 422/020 and 422/002, the Southern Access Works (and associated vegetation clearance) would lead to a greater awareness of the river corridor, although this would also include greater awareness of the scour protection on the south bank. The effects would remain as not significant.

The users of St Oswald's Way may also experience a minor change as a result of the Southern Access Works, and would experience greater awareness of the scour protection on the south bank, however intervening vegetation means the change is not likely to result in any change of significance.

BIODIVERSITY

OVERVIEW

The biodiversity assessment considers the combined impacts and effects of both the Southern Access Works and the Stabilisation Works on the natural environment. The works would generate new impacts to the River Coquet from those assessed as part of the ES, which is both a Habitat of Principal Importance (HPI) as well as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The Study Area is the same as that used in the original ES assessment, including the additional areas within the extended Scheme boundary.

CONSTRUCTION

The combined Southern Access Works and Stabilisation Works would result in the permanent loss of natural habitat along the north and south bank of the River Coquet (part of the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI) as a result of the construction of the permanent scour protection, which would result in a new significant adverse effect. However, the Scheme is already anticipated to give rise to significant effects on the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI, and the combined Southern Access Works and Stabilisation Works would not change this. There is an additional risk of harm from other impacts such as changes to water chemistry, or pollution runoff, however with the successful implementation of mitigation, these effects would not be significant.

The alternative access to the south bank would reduce the extent of construction activities within the areas of ancient woodland in the SSSI on the south bank. This would mean less woodland would need to be cleared but it would not reduce the significant effect reported in the original ES.

The combined Southern Access Works and Stabilisation Works would additionally affect otter for instance by causing a temporary loss in suitable habitats or causing temporary disturbance as a result of noise, light and vibration effects. Best practice measures would be incorporated into the Construction Environmental Management Plan (which the main contractor would be required to follow), and therefore there would be a neutral effect (not significant) on otters. This means there would be no change in the assessment reported in the original ES.

The combined Southern Access Works and Stabilisation Works would additionally affect fish and aquatic invertebrates, for instance by causing a temporary obstruction to areas used by fish and aquatic invertebrates, temporary loss in suitable habitats or causing temporary disturbance as a result of noise, light and vibration effects. However, the works would not be a barrier to fish migration because the river training measures would be located close to the riverbank. Best practice measures would be incorporated into the Construction Environmental Management Plan (which the main contractor would be required to follow), and therefore there would be a slight adverse (not significant) effect on these ecological receptors. This means there would be no change in the assessment reported in the original ES.

OPERATION

The combined Southern Access Works and Stabilisation Works could cause material from the scour protection to enter the River Coquet watercourse, which would impact the SSSI and other habitats and animals which depend on it during operation. However, assuming the proposed management and monitoring strategy is implemented successfully, there would be no significant effects on these ecological receptors. This means there would be no change in the assessment reported in the original ES.

ROAD DRAINAGE AND THE WATER ENVIRONMENT

OVERVIEW

This assessment considers the impacts and effects of the Southern Access Works and Stabilisation Works on road drainage and the water environment, including surface and groundwater and geomorphology.

Environment Agency (EA) records show that the River Coquet has a 'Moderate' quality overall, with the ecological quality assessed as 'Good' and the chemical quality assessed as 'Fail'. The EA hydromorphological status (i.e. physical character and water content of water bodies) of the River Coquet is 'Supports Good'. The River Coquet is designated as part of the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI. The SSSI is designated for aquatic plants and animals, which have the potential to be affected by geomorphological (i.e. form or features of the watercourse) change.

The Study Area is the same as that used in the original ES assessment.

CONSTRUCTION

The potential impacts during the construction phase would be short-term, limited to the duration of the works, which is anticipated to be 16 months for near and in-channel works. During construction, the anticipated impacts of the Southern Access Works could include release of fine sediment into the watercourse, reduced groundwater flows, and impact to riverbed, bank features and natural river processes. However, following the successful implementation of mitigation, the Southern Access Works is not expected to have any effect on sedimentation, pollution risk, water quality, groundwater and geomorphology during construction.

However, the Southern Access Works would impact on channel morphology (changes to the natural bank and bed features). Despite the implementation of mitigation, effects on channel morphology as a result of these works are predicted to cause a significant adverse effect.

OPERATION

During operation, there may be continued impacts of access to the south bank of the River Coquet on the release of fine sediment into the watercourse, reduced groundwater flows, and impact to riverbed and bank features. Following the successful implementation of mitigation, the Southern Access Works are expected to have a negligible effect on sedimentation or groundwater flow and natural river processes during operation, and there would not be any significant adverse effect.

However, the Southern Access Works would permanently affect the channel morphology of the River Coquet. Despite the successful implementation of mitigation, the south bank scour protection would still likely cause a significant adverse effect on channel morphology.

POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH

OVERVIEW

The population and human health assessment considers the impacts and effects of the Southern Access Works and Stabilisation Works on recreation. The Scheme is set within a rural landscape and is sparsely populated. There are several communities, recreational facilities (including recreational users of the river itself) and community facilities within the vicinity of the additional works. There are also a number of Public Rights of Way which are used for walking, cycling and horse-riding.

The Study Area for the assessment of population and human health covers the areas within the Scheme boundary, which includes both the existing and additional areas.

CONSTRUCTION

The Southern Access Works would affect recreational users of the River Coquet by reducing their ability to travel along this stretch of the river, and at during the bridge installation and removal, stopping access altogether. However, it is considered that the significant adverse effect reported in the original ES would not change.

OPERATION

The operation of the Southern Access Works would affect recreational users of the River Coquet by reducing their ability to travel along this stretch of the river, however it would remain passable during operation. It is therefore not considered to cause a significant adverse effect, which is the same as that reported in the original ES.

MATERIAL RESOURCES

OVERVIEW

The materials and waste assessment considers the impacts and effects of the Southern Access Works and Stabilisation Works on the consumption of material resources (including products offering sustainability benefits, recycled or renewable sources) and the generation and use of material recovered from the construction site. It also considers the production and disposal of waste to landfill.

The Study Area is the same as that used in the original ES assessment.

CONSTRUCTION

During construction, the anticipated impacts of the Southern Access Works are:

- Consumption of natural and non-renewable resources; and
- Reduction in landfill capacity.

The following materials identified by the main contractor would be required for the Southern Access Works:

- Approximately 50 m³ concrete or stone placed on the north bank;
- Approximately 50 m³ concrete or stone placed on the south bank;
- Approximately 92 tonne steel structure for the temporary bridge crossing (re-usable);

- Approximately 32 m of pre-cast concrete pipes for the bridge supports (approximately 68.5 tonnes);
- Approximately 560 m³ temporary wall for in-river works; and
- Approximately 840 m³ scour protection.

The Southern Access Works are expected to require an additional 3,796 tonnes in addition to the steel structure, which represents a small increase in the overall consumption by the Scheme. The Stabilisation Works would require an additional 9,495 tonnes of materials, which represents approximately 3 % of the consumption of the Scheme as a whole. Combining the Stabilisation Works with the Southern Access Works equates to approximately 4 % of the overall consumption of the Scheme.

It is anticipated that the temporarily placed concrete / stone from the temporary construction bridge and temporary river training blocks would be sent to inert landfill; this would be approximately 660 m³ or 1,652 tonnes. Additionally, there would be 5,373 tonnes of waste from the pile arisings and piling platforms from the Stabilisation Works that are anticipated to go to landfill as part of this worst-case scenario. This is a total of 7,025 tonnes. However, it is likely that much of this would be recovered / recycled elsewhere on the Scheme.

Based on the scale and nature of the additional works it is considered that the additional material resources required and waste produced during the construction phase are not expected to be significant, and therefore there would be no change in the assessment reported in the original ES.

CLIMATE

OVERVIEW

The climate assessment considers how the Southern Access Works and Stabilisation Works could affect climate, for example by releasing more greenhouse gases (GHG) during construction and their contribution to global warming and climate change. GHG are natural and man-made gases occurring in the atmosphere, which retain the sun's energy within the earth's atmosphere leading to changes in climate. The assessment considers that GHG emissions occur constantly and widely due to human and natural activity, therefore, the assessment only considers where the additional works results in additional or avoidable emissions compared to the existing scenario and its assumed evolution.

The Study Area is the same as that used in the original ES assessment.

CONSTRUCTION

The main source of GHG emissions during the construction of the Southern Access Works would be from embedded carbon in the construction materials and their associated transportation. The materials identified by the main contractor comprise:

- Approximately 92 tonnes of general steel for the temporary bridge construction;
- Approximately 32 m of pre-cast concrete pipe for the bridge supports;
- Approximately 100 m³ of concrete for the bridge supports;

- Approximately 1,344 tonnes of pre-cast high strength concrete for the river training works; and
- Approximately 840 tonnes for scour protection.

It was calculated that the Southern Access Works would increase the construction phase GHG emissions by 0.6 thousand tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (ktCO₂e), however with mitigation, this is considered to be a non-significant adverse effect. The combined effect of the Stabilisation Works with the Southern Access Works would not lead to a significant effect. Therefore, there would be no change in the assessment reported in the original ES.

ASSESSMENT OF CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

An assessment of cumulative and combined effects of the Southern Access Works and Stabilisation Works has been undertaken to consider how these changes may result in significant environmental effects. The following types of cumulative and combined effects have been assessed:

- **Within Topic Combined Effects:** Considers the environmental effects of the Southern Access Works and Stabilisation Works for each environmental topic.
- **Cross Topic Combined Effects:** Considers the environmental effects of the Southern Access Works across the environmental topics.
- **Cumulative effects:** Considers the effects of the Southern Access Works interacting with effects from other proposed developments that are near the relevant receptor. For example, a residential receptor may be affected by noise from the works as well as noise from another proposed development.

COMBINED EFFECTS

Within Topic Combined Effects

As detailed in the 'Scope' section, in order to assess the combined effects of the Southern Access Works and Stabilisation Works on the same environmental topic (i.e. within topic combined effects), where relevant, the assessment of each topic presented in this NTS has considered the following:

- The baseline conditions described account for the land Stabilisation Works (e.g. piling, working area platform creation, north bank temporary river training and north bank scour protection).
- The baseline conditions described account for the Southern Access Works (foundation manhole support rings, working area platform creation, south bank temporary retaining wall and south bank scour protection).
- The assessment of likely significant effects considers the combined within topic effects of both the Stabilisation Works and Southern Access Works on the same receptor.

This means the assessments presented in this NTS are inherently within topic combined effects assessments.

Cross Topic Combined Effects

An assessment has been undertaken to consider how multiple effects at the same time may affect a receptor. This could occur due to multiple effects of the Southern Access Works from different environmental topics combining to cause an effect on the same receptor which is different than the effect from one topic alone. This is known as combined effects, and could occur if, for example, a residential receptor is affected by noise, air quality and visual effects from a scheme.

As detailed above, the permanent loss of natural habitat along the northern bank of the River Coquet (part of the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands SSSI) would result in a new significant effect (Moderate Adverse).

As detailed above, changes in channel morphology (changes to the natural bank and bed features) of the River Coquet would result in a new significant effect (Moderate Adverse).

When considering both the Biodiversity and Road Drainage and the Water Environment effects on the River Coquet, the works would have a combined new significant effect (Moderate Adverse).

CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

Although the Southern Access Works would lead to new significant effects, it is anticipated that due to the distance between the Stabilisation Works and other developments, together with a lack of developments that have the potential to impact on the River Coquet, there would be no cumulative effects above that reported in the ES.

CONCLUSION

This NTS presents a summary in non-technical language of the environmental assessment that has been undertaken for the Southern Access Works. A scoping exercise identified that eight environmental topics required further assessment (Air Quality, Noise and Vibration, Landscape and Visual, Biodiversity, Road Drainage and the Water Environment, Population and Human Health, Material Resources and Climate). This is because for other topics the outcomes of the assessment were unlikely to be different for the Southern Access Works.

The assessments undertaken for the following six topics: Air Quality, Noise and Vibration, Landscape and Visual, Population and Human Health, Material Resources and Climate, have concluded that although the effects vary with the Southern Access Works, overall this would not alter the findings of the ES.

The assessments undertaken for Biodiversity and Road Drainage and the Water Environment topics have concluded that the impacts from the Southern Access Works would result in new Moderate Adverse significant effects. These effects would specifically be felt on the River Coquet SSSI for Biodiversity, and on channel morphology for Road Drainage and the Water Environment. There would also be a Moderate Adverse combined effect on the River Coquet when considering the permanent loss of natural habitat along the northern bank of the River Coquet and change in channel morphology.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

At the time of publication of this Non-Technical Summary, which should be read in conjunction with the previously published Non-Technical Summary, published in 27 July 2020, the DCO examination has entered Deadline 2. The Examining Authority has a duty to complete the examination of the application by the end of a period of six months, beginning with the day after the close of the Preliminary Meeting. The Preliminary Meeting part 1 was held on 15 December 2020 and part 2 was held on 5 January 2021. The examination of the application primarily takes the form of consideration of written submissions. Registered interested parties can send written comments to the Planning Inspectorate.

On completion of the examination after six months, the Examining Authority will then have three months to consider its recommendation. This recommendation and a supporting report will then be passed to the Secretary of State for Transport, who will have three months to decide whether to grant a Development Consent Order.

Finally, when the Secretary of State's decision is published, there will be a six-week High Court challenge period. If there are no High Court challenges, the decision will be final.

The Environmental Statement Addendum and supporting documents can be viewed online at: <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/north-east/a1-in-northumberland-morpeth-to-ellingham/?ipcsection=docs>

Further information about the Planning Act 2008 process and DCO can be found on the Planning Inspectorate National Infrastructure Planning website: <http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/>

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