

## A417 fact sheet

### Archaeological trial trenching



#### What is archaeological trial trenching?

Anyone who plans a major construction project must be careful where they dig to avoid damaging any important archaeological remains. Following results of the geophysical investigations that we've previously carried out we've determined the locations where we need to do some further surveys.

#### What's involved?

To carry out the trial trenching several of our teams will need to excavate pre-located trenches across the specified plots of land.

To do this we'll need vehicle access for off-road vehicles and for mechanical excavators to open and backfill trenches. We may also need to install a small cabin near the working area to provide our archaeologists with welfare facilities. This will usually be located within the field, close to the entrance. Where required, we'll agree an acceptable location with you.

#### What will happen on site?

The sizes of the trenches will vary, but typically measure 30m or 50m in length by 1.8m wide, and approximately 50cm deep. A few trenches will measure about 6m by 6m, also 50cm deep. Where we find archaeological features present we'll excavate these trenches to a maximum depth of 1.2m below ground level, although the majority of excavations will be much shallower than this.

Once we've finished our surveys, we'll backfill the trenches, replacing the soil materials in the correct sequence i.e. lower subsoil, upper subsoil, topsoil, then the surface will be pressed down by a machine. We'll aim to complete our work on each trial trench within two weeks. However, if we find some particularly complex archaeology present, we may need longer to complete the work on that trench. Because the trenches will be left open for a period of time, livestock cannot be present in fields where work is being undertaken.

## Why are we doing them now?

If our archaeological trial trenching finds remains that could be lost through construction of the scheme, we'll need to implement mitigation known as 'preservation by record'. This ensures that archaeologists have the opportunity to study these remains and publish the results so that everyone can benefit from this new knowledge. The proposed trial trenches are very important for us to be able to understand where and when we might need to implement this mitigation. We need to carry them out now to allow sufficient time for any required mitigation before we start construction of the scheme.



If you need help accessing this or any other Highways England information, please call **0300 123 5000** and we will help you.