

# A19 Downhill Lane Junction Improvement

Pre-construction Ecology Survey Report

PCF Stage 5

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## DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

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C00	29/07/2020	Phase 1 Habitat Survey Report and Badger Survey Report – Draft for Client Approval	Amy Scott (Jacobs)

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Scheme Context**

- 1.1.1 The A19 Downhill Lane Junction Improvement (The Scheme) is located in the North East of England within the local authority areas of South Tyneside Council (STC) and Sunderland City Council (SCC). Downhill Lane junction is located approximately 1.2km south of Testo's roundabout and forms the junction of the A19, A1290, Washington Road and Downhill Lane. The junction is the primary access from the A19 for vehicles entering and leaving the local Nissan Motor Manufacturing UK (Nissan) car manufacturing plant located 1km to the south.
- 1.1.2 In 2015, Downhill Lane junction was upgraded from a dumbbell roundabout arrangement to a signalised junction by the local authority (STC) as an interim solution to congestion at the junction. This junction and the Testo's roundabout provide links between the conurbations of Tyneside, Wearside and Teesside, and form part of an eastern route around the Tyneside conurbation.
- 1.1.3 The A19 Downhill Lane Junction Improvement scheme is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) under the Planning Act 2008. NSIPs require planning approval in the form of a Development Consent Order (DCO). An application for development consent is made to the Planning Inspectorate which considers the application and makes a recommendation to the Secretary of State (SoS) for Transport. The SoS then decides whether consent should be granted for the proposed scheme.
- 1.1.4 The DCO for the A19 Downhill Lane Junction Improvement scheme was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in February 2019. The SoS made the decision to grant the DCO in July 2020 based on the information submitted with the DCO application and collated during the DCO Examination process by the Examining Authority.

### **1.2 Previous Survey Information**

- 1.2.1 This report takes into consideration all previous baseline ecology work undertaken to date as reported in the Environmental Statement (A19 Downhill Lane Junction Improvements, Environmental Statement (Jan 2019), Vol.1 Chapter 9 - document reference TR010024/APP/6.1). In addition, pre-construction surveys have been undertaken from late 2018 onwards. The results of these pre-construction surveys are summarised in Section 3 of this report.

### **1.3 Report Rationale**

- 1.3.1 The purpose of this report is to record the results of final pre-construction surveys in accordance with Requirement 7 of the A19 Downhill Lane Development Consent Order 2020 as made by the Secretary of State on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2020.
- 1.3.2 The Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC) submitted as part DCO application and published in Volume 3 of the Environmental Statement commits the applicant to maintain an up to date baseline. This is secured in the DCO through Requirements 4 and 7. This is to ensure that the mitigation/enhancement measures detailed in the Environmental Statement and

the Construction Environmental Masterplan (CEMP) are appropriate to address the ecological effects of the proposals.

- 1.3.3 The aim of this report is to provide a summary of pre-construction ecological surveys undertaken to date in relation to A19 Downhill Lane Junction Improvement scheme. In addition, an assessment is presented on how this information compares to previous baseline detailed in the Environmental Statement and used to formulate the mitigation proposals for the scheme.
- 1.3.4 Given the habitat types previously recorded in the survey area, which are directly affected by the proposals, it was determined that the scope of the pre-construction survey would be limited to updating the Phase 1 habitat survey and a badger walkover.



## 2 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1.1 Habitats were surveyed on foot on 13<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> July 2020 by two experienced Jacobs' ecologists. All of the habitats were recorded according to the Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey (JNCC 2010).
- 2.1.2 The badger survey methodology followed best practice guidelines - Harris S, Cresswell P and Jefferies D, (1989), Surveying Badgers, Mammal Society - to identify evidence indicating the presence of badger in the survey area. The survey involved a visual search on foot for field signs indicating the presence of badger. Such signs include dung, dung-pits and latrines, guard hair caught on fences/hedges, around holes or on scratching posts, well-used pathways through fields and vegetation, day nests in grass or other vegetation where badgers may sleep, foraging signs such as snuffle holes footprints and setts.

### 3 BASELINE SUMMARY

3.1.1 Table 3.1 below provides a summary of the pre-construction surveys undertaken to date

**Table 3.1: Baseline Summary**

Feature	Survey Date	Survey Area	Baseline Summary	Additional Mitigation Required (Y/N)	Licensing Requirement	Appropriate Mitigation Captured in Environmental Statement (Y/N)	Notes
Pre-construction walkover/Phase 1 habitat survey	July 2020	Temporary and permanent scheme footprint plus 100m buffer	<p>Twenty different habitat types were recorded during the field survey. The survey area was dominated by a mixture of arable, semi-improved grassland, broad-leaved plantation woodland, dense scrub and hedgerows.</p> <p>Three Habitats of Principal Importance (HOPI); (NERC Act 2006), arable field margins, running water and hedgerows are present within the survey area.</p>	N	N/A	Y	The results of the habitat survey are consistent with those reported in the Environmental Statement.
Pre-construction Badger Survey	July 2020	Temporary and permanent scheme footprint plus 100m buffer	No evidence of badger recorded	N	None	Y	The results of the badger survey are consistent with those reported in the Environmental Statement.
Pre-construction	February 2019 to May 2019	Temporary and permanent scheme footprint	The following species of conservation interest:	N	None	Y	The results of the 2019 field surveys are consistent with

Feature	Survey Date	Survey Area	Baseline Summary	Additional Mitigation Required (Y/N)	Licensing Requirement	Appropriate Mitigation Captured in Environmental Statement (Y/N)	Notes
Breeding Bird Surveys		plus 100m buffer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 11 species on the Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern 4 2015 – great black-backed gull (<i>Larus marinus</i>), grey partridge (<i>Perdix perdix</i>), herring gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>), lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>), linnet (<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>), mistle thrush (<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>), skylark (<i>Alauda arvensis</i>), song thrush (<i>Turdus philomelos</i>), starling (<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>), yellow wagtail (<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>) and yellowhammer (<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>).</li> <li>- 9 species on the Amber List of Birds of Conservation Concern 4 2015 - black-headed gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>), bullfinch (<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>), dunnock (<i>Prunella modularis</i>), kestrel (<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>), mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>), meadow pipit (<i>Anthus pratensis</i>), reed bunting (<i>Emberiza scheoniclus</i>), stock</li> </ul>				previous baseline published in the Environmental Statement.

Feature	Survey Date	Survey Area	Baseline Summary	Additional Mitigation Required (Y/N)	Licensing Requirement	Appropriate Mitigation Captured in Environmental Statement (Y/N)	Notes
			dove ( <i>Columba oenas</i> ) and swift ( <i>Apus apus</i> ).				
Pre-construction Wintering Bird Surveys	November 2018 to January 2019	Temporary and permanent scheme footprint plus 100m buffer	<p>The following species of conservation interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2 species listed on Schedule 1 (Part 1) of the WCA (as amended); fieldfare (<i>Turdus pilaris</i>) and redwing (<i>Turdus iliacus</i>).</li> <li>- 7 'Species of Principal Importance', Section 41, NERC Act 2006; bullfinch, dunnock, grey partridge, herring gull, skylark, song thrush and starling.</li> <li>- 5 species on the Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern 4 2015; grey partridge, herring gull, skylark, song thrush and starling.</li> <li>- 8 species on the Amber List of the Birds of Conservation Concern 4 (2015); black-headed gull, bullfinch,</li> </ul>	N	None	Y	The results of the 2018/2019 field surveys are consistent with previous baseline published in the Environmental Statement.

Feature	Survey Date	Survey Area	Baseline Summary	Additional Mitigation Required (Y/N)	Licensing Requirement	Appropriate Mitigation Captured in Environmental Statement (Y/N)	Notes
			<p>dunnock, kestrel, meadow pipit, pink-footed goose (<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>), reed bunting and stock dove.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 6 Durham Biodiversity Action Plan Species; and</li> <li>- 19 common undesignated species.</li> </ul>				

## 4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1.1 Taking into consideration the baseline conditions, as reported in the Environmental Statement, and the pre-construction surveys undertaken date it is clear that the ecological baseline for the survey area remains consistent.
- 4.1.2 Therefore, it is a reasonable assumption that the mitigation/enhancement measures detailed in the Environmental Statement and the Construction Environmental Masterplan (CEMP) are appropriate to address the ecological effects of the proposals.

## 5 REFERENCES

All legislation can be found at: [www.legislation.co.uk](http://www.legislation.co.uk)

JNCC (Joint Nature Conservation Committee). (2010). Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey: A technique for environmental audit. JNCC, Peterborough.