SURVEY WORK

As part of the assessment process a range of surveys need to be conducted. These are often referred to as either non-intrusive surveys which are normally a simple walkover of the land or intrusive surveys which involve minor disturbance of the land such as the digging of trial pits. Access arrangements will be agreed with any affected landowners prior to the surveys being undertaken.

NON-INTRUSIVE SURVEYS

Environmental Surveys

Access is required for a number of environmental surveys. These surveys will involve a 'walkover' of the site to enable the surveyors to get a detailed knowledge of the site, thus ensuring that all environmental impacts and environmentally sensitive areas are identified and appropriately assessed. Therefore, land access is an essential prerequisite for a thorough and effective environmental survey. The surveys are due to commence in April and will continue for 6 months – 1 year at this stage.

Surveys which need to be completed include:

- Ecological Surveys – these are surveys which will identify the flora and fauna on the site. Floral surveys will include the identification of rare/notable plant species and habitats which may support important species. Faunal surveys will include the identification of habitats which could support protected species (for example bats, otters, pine martins) and searching for evidence for protected species (for example tracks and/or tufts of hair).
- Cultural Heritage Surveys - the project archaeologist will carry out a site walkover survey to inspect archaeological features (such as listed buildings and forts), which have previously been identified from a review of aerial photographs of the study area. The walkover survey also has the potential for discovery of undetected archaeological sites/features.
- Landscape Surveys – our landscape specialists will survey the study area and will also visit view points (for example vantage points within the Sperrins Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) to identify the landscape character, important views, visual recptors and other landscape features.

- Noise and Air Quality Surveys – the noise and air quality team will need to visit the site to identify potential receptors such as schools, homes and ecological sites. The specialists will target key areas which they have identified through aerial photography and mapping. Noise and air quality monitoring will also be completed to measure ambient noise and air quality levels. This data will be collected over a 6 month – 1 year period and will used to assess the potential impacts of the new road on the receptors.
- Drainage and Hydrology – this survey will involve visiting key areas of the site to confirm the drainage and topographical characteristics. It is important that details of existing watercourse crossings and culverts, floodplains and outfall locations are fully investigated. These surveys will help to ensure that the best practical and environmentally sustainable option of draining the surface runoff from the proposed road is developed. Maintaining and improving the quality of the discharges to the existing watercourses is of utmost importance and all drainage design proposals are discussed with the Rivers Agency, The Environment and Heritage Service and the Fisheries Conservancy.

INTRUSIVE SURVEYS

Ground Investigation Survey

As part of the assessment process information is required on the ground conditions that may be encountered within the study area. Accurate information can only be obtained through direct investigations on the ground. Prior to ground investigations taking place agreement must be reached with local landowners.

We will conduct pre-entry surveys in order to establish the location any proposed works, and agree a suitable access route and reinstatement works. A post-entry visit will be made to confirm that the agreed reinstatement has been completed to a satisfactory standard.

The site investigation may consist of boreholes, trial pits and probing.

- Boreholes include drilling a hole approx. 250mm (8”) in diameter with a mobile drilling rig and removing small soil samples.
- Trial Pits involve digging a hole with a JCB and removing small soil samples for testing. Holes are then backfilled and reinstated.
- Probing is a non-destructive investigative method. The test involves the use of a machine similar to a jackhammer, which takes a soil sample less than 75mm (3”) inches wide. Hand Augers involve taking soil samples with a hand held tool.