



Welcome

This leaflet is to update you on the next steps of our plans for Sevington Inland Border Facility. The previous proposal, known as Sevington 3, has now been approved, and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) are operating on Site with the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) commencing checks from 1 July 2022.

The Department for Transport (DfT) will be submitting further proposals for Sevington Inland Border Facility, known as Sevington 4, to meet new operational requirements for the site, and to create and enhance habitats on the eastern parcel of land. This briefing brochure outlines our plans and explains how you can give your feedback on the proposals.

Approval for the proposed changes to the site will be sought under the requirements of a Special Development Order (SDO) from the Secretary of State for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). This is the same process which has been followed previously.

We have been working closely with other government departments, HMRC and Defra to progress Sevington 4. Together we have been engaging with the relevant local and environmental stakeholders to propose a scheme that meets operational requirements of Sevington Inland Border Facility and delivers biodiversity enhancement on the eastern parcel of land.

The Inland Border Facility

Operations began at Sevington Inland Border facility in January 2021 after the United Kingdom (UK) left the European Union (EU) and the transition period ended on 31 December 2020.

New rules have since been brought into place which require additional customs, transit and Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary (SPS) checks. Where there is no space at ports for new border infrastructure, the Government built new inland border facilities where these checks and other activities will take place.

The original site-specific approval was granted for the Sevington Inland Border Facility under Article 4 of the 2020 Special Development Order (SDO) in December 2020. To meet evolving operational requirements, a further two submissions under Article 4 of the SDO have since been made.

Sevington is managed by an appointed contractor with HMRC taking on responsibility for the operations of the site from DfT in January 2022.

To find out more about Sevington Inland Border Facility and its operations, please visit: inlandborderfacilities.uk



The Eastern Parcel

Our plans for the site

The land to the east of Highfield Lane, otherwise known as 'Sevington East,' is approximately 48ha of agricultural land. Over the last year, part of this area has been used to temporarily stockpile material which was excavated from the land to the west of Highfield Lane. A footpath runs through the centre of the field from east to west, from Blind Lane to the edge of the operational IBF site, which was temporarily closed during construction but has now reopened to the public. The footpath will remain the only part of the Eastern Parcel that will be open to public access, with the rest of the land dedicated to biodiversity enhancement.

Through engagement with the local community to date, it is understood there is a desire to maintain the eastern land as a green space. The Department for Transport shares this vision for the site and, as part of a further submission, is proposing to create a local biodiversity asset on the site.

Creating a biodiverse green space

The design of Sevington East would focus on bringing landscape and biodiversity enhancements to a once arable field. This area would contain native species, with a mosaic of habitat areas including species rich wildflower meadows, and open managed grassland with shrubs, scrub and scattered individual trees. Denser areas of tree and shrub planting would also be incorporated, particularly along field boundaries increasing visual screening with wider environmental benefits. A bund extension and berm construction would be incorporated into the design, reprofiling and softening earthworks to a shallower slope, helping better integrate the landscape. These bunds and berms would be planted with shrubs and intermittent trees.

Rather than trucking away excavated stockpile material, a more sustainable approach will be implemented to reutilise the earth for landscaping works on site. The stockpile material will also be used to construct the wildlife ponds and wet scrapes, creating small undulating pockets of landform which will provide valuable microclimates to support invertebrates and amphibians. This would also help avoid disturbing below ground archaeology which is believed to be located within the eastern field.

While no additional public access is proposed as part of the submission, access to the existing public footpath will be retained. Users of the footpath will be able to enjoy open views across the countryside and catch a glimpse of wildlife as it flourishes.

Future management of the site

As with all of the blue-green infrastructure that has been created within the wider site, the eastern field would be retained for the long term benefit of biodiversity and the local community. This would be subject to management and maintenance with exact details to be confirmed.



Eastern Parcel



Eastern Parcel

Archaeology

The eastern field has the potential to contain archaeological remains from the prehistoric through to the modern period. Nearby investigations have found roman kilns, bronze age trackways, burial sites and early medieval agricultural activity. As the field has been used for agriculture since at least the medieval period, early archaeological remains are likely to survive well. The field also forms part of the setting of multiple listed buildings. Especially significant is a key line of sight between two grade I listed churches in Mersham and Sevington.

The scheme in the eastern field will be designed with this archaeological potential in mind. Geophysical surveys have been undertaken within the field. These non-invasive surveys provide a 'picture' of what is happening underground. This information has informed the design of landscaping and planting to minimise the potential to impact archaeology. The landscaping design has been informed by an understanding of the setting of heritage assets, retaining the rural character of their historic settings and the key line of sight between the churches. Further surveys will be undertaken where there remains potential to impact buried archaeology. This will allow remains of lower value to be appropriately understood and recorded prior to removal. If any remains of higher value are discovered, where appropriate, the design

will be altered to reduce the potential harm to remains. Archaeological investigations will be agreed through consultation with key stakeholders, in particular, the archaeological advisor to Kent County Council.

As well as reducing the potential to harm assets, these investigations provide valuable research information and understanding of how the human activity in the landscape has developed and changed over time. This information is beneficial to academic and professional bodies, but also of interest to local communities and history groups. We will provide information boards which will highlight heritage assets and relay information about the buried archaeology on the site. This will provide public benefit by facilitating a much greater understanding of the history of the area.



Eastern Parcel



St Mary's Church, Sevington



Eastern Parcel

Habitat Creation and Enhancement

So far, several measures have been implemented to protect existing wildlife on the operational Sevington site and create enhancements including new habitats for native species to thrive. This includes:

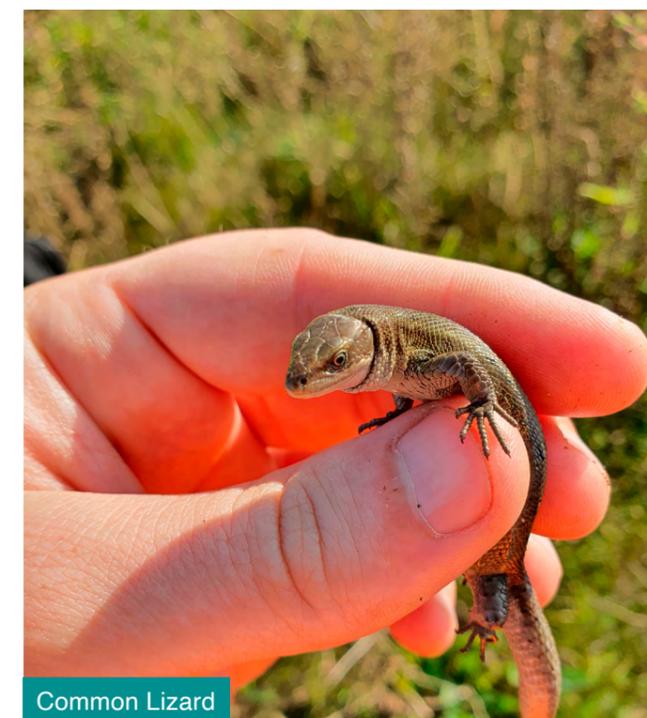
- New ponds designed as nature-based solutions to onsite drainage needs, providing new habitat where there was none previously, where waterfowl and several bird species have already taken up residence;
- Successful reptile translocations – slow worms and common lizards that were translocated have continued to breed and thrive in their new location;
- Provision of bat, bird and dormice boxes across the site;
- Planting of native species around the site;
- Establishment of wildflower meadows;
- Removal of tarmacked area in the centre of the operational site and restoration of a landscaped green corridor.

We have been keen to engage with key stakeholder such as Natural England and Kent Wildlife Trust (KWT) in developing and maximising opportunities to enhance biodiversity. For example, in autumn 2021, KWT kindly provided recommendations on the initial concept design and approach to Sevington East. A site visit was undertaken with KWT and KCC to demonstrate what biodiversity improvements have been implemented on the western side, including ponds, wildflower meadow establishment and other measures, and what opportunities may be presented

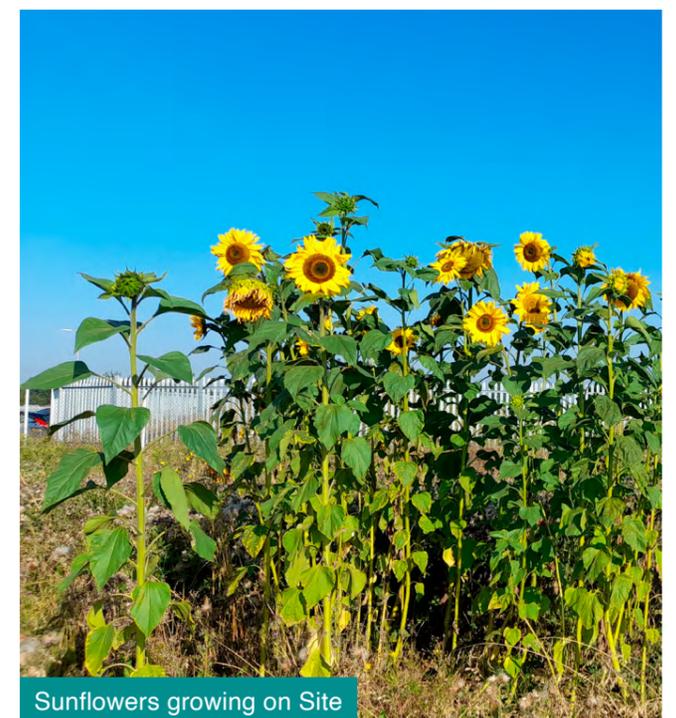
by Sevington East to boost biodiversity benefits and connect the green spaces across the site. Design advice has been reviewed by project environment leads and incorporated in the design where this is possible.

As the eastern field matures, it is envisaged that it will provide habitat for hedgehogs, bats, dormice, brown hare, reptiles, newts, birds of prey and breeding birds of conservation priority such as skylark and nightingales. The introduction of these new habitats will bring substantial biodiversity net gain (BNG).

In partnership with KCC, DfT has also implemented a pilot woodland scheme on part of the site. KCC is participating in the Defra Shared Outcomes Fund 'Trees Outside Woodlands' project, a pilot study aimed at increasing tree cover outside of woodlands, whilst prioritising cost-effectiveness and good biosecurity. KCC is leading on the 'Urban Tree Establishment' pilot and are delivering Miyawaki-method planting plots at various sites across Kent to enable delivery of optimal benefits for people, wildlife, biosecurity, and ecosystem services. This initiative is based on an innovative woodland establishment and management approach, developed by Japanese botanist Dr Akira Miyawaki, which aims to reconstruct indigenous woodlands, producing a rich, dense, and efficient pioneer woodland within 20 – 30 years, whereas natural succession can take up to 200 years in temperate climates.



Common Lizard



Sunflowers growing on Site

Changes to the Inland Border Facility site

Why do we need to make further changes?

Further to the operational site improvements delivered through the three Special Development Orders for Sevington since 2020, some additional ancillary infrastructure associated with the Defra and HMRC operations is required.

What changes are proposed?

These changes include proposals for:

- A canopy with two parking bays to allow shading and cleaning down of live animal HGV's for animal welfare and spraying of wheel arches for biosecurity reasons
- A new refuse bin storage area for a cleaner, tidier IBF site
- Extra cabins for staff and drivers, including driver welfare facilities
- Three generators to provide power to critical infrastructure in the event of mains supply failure, which are sealed to provide noise-insulation
- Raised fencing for enhanced safety
- A pump house and water tank for an improved sprinkler system
- A secure hazardous waste storage area

A map of the site is set out below, with the key additional changes highlighted:

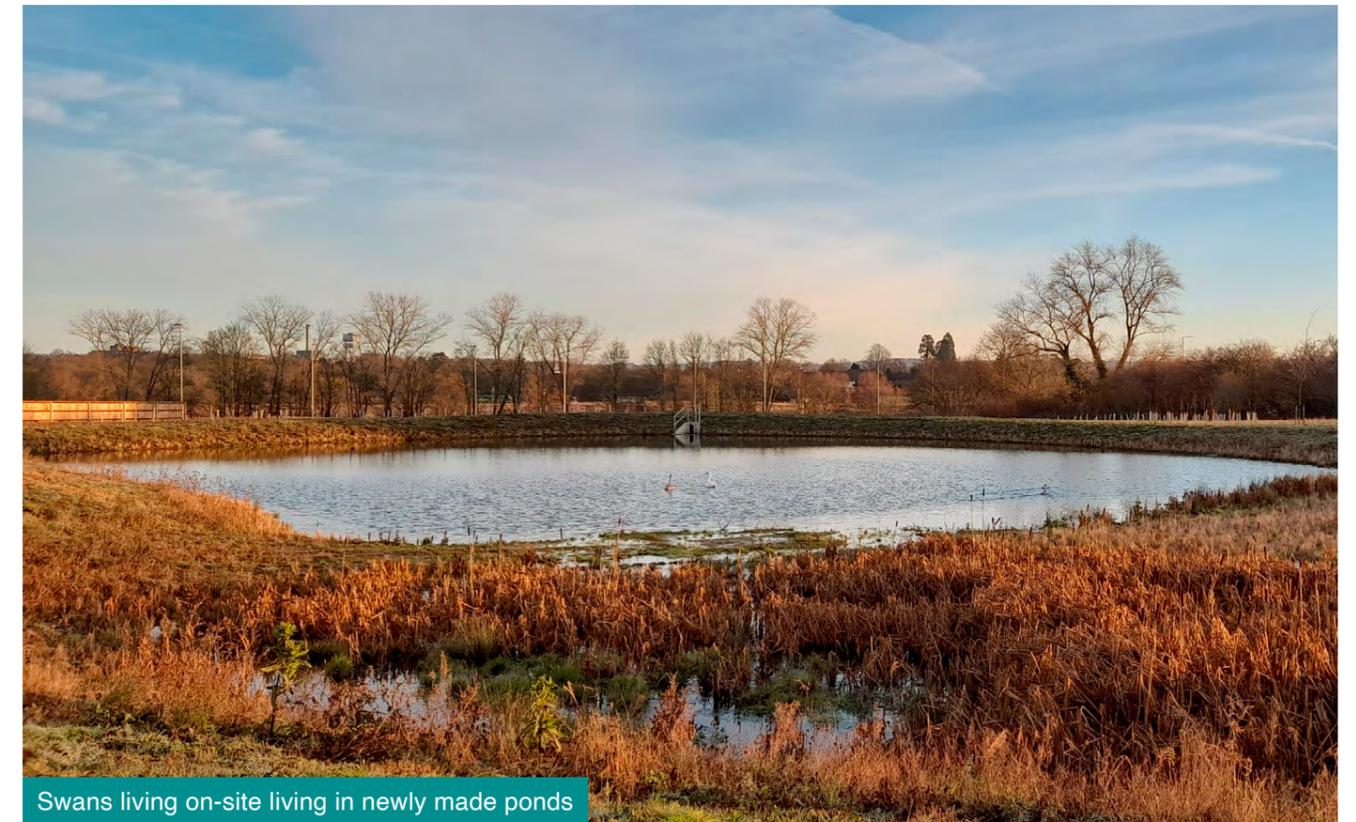


Site Plan

Scheme Benefit

This scheme will unlock the arable field to the east of Highfield lane for the first time and deliver an environmental scheme which will provide:

- A diverse new mosaic of habitats for native birds, reptiles, insects and mammals to thrive in.
- Species-rich wildflower meadows, open grassland and shrubs – providing a rich variety of flora on site. Which would encourage ground nesting birds and provide forage for pollinator species.
- Denser, wilder areas of tree and shrub planting at boundaries to help screen the site from direct neighbours as well as provide a range of wider biodiversity benefits.
- Sensitive landscaping and earthworks to provide a more attractive outlook and to integrate the site better into its surroundings.
- A range of improvements to the existing Sevington IBF site, including new security and safety measures.
- Retained Public Rights of Way (PROWs) across the site, allowing residents, dog walkers and hikers to enjoy the improved space.
- Improved drainage arrangements.
- Rather than trucking away excavated stockpile, a more sustainable approach will be implemented, to reutilise the earth for landscaping works on site.
- The conversion of the eastern field from cereal cropping and lowland grazing to habitat creation will provide a nutrient credit for both Nitrogen and Phosphorus.



Swans living on-site living in newly made ponds

Next steps

Thank you for viewing our plans for this next stage of Sevington Inland Border Facility and the biodiversity enhancements to the Eastern Parcel.

Details about how the inland border facility will operate can also be viewed on our website at www.inlandborderfacilities.uk where you can also provide your comments on the proposals online.

If you would like to submit comments about the Sevington Inland Border Facility proposal, please complete a feedback form online or post to: **Freepost Inland Border Facilities**

Planning

Approval for the site will be sought under the requirements of a Special Development Order (SDO).

An SDO was laid in Parliament on 3 September 2020 (The Town and Country Planning (Border Facilities and Infrastructure) (EU Exit) (England) Special Development Order 2020) and came into force on 24 September.

The legislation provides for the granting of temporary planning permission to government

departments, to provide facilities in specified local authority areas for the stationing and processing of HGVs entering or leaving the UK. It also allows for the provision of associated temporary facilities and infrastructure. The legislation specifies that the facilities will cease operation prior to 31 December 2025.

The 2020 SDO statutory instrument includes four sections and can be viewed at: www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/928/schedule/2/made

Next Steps

DfT has been engaging with a range of national and local stakeholders regarding the proposals for Sevington Inland Border Facility, including with the local community.

This will help inform our submission to DLUHC, which we anticipate to be in **mid-March 2022**. We hope to begin works on the eastern parcel of land by late Spring 2022, and complete the planting works during **Winter 2022/Spring 2023**.