



Wrexham Technology Park

Otter Method Statement

Document Ref: 4571.002
August 2014

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for

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August 2014

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G4571.002 Otter Method Statement Drawing

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 TEP was commissioned by Ramboll UK Ltd in May 2014 to prepare a method statement detailing measures to be put in place to avoid any potential impacts on otter as a result of the development at Wrexham Technology Park. The development proposals for the site are for the construction of new housing with associated gardens and hardstanding.
- 1.2 An otter survey of the section of the River Gwenfro which runs through the site, and an additional 50m section both up and downstream of the site, was undertaken by suitably qualified ecologist John Crowder in June 2014. The results of the otter survey are presented in full in TEP document 4571.003 (appended to this report), which should be read in conjunction with this Method Statement. A single otter spraint and a small number of footprints were identified.
- 1.3 Drawing G4571.002 illustrates the location of the proposed works which will affect the River and banks, and indicates the protection measures that will need to be implemented to ensure no harm or disturbance to otter during the works.
- 1.4 A toolbox talk will be delivered by an ecologist to all contractors prior to works commencing. Contractors will be briefed on the potential ecological constraints and implications resulting from the presence of otters, and details of the working methods that will need to be implemented and any timing restrictions on works.
- 1.5 A copy of this method statement will be provided to the contractors carrying out the works, prior to the start of the works, and a copy will be kept on site for the duration of the works.
- 1.6 In the event that any ecological concerns arise during the works, such as materials accidentally entering the watercourse or other damage occurring, the contractor or the site operator is required to contact TEP for advice:

TEP
Genesis Centre
Birchwood Science Park
Warrington
WA3 7BH

Tel: 01925 844004
Fax: 01925 844002

- 1.7 Appropriate remedial actions will be implemented, which may require supervision of works by a suitably qualified ecologist.

2.0 LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.1 Otter, their breeding sites and places of shelter receive full statutory protection under the Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2010, as amended, and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended. This legislation makes it an offence to kill (or injure) any otter or disturb, damage, destroy or obstruct access to holts or other places of shelter, or disturb an otter while in any place of shelter.

3.0 METHOD STATEMENT

- 3.1 A detailed survey of the river and banks was undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist in 2014 to identify any evidence of otter presence. A single spraint and a small number of footprints were identified, but no holts, or potential holts, were present. However, there were some areas of tree growth and sheltered banks present which may offer temporary shelter to otter. Any impacts from the proposed works are therefore restricted to potential disturbance and/or potential harm to otters. Indirect impacts could also be an issue caused by sediment or pollution entering the river.

- 3.2 The majority of the river banks will be unaffected by the development, but a culvert, which is currently located within the stretch of river that runs through the site, is to be removed and replaced. A new outfall is also to be installed. These works have the potential to impact on otters as they will affect the banks of the River Gwenfro. The paragraphs below provide details of the working methods that will need to be implemented during these works to avoid any potential impacts on otter.

- 3.3 At present no detailed design or construction method statements have been agreed. It will be the responsibility of the contractor to ensure appropriate otter protection measures are in place during works. This method statement must be read and adhered to in full and the contractor's schedule of works and protection measures must be agreed with a suitably qualified ecologist prior to works commencing. In the absence of detailed construction methods, general protection methods and best practice guidelines are provided below.

Culvert Works

- 3.4 The proposed works will require the removal of the current culvert and construction of a replacement. The works will take place along the banks on both sides of the culvert and at either end. As part of the construction process the river will also be temporarily diverted from its current course it must be ensured the diversion is in place before the current culvert is closed to ensure otter are not prevented from moving up and down stream. This will lead to direct impacts on the river banks. The works could also result in indirect impacts by means of sediment, debris or windblown materials being washed or blown into the watercourse.
- 3.5 Immediately prior to works commencing, further survey of the existing culvert entrances and as far as possible inside, as well as 30m up and down stream, will be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist to establish any use by otter. If a holt is identified a licence would be required to continue works.
- 3.6 Deep excavations will be required as part of the works. These must be covered between dusk and dawn to prevent the trapping of any otter or other wildlife. As the river is to be diverted during the works, access will be maintained along the length of the river corridor.
- 3.7 All effort should be made to prevent any pollutants from entering the river during the works and removal of the culvert.

- 3.8 During construction of the new culvert, a ledge must be attached to the culvert wall suitable for use by mammals, otter in particular, allowing safe passage through the culvert.

Outfall

- 3.9 The banks where the works are proposed and those within 30m in either direction will be checked immediately prior to works commencing for signs of use by otter. If a holt is identified a licence would be required to continue works.
- 3.10 The proposed works will require excavating a small area of the bank to install the outfall and a working area around the outfall during its installation. The works will not have any direct impact upon the River Gwenfro itself. However, they could result in indirect impacts by means of sediment being washed into the watercourse or debris or windblown materials entering it.
- 3.11 Deep excavations will be required as part of the works. These must be covered between dusk and dawn to prevent the trapping of any otter or other wildlife. During the construction of the outfall it must be ensured that an access route is maintained along the length of the river.
- 3.12 All effort should be made to prevent any pollutants from entering the river during the installation of the outfall. Standard pollution prevention measures should be implemented throughout the works.

General Protection measures

- 3.13 Otter are generally more active at night, it is therefore necessary to restrict any works to the banks to day light hours which will minimise the potential for any disturbance to otter using the watercourse.
- 3.14 During construction works, no machinery or materials will be stored within 8m of the bank to prevent accidental spillages into the watercourse. Refuelling and refilling of machinery or tools must not be undertaken within 8m of the banks and drip trays should be placed underneath machinery or tools to capture any accidental spillages that may occur.
- 3.15 Any works affecting the banks must be kept to a minimum and any works likely to cause unnecessary bank collapse should be avoided. Any digging or soil movement required for the installation of the culvert or outfall should start at the water line and be dug back into the site to minimise input of sediment into the river. The use of sediment traps should also be considered where suitable.
- 3.16 Appropriate surface water control will also be ensured through compliance with the relevant Environment Agency guidelines which will prevent uncontrolled surface waters from entering the watercourse.
- 3.17 Prior to the removal/construction of the new culvert and outfall Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and the Environment Agency (EA) must be consulted to ensure the working methods proposed are in line with current guidelines and requirements.
- 3.18 Following consultation with the EA and NRW this method statement will be updated to include any additional requirements identified during consultation.
- 3.19 It is recommended that the developer create piles of brash or logs as habitat and potential otter couches from the remnants of any trees to be felled on the site.

- 3.20 Upon completion of the culvert and outfall installations, the bank should be restored to its previous levels and should be planted using native local tree stock. It is recommended that willows are included within the planting scheme as they have large root systems which provide good shelter for otter.
- 3.21 The planting scheme will screen the water course and otter from the new development and will provide resting places for otter. The tree planting will also help to prevent bank collapse or erosion.
- 3.22 If otters are observed in or around the river habitats prior to or during works, work should cease and advice should be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

Additional Mitigation

- 3.23 Following completion of the new culvert, installation of the new road and development on the site, there will be added pressure on the river from local residents who may use the road and walkways as a commuting route. There is also likely to be an increase in the number of dogs/dog walkers along the river following the completion of the development.
- 3.24 A permanent otter proof fence must be constructed along the length of both sides of the new road to prevent access to the river by people and dogs. This should also extend north and south along Croesnewydd Road to prevent access to the main road. This will prevent any additional disturbance to the otter in the river and minimise road traffic accidents.
- 3.25 A permanent otter proof fence must also be constructed between any new residential development and the river. Ensuring that access for otters along the river corridor is not restricted.

APPENDIX 1

Otter Survey

1.0 PROJECT DETAILS

Project Name:	Wrexham Technology Park		
TEP Job Ref:	4571	TEP Doc. Ref:	4571.003
Site Location:	Croesnewydd Road, Wrexham	National Grid Ref:	SJ 31739 50438
Date	24/06/2014		
Surveyors:	John Crowder, Ian Holland		
Weather	Warm with clear skies		
Methods:	A survey was carried out to check for any evidence of otter using the site. The section of the River Gwenfro which runs through the site, as well as an additional 50m stretch up and downstream from the site, were surveyed from within the water course. Suitable adjacent habitat was also checked for any signs of otter such as footprints, spraint, holts or slides.		
Drawing Ref:	D4571.003		

2.0 SURVEY DETAILS

2.1 Summary of Desktop Data

Source:	Site / Habitat / Species Data:	km from site:	Direction from site:
Marches Ecology Ecological Impact Assessment (C076/J2EcIA/Final)	Otter signs	Within the site and up to 5km away	Within the site and east/west of site

3.0 SURVEY RESULTS

Aquatic Habitat Descriptions

3.1 The location of the section of the River Gwenfro subjected to survey in 2008-2009 by Marches Ecology and in 2014 by TEP is identified on Drawing D4571.003. The table below describes the river.

Waterbody Type	Description
River Gwenfro	The River Gwenfro meanders through the centre of the site and is partially culverted. It passes under a bridge at each end of the site. The banks comprise a mix of habitats including scrub, dense Himalayan balsam and woodland areas. The river is shallow and varies from slow to fast flowing.

Historic Field Evidence

3.2 The table below details the positive field evidence found during the 2008 - 2009 surveys.

Waterbody Type	Evidence															
Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>)																
River Gwenfro	Marches Ecology undertook four monitoring survey visits for otter between December 2008 and July 2009. The surveys recorded findings on site and within 5km up and down stream of the site. The results of these surveys are summarised in the table below.															
	<table><tr><th>Visit</th><th>Date</th><th>Findings</th></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>15/12/2008</td><td>19 records of spraint, 9 records of footprints.</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>18/02/2009</td><td>25 records of spraint, 1 record of footprints.</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>26/05/2009</td><td>21 records of spraint, 15 records of footprints, 3 probable lie up sites.</td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>31/07/2009</td><td>8 records of spraint.</td></tr></table>	Visit	Date	Findings	1	15/12/2008	19 records of spraint, 9 records of footprints.	2	18/02/2009	25 records of spraint, 1 record of footprints.	3	26/05/2009	21 records of spraint, 15 records of footprints, 3 probable lie up sites.	4	31/07/2009	8 records of spraint.
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Field Evidence 2014

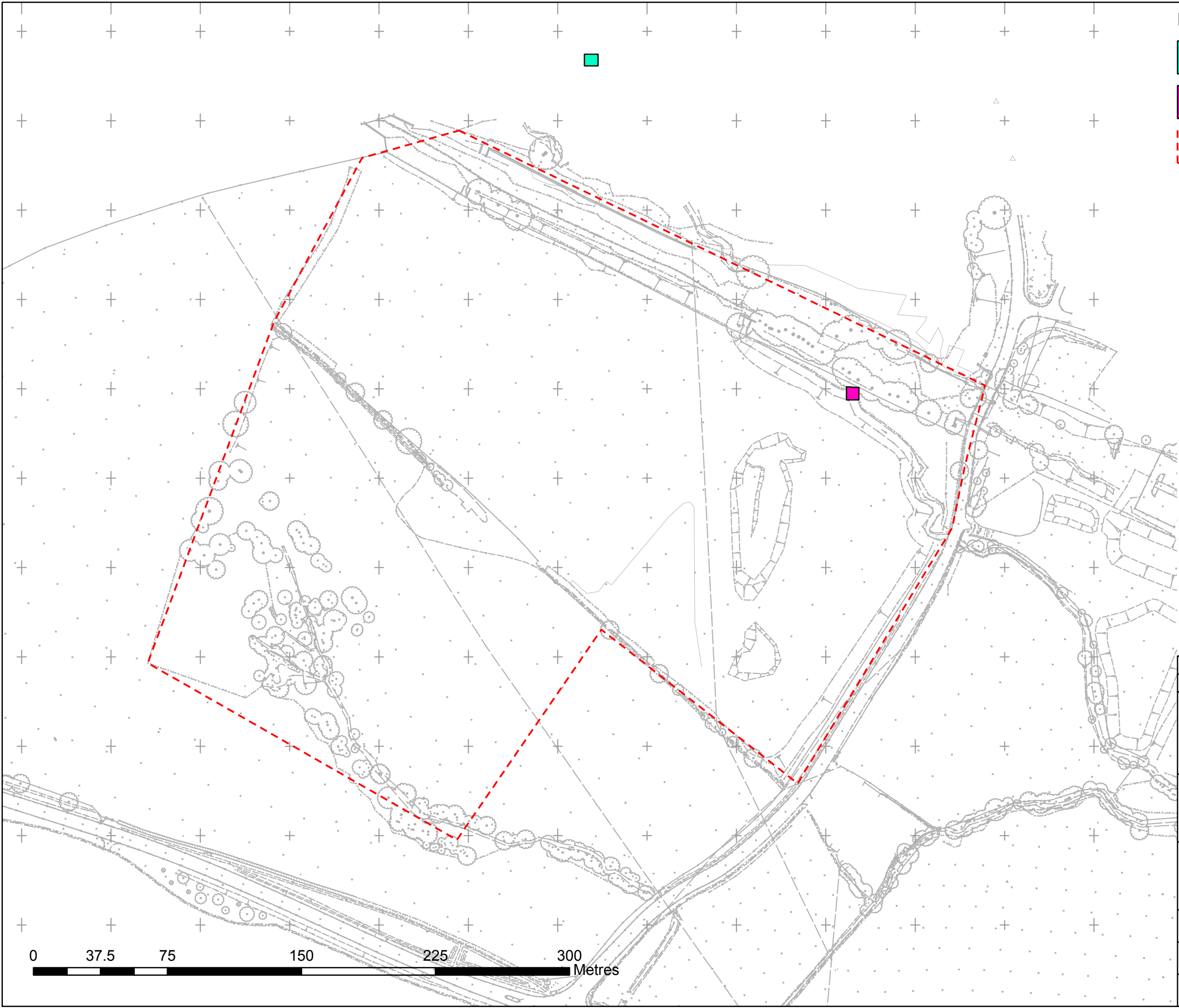
3.2 The table below details the positive field evidence found during the 2014 survey.

Waterbody Type	Evidence
Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>)	
River Gwenfro	A single spraint and small number of footprints were identified during the survey. The location of these signs is shown in drawing G4571.003. The river contains a number of areas on site which may be suitable as resting places for otter, though no holts were identified during the survey.

4.0 SUMMARY

- 4.1 Previous ecological surveys at the site identified the River Gwenfro as suitable to support otter. The river has banks that vary from steep to shallow, the majority of which are densely covered with Himalayan balsam and heavily shaded by dense trees, scrub and hedgerows.
- 4.2 Evidence of otter was observed along the River Gwenfro during the 2008/2009 surveys, both within the section which runs through the site and within 5km in both up and downstream.
- 4.3 During the 2014 survey a single spraint and a number of footprints were identified. This suggests the section of the River Gwenfro which runs through site is used sporadically by the local otter population. A number of areas suitable as resting places for otter were identified, though no holts were identified during the survey.
- 4.4 Otters are European protected species and are provided full protection under *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010* as amended, and the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981(as amended)*. Under this legislation, otters and their resting places are fully protected, making it an offence to deliberately capture, injure or kill them or to damage, destroy or obstruct access to their breeding or resting places. It is also an offence to disturb otters in their breeding or resting places.
- 4.5 Taking into account that otters have large home-ranges, precautionary working methods should be put in place during the site clearance and construction phases of the proposed development to ensure no impacts on the otter population. The design and layout of the site, particularly any drainage plans, will need to consider the potential for any impacts on otter, through either direct or indirect impacts to the banks and water quality, to ensure the current conservation status of the local otter population is not negatively affected. Recommended precautionary working measures are discussed in detail in the Otter Method Statement produced by TEP (4571.002). All recommendations in the Method Statement must be fully

adhered to to avoid any possible contravention of wildlife legislation.



Key



Otter Footprints



Otter spraint

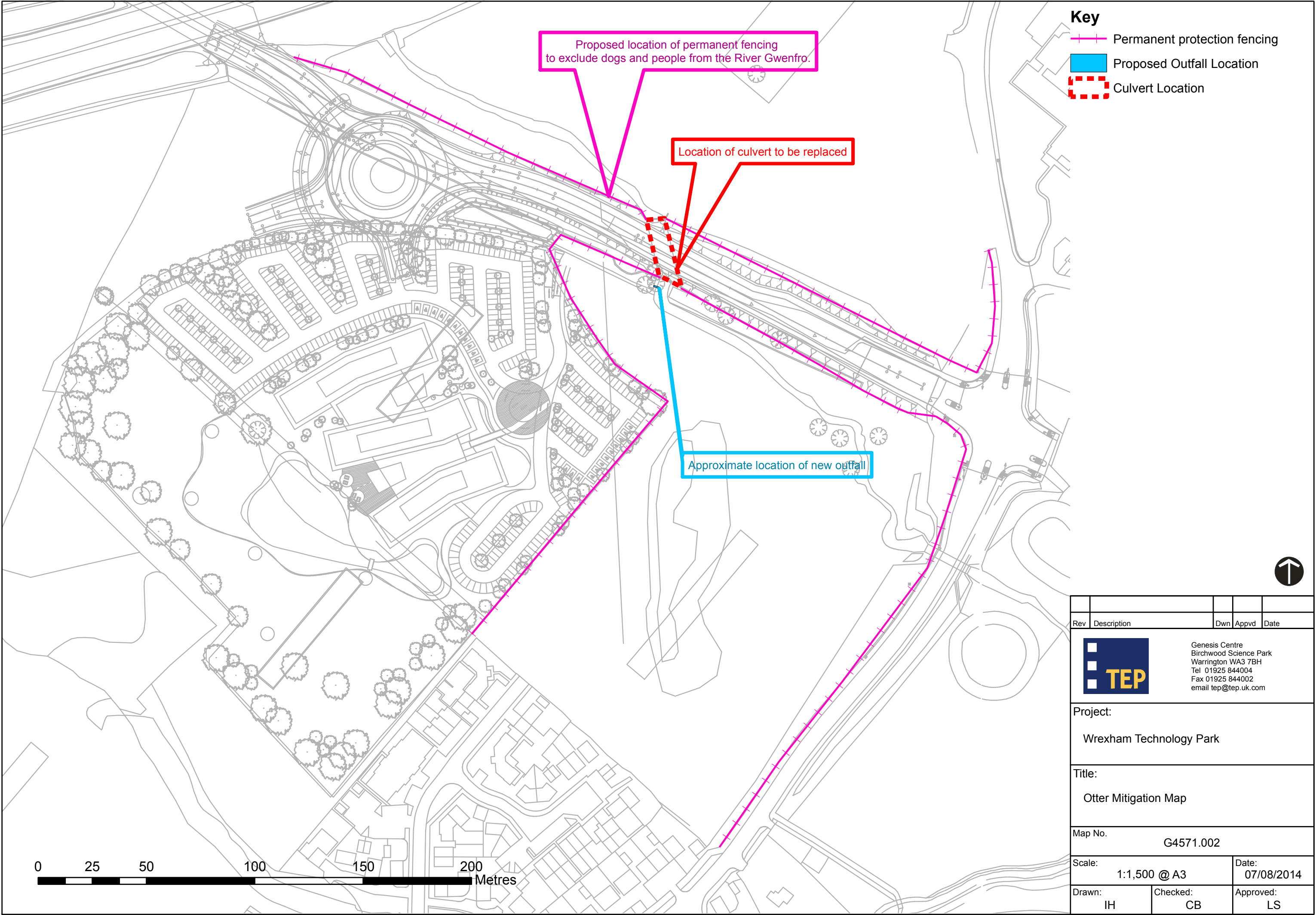


Site-Boundary



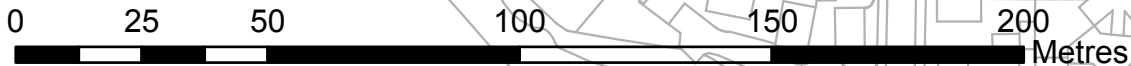
Rev	Description	Dwn	Appvd	Date
		Genesis Centre Birchwood Science Park Warrington WA3 7BH Tel 01925 844004 Fax 01925 844002 email tep@tep.uk.com		
Project: Wrexham Technology Park				
Title: Otter Survey Map				
Map No.		G4571.003		
Scale: 1:2,000 @ A3			Date: 22/07/2014	
Drawn: IH		Checked: LS		Approved: LS

DRAWINGS



Key

- Permanent protection fencing
- Proposed Outfall Location
- Culvert Location



Rev	Description	Dwn	Appvd	Date
	 Genesis Centre Birchwood Science Park Warrington WA3 7BH Tel 01925 844004 Fax 01925 844002 email tep@tep.uk.com			
Project: Wrexham Technology Park				
Title: Otter Mitigation Map				
Map No. G4571.002				
Scale: 1:1,500 @ A3			Date: 07/08/2014	
Drawn: IH		Checked: CB		Approved: LS