



TRANSPORT  
**SCOTLAND**  
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

# Environmental Impact Assessment Record of Determination

A9 930 Allt Cuaich – Joint  
Replacement

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## Project Details

### Description

BEAR Scotland has been commissioned by Transport Scotland to carry out a replacement of bridge expansion joints at the A9 930 Allt Cuaich bridge. The works will consist of like-for-like replacement of the bridge expansion joints as well as areas of localised resurfacing on the bridge deck. This is required due to the failure of the existing joint.

The works are currently programmed to be completed within the 2023/2024 financial year and are expected to commence on 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2023. Works are expected to be completed over 4 days, by operating with a mixture of daytime (07:00 – 19:00) and night time (19:00 – 07:00) working hours.

Traffic management (TM) will involve single line closures, facilitated by temporary traffic lights (TTLs). If the programme changes, this may result in amendments to the exact TM requirements. Where required, alternative pedestrian routes will be included in the TM setup.

### Location

The scheme is located on the A9 930 Allt Cuaich bridge, which lies approximately 2km north of Dalwhinnie within the Highland Council area (Figure 1). The National Grid Reference (NGR) for the A9 930 Allt Cuaich bridge (measured at the centre of the bridge deck) is NN 65689 87137.

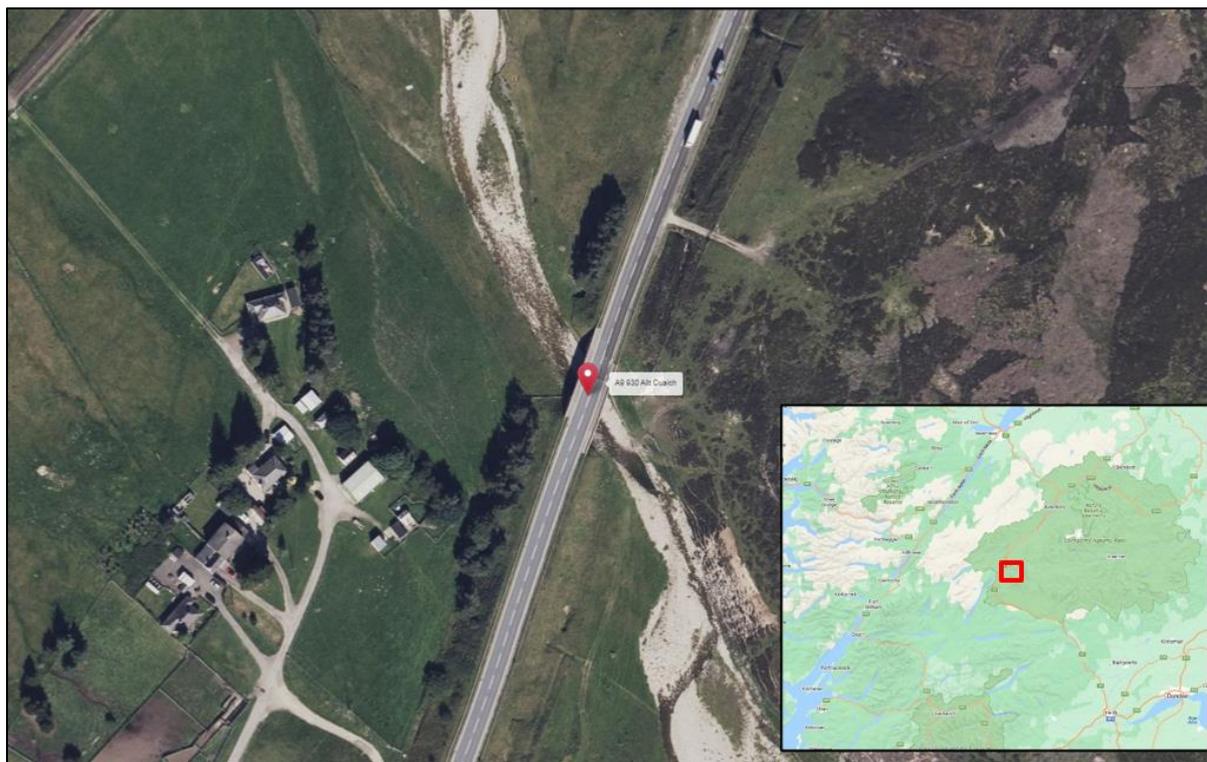


Figure 1. Location and scheme extent of the proposed joint replacement and resurfacing works at A9 930 Allt Cuaich bridge. Source: BEAR Scotland. F108 – Environmental Assessment Request (Scheme ref: 23-NW-1201-21).

## Description of local environment

### Air quality

The scheme does not fall within any Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) ([Air Quality Scotland](#)). The nearest air quality monitoring site to the scheme is located in Fort William, approximately 55km southwest of the scheme, which records local concentrations of Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), Nitric oxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and Nitrogen dioxide (NO). The levels at the time of the search were recorded as low ([Air Quality Scotland](#)). Pollution levels in the general vicinity of works are anticipated to be lower than those at the monitoring station in Fort William due to the remote nature of the scheme location.

No sites registered on the Scottish Pollutant Release Inventory (SPRI) ([Scotland's Environment](#)) are located within 10km of the works.

Average Annual Daily Flow (AADF) for the A9 carriageway approximately 8km south of the scheme extents accounted for 9,938 vehicles in 2022, of which 18.5% were heavy goods vehicles (HGV) ([Road Traffic Statistics](#)).

Baseline air quality is likely to be primarily influenced by traffic along the A9 trunk road, with secondary sources likely to arise from nearby agricultural practices. The

Highland Mainline Railway Line lies 230m west of the A9 at the scheme extents. Railway movements will also have an impact on the local air quality.

## Cultural heritage

There are no World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Garden and Designed Landscapes, Conservation Areas, Inventory Battlefields, Historic Environment Records or Canmore features identified within 300m of the A9 930 Allt Cuaich ([PastMap](#)).

All works are restricted to the trunk road, with only 'like-for-like' replacement of the bridge joints and the bridge deck road surface being undertaken, therefore the works do not include any alterations that would affect the historic and architectural character of any features of cultural heritage interest. It has been determined that the proposed project does not carry the potential to cause direct or indirect impact to features of cultural heritage importance.

As such, impact has been assessed as being 'no change' and has been scoped out of requiring further assessment.

## Landscape and visual effects

The scheme is located within the Cairngorms National Park (CNP) ([SiteLink](#)), which has the following special qualities:

### 1.0 General Qualities

- Magnificent mountains towering over moorland, forest and strath;
- Vastness of space, scale and height;
- Strong juxtaposition of contrasting landscapes;
- A landscape of layers, from inhabited strath to remote, uninhabited upland;
- 'The harmony of complicated curves; and
- Landscapes both cultural and natural.

### 2.0 The Mountains and Plateaux

- The unifying presence of the central mountains;
- An imposing massif of strong dramatic character;
- The unique plateaux of vast scale, distinctive landforms and exposed, boulder strewn high ground;
- The surrounding hills;
- The drama of deep corries;
- Exceptional glacial landforms; and

- Snowscapes.

### **3.0 Moorlands**

- Extensive moorland, linking the farmland, woodland and the high tops; and
- A patchwork of muirburn.

### **4.0 Glens and Straths**

- Steep glens and high passes;
- Broad, farmed straths;
- Renowned rivers; and
- Beautiful lochs.

### **5.0 Trees, Woods and Forests**

- Dark and venerable pine forest;
- Light and airy birch woods;
- Parkland and policy woodlands; and
- Long association with forestry.

### **6.0 Wildlife and Nature**

- Dominance of natural landforms;
- Extensive tracts of natural vegetation;
- Association with iconic animals;
- Wild land; and
- Wildness.

### **7.0 Visual and Sensory Qualities**

- Layers of receding ridge lines;
- Grand panoramas and framed views;
- A landscape of many colours;
- Dark skies;
- Attractive and contrasting textures; and
- The dominance of natural sounds.

### **8.0 Culture and History**

- Distinctive planned towns;
- Vernacular stone buildings;

- Dramatic, historical routes;
- The wistfulness of abandoned settlements;
- Focal cultural landmarks of castles, distilleries and bridges; and
- The Royal connection.

## 9.0 Recreation

- A landscape of opportunities; and
- Spirituality.

The scheme does not lie within a National Scenic Area (NSA) ([Scotland's Environment](#)).

The Landscape Character Type (LCT) within the scheme extents is categorized as 'Upland Glen – Cairngorms' (no. 126) ([Scottish Landscape Character Types](#)), which is characterised by:

- Strong evidence of glacial processes, including steepened sides and level floors, shattered rock faces on higher slopes, hummocks of resistant rock on some glen floors and terraces of glacial deposits at the edges of glen floors.
- Often form arrival points into the Cairngorms National Park.
- Size varies from large open passes to narrower, more secluded glens.
- Enclosed predominantly by steep slopes.
- Frequently differing land-use on one side of the glen to the other - linked to aspect.
- Improved, grazed fields on glen floors and floodplains.
- Mostly settled, some only sparsely, but often extensive evidence of past settlement, including prehistoric hut circles and associated field systems, pre-improvement townships, and seasonal shielings.
- Some landmark historic buildings.
- Access varies from narrow roads, estate and forestry tracks to main routes, but most have some form of road running through them.
- Varied experience when passing through glens from open and expansive to sheltered and secluded.
- Views to adjacent uplands; from which parts of the glens are visible and provide contrast.

Historic Environment Scotland's HLAMap ([HLAMap](#)) has highlighted that the surrounding landscape is dominated by rough grazing.

## Biodiversity

A desktop study using NatureScot SiteLink ([SiteLink](#)) has identified the River Spey Special Area of Conservation (SAC) ([SiteLink](#)) within 2km of the scheme extents. The A9 930 Allt Cuaich spans Allt Cuaich River, which forms a part of the River Spey SAC approximately 40m downstream of the A9.

BEAR Scotland carried out a Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) to assess potential impacts of a range of maintenance activities (including joint replacement and resurfacing) on the River Spey SAC.

The NBN Atlas holds records of two bird species within 2km over a 10-year period. Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, all wild birds and their active nests are protected.

The NBN Atlas does not hold records of invasive non-native species (INNS) of plants, as listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA), injurious weeds, as listed under the Weeds Act 1959, or invasive native perennials, as listed in the Trunk Road Inventory Manual under the same criteria.

A search with Transport Scotland's Asset Management Performance System (AMPS) also did not identify any invasive or injurious plant species within the scheme extents.

Habitats surrounding the bridge are dominated by open fields of agricultural grasslands with pockets of alpine and subalpine grasslands. Temperate shrub heathland and dry heaths lie further afield.

Freshwater habitat in proximity to the A9 930 Allt Cuaich bridge is provided by Allt Cuaich river, which is spanned by the bridge, and River Truim (from source to Allt Cuaich confluence), in which Allt Cuaich discharges 500m west of the bridge. Riparian zones along the Allt Cuaich are characterised by rocky eroded strips with no significant vegetation present. Some rough grassland lies along the northern bank of the bridge. Tree cover in proximity to the scheme is sparse and limited to isolated strips and pockets of conifer trees along the residential properties. Considering the lack of habitat diversity within the trunk road boundary and the lack of tree cover, intensive agriculture and high traffic density and fast-flowing traffic, it is considered unlikely that any terrestrial mammal species of conservation importance are associated with permanent habitat or resting places within the area of likely construction disturbance.

No woodland noted on the Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) ([Scotland's Environment](#)) has been identified within 300m of the scheme.

## Ecological surveys

A preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) and a preliminary roost assessment (PRA) was carried out in May 2023 by the BEAR Scotland ecologists. Two follow up surveys on the bridge were undertaken by a qualified and experienced sub-contractor in July 2023.

The land surrounding the scheme is dominated by heavily grazed pastoral land with signs of sheep and cows. The riverbanks were eroded, possibly caused by domestic animals and water level fluctuations. Woodland is restricted to sparse pockets and strips of conifer trees along the trunk road corridor and at the residential properties. The nearest notable woodland is located at least 2km west of the scheme. Freshwater habitat within the area is provided by the Allt Cuaich which meanders below the bridge deck causing significant erosion to the sandy and rocky riverbanks.

Although there was no evidence of nesting birds present within the survey area, the area has suitable habitat for a wide variety of birds.

No signs of other protected species or suitable habitats were identified during the survey. Woodland cover in proximity to the bridge is limited with no suitable refuge for protected mammal species available. Furthermore, given the proximity to the road and intensive cattle and sheep farming, it is considered unlikely that protected species would utilize these areas for resting places.

No INNS or injurious weeds were recorded during the survey.

## Geology and soils

The scheme does not lie within a Geological Conservation Review Site (GCRS) or geological Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) ([SiteLink](#)).

The Generalised Soil Type at the scheme location is identified as peaty podzols ([Scotland's Soils](#)).

A desktop study using the British Geological Survey Map ([BGS GeolIndex](#)) identifies the local geology type as a combination of the following:

### Bedrock Geology:

- Gaick Psammite formation (psammite), which is a metamorphic bedrock.

### Superficial Deposits:

- Alluvial Fan deposits (gravel, sand, silt and clay), which is a superficial deposit.

As a result of the works taking place strictly within made ground within the A9 carriageway boundary (the bridge deck), it has been determined that the proposed project does not carry the potential to cause direct or indirect impact to geology or soils. As such, impact has been assessed as being 'no change' and has been scoped out of requiring further assessment.

## Material assets and waste

The proposed works will include reinstatement of the bridge joints and the bridge deck surface course. Materials used will consist of:

- Expansion joint nosing materials.
- Asphaltic material (surface and binder).

The scheme design intends to treat the upper bridge deck layer to a depth of 40mm, which has been laid during the last 40 years; therefore, it is assumed that coal tar is not present within planings removed from the scheme extent.

Planings from the bridge deck surface course, which will be fully recovered for re-use in line with BEAR Scotland's Procedure 126: The Production of Fully Recovered Asphalt Road Planings, where not contaminated with coal tar. The Contractor is responsible for the disposal of road planings and this has been registered in accordance with a Paragraph 13(a) waste exemption issued by SEPA, as described in Schedule 3 of the Waste Management Licensing Regulations 2011.

The scheme is executed by the operating company as site operations e.g. 'As-of-Right' scheme of value less than £350,000. As a result, a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) is not required.

## Noise and vibration

The scheme extent lies within a rural setting with five residential properties located within the scheme extents. These are all congregated southwest of the bridge with the nearest being 50m from the scheme extent. Residential properties are afforded some screening by 5m wide conifer tree belts.

The works do not fall within a Candidate Noise Management Area (CNMA) as defined by the Transportation Noise Action Plan ([TNAP](#)).

Scotland's strategic noise map does not report data for the A9 within the scheme extents ([Scotland's Noise Scotland's Environment](#)). However, given the rural nature of the area and the low AADT flow, it is considered likely that baseline noise levels will be low.

Baseline noise levels at the scheme location are likely to be primarily influenced by traffic along the A9 trunk road, with secondary influences from the agricultural activities and the Highland Mainline railway line, which lies 230m west of the scheme extents.

## Population and human health

Five residential properties lie within 300m of the A9 930 Allt Cuaich bridge. These are all congregated southwest of the bridge with the nearest being 50m from the scheme extent. Residential properties are afforded some screening by 5m wide conifer tree belts. There are no access points to residential properties or local road network within the scheme extents.

There are no pedestrian facilities (core paths ([Scotland's Environment](#)), National Cycle Network (NCN) routes ([OS Maps](#)), walking routes as listed on WalkHighlands ([WalkHighland](#)), or other pedestrian facilities) within the scheme extent.

The A9 Trunk Road connects Perth with Thurso. It commences immediately north of Inveralmond Roundabout in Perth leading generally northwards for a distance of 357 kilometres to its junction with an unclassified road leading to Holborn Head lighthouse at Scrabster. The A9 is a mixture of single carriageway, '2+1' carriageway and stretches of two-lane dual carriageway. The A9 at the scheme location is a single carriageway.

## Road drainage and the water environment

The A9 930 Allt Cuaich bridge spans the Allt Cuaich (ID: 23639) which is a waterbody classified by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) under the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC (WFD) in 2020 as having 'Bad ecological potential'. Allt Cuaich is a river in the River Spey catchment of the Scotland river basin district. The main stem is approximately 10.1km in length. The water body has been designated as a heavily modified water body on account of physical alterations that cannot be addressed without a significant impact on water storage for hydroelectricity generation ([SEPA water environmental hub](#)).

Allt Cuaich merges with the River Truim - lower catchment (ID: 23146) approximately 500m west of the scheme. The River Truim - lower catchment is a classified waterbody and has been assessed in 2020 as having 'Moderate ecological potential' ([SEPA water environmental hub](#)).

There are several minor (unclassified) surface waterbodies/drainage ditches that lie within 300m of the scheme.

The scheme falls within the 'Strathnairn, Speyside and Cairngorms' and 'Upper Spey Sand and Gravel' groundwater bodies which were both classified by SEPA in 2020 as having an overall status of 'Good' ([SEPA water environmental hub](#)) and are also Drinking Water Protected Areas (Ground) ([DWPA](#)).

The A9 930 Allt Cuaich bridge has not been highlighted as having risk of flooding ([SEPA Flood Map](#)). The bridge spans Allt Cuaich, which is highlighted to have a high risk of fluvial and surface water flooding directly below the bridge deck (i.e., each year the banks of Allt Cuaich have a 10% chance of flooding).

## Climate

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 sets out the target and vision set by the Scottish Government for tackling and responding to climate change ([The Climate Change \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#)). The Act includes a target of reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 80% before 2050 (from the baseline year 1990). The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 amended the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 to bring the target of reaching net-zero emissions in Scotland forward to 2045 ([Climate Change \(Emissions Reduction Targets\) \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#)).

The Scottish Government has since published its indicative Nationally Determined Contribution (iNDC) to set out how it will reach net-zero emissions by 2045, working to reduce emissions of all major greenhouse gases by at least 75% by 2030 ([Scotland's contribution to the Paris Agreement: indicative Nationally Determined Contribution - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)). By 2040, the Scottish Government is committed to reducing emissions by 90%, with the aim of reaching net-zero by 2045 at the latest.

Transport Scotland is committed to reducing carbon across Scotland's transport network and this commitment is being enacted through the Mission Zero for Transport ([Mission Zero for transport | Transport Scotland](#)). Transport is the largest contributor to harmful climate emissions in Scotland. In response to the climate emergency, Transport Scotland are committed to reducing their emissions by 75% by 2030 and to a legally binding target of net-zero by 2045.

## Policies and plans

This Record of Determination (RoD) has been undertaken in accordance with all relevant regulations, guidance, policies and plans, notably including the Environment and Sustainability Discipline of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges ([Design Manual for Roads and Bridges \(DMRB\)](#)) and Transport Scotland's Environmental Impact Assessment Guidance ([Guidance - Environmental Impact Assessments for road projects \(transport.gov.scot\)](#)).

## Description of main environmental impacts and proposed mitigation

### Air quality

Construction activities associated with the proposed works have the potential to temporarily cause local air quality impacts. Activities undertaken on site may cause dust and particulate matter to be emitted to the atmosphere. However, taking into account the nature and scale of the works and the following mitigation measures, the risk of significant impacts to air are considered to be low.

- All plant, machinery and vehicles associated with the scheme will be switched off when not in use.
- All plant, machinery and vehicles associated with the scheme will be maintained in order to minimise emissions, as per manufacturing and legal requirements. No significant dust, particulate matter, and exhaust emissions (DPMEE) sources will be introduced by the works.
- Green driving techniques will be adopted, and effective route preparation and planning will be undertaken prior to works.
- All delivery vehicles carrying material with dust potential will be covered when travelling to or leaving site, preventing the spread of dust beyond the work area.
- Material stockpiles will be reduced as far as is reasonably practicable by using a 'just in time' delivery system. All material will also be stored on made ground.
- Any stockpiled material on site will be monitored daily to ensure no risks of dust emissions exists.
- Materials will be removed from site as soon as is practicable.
- Good housekeeping will be employed throughout the work.
- Drop heights to haulage vehicles and onto conveyors will be minimised.
- Surfaces will be swept where loose material remains.

With the above mitigation measures in place, it is anticipated that any air quality effects associated with the proposed works are unlikely to be significant. This receptor is not considered further in this RoD.

## Landscape and visual effects

There is potential for minor, temporary visual impacts to the local landscape during the construction phase as a result of obstructed views due to vehicles and machinery. However, proposed works will be restricted to like-for-like bridge joint replacement and resurfacing on the A9 930 Allt Cuaich bridge and will be carried out over 4-days (a mixture of daytime and night time working) and land use will not change as a result of the works. Therefore, the works will not create any significant change to the local landscape. No significant impacts to the Cairngorms National Park are expected, and no consultations are required. In addition, the following mitigation measures will be put in place during works:

- Throughout all stages of the works, the site will be kept clean and tidy, with materials, equipment, plant and wastes appropriately stored, reducing the landscape and visual effects as much as possible.
- The working area will be appropriately reinstated following works.
- Works will avoid encroaching on land and areas where work is not required or is not permitted. This includes general works, storage of equipment/containers and parking.
- Where applicable, upon completion of the works, any damage to the local landscape will be reinstated as much as is practicable.
- The site will be left clean and tidy following construction.

With the above mitigation measures in place, it is anticipated that any landscape and visual effects associated with the proposed works are unlikely to be significant. This receptor is not considered further in this RoD.

## Biodiversity

### Designated Sites

The A9 930 Allt Cuaich bridge spans the Allt Cuaich River, which forms a part of the River Spey SAC approximately 40m downstream of the A9. BEAR Scotland carried out a HRA to assess potential impacts of a range of maintenance activities (including bridge joint replacement and resurfacing) on the River Spey and its overlapped European Sites and produced an HRA Proforma document. The HRA Proforma outlines standard good practice measures to reduce the risk of pollution or disturbance to qualifying features of these designated sites. The HRA Proforma concluded that the maintenance activities (including bridge joint replacement and resurfacing) would not result in Likely Significant Effects (LSE) on the qualifying features of the European Sites and was approved by Transport Scotland in 2023 and

was also agreed by Nature Scot. All standard good practice measures will be adhered to. These measures will be detailed in the Site Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) and adhered to during works. As such, the works are not expected to result in LSE on the qualifying features of the River Spey by virtue of the following factors:

- All works are restricted to made-ground on the A9 carriageway surface and A9 930 Allt Cuaich bridge deck, with only 'like-for-like' bridge expansion joint replacement and road resurfacing being undertaken. The works are also of short duration (4 days only).
- All works will be completed over 4-days by utilising a mixture of daytime and night time working. Artificial lighting will be directed in a way to reduce the spread and ensure that only the task area is lit.
- There is also no requirement for land take (or resources) or site clearance from within the SAC and no works are required within any part of the SAC.
- Disturbance levels due to joint replacement and resurfacing works are unlikely to be significantly higher than disturbance due to normal traffic on the A9. Any species in the area are likely to be habituated to existing levels of disturbance on the A9 due to traffic noise.
- Given the highly rural location of the scheme, it is anticipated that foraging species would easily avoid the works area if any disturbance was created from noise as there is an abundance of alternative habitat present in the landscape suitable for foraging.

### **Terrestrial Ecology**

Although, no bird nests were noted within the potential works disturbance area, nearby areas provide suitable habitat for ground nesting birds. As such, relevant ecological checks will be undertaken prior to works starting.

The walkover surveys noted no presence of invasive or injurious species within the scheme extents.

During road resurfacing and bridge joint replacement, activities undertaken on site could potentially have a temporary adverse impact on biodiversity in the area as a result of an increased vehicle presence and the potential for disturbance to protected species and pollution of habitats. However, any protected species in the area are likely to be accustomed to traffic noise on the A9. Pollution controls and good practice measures to reduce impacts of works on the local environment will be detailed in the SEMP and adhered to on site. Therefore, with the following mitigation

measures in place, the risk of significant impacts on biodiversity are considered to be low:

- Works will be strictly limited to areas required for access and completion of works. Unnecessary encroachment onto terrestrial or aquatic areas will not be tolerated.
- No tree felling or in-stream works will be permitted.
- All construction operatives will be briefed through toolbox talks prior to works commencing. The toolbox talks will provide information on the legislation, general ecology, and best practice measures for relevant protected species and INNS.
- Site personnel will remain vigilant for the presence of any protected species throughout the works period. Should a protected species be noted during construction, works will temporarily halt until the species has sufficiently moved on. Any sightings of protected species will be reported to the BEAR Scotland Environmental Team.
- Artificial lighting used during the night works will also be directed away from road verges, and waterbodies as far as is safe and reasonably practicable.
- Site personnel will remain vigilant for the presence of potentially unrecorded instances of INNS or injurious weeds in road verges throughout the works period. Should any INNS be identified in working areas, no works will take place within 7m of these areas until the BEAR Scotland Environmental Team can provide further advice on additional mitigation measures.
- A 'soft start' will be implemented on site each day. This will involve switching on vehicles and checking under/around vehicles and the immediate work area for mammals prior to works commencing to ensure none are present and that there is a gradual increase in noise. Any excavations, exposed pipes/drains, or areas where an animal could become trapped (e.g., storage containers) will be covered over when not in use, at the end of each shift, and following completion of the works to avoid animals falling in and becoming trapped.
- If fencing is utilised at any point during the works, a gap of 200mm from ground level will be provided, allowing free passage for mammals and preventing entrapment.

With the above mitigation measures in place, it is anticipated that any biodiversity effects associated with the proposed works are unlikely to be significant. This receptor is not considered further in this RoD.

## Material assets and waste

There is potential for impacts as a result of resource depletion through use and transportation of new materials. However, materials will be sourced locally where possible and the following mitigation measures will be put in place:

- Materials will be sourced from recycled origins as far as reasonably practicable within design specifications.
- Care will be taken to order the correct quantity of required materials to prevent the disposal of unused materials.
- Where possible, minimal packaging will be requested on required deliveries to reduce unnecessary waste and production of packaging materials.

There is potential for impacts during works as a result of the improper storage or disposal of waste. The following mitigation measures will be put in place:

- The waste hierarchy (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Dispose) will be employed throughout the construction works.
- The subcontractor will adhere to waste management legislation and ensure they comply with their Duty of Care.
- Containment measures will be in place to prevent debris or pollutants from entering the surrounding environment.
- Uncontaminated road planings will be re-used or recycled under a SEPA Paragraph 13(a) waste exemption and in line with BEAR Scotland's Procedure 126: The Production of Fully Recovered Asphalt Road Planings.
- All wastes and unused materials will be removed from site in a safe and legal manner by a licensed waste carrier upon completion of the works, unless otherwise stated. The appointed waste carrier will have a valid SEPA waste carrier registration, a copy of which will be provided to and retained by BEAR Scotland as early as possible.
- All appropriate waste documentation will be present on site and be available for inspection. A copy of the Duty of Care paperwork will be provided and filed appropriately in accordance with the Code of Practice (as made under Section 34 of Environmental Protection Act 1990 as amended).
- Re-use and recycling of waste will be encouraged, and the subcontractor will be required to fully outline their plans and provide documentary evidence for waste arising from the works (e.g. waste carrier's licence, transfer notes, and waste exemption certificates).

- Staff will be informed that littering will not be tolerated. Staff will be encouraged to collect any litter seen on site.
- Where applicable, all temporary signage will be removed from site on completion of the works.

With the above mitigation measures in place, it is anticipated that any material assets and waste effects associated with the proposed works are unlikely to be significant. This receptor is not considered further in this RoD.

## Noise and vibration

Construction activities associated with the proposed works have the potential to cause noise and vibration impacts through the use of equipment and construction vehicles for the proposed activities. Works will be undertaken over 4-days by utilising a mixture of daytime and night time working programme. The proposed scheme is anticipated to result in temporary minor adverse noise impacts. The following mitigation measures will be put in place:

- The Best Practice Means, as defined in Section 72 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974, will be employed at all times to reduce noise to a minimum.
- Residential properties have a degree of screening from the A9 930 Allt Cuaich bridge.
- The Environmental Health Officer (EHO) from The Highland Council will be notified of works due to the proximity of nearby residential properties.
- The noisiest works (e.g. planing) will be programmed to be completed before 23:00 each night, where reasonably practicable.
- All site personnel will be fully briefed in advance of works regarding the need to minimise noise during works and of the site-specific sensitivities.
- Local residents will be notified of works via letter drop and road users will be informed of works through a media release, which will provide details of construction dates and times.
- The BEAR Scotland 'Being a Good Neighbour' toolbox talk will be briefed to all operatives prior to commencement of works on site.
- On-site construction tasks will be programmed to be as efficient as possible, with a view to limiting noise disruption to local sensitive receptors.
- All plant, machinery and vehicles will be switched off when not in use.
- All plant will be operated in such a way that minimises noise emissions and will have been maintained regularly to the appropriate standards.

- Where fitted, and where permitted under Health and Safety requirements, white noise reversing alarms will be utilised during construction.
- Where ancillary plant such as generators are required, they will be positioned so as to cause minimum noise disturbance. Where deemed necessary, acoustic screens will be utilised.

With the above mitigation measures in place, it is anticipated that any noise and vibration effects associated with the proposed works are unlikely to be significant. This receptor is not considered further in this RoD.

## Population and human health

During construction, activities undertaken on site may have temporary adverse impacts on vehicle travellers and non-motorised road users (NMUs) as a result of vehicle noise and delays due to traffic management measures. Road users will be informed of works through a media release, which will provide details of construction dates and times. The works will be of short duration (4-days) and there are no pedestrian facilities within the scheme. With the following mitigation measures in place, the risk of significant impacts on population and human health is considered to be low:

- Local residents will be notified of the impending works. Information will provide contact details (office phone number and e-mail address) for the Project Engineer as well as a 24-hour contact number for the BEAR Scotland Control Room.
- Where ancillary plant such as generators are required, they will be positioned so as to cause minimum noise disturbance.
- Appropriate provisions / measures will be implemented within the traffic management to allow the safe passage of NMUs of all abilities through the site (if required).
- Journey planning information will be available for drivers online at the [trafficscotland.org](http://trafficscotland.org) website. Journey planning information will also be available for drivers online through BEAR Scotland's social media platforms.

With the above mitigation measures in place, it is anticipated that any population and human health effects associated with the proposed works are unlikely to be significant. This receptor is not considered further in this RoD.

## Road drainage and the water environment

During these works, there is potential for temporary impacts on the water environment. Potential changes in water quality from pollution events (either by accidental spillage of sediments, particulate matter, chemicals, fuels or by mobilisation of these in surface water caused by rain or tidal movements) during works have the potential to have a direct or indirect effect on the surrounding waterbodies. The following mitigation measures will be put in place to reduce the risk of pollution incidents as a result of works:

- Standard working practices to comply with The Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 (as amended) for works near water are detailed in the SEMP and will be adhered to on site.
- The scheme will not entail any in-stream works.
- No discharges into any watercourses or drainage systems will be permitted. Appropriate containment measures will be in place to prevent any loss of construction materials into the water environment.
- An incident response (contingency) plan will be put in place to reduce the risk from pollution incidents or accidental spillages. All necessary containment equipment, including suitable spill kits (for oil and chemicals) will be available on site, quickly accessible if needed, and staff trained in their use.
- All spills will be logged and reported. In the event of any spills into the water environment, all works will stop, and the incident will be reported to the project manager and the BEAR Scotland Environmental Team. SEPA will be informed of any such incident as soon as possible using the SEPA Pollution Hotline.
- All plant and equipment will be regularly inspected for any signs of damage and leaks. A checklist will be present to make sure that the checks have been carried out.
- Storage of hazardous material, oil and fuel containers will be distanced more than 10m away from any watercourses.
- If required, a designated refuelling area will be identified. Fuel bowsers will be stored on an impermeable area and be fully bunded. This will be distanced more than 10m from any watercourses.
- During refuelling of smaller mobile plant, a funnel will be used, and drip trays will be in place. Care will be taken to reduce the chance of spillages. The ground / stone around the site of a spill will be removed, double bagged and taken off site as special waste.

- Generators and static plant may have the potential to leak fuel and / or other hydrocarbons and will have bunding with a capacity of 110%. If these are not banded, then drip trays will also be supplied beneath the equipment with a capacity of 110%.

With the above mitigation measures in place, it is anticipated that any road drainage and the water environment effects associated with the proposed works are unlikely to be significant. This receptor is not considered further in this RoD.

## Climate

Construction activities associated with the proposed scheme works have the potential to cause local air quality impacts as a result of the emission of greenhouse gases through the use of vehicles and machinery, material use and production, and transportation of materials to and from site. The following mitigation measures will be put in place:

- BEAR Scotland will adhere to their Carbon Management Policy.
- Where possible, the works will be undertaken utilising a daytime work pattern to reduce the requirement for additional lighting.
- Local contractors and suppliers will be used as far as practicable to reduce fuel use and greenhouse gas emitted as part of the works.
- Where possible, materials will be sourced locally to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with material movement, and waste will be disposed at local landfill.

With the above mitigation measures in place, it is anticipated that any climate effects associated with the proposed works are unlikely to be significant. This receptor is not considered further in this RoD.

## Major Accidents and Disasters

The Allt Cuaich, spanned by the A9 930 Allt Cuaich bridge, has a high risk of fluvial and surface water flooding. However, all works are restricted to the bridge deck with no access into the watercourse required.

Works are restricted to the made ground of the A9 carriageway and traffic management will be designed in line with existing guidance. The proposed works are anticipated to last 4-days (combination of daytime and night time works). TM will involve single line closures, facilitated by TTLs.

A Traffic Management Plan (TMP), which includes measures to avoid or reduce disruption to road traffic, will be produced in accordance with the Traffic Signs Manual (Department of Transport 2009). The TMP will ensure that there is no severance of community assets, access routes or residential development.

These measures, along with mitigation measures and standard working practices, will be detailed in the SEMP and adhered to on site. The vulnerability of the project to risks of major accidents and disasters is considered to be low.

## Assessment of cumulative effects

The proposed works are not anticipated to result in significant environmental effects. Due to the nature of the proposed works, no cumulative effects are anticipated with any other developments in the vicinity.

A search of the Highland Council Planning ([Map Search](#)) Portal did not identify any planning applications within 300m of the scheme location.

A search of the Scottish Roads Works Commissioner's website ([Map Search](#)) has identified that no other roadworks are currently ongoing, or noted as being planned, on the trunk road at the same time as this scheme. There are also no local authority road networks in proximity to the scheme. Due to the nature of the proposed works, no cumulative effects are anticipated with any other developments in the vicinity.

BEAR Scotland programme all of their proposed works in line with appropriate guidance and contractual requirements. All schemes are programmed to take into account existing and future planned works, with a view of limiting any cumulative effects relating to traffic management. As a result of this exercise, where a potential for cumulative impacts is identified, BEAR Scotland will reprogramme schemes to avoid / limit any cumulative effects or will utilise existing traffic management to complete multiple schemes at once. This approach allows BEAR Scotland to effectively manage the potential cumulative effects as a result of traffic management, resulting in minimal disruption to users of the Scottish trunk road network.

Overall, it is unlikely that the proposed works will have a significant cumulative effect with any other future works in the area.

## Assessments of the environmental effects

As detailed in the Description of Main Environmental Impacts and Proposed Mitigation section within this Record of Determination, there are no significant effects anticipated on any environmental receptors as a result of the proposed works.

## Statement of case in support of a Determination that a statutory EIA is not required

This is a relevant project in terms of section 55A(16) of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 as it is a project for the improvement of a road and the completed works (together with any area occupied by apparatus, equipment, machinery, materials, plant, spoil heaps, or other such facilities or stores required during the period of construction) is situated in whole, or in part, within the Cairngorms NP, which is noted as a sensitive area within the meaning of regulation 2(1) of the Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 1999.

The project has been subject to screening using the Annex III criteria to determine whether a formal Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 (as amended by The Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017). Screening using Annex III criteria and review of available information has not identified the need for a statutory EIA.

The projects will not have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as:

### Characteristics of the scheme:

- Construction activities are restricted to the <1ha area of existing carriageway boundary (A9 930 Allt Cuaich bridge deck).
- No impacts on the environment are expected during the operational phase as a result of works. The works are expected to result in positive impacts on road users during the operational phase.
- As the works will be limited to the like-for-like replacement of the structural components, there is no change to the vulnerability of the road to the risk or severity of major accidents/disasters that would impact on the environment.
- Any potential impacts of the works are expected to be temporary, short-term, non-significant, and limited to the construction phase.

- The works will be temporary, localised, transient and completed during a mixture of daytime and night-time hours and out of the peak tourist season, when the traffic count is at its lowest levels.
- Works are not expected to result in significant disturbance to protected species that may be present in the wider area.
- No in-combination effects have been identified.
- The risk of major accidents or disasters is considered to be low.
- By removing the bridge defects this will provide these parts of the A9 carriageway and A9 930 Allt Cuaich bridge with another life cycle, and significantly improve the ride quality, which will result in safer conditions for road users.

**Location of the scheme:**

- Works will not result in any residual visual change, and as such will have no change to the special qualities for which the Cairngorms NP is designated.
- Although the works lie in close proximity to the River Spey SAC, the HRA Proforma concluded that the works would not result in any LSE on the qualifying features of this site.
- No earthworks are required, and the scheme does not lie within any sites of historical, cultural, or archaeological significance.
- The scheme will be confined within the existing carriageway boundary (A9 930 Allt Cuaich bridge deck) and as a result will not require any land take or alter any local land uses.
- Any impacts to the local landscape during the construction phase will be minor, temporary and not considered significant. In addition, no operational impacts are anticipated.

**Characteristics of potential impacts of the scheme:**

- Measures will be in place to ensure appropriate removal and disposal of waste.
- The SEMP will include plans to address environmental incidents.
- Containment measures of the working area will be in place to prevent debris or pollutants from entering the surrounding environment.
- In the event that INNS are found on site, measures to prevent potential INNS spread will be implemented.
- Mitigation measures detailed above (and in the SEMP) will be put in place with the objective to prevent and, if required, subsequently control any potential impacts on sensitive receptors.

## Annex A

“sensitive area” means any of the following:

- land notified under sections 3(1) or 5(1) (sites of special scientific interest) of the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004
- land in respect of which an order has been made under section 23 (nature conservation orders) of the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004
- a European site within the meaning of regulation 10 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994
- a property appearing in the World Heritage List kept under article 11(2) of the 1972 UNESCO Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage
- a scheduled monument within the meaning of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979
- a National Scenic Area as designated by a direction made by the Scottish Ministers under section 263A of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997
- an area designated as a National Park by a designation order made by the Scottish Ministers under section 6(1) of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000.



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