



TRANSPORT  
**SCOTLAND**  
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

# Environmental Impact Assessment Record of Determination

A9 Slochd Plantation – Vegetation  
Management

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## Project Details

### Description

BEAR Scotland, on behalf of Transport Scotland, has been commissioned to undertake a clear fell of the Slochd Plantation which is located between the old A9 (now a local road) and the new A9 carriageways. The plantation was planted in 1978 on a steep and narrow embankment within a shallow soil, which is now interposed between the two carriageways. The location provides disadvantageous conditions (rockfill with shallow soil levels) for suitable tree growth which leads to tree fall during the high wind events and therefore provides a hazard to travelling public and residential properties just northwest of the plantation.

The plantation is located fully within the trunk road boundary over a total scheme length of 100m and an area of approximately 0.02ha.

The scheme is required to address potential hazard to road users of the A9, a local road and nearby properties, with concerns also raised by homeowners. Due to the unsuitable soil condition for tree growth, it is not proposed to re-plant the scheme extents. Felled trees will be removed from the site.

The works are currently programmed to be completed within the winter of 2023/2024 (December 2023 to February 2024 inclusive). Construction start date, duration and working hours will be confirmed following the tender process.

Traffic management (TM) will involve temporary traffic lights (TTLs) with full stop road closures on the A9 northbound carriageway during the felling works on the top of the slope. The local road (former A9) will be closed with local access and pedestrians/cyclist access in place. If the programme changes, this may result in amendments to the exact TM requirements.

### Location

The scheme is located adjacent to the A9 northbound carriageway at Slochd, between Inverness and Aviemore within the Highland Council (Figure 1). The scheme has the following National Grid References (NGRs):

- Scheme Start: NH 84554 24193
- Scheme End: NH 84637 24103



Figure 1. Location and scheme extent (in red borders) of the proposed vegetation management works along the A9. Source: BEAR Scotland. F108 – Environmental Assessment Request (Scheme ref: 23-MW-0313-25).

## 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 Inverness, approximately 27km northwest of the scheme, which records local concentrations of Nitric oxide (NO), Nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and Particulate Matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub>). The level of air pollutants at the time of the search were recorded as low ([Air Quality Scotland](#)). Air pollution levels in the general vicinity of works are anticipated to be lower than those at the monitoring station in Inverness 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.

Baseline air quality is likely to be primarily influenced by traffic along the A9 and the local road (former A9).

## Cultural heritage

According to [PastMap](#), two Canmore features and two Historic Environment Records (HERs) are located within 300m of the scheme. The nearest of these is the milestone 'Rynaclarsach', which is a Canmore feature and lies on the A9 embankment 5m north of the scheme ([PastMap](#)).

There are no World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Garden and Designed Landscapes or Battlefields within 300m of the scheme.

## 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'
- 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, boulderstrewn high ground
- The surrounding hills
- The drama of deep corries
- Exceptional glacial landforms
- Snowscapes

### 3.0 Moorlands

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

## 4.0 Glens and Straths

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

## 5.0 Trees, Woods and Forests

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

## 6.0 Wildlife and Nature

- Dominance of natural landforms
- Extensive tracts of natural vegetation
- Association with iconic animals
- Wild land
- 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
- 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
- The Royal connection

## 9.0 Recreation

- A landscape of opportunities
- 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 'Rolling Uplands – Cairngorms' (no. 125) ([Scottish Landscape Character Types](#)), which is characterised by:

- A series of massive, broad, smooth, rounded summits: over 800 metres to the south, with the overall height tapering northwards to around 600 metres at the Strathdearn Hills.
- North-east/south-west alignment, running parallel to the Highland Boundary Fault.
- Lower slopes made up of small-scale hummocks and hollows.
- Heather and upland grassland on higher ground often extending to lower slopes.
- Number of relatively isolated glens.
- Improved pastures and woodland in larger glens.
- Sparse, scattered settlement of isolated traditional farmsteads and estate buildings on lower foothills and flat glen floors.
- Perception of relative remoteness.

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

## **Biodiversity**

No European designated biodiversity sites have been recorded within 2km of the scheme, and no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) have been recorded within 300m ([SiteLink](#)).

No records of invasive non-native species (INNS) of plants, injurious weeds (as listed under the Weeds Act 1959), and invasive native perennials (as listed in the Trunk Road Inventory Manual) were returned using the same criteria as above ([NBN Atlas](#)).

A search of Transport Scotland's Asset Management Performance System (AMPS) did not highlight any records of invasive and injurious plant species within 300m of the scheme.

Habitats in proximity to the scheme are dominated by young woodland west of the scheme and rough grassland east of the scheme. Freshwater habitat is limited to River Dulnain - Allt an Aonaich, which lies 120m from the scheme at its nearest point and occasional minor tributaries/drains which are present within 300m of the scheme.

There are no areas of woodland or individual trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) within the Slochd Plantation and within 300m of the plantation ([Highland Council](#)).

An area of woodland listed as 'ancient' (of semi-natural origin) on the Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) lies adjacent to the local road 3m west of the scheme ([Scotland's Environment](#)). Works will not affect this woodland.

Due to the works requiring removal of vegetation, a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was undertaken on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023 by BEAR Scotland's Environment team.

## 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 immature soils ([Scotland's Soils](#)).

A desktop study using the British Geological Survey Map ([BGS GeoIndex](#)) identifies the local bedrock geology as 'Dalradian Supergroup (psammite, semipelite and calcsilicate-rock), which is a metamorphic bedrock.

There is no information available for superficial deposits at the scheme extents.

## Material assets and waste

The proposed works will include the removal of a lodgepole pine tree plantation (0.02ha). Felled material will be chipped for biomass and removed from site.

As the value of the scheme does not exceed £350,000, a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) is not required for this scheme.

## Noise and vibration

Two residential properties lie within 300m of the scheme. Both of these lie within 20m of the scheme and have no acoustic screening available from the scheme extents. Proposed plantation removal is in agreement with the nearby properties.

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 records that the day and night (Lden) noise modelled levels at the scheme extents range between 55 and 70 decibels ([Scotland's Noise Scotland's Environment](#)). Baseline noise levels are likely to be primarily influenced by traffic along the A9 and the local road (former A9).

## Population and human health

Two residential properties, 'Doneen' and 'Ryna Clask' lie 10m and 20m northwest of the scheme extents respectively. Both of these lie adjacent to a local road (former A9) northwest of the scheme and have no screening from the Slochd Plantation.

A core Path (ID: LBS114) utilises the local road adjacent to the scheme extents ([Scotland's Environment](#)). The local road is also noted as National Cycle Network Route 7 ([OS Maps](#)).

There are no routes as listed on WalkHighlands within 300m of the scheme ([WalkingHighlands](#)). There are no other pedestrian facilities within 300m of the scheme.

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

River Dulnain - Allt an Aonaich (ID: 23110) is a waterbody which has been classified by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) under the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC (WFD) and lies 120m southwest of the scheme at its nearest point ([SEPA water classification hub](#)). River Dulnain - Allt an Aonaich is a river in the River Spey catchment of the Scotland river basin district. The main stem is

approximately 8.3km in length. The River Dulnain - Allt an Aonaich has been noted in 2020 as having a 'good' overall status ([SEPA water classification hub](#)).

Numerous minor unclassified waterbodies, considered to be drainage channels and tributaries, lie within 300m of the scheme.

The scheme is located within the 'Strathnairn, Speyside and Cairngorms' groundwater body, which is also a Drinking Water Protected Area (Ground) ([DWPA](#)). This groundwater body was classified by SEPA as having an overall good status in 2020 ([SEPA water classification hub](#)).

Numerous short sections along the A9 carriageway at the A9 Slochd Plantation are noted as having medium risk of surface water flooding, which means that each year, these areas have a 0.5% chance of flooding ([SEPA Flood Map](#)).

## 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 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.

### Cultural heritage

The nearest of the cultural heritage feature, a milestone 'Rynaclarsach', lies just 5m north of the works. However, no works will be undertaken outside the A9 Slochd

Plantation and details regarding the milestone will be highlighted in the SEMP. In addition, there are no earthworks associated with the scheme and construction of the A9 road corridor is likely to have removed any archaeological remains that may have been present. Therefore, the potential for the presence of unknown archaeological remains in the study area has been assessed to be low.

As standard, the following good practice measures will be in place to reduce the risk of impacts to undiscovered features of cultural heritage interest:

- There will be no storage of vehicles, plant, or materials against any buildings, walls or fences.
- Should any unexpected archaeological evidence be discovered, works will stop temporarily in the vicinity and the BEAR Scotland Environment Team contacted for advice.
- People, plant, and materials will, as much as is reasonably practicable, only be present on areas of made / engineered ground. Where access outwith these areas is required for the safe and effective completion of the scheme, it will be reduced as much as is reasonably practicable and ideally be limited to access on foot.

With the above mitigation measures in place, it is anticipated that any cultural heritage 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 will be a minor visual impact to the local landscape following the clear fell of the Slochd Plantation. However, the plantation is wholly located within the trunk road boundary with limited opportunity for trees to suitably establish and likely to deteriorate further as a result. The works will not require removal of ancient woodland or trees of a mature character or with a Tree Preservation Order, therefore, the works will not create a negative change to the local landscape. Though works are not expected to result in significant visual impacts on the CNP, consultation with the CNP Authority was undertaken (on 06/11/2023). The CNP responded that The Park Authority has no formal role in approval of the works and has no specific comments on the proposals for tree clearance as it is related to the maintenance of visibility splays at junctions or critical sections of road.

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.
- All felled vegetation will be chipped and removed from the site.
- 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 shall 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

During vegetation management works, activities undertaken on site could potentially have a minor adverse impact on biodiversity in the area as a result of removed vegetation and increased vehicle presence and the potential for disturbance to protected species and pollution of habitats.

Due to the unsuitable soil condition for tree growth, it is not proposed to re-plant in the scheme extents. However, it is expected that the area will self-seed with locally dominant tree and shrub species such as birch (*Betula*).

Pollution controls and good practice measures to reduce impacts of works on the local environment will be detailed in the Site Environmental Management Plan (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:

- If works are delayed until the bird breeding season (March to August inclusive), then nesting bird checks will be undertaken prior to works commencing.
- No works will take place within the ancient woodland which lies adjacent to the local road 3m west of the scheme.
- 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 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.
- 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.

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.

## Geology and soils

The works do not require any excavation within the roadside verges. Therefore, the works are not anticipated to have an adverse impact on geology and soils. With the following mitigation measures in place, the likelihood of significant impacts on geology and soils is low.

- Works will be strictly limited to areas required for access and vegetation management works. Unnecessary encroachment onto terrestrial or aquatic areas will not be tolerated.
- The parking of machinery/vehicles and storage of equipment on road verges will be minimised as far as is reasonably practicable.
- Upon completion of the works, any damage to the local landscape (i.e., damage to embankment, woodland areas) will be reinstated as much as is practicable.
- Mitigation measures to prevent contamination of soils through loss of containment will be strictly adhered to.

- Additional pollution prevention measures as outlined in road drainage and the water environment will be adhered to during construction.

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

## Material assets and waste

It is anticipated that unsuitable wood material will be chipped for biomass with higher quality material being reused as timber. Due to the steep slope, no felled wood material will be left on the site. 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.
- Site staff will adhere to waste management legislation and comply with Duty of Care.
- Containment measures will be in place to prevent debris or pollutants from entering the surrounding environment.
- 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 contractor 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. The duration and working hours are still to be confirmed. 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.
- 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.
- 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 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 duration of works is still to be confirmed however due to the

relatively minor scheme extents, it is not anticipated that the works will last for prolonged time periods. 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.
- Local access will be retained within the scheme extent.
- 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 shall 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 bunded, then drip trays shall 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, transportation of materials to and from site as well as removal of vegetation. Given that the removed vegetation will predominantly consist of felling trees, it is not considered to significantly impact the climate. The following mitigation measures will be put in place:

- BEAR Scotland will adhere to its Carbon Management Policy.
- 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.

## Vulnerability of the project to risk

Numerous short sections along the A9 carriageway within the scheme extent are noted as having medium risk of surface water flooding. Although the trees within the plantation participate in flooding reduction by slowing down the flow of rainwater, absorbing rainwater and reducing erosion, it is not expected that removal of the plantation will significantly impact local flooding.

Works are restricted to the embankment along the A9 carriageway and traffic management will be designed in line with existing guidance. TM will involve TTLs with full stop road closures on the A9 northbound carriageway during the felling works on the top of the slope. Local road (former A9) will be closed with only local access and pedestrians/cyclist access in place. 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

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 or within 5km of the scheme Due

to the nature of the proposed works, no cumulative effects are anticipated with any unidentified 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 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 a 0.02ha area.
- No significant 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 removal of the failing pine tree plantation along the A9 carriageway, 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 and non-significant.

- The 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.
- The felling of failing trees at the A9 Slochd Plantation will remove the potential hazard by falling trees during high wind events.

**Location of the scheme:**

- Works will not involve felling of healthy thriving trees and as such will have no change to the special qualities for which the Cairngorms NP is designated.
- The scheme is not located within any areas of ancient woodland or Conservation Area and does not require felling of trees protected by a TPO.
- The scheme will be confined to the trunk road boundary and 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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