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Environmental Impact Assessment Record of Determination

A9 South of Munlochy NB – Drainage and Resurfacing

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Project Details

Description

BEAR Scotland has been commissioned by Transport Scotland to carry out drainage improvement works and resurfacing on a stretch of the northbound (NB) A9 north of Inverness. The works will consist of the following:

Drainage works:

- Repair carrier pipes in the verge and central reservation by lining the inside of the pipe,
- Replacing short sections of pipe by digging out and replacing the existing pipe section.

Resurfacing works:

- Removal of asphaltic layer and the lean mix concrete layer underneath,
- Reconstruct the pavement using asphalt materials.
- Installation of road marking and road studs.
- Re-instatement of the verge and swiping of the carriageway will be undertaken where required.

The scheme will take place over a length of approximately 1.1km, covering a total area of approximately 1.026ha.

The works are currently programmed to be completed within February/March 2024, however changes in programming may require construction within the 2024/2025 financial year. Drainage works are expected to be completed prior to resurfacing works, over approximately two weeks by utilising a nighttime working pattern (07:00 to 19:00), and surfacing works are planned for three weeks with 24 hours working arrangements. However, changes in the programme may result in changes to the working pattern.

Traffic management (TM) will consist of a single lane closure of the dual northbound carriageway during drainage works. Resurfacing works will be undertaken under 24h lane closures with night-time convoy.

Location

The scheme is located on a stretch of the A9 carriageway north of Inverness, between Charlestown and Munlochy Junction, within the Highland Council area (see Figure 1 below), and has the following National Grid References:

- Scheme Start: NH 63870 48879
- Scheme End: NH 62898 49367

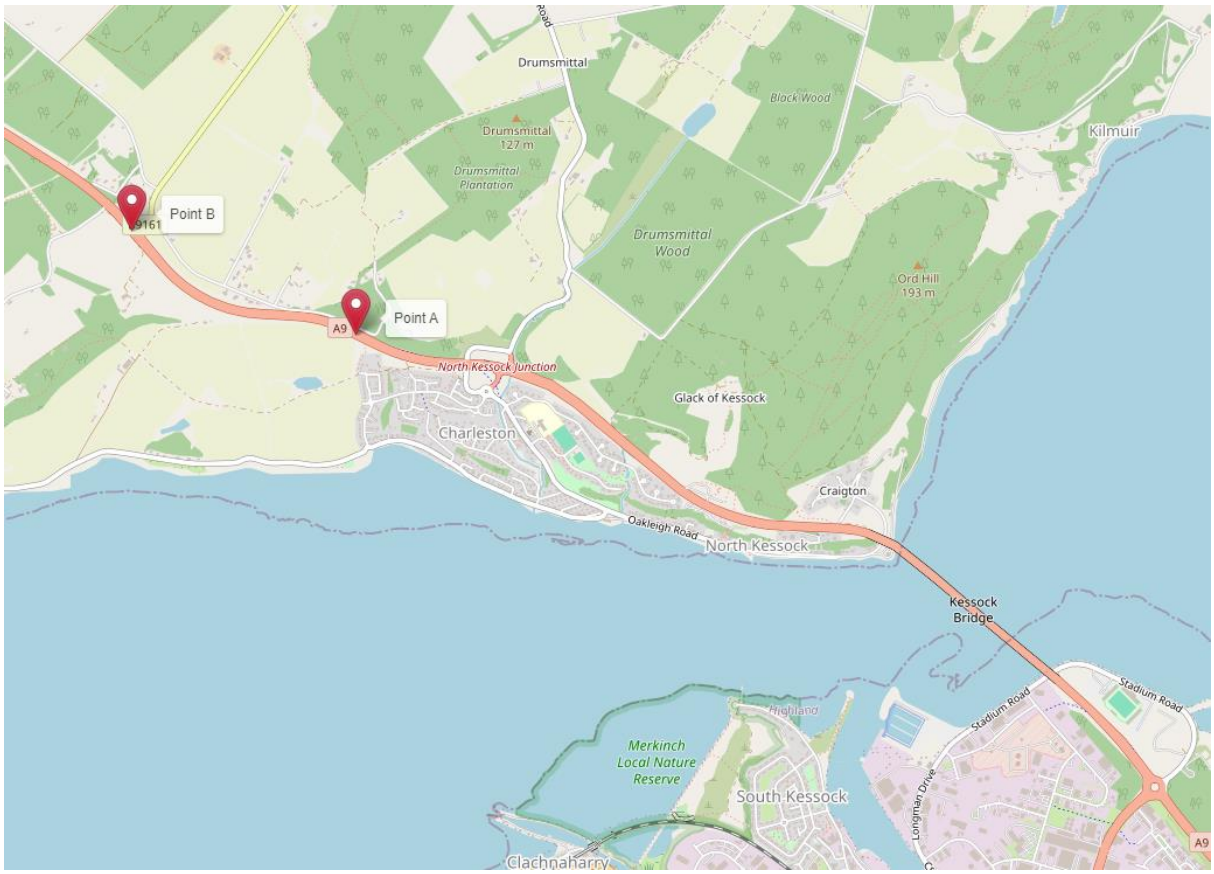

Figure 1. Location and scheme extent of the proposed works at A9 South of Munlochy NB. Source: BEAR Scotland. F108 – Environmental Assessment Request (Scheme ref: 22-NW-0103-15).

Description of local environment

Air quality

The scheme is not located within any Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA), with the nearest AQMA identified approximately 4.3km southeast of the scheme in Inverness (Air Quality Scotland).

The closest air quality monitoring station as listed on Air Quality Scotland is located in Inverness and records low pollution levels of Particulate Matter ($PM_{2.5}$, PM_{10}) and Nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) at the time of the assessment. Similar levels of pollution are expected at the scheme extent, given the more rural location but moderate traffic density and nearby agricultural land use.

Allanfearn Sewage Treatment Works is a registered air pollutant site on the Scottish Pollutant Release Inventory (SPRI), located within 10km of the scheme. This waste-water management facility is located 7.4km east of the scheme, near the A96 (Scotland's Environment).

In 2022, the average annual daily flow (AADF) of traffic was recorded at a count point on the A9 within the scheme extent, and accounted for 30,529 vehicles of which 5.4% were heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) (Department for Transport).

Baseline air quality is likely to be primarily influenced by traffic along the A9 carriageway, with secondary sources likely to arise from activities associated with nearby residential and agricultural activities.

Cultural heritage

According to Historic Environment Scotland's Pastmap, no cultural heritage features are located within the working area. Multiple Canmore National Records and Historic Environment Records (HER) can be found within 300m; however, they are all set back from the trunk road with the nearest record pertaining to Tarscavaig Cropmarks (HER), located 45m south of the A9 carriageway.

One Listed Building is located within 300m of the scheme, which is the North Kessock, Bellfield Farmhouse including Stone Well, Listed Building Category C, located 250m southeast of the works (LB50185).

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

Due to lack of cultural heritage assets within the scheme footprint, the proposed project does not carry the potential to cause direct or indirect impact to cultural or archaeological features. 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 not located within or within 300m of a National Scenic Area or National Park (SiteLink).

The Landscape Character Type (LCT) within the scheme extent is Farmed and Forested Sloped – Ross & Cromarty (no. 345) (Scottish Landscape Character Types), which is characterised by:

- Complex pattern of farmland, tree cover, forests and woodland on sloped, often terraced land rising from firths or river plains to mid-elevations and often backed by large scale forest plantations where there are adjacent hills.
- Overall impression of a well-treed landscape, but within which farming is the dominant land use.
- Generally higher proportion of trees, woodland and forest plantations in upper slopes, forming a well-connected network within which fields are located.
- Terraces of open land, interspersed with forest plantations and woodlands on mid slopes.
- Gradual change to more open landscapes at lower levels.
- Wide range and distribution of archaeological sites indicating a long history of human settlement.
- Occasional large settlements in a predominantly rural landscape.
- Views from more open, terraced areas across lowlands or firth to hills or out to sea.

The scheme is located on the A9 between Charlestown and Munlochy Junction on the Black Isle, approximately 2.6km west of Kessock Bridge. Land use surrounding the scheme is largely dominated by a combination of arable land, field used for grazing and urban development. Roadside tree belts are present for the majority of 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. Within the scheme extents, the A9 is a two-lane dual carriageway.

Biodiversity

The following four European Sites are located within 2km of the scheme, and are designated for the following features:

- Moray Firth Special Protection Area (SPA) 10490, located 850m south of the scheme
- Moray Firth Special Area of Conservation (SAC) 8327, located 850m south of the scheme
- Inner Moray Firth SPA 8515, located 1,850m southwest of the scheme, designated for
- Inner Moray Firth RAMSAR 8430, located 1,850m southwest of the scheme

A Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) has been carried out for the above European sites. Refer to 'Description of main environmental impacts and proposed mitigation: Biodiversity' section below for details.

No nationally or locally protected sites designated for biodiversity (Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserves, Local Nature Reserves) are located within 300m of the scheme (NatureScot).

The NBN Atlas holds records of several 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 (NBN Atlas).

In addition, NBN has record of the following invasive non-native species (INNS) of plants (as denoted by *) (as listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA)), injurious weeds (as listed under the Weeds Act 1959), and invasive native perennials (as listed in the Trunk Road Inventory Manual) using the same criteria as above. None of these records are located within the trunk road boundary.

- Broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*)
- Common ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*)
- Giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*)*
- Rosebay willowherb (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*)
- Spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*)

Transport Scotland's Asset Management Performance System (AMPS) holds records of rosebay willowherb within the scheme extent and records of ragwort within 300m of the scheme.

Land use beyond the carriageway is dominated by extensive areas of agricultural land, used for grazing and crop, with farms alongside residential areas and plantation woodland. Some woodland corridors and patches of mixed woodland are located in vicinity to the A9, with the verges of the A9 flanked by roadside tree belts, connecting to larger and less disturbed areas of woodland and shrub.

There are no areas of woodland listed on the Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) within the scheme extent, but a small area of woodland listed as long-established (of plantation origin) is located approximately 100m south of the scheme extent, including A9 verges.

Geology and soils

The scheme does not lie within a Geological Conservation Review Site (GCRS) or a geologically designated SSSI (SiteLink).

Bedrock within the scheme extent is comprised of Conglomerate of the Kilmuir Conglomerate Formation, which is a sedimentary bedrock. Superficial deposits are noted as Till, with a small area of the scheme extent noted as raised beach deposits (British Geological Society).

Soils within the scheme extent are recorded as mineral podzols (Scotland's Soils).

The scheme is located within a 'Class 0' category of carbon and peatland importance, which relates to mineral soil types. Peatland habitats are not typically found on such soils (Scotland's Environment (SE) Map).

Material assets and waste

The proposed works are required to repair damaged drainage carrier pipes and to replace worn pavement materials due to structural issues. Materials used will likely consist of:

Drainage works:

- Pipe Lining Material
- Pipe Lining Resin
- Twin Wall UPVC Pipe
- Concrete

Resurfacing works:

- Asphaltic Materials (TS2010 Surface Course, Warm Mix AC20 Binder Course and Warm Mix AC32 Base Course)
- Sub-Base Material
- Bituminous Emulsion Bond Coat
- Thermoplastic Road Marking Paint

Wastes are anticipated to be similar to material required. 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. Where excavation in the verge is required for drainage works, soil will be re-used on site where possible.

As the cost of the works is expected to exceed £350,000, a site waste management plan (SWMP) is required for this scheme.

Noise and vibration

There are a number of residential properties located within 300m of the scheme, to the north and south of the carriageway. All properties are afforded screening by intervening vegetation of roadside tree belts and ornamental planting, with three properties identified where sight lines onto the scheme extent may still occur due to elevation.

The works do not fall within a Candidate Noise Management Area (CNMA) as defined by the Transportation Noise Action Plan (Road Maps).

Noise modelled data as available on SE Map records levels up to the range of 75-80 dB for the scheme extent. Baseline noise levels are likely to be primarily influenced by traffic travelling along the A9 carriageway.

Population and human health

A number of residential properties are located within 300m of the scheme, comprising of scattered individual farms and properties, residential properties of Charlestown and Croftnacriech. Roadside tree belts, ornamental vegetation as well as other intervening vegetation and properties provide a visual barrier to the scheme. Three properties, located between 25m and 35m from the works, may have sightlines on to the scheme extent where vegetation is patchy or not grown high enough.

The scheme ends at the junction with B9161, a road leading towards Munlochy and connecting to local roads leading nearby properties, including Croftnacriech. A bus stop is located at the start of the scheme.

The National Cycle Network (NCN) route 1 is located within 300m of the scheme extents, running approximately 30-80m north of the southbound carriageway lanes (Sustrans).

There are no Core Path (SE Map) or walking routes listed on Walkhighlands within or with connectivity to the scheme extents.

Street lighting is present within the scheme extent on approach to the junction with B9161.

Road drainage and the water environment

There is one watercourse and one drain culverted beneath the A9 within the scheme extent. These two watercourses have not been classified by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) under the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC (WFD).

No classified watercourses have been identified within 300m of the scheme, however, one pond is located 250m south of the A9 and smaller surface waterbodies and drainage features might lie within 300m of the scheme (SEPA).

The scheme falls within the ‘Black Isle’ groundwater body which was classified by SEPA in 2020 as having an overall status of ‘Good’ and is also a Groundwater Drinking Water Protected Area (DWPA).

The A9 northbound carriageway has not been identified as having a risk of river or surface water flooding on the SEPA Flood Maps (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 CO2 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 (https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-contribution-paris-agreement-indicative-ndc/). 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 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 and increased prolonged vehicle and plant presence may result in higher-than-average emissions. 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 to the appropriate standards and will be switched off when not in use.
- 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.
- 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 Record of Determination (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 the A9 carriageway and verges with no vegetation removal or habitat alteration required, 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. 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 and any damage to the local landscape (where applicable) 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.
- 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

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.

The Moray Firth SPA and Moray Firth SAC lie approximately 850m south of the scheme at the closest point of their boundary, and the Inner Moray Firth SPA and Inner Moray Firth Ramsar lie 1,850m southwest of the scheme. The HRA concluded that the works would not result in the potential for any likely significant effects (LSE) upon the qualifying features of these sites by virtue of the following factors:

- Works will not involve any land take, or removal or alteration of habitat features within the SAC, SPAs and Ramsar. As such, habitat used by designated species for foraging and breeding will remain unchanged and no direct removal or impact to the habitat types noted in the SAC and Ramsar are possible.
- Noise is not considered to be a defining feature of the works, however there is potential for temporary and intermittent increases to baseline noise levels throughout the works due to use of various plant. Due to location on the A9 carriageway where a moderate level of traffic exists, any increases in noise are not considered to be significant. In addition, sufficient distancing from the four designated sites would further limit the scheme-related disturbance from

noise. As such, noise disturbance from the works to the qualifying features is not likely.

- One drainage feature has been identified within the scheme extent connecting to the Beauly Firth/Moray Firth designated areas, providing hydrological connectivity between the scheme and designated habitats, and as such also feeding grounds for designated species. Connectivity could give rise to pollution potential, however, given the minor and localised nature of the works and adherence to best practice measures for pollution prevention, any potential pollution events related to the drainage works are not considered to have potential for LSE on the features of the European sites.
- No significant dust, particulate matter, and exhaust emissions (DPMEE) sources will be introduced by the works, and standard pollution prevention measures will be in place during works.

All works are restricted to the A9 carriageway boundary (including adjacent verge) and will consist of maintenance works to existing drainage and resurfacing of the carriageway. No habitat removal will occur. The works have potential to disturb/spread INNS and injurious weeds where growth of these species fall in verge drainage working areas. Appropriate mitigation will be included within the Site Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) to prevent/limit spread.

The potential for significant species disturbance within the area of likely construction disturbance is also somewhat diminished due to location on the A9 carriageway, where a moderate traffic flow exists, light pollution from street lightning and traffic is present. The verges are considered unsuitable to provide habitat for permanent resting places for protected species, excluding nesting birds. Where drainage works in the verges will be undertaken in the nesting bird season, a nesting bird check will be undertaken prior to works starting.

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:

- Site personnel will remain vigilant for the presence 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.
- Where drainage works in the verges take place within the nesting bird season (March to August inclusive), a nesting bird check will be undertaken within 48h prior to works starting.

- Works will be strictly limited to areas required for access and construction works. Unnecessary encroachment onto terrestrial or aquatic areas will not be tolerated.
- 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. NatureScot will be consulted for further advice as required.
- 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.
- Relevant toolbox talks for working with protected species will be included in the SEMP.
- If artificial lighting is required, it will be directed away from road verges, woodland, and waterbodies as far as is safe and reasonably practicable.
- 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.

Geology and soils

Works will include minor excavation to facilitate drainage amendments. Construction activities are restricted to localised areas of the verge and 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.

- The parking of machinery/personnel and storage of equipment on road verges will be minimised as far as is reasonably practicable.

- Where excavation takes place in the verge, the extent and duration of exposed soil will be kept to the minimum required for the works and multiple handling of soil will be minimised.
- Topsoil and subsoil reused onsite will be spread evenly in a single layer < 200 mm in height to ensure the soil profile is maintained across the works location.
- Upon completion of the works, any damage to the local landscape (i.e. damage to grass verges) will be reinstated as much as is practicable.
- Mitigation measures to prevent contamination of soils through loss of containment will be strictly adhered to.

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

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.
- A SWMP will be produced and adhered to.
- 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. 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).
- 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.
- 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 scheme have the potential to cause noise and vibration impacts through the use of equipment and construction vehicles. The proposed scheme is anticipated to result in temporary minor adverse noise impacts. The following mitigation measures will be put in place:

- The local Environmental Health Officer will be notified in advance of the works, in the event of 24hr or night-time programming.
- Local residents will be notified in advance of the works via a letter drop (or similar method), in the event of 24hr or night-time programming.
- The Best Practicable 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.

- 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.
- A ‘soft start’ will be implemented on site each day to ensure that there is a gradual increase in noise.
- 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 local residents, vehicle travellers, and non-motorised road users (NMUs) as a result of vehicle noise and delays due to traffic management measures.

Local residents will be notified of works via letter drop where required and road users will be informed of works through a media release, which will provide details of construction dates and times. The works will move progressively along the full scheme extent. With the following mitigation measures in place, the risk of significant impacts on population and human health is considered to be low:

- 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).
- 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.
- Journey planning information will be available for drivers online at the 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

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:

- Drainage amendments will be appropriately managed so as not to release sediment into the drainage system.
- Standard working practices to comply with The Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 (as amended) for works in or near water will be detailed in the SEMP and adhered to on site.
- 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 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 in place. Care will be taken to reduce the chance of spillages. Spill kits will be

quickly accessible to capture any spills should they occur. The ground / stone around the site of a spill will be removed, double bagged and taken off site as special contaminated 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 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.
- The requirement for additional lighting will be reduced as far as reasonably practicable.
- 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 materials 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 A9 northbound carriageway lanes are not associated with a risk of river or surface water flooding.

Works are restricted to the A9 carriageway boundary and traffic management will be designed in line with existing guidance. The proposed works are anticipated to last a

few weeks. Traffic management will likely consist of lane closures, with convoy at night time, and NMUs will be accommodated within any TM setup.

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 cumulative effects

No cumulative effects on people or property receptors are anticipated during operation given there will be no change to the existing road conditions.

A search of the Highland Council Planning Portal (Map Search) did not highlight any other planning applications within 300m of the scheme (within the last 6 months).

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 this section of the A9 trunk road at the same time as this scheme.

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, there are no significant effects anticipated on any environmental receptors as a result of the proposed works.

A HRA was undertaken for the works and concluded that there would be no Likely Significant Effects on the qualifying features of the designated sites.

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) exceed 1ha in area.

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

Characteristics of the scheme:

- Works are restricted to minor drainage maintenance and improvements, and resurfacing, with all works restricted to the A9 carriageway boundary.
- 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 completed over a few weeks under a mix of daytime and nighttime working, under a rolling programme.
- Works are not expected to result in significant disturbance to protected species that may be present in the wider area.

- 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.
- 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. The works are not expected to result in any alteration to existing features or exposure of potential undiscovered features of cultural heritage.
- No in-combination effects have been identified.

Location of the scheme:

- The HRA concluded that the works will not result in the potential for LSE on the qualifying features of the Moray Firth SAC, Moray Firth SPA, Inner Moray Firth SPA and Inner Moray Firth RAMSAR.
- The scheme will be restricted to the A9 carriageway boundary (including verge), and as a result will not require any land take or alteration of any local land uses.
- Any impacts to the local landscape during the construction phase will be minor, temporary and are not considered significant. In addition, no operational impacts are anticipated.

Characteristics of potential impacts of the scheme:

- Containment measures of the working area will be in place to prevent debris or pollutants from entering the surrounding environment.
- Measures will be in place to ensure appropriate removal and disposal of waste.
- The SEMP will include plans to address environmental incidents.
- In the event that INNS are found on site, measures to prevent potential INNS spread will be implemented.

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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