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Environmental Impact Assessment Record of Determination

A9 South of Slochd Duals

Contents

Project Details

Description

BEAR Scotland has been commissioned by Transport Scotland to carry out resurfacing works on the A9 trunk road south of Slochd duals within the Highland Council region. The works will consist of carriageway resurfacing, with a 50mm surface course depth and a 150mm surface & binder course depth. Reinstatement of road markings and studs will also be carried out for a length of 1,161m (approximately 1.05ha).

The works are currently programmed to be completed within the 2024/2025 financial year, commencing in June 2024. Works are expected to be completed over 14 nights with working hours of 19:00-06:00. Traffic management (TM) is currently anticipated to consist of alternate lane closures with a convoy system in place. There are no pedestrian or non-motorised user (NMU) routes located with connectivity to the scheme and as such no impacts no pedestrian diversions are anticipated.

Location

The scheme is located on the A9 trunk road in the Highland Council region, approximately 5km southeast of the village of Tomatin (Figure 1).

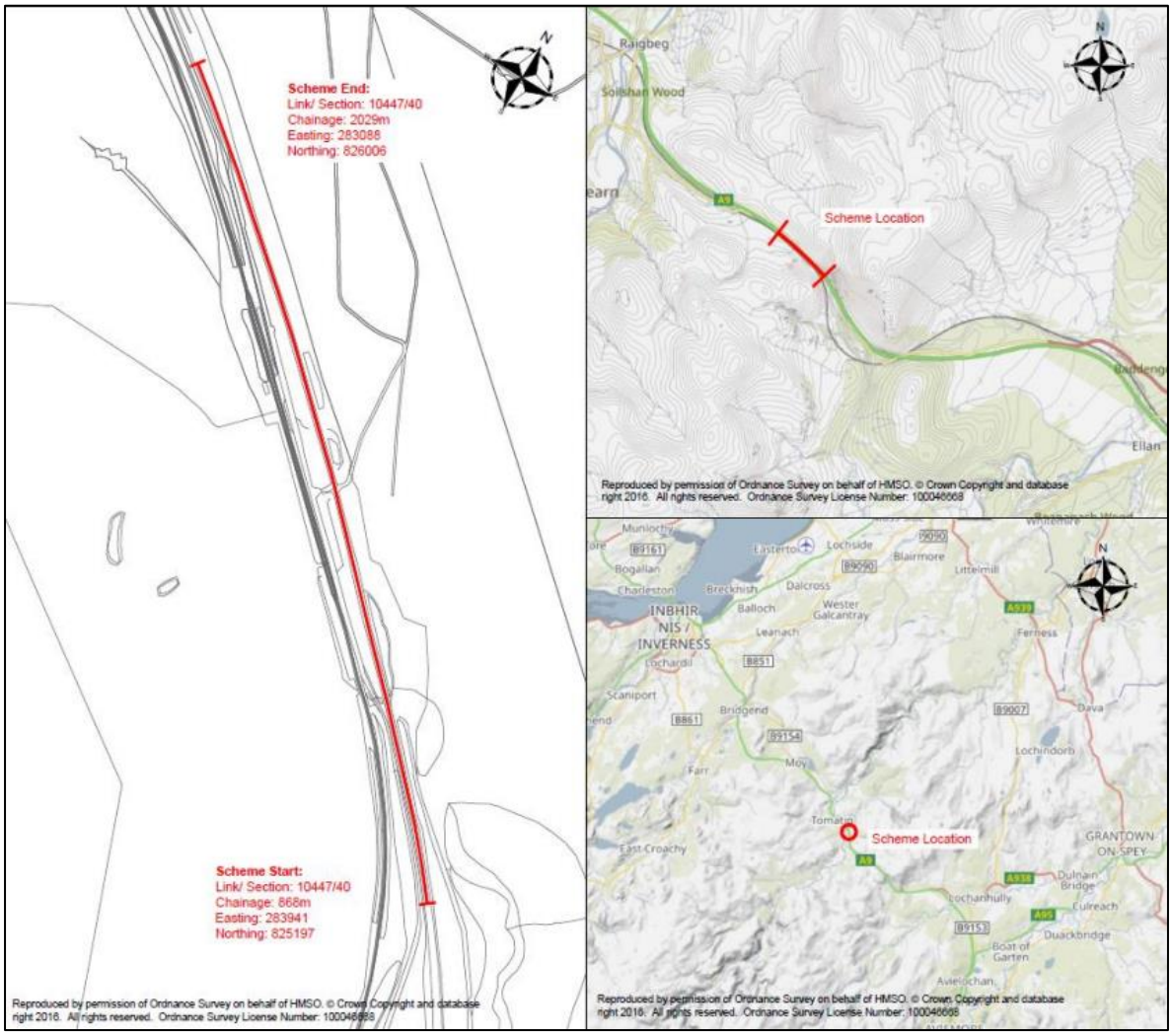

Figure 1. Location of the proposed resurfacing works at A9 South of Slochd Duals. Source: BEAR Scotland.

Description of local environment

Air quality

The scheme is not located within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) declared by the Highlands council (Air Quality in Scotland).

No Air Quality Monitoring Stations (AQMS) are located within 10km of the proposed works (Air Quality in Scotland).

No Scottish Pollutant Release Inventory (SPRI) sites which record air pollutant releases are located within 10km of the scheme (Scotland's Environment).

Baseline air quality is likely to be primarily influenced by traffic along the A9.

Cultural heritage

A desktop study using Historic Environment Scotland's PastMap has identified the following features of cultural heritage within 300m of the scheme:

- Six Historic Environment Records (HERs), the closest of which pertains to 'Slochd bridge three' and lies approximately 20m south of the scheme.
- Five Canmore records, the closest of which is 'Slochd bridge three', which lies 20m south of the scheme. The Canmore is also noted as HER.

No Garden & Designed Landscapes, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Battlefields, or World Heritage sites were identified within 300m of the scheme (PastMap).

The works are confined to the carriageway surface with no verge works required. Furthermore, construction of the A9 is likely to have removed any archaeological remains that may have been present within the area and as such 'cultural heritage' is scoped out and is not discussed further within this RoD.

Landscape and visual effects

The scheme is not located within any National Parks (NP), National Scenic Areas (NSA), or other sites designated for their landscape character or quality. However, the proposed works lie approximately 100m west of the Cairngorms NP boundary.

The Landscape Character Type (LCT) within the scheme extent is 'Rolling Uplands – Inverness' (LCT No. 221) (Scottish Landscape Character Types), which the key characteristics for are:

- A series of large scale, smooth, rounded hills with summits of similar height forming broad, undulating upland plateaux containing occasional steep-sided straths.
- Open heather moorland dominates, the uniform colour and texture accentuating the landform.
- Straths floors contain inbye pastures, trees and small patches of woodland.
- Conifer forests limited to the lower edges of uplands and strath sides.
- Settlement limited to a few isolated farms in remote straths.
- A few mainly single track roads, integrated within the landform.
- Uninhabited interior, largely inaccessible to vehicles.
- Archaeological evidence of settlement and farming from prehistoric times to the 19th century.
- Striking colour and textural contrast between strath floors and moorland vegetation above.
- Expansive views from the hill tops and plateaux create a strong sense of openness and exposure.

- Scale and distance difficult to judge.
- Few signs of active management in the interiors, creating a strong perception of remoteness, although this is affected by a number of large wind farm developments.

The scheme is located in a rural stretch of the A9 carriageway, approximately 5km southeast of the village of Tomatin. Land surrounding the scheme is dominated by open areas of rough grassland, heathlands, small areas of mixed woodlands either side of the carriageway, and areas of exposed hillside rockface.

The A9 Trunk Road, within the North West, 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.

Biodiversity

Designated Sites

Slochd Special Area of Conservation (SAC) lies approximately 400m northwest of the scheme extents and is designated for dry heaths (SiteLink).

No other sites designated for biodiversity features lie within 2km of scheme extents.

Records

Numerous bird species were recorded on NBN Atlas and under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), all wild birds and their active nests are protected.

The NBN Atlas was also searched using the same criteria for plant species; however no invasive non-native species (INNS) of plants, injurious weeds, or native invasive perennials were recorded.

A search using Transport Scotland's Asset Management Performance System (AMPS) also returned no records for INNS or native invasive perennials or injurious weeds.

Habitat in the surrounding area is dominated by open areas of rough grassland, heathlands, small areas of mixed woodlands either side of the carriageway, and areas of exposed hillside rockface. The habitat in proximity to the scheme is

somewhat restricted for mammal species due to absence of significant watercourses and tree cover.

There are no woodland as listed on the Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) (NatureScot) within 300m of the scheme.

There are no areas of woodland or individual trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) within 300m of the scheme extents (Highland Council).

Geology and soils

The scheme lies within 'The Slochd' Geological Conservation Review Site (GCRS), which is not overlapped by a geologically designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (NatureScot).

Superficial deposit within scheme extents are 'Till, Devensian' (Diamicton), which are sedimentary superficial deposits (BGS Geology Viewer).

Bedrocks within the scheme extent is comprised of (BGS Geology Viewer):

- 'Beinn Bhreac Psammite formation'
- 'Creag Buidhe Semipellite formation'
- 'Slochd Psammite formation'
- 'North Britain Siluro-devonian Calc-alkaline Dyke Suite'

The local soil type is recorded as peaty gleyed podzols (Scotland's Environment Map) and soils within the scheme extent are recorded as being 'Class 5', as displayed on Scotland's Peat Map. Class 5 is peat soil with no peat vegetation present.

The works are restricted to previously engineered ground within the A9 carriageway boundary. No soil/earth works are required, and the GCRS does not have statutory protection as a SSSI. As such, no change to geology and soil is expected and 'geology and soils' are scoped out and is not discussed further within this RoD.

Material assets and waste

The proposed works are required to resurface the worn carriageway and reinstate road markings and traffic loops. Materials used will consist of:

- Asphaltic material
- Thermoplastic road-marking paint
- Bituminous emulsion bond coat
- Milled in road studs

As the value of the scheme exceeds £350,000 a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) is required.

The 1.05ha scheme involves the removal of the surface course and localised areas of binder course. Planings will be reused under SEPA approved methods in accordance with the Paragraph 13 exemption, described in Schedule 3 of the Waste Management Licensing Regulations (exemption number: WML/XS/2008865). Coal tar is not expected to be present within the scheme extent.

No site compound is required for these works. Storage of plant and equipment will be within TM on the A9 carriageway.

Noise and vibration

Residential, community and commercial receptors – refer to the 'Population and Human Health' section below.

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

The Lnight noise modelled levels within the scheme extents range between 60 and 65 decibels (Scotland's Noise Scotland's Environment). Baseline noise levels in the scheme extent are likely to be primarily influenced by traffic along the A9.

In 2022, the average annual daily flow (AADF) of traffic was measured on the A9 carriageway approximately 12km southeast of scheme extents (Site: 30868), and accounted for 4,200 vehicles, including 481 (11.5%) heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) (Road Traffic Statistics).

Population and human health

There are no residential properties within 300m of the scheme extents.

National Cycle Network Route 7 (OS Maps), also noted as a core path ID:8638 (SE Map), lies along the A9 northbound carriageway, 10-20m southwest of the scheme at its nearest point.

There are no walking routes as listed on WalkHighlands within the scheme extents and within 300m of the scheme.

TM will involve a nighttime lane closure with a convoy system in place.

Road drainage and the water environment

There are no waterbodies as classified by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) under the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC (WFD) (SEPA Water Classification Hub) within 300m of the scheme.

No minor waterbodies (i.e. tributaries or drainage ditches) lie within 300m of scheme extents.

The scheme is underlain by the 'Strathnairn, Speyside and Cairngorms' groundwater body, which was classified by SEPA in 2022 as having an overall status of 'good' (SEPA Water Classification Hub). This groundwater body is also recorded as a Drinking Water Protected Area (DWPA) (Ground and Surface) (Scotland's Environment).

There is a medium risk (0.5% chance each year) of surface water flooding recorded within some small areas within scheme extents (SEPA Flood Maps).

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^2 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 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. The main sources are likely to be dust generated by cold milling in preparation of carriageway resurfacing, as well as exhaust emissions from ancillary plant and vehicles. As a result, there is potential for dust, particulate matter, and exhaust emissions 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.

- A water-assisted dust sweeper will sweep the carriageway after dust-generating activities, and waste will be contained and removed from site as soon as is practicable.
- Materials that have a potential to produce dust will be removed from site as soon as possible, and vehicles that remove cold-milled material from site will have sheeted covers.
- Ancillary plant, vehicles and non-road mobile machinery (NRMM) will have been regularly maintained, paying attention to the integrity of exhaust systems.
- Ancillary plant, vehicles and NRMM will be switched off when stationary to prevent exhaust emissions (e.g., there will be no idling vehicles).
- Cutting, grinding, and sawing equipment (if required) will be fitted or used in conjunction with suitable dust suppression techniques e.g., local exhaust ventilation system that fits directly onto tools.
- Regular monitoring (e.g., by engineer or Clerk of Works) will take place when activities generating air pollution are occurring. In the unlikely event that unacceptable levels of air pollution are emanating from the site, the operation will, where practicable, be modified and re-checked to verify that the corrective action has been effective. Actions to be considered include: (a) minimizing cutting and grinding on-site, (b) reducing the operating hours, (c) changing the method of working, etc.
- 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.

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 will be a short-term impact on the landscape character and visual amenity of the site as a result of the presence of construction plant, vehicles, and TM.

However, people, ancillary plant, vehicles, NRMM and materials will be restricted to areas of made/engineered ground on the A9, and construction works are programmed to be undertaken at night (14 nights) on a rolling programme. As such, the visual impact of the works will be reduced. Upon completion of the works, no residual impacts are anticipated e.g., when complete the visual appearance will remain largely unaffected, with a renewed road surface being the only discernible change.

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.
- Works will avoid encroaching on land and areas where work is not required or 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

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 Slochd SAC lies approximately 400m northwest of the scheme extent. No potential for Likely Significant Effects (LSE) on the qualifying feature of the SAC (dry heaths) was identified as there is a lack of connectivity between proposed works and the SACs qualifying feature due to distance and non-mobile nature of the feature.

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. Any protected species in the area are likely to be accustomed to road noise on the A9 and the scheme is of short duration (14 nights) and will be undertaken on a rolling programme across the full scheme extent. 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 to carry out the works. Unnecessary encroachment onto terrestrial or aquatic areas will not be tolerated.
- All construction operatives will be briefed through toolbox talks prior to works commencing, which will be included in the SEMP. The toolbox talks will provide information on the legislation, general ecology, and best practice measures for relevant protected species.
- 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 will be directed away from areas of woodland and waterbodies as far as is safe and reasonably practicable.
- 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, works will be restricted to a 7m buffer of any growth where reasonably practicable.
- 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.
- 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. 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 scheme have the potential to cause noise and vibration impacts through the use of equipment and construction vehicles for the proposed activities. However, the works are not located within a CNMA or CQA and there are no residential or commercial properties located within 300m of the scheme. Works will also be completed over 14 nights on a rolling programme, with the aim being to complete the noisiest works by 23:00. Works with the potential to induce worst-case scenario noise and vibration will also be intermittent, temporary, transient and short-lived.

The road surface is in a poor condition, with a series of defects. Replacing the life-expired surface course with TS2010 road surfacing affords the benefits of a reduction in mid-to-high frequency traffic noise and a reduction in ground vibrations. As a result, upon completion of the work, noise associated with the movement of vehicles on the trunk road should decrease post construction.

The following mitigation measures will be put in place:

- Where possible, the noisiest work operations (e.g., cold milling, using breakers (jackhammers), chipping hammers, use of rollers, etc.) will be completed before 23:00.
- The Environmental Health Officers (EHO) from Highland Council will be notified of works.
- 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. 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 site personnel will be fully briefed in advance of works regarding the need to minimise noise during works and of the site-specific sensitivities.
- Drop heights from vehicles and NRMM will be kept to a minimum to minimise noise when unloading.
- 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 have the potential to have temporary adverse impacts on vehicle travellers, and NMUs. No significant congestion issues are noted during the proposed construction hours; however increased journey times may occur, but these are considered insignificant considering the relatively low traffic counts and works being undertaken out of the traffic peak hours. Access to NMU facilities (such as National Cycle Route 7) which lie within 300m of the scheme, will be maintained with the works are being undertaken at night when footfall and cyclist count is at its lowest.

There are no residential properties and commercial premises are found within 300m of the scheme, as such there is minimal potential for disturbance from noise, vibration and from additional construction lighting.

With the following mitigation measures in place, the risk of significant impacts on population and human health is considered to be low:

- Notification will be issued to local public transport operators prior to commencement of the works, advising of any proposed works and expected restrictions.
- Construction lighting will consider the need to avoid illuminating surrounding environment to avoid a nuisance at night, and non-essential lighting will be switched off at night.

- Appropriate provisions / measures will be implemented within the traffic management to allow the safe passage of NMUs of all abilities through the site.
- 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 due to operation of plant within and within proximity to watercourses and/or drainage systems, which may lead to 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). No in-water works will take place and there is no requirement for the abstraction or transfers of water from, or discharges to, a waterbody. As such, the potential for a direct pollution incident within a waterbody is unlikely. Experience gained from BEAR Scotland maintenance schemes elsewhere on the network has shown that where standard good working practice is adopted (e.g., adherence to SEPA good practice guidance, utilisation of drain covers or similar, etc.), water quality is protected.

The works may result in potential direct or indirect effects on the water environment. 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) will be detailed in the SEMP and adhered to on site.
- No discharges into any 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 drainage systems.
- 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. 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.
- Local contractors and suppliers will be used as far as practicable to reduce fuel use and greenhouse gas emitted as part of the works.

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 risks

There will be no change to the likelihood of flooding on the A9 within the scheme extents upon completion of the works.

Works are restricted to areas of made ground on the A9 carriageway surface, with access to the scheme gained via the A9. TM will employ lane closures facilitated by a convoy system. Travelling public will be notified of working hours and provided with appropriate contact information.

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 Portal (Map Search) identified one planning application in the approval stages within 300m of the scheme within the last year. The proposed ‘Clune Wind Farm’ (24/00690/SCOP) is located approximately 100m south of scheme extents and was submitted in February 2024. Due to planning permission not yet being granted, these works will not begin until after the proposed resurfacing works are completed, therefore no cumulative effects are anticipated.

A search of the Scottish Roads Works Commissioner’s website (Map Search) has identified no other roadworks noted as being planned by BEAR Scotland in proximity to scheme and 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 TM. 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 TM to complete multiple schemes at once.

This approach allows BEAR Scotland to effectively manage the potential cumulative effects as a result of TM, resulting in minimal disruption to users of the Scottish trunk road network.

Overall, it is unlikely that the proposed works will have significant cumulative effects 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) exceed 1 ha 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 like-for-like replacement of worn road surface, with all works restricted to made ground on the A9 carriageway.
- Construction activities are restricted to an area of 1.05 ha along the A9 for a length of 1,161m.
- Works are not expected to result in significant disturbance to nearby receptors or protected species that may be present in the wider area.

- INNS are not expected to be present within the scheme extent. However, if any are found on site, measures to prevent potential INNS spread will be implemented.
- The risk of major accidents or disasters is considered to be low.
- Residual impacts are considered to beneficial for the travelling public which may use this stretch of carriageway. In addition, improved road surface will reduce the road noise levels and in turn will reduce disruption to the receptor located in proximity to the scheme.

Location of the scheme:

- The scheme will be located within the existing A9 road boundary (carriageway surface) and as such, no land take will be required.
- The scheme is not located within any NP/NSAs. Works entail like-for-like resurfacing and no change to the visual landscape is expected.
- The scheme is located approximately 400m from the Slochd SAC. However, it has been determined that there is no potential for LSE on the qualifying feature (dry heaths) of this site as there is no connectivity (due to distance and non-mobile nature of feature).
- There are several HER/Canmore in proximity to scheme extents; however, none are located within scheme extents, and the construction of the A9 trunk road is likely to have removed any archaeological remains that may have been present.

Characteristics of potential impacts of the scheme:

- Any potential impacts of the works are expected to be temporary, short-term, non-significant, and limited to the construction phase.
- Measures will be in place to ensure appropriate removal and disposal of waste.
- Works are programmed to only take 14 nights to complete on a rolling programme, with the aim being to complete the noisiest works by 23:00.
- The SEMP will include plans to address environmental incidents.
- 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.
- 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.

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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