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Environmental Impact Assessment Record of Determination

A835 Conon Bridge

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Project Details

Description

BEAR Scotland has been commissioned by Transport Scotland to carry out deck refurbishment works and minor maintenance works of the A835 Conon Bridge, which carries the A835 carriageway over the River Conon, south of Dingwall. The works will involve:

- Repair/replacement of the expansion joints
- Removing existing surfacing and waterproofing layer on the full deck
- Resurfacing and re-waterproofing on the full deck
- Breakout of damaged concrete on bridge deck using hydro-demolition (with encapsulation and water treatment in place)
- Concrete repairs to the deck
- Maintenance works including repairs to an off-deck pedestrian fence, removal of minor vegetation on wing walls, removal of graffiti and pigeon droppings on abutments and underneath the bridge decking within the enclosure.

Works are required to increase the lifespan of this structure and ensure its safety for road users. Maintenance works will be undertaken at the same time as the deck refurbishment. Investigation works have been undertaken in July 2026 to determine the road make up and presence of asbestos. The refurbishment and maintenance works are planned for September 2026, for a duration of 16 weeks by utilising daytime hours (08:00-18:00). Changes in the programme may result in a change to the proposed working hours/commencement dates.

Traffic management (TM) will involve single lane closures with two-way temporary traffic lights. A site compound is required and the location of this is yet to be confirmed (likely within TM on the A835 carriageway). Local access will be accommodated within TM as much as reasonably practicable.

Location

The scheme is located on a semi-rural stretch of the A835 approximately 1km northeast of the settlement of Conon Bridge (21km northeast of Inverness), within the Highland Council region (Figure 1). The scheme is located at National Grid Reference NH 54724 56351.

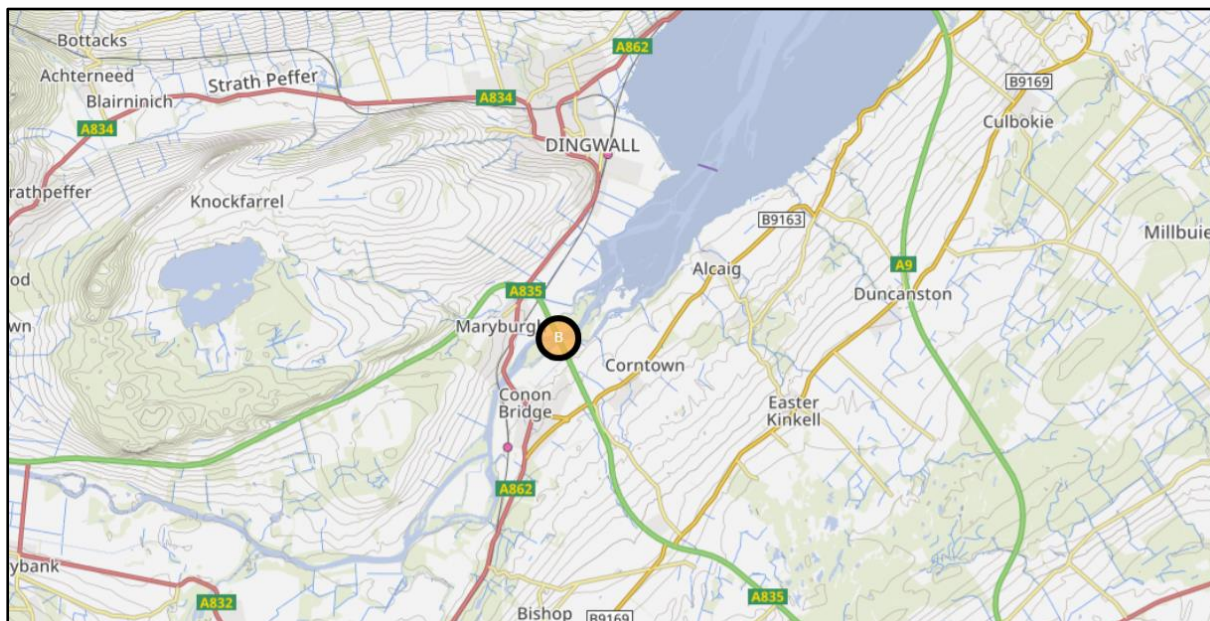


Figure 1. Scheme location

Description of local environment

Air quality

There are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) which have been declared by the Highland Council within 300m of the scheme ([Air Quality Management Areas](#)).

There are no air quality monitoring sites located within 10km of the scheme ([Scottish Air Quality](#)).

There is one site registered on the Scottish Pollution Release Inventory (SPRI) within 10km of the scheme ([Scottish Pollution Release Inventory](#)): 'Carbon Fibers, Muir of Ord Industrial Estate', lies approximately 7.7km southwest from the scheme.

Baseline air quality for this scheme is primarily influenced by traffic along the A835 trunk road. Secondary releases are likely delivered by residential and agricultural activities within the wider area.

Cultural heritage

According to [PastMap](#) there is one Historic Environment Record (HER) (also listed on the National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE)): 'Conon Bridge, A9', approximately 50m west of the scheme at its closest extent.

There are no other Cultural Heritage features such as Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Garden & Designed Landscapes, Conservation Areas, Battlefields or World Heritage Sites listed within 300m of the scheme.

The works are confined to the trunk road boundary. As such, construction of the A835 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 Record of Determination (RoD).

Landscape and visual effects

The site does not fall within a National Park (NP) or a National Scenic Area (NSA) ([SiteLink](#)).

The scheme is located on a semi-rural stretch of the A835, approximately 1km northeast of the settlement of Conon Bridge. Land use within 300m of the scheme extent is dominated by rectilinear fields and farms, managed woodlands, holdings,

rough grazings, and motorway and major roads ([HLAMap](#)). The A835 trunk road and River Conon are the dominant landscape features.

Landscape Character Type for the scheme is listed as 'Farmed River Plains' ([LCT 342](#)) which has the following key characteristics:

- Broad expanse of mainly flat, connected river valley flood plains, with central meandering rivers.
- Contrast of the flat, open plain and the adjacent surrounding concave slopes rising to steep hill and mountain edges to the north, west and south.
- Meandering and mainly natural course of rivers and associated wetlands and salt marshes at lower reaches.
- Woodland and tree cover of roadside and field-side trees lines, shelterbelts and small plantations interspersed with large scale fields.
- Relatively sparse settlement, mainly of estate farms and cottages which avoid wetter areas, with occasional and relatively contained larger settlements on low plains as well as elevated sandy gravel deposits.
- Important prehistoric ceremonial monuments consisting of standing stones and henges.

The land capability for agriculture surrounding the trunk road is classified as 3.2 ('Land capable of average production though high yields of barley, oats and grass can be obtained. Grass leys are common.') ([Scotland's Soils](#)).

The A835 trunk road, including the A893, connects Tore with Ullapool. It commences at (but excludes) the A9 Tore Roundabout leading generally north-westwards for a distance of 80 kilometres to (but excludes) its junction with the ferry terminal at Ullapool. The A835 within the scheme extents is a single carriageway bridge over the River Conon.

Biodiversity

The scheme spans the Conon Islands Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (NatureScot ID: [8230](#)).

The scheme lies approximately 550m southwest of the Cromarty Firth Special Protection Area (SPA) ([8488](#)) and Ramsar site ([8418](#)).

The A835 Conon Bridge spans the Lower River Conon Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) ([1105](#)), which overlaps Conon Islands SAC at the scheme extents.

The Cromarty Firth SSSI lies 1.3km downstream of the scheme at its closest point ([467](#)).

Additionally, the Inner Moray Firth SPA ([8515](#)) and Inner Moray Firth Ramsar site ([8430](#)) are located 7.5km southeast of the scheme.

Due to the proximity and hydrological connectivity of the works to the above designated sites, a Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) / Appropriate Assessment (AA) has been produced. Refer to the relevant assessment section below for details.

No other locally or nationally designated sites for biodiversity features are located within 300m of the scheme ([SiteLink](#)).

Numerous bird species were recorded on the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas ([NBN Atlas](#)) within 2km of the scheme during the last ten-year period. Only records with attributions CC-BY, OGL and CC0 (open use) were included in the search criteria. Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), all wild birds and their active nests are protected.

NBN Atlas also holds the following records of invasive non-native species (INNS) (as denoted by *), invasive native weeds or injurious plant species (as listed in the northwest Network Management Contract (NMC)) under the same search criteria:

- Broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*)
- Common ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*)
- Creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*)
- Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*)*
- Rosebay willowherb (*Chamerion angustifolium*)
- Spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*).

Transport Scotland's Asset Management Performance System (AMPS) holds two records of INNS (as denoted by '**') and injurious plants within 300m of the scheme:

- American skunk cabbage (*Lysichiton americanus*)*
- Common ragwort

Habitat surrounding the A835 carriageway at the scheme extents is dominated by semi-natural broadleaved woodlands, agricultural land/arable fields and residential areas. The Inner Cromarty Firth is spanned by the A835 at the scheme extents and is an area of floodplain, supporting a range of habitats including wet woodland, fens, brackish marsh and saltmarsh. The Inner Cromarty Firth at the scheme extents is influenced by the tides.

Two areas of woodland listed on the [Ancient Woodland Inventory](#) (AWI) lie within 300m of the scheme. The closest, listed as 'other' (on Roy map) (2.59 ha) lies beneath the A835 Conon Bridge scheme at its northern extent.

There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) present within 300m of the scheme ([Highland Tree Preservation Orders](#)).

An ecological constraints survey (ECS) was undertaken by the BEAR Scotland NW Environmental Team on 04 September 2025.

Geology and soils

Bedrock geology within the scheme is recorded as 'Braemore Mudstone Formation' - Mudstone, sandstone and limestone. Sedimentary bedrock formed between 407.6 and 393.3 million years ago during the Devonian period ([BGS Geology Viewer](#)).

Superficial deposits within the scheme consist of alluvium - clay, silt, sand and gravel, and; raised marine beach deposits of Holocene age - sand and gravel ([BGS Geology Viewer](#)).

Soils within the scheme are recorded as non-calcareous gleys ([Scotland's Soils](#)), and as being of Carbon and Peat 'Class 0' which are mineral soils; peatland habitats are not typically found on such soils ([Carbon and peatland 2016 map](#)).

This receptor has no constraints (as identified in Environmental Baseline) that are likely to be impacted by the proposed works and as such 'geology and soils' is scoped out and not discussed further within this RoD.

Material assets and waste

The proposed works will include removal and reinstatement of carriageway surface course. Materials used will consist of:

- Binder material
- Concrete repair material
- Surfacing material
- Waterproofing material

Wastes generated are anticipated to be surfacing, concrete, minor vegetation from wingwalls, bird guano, and wastewater from hydro-demolition. Further details on wastewater from hydro-demolition are provided in the Road Drainage and Water Environment section of this RoD.

Investigation works have been undertaken in July 2026 to determine the road make up and presence of asbestos. Results for asbestos were negative. Further details are provided in the Air Quality and Material Assets and Waste sections of this RoD, in the event that asbestos is found during the works.

Due to the scheme value (approximately £1,000,000), there is a requirement for a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP).

A site compound is required, and the location is to be confirmed by the appointed contractor (likely within TM on the A835 carriageway).

Noise and vibration

A search of the latest Round 4 noise mapping data from the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) as displayed on the [Scottish Government's GeoNetwork Map](#) returned records for noise levels during the day/evening/night (LDEN) within the A835 and its verges as between 73-74dB.

The scheme does not fall within a Candidate Noise Management Area (CNMA) as defined by the Transportation Noise Action Plan (TNAP) ([Transportation Noise Action Plan-2024-2028](#)).

Given the semi-rural nature of the surrounding area, it is considered likely that the baseline noise levels will be mainly influenced by vehicles travelling along the A835 and agricultural activities in the wider area.

Population and human health

There is one commercial property located within 300m of the scheme. This property lies approximately 250m southeast of the A835 carriageway and is screened by broadleaved woodland. A footpath/cycle lane runs adjacent to the A835 southbound carriageway along the full scheme extents. There is one layby within 300m of the scheme, located adjacent to the southbound carriageway.

There are no access roads, laybys, bus stops or other public amenities within the scheme extent.

According to Scottish Road Works Commissioner, there are no other works scheduled within 300m of the scheme ([Scottish Road Works](#)).

National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 1 runs adjacent to the A835 southbound carriageway along the entire scheme extent ([OS Maps](#)).

There are no walking routes listed on [WalkHighlands](#), or [Core Paths in Highland Council](#) within 300m of the scheme.

A Transport Scotland manual traffic counter (site name ATC01097) located along the A835 carriageway, 250m southeast from the scheme, recorded an average daily

traffic (ADT) flow of 12,258 motor vehicles in 2025, of which 13.6% were heavy goods vehicles (HGVs).

TM will consist of single lane closure with two-way temporary traffic lights.

Road drainage and the water environment

The scheme lies between two groundwater bodies: 'Strathconan and Muir of Ord Sand and Gravel' (ID 150790) and 'Strath Peffer and Alness Coastal' (ID 150805), both were awarded an overall status of 'good' in 2024 by Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) under the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC (WFD) ([Water Classification Hub](#)).

The 'Inner Cromarty Firth' (ID 200443) is a transitional water body in the Scotland river basin district and is spanned by the A835 trunk road at the scheme extents. It was awarded an overall status of 'good' in 2024 by Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) under the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC (WFD) ([Water Classification Hub](#)).

The River Conon (which is part of the Inner Cromarty Firth) is tidal at this location; therefore, the bridge spans the marine environment and lies seaward of the mean high water springs (MHWS) boundary.

The SEPA indicative surface water online [flood mapping](#) tool records that the carriageway within the scheme extents is not at risk of surface water flooding.

Climate

The [Climate Change \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#) ('The Act'), and its subsequent amendment under the [Climate Change \(Emissions Reduction Targets\) \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#), sets the framework for the Scottish Government to address climate change. The Act has an ambitious target to reach Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045, with any residual emissions balanced by removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. This is five years earlier than the rest of the UK due to the greater potential for carbon sequestration in Scotland.

The Act was amended to replace interim targets with carbon budgets. Carbon budgets are legally binding caps on greenhouse gas emissions in Scotland over five-year periods. In line with the Act, the Climate Change Committee (CCC) published advice on the level of Scotland's four carbon budgets, covering the period 2026 to 2045, recommending what the Scottish Government sets its carbon budgets at for annual average levels of emissions. These recommendations are based on an ambitious but credible route to Net Zero for Scotland by 2045.

Emissions reductions from surface transport are the largest contribution to meeting the first two carbon budgets. The pathway for surface transport emission reduction is primarily driven by the uptake of electric vehicles, in addition to measures to enable a shift from car use to public transport and active travel, which all play a role in reducing emissions from fossil fuel cars. Ensuring efficiency of existing transport infrastructure and improving/providing new active travel facilities is therefore important to support these carbon reduction budgets.

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 the above noted legally binding target of net-zero by 2045. 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](#)).

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 adverse local air quality impacts. Activities undertaken on site may cause dust and particulate matter to be emitted to the atmosphere.

In addition, the waterproofing layer on the bridge deck is required to be removed and may contain asbestos within the bitumen matrix. This type of asbestos material is non-friable and bound within a bitumen matrix. If this is confirmed to be present, it is highly unlikely that asbestos material will break away or become particulate matter and dispersed into the air. If asbestos is present, licensed contractors will use small hand tools to remove the waterproofing layer with appropriate containment measures in place. Small amounts of water will be sprayed during use of hand tools to suppress any dust created during removal of the waterproofing layer before the material is removed as special waste.

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.

- Removal of asbestos material (if present) will be carried out by a specialist contractor with appropriate containment measures in place. Asbestos material will be removed as special waste.
- 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 the 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, and 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 risk 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 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. There will be minor permanent change to local landscape due to refurbishment of the bridge. However, all change is confined to the A835 trunk road boundary and will be in keeping with the character of the road. In addition, people, ancillary plant, vehicles and materials will be restricted to areas of made/engineered ground on the A835 and the works will be of relatively short duration (16 weeks). Land use will not change as a result of the works. As such, the temporary visual impact of the works is unlikely to be significant and there will be no residual impacts i.e. when complete, the visual appearance will remain largely unaffected with refurbished bridge being the only 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

The A835 within the scheme extents spans the Conon Islands SAC and Lower River Conon SSSI. The scheme lies approximately 550m southwest of the Cromarty Firth SPA and Cromarty Firth Ramsar site, approximately 1.3km southwest of the Cromarty Firth SSSI, and 7.5km northwest of the Inner Moray Firth SPA and Inner Moray Firth Ramsar site. Due to the proximity of the works and ecological connectivity, BEAR Scotland completed an HRA (AA) to assess potential impacts of the works on these designated sites.

The HRA (AA) concluded that the works will not result in likely significant effects (LSE) on the qualifying features of the Conon Islands SAC, Inner Moray Firth SPA and Inner Moray Firth Ramsar.

LSE could not be ruled out for four of the qualifying features of the Cromarty Firth SPA and Ramsar. However, the works are not expected to result in adverse effects on site integrity (AESI) due to the following reasons:

- The works are highly localised to the bridge and no works will take place within the SPA/Ramsar.
- Species in the vicinity are likely to be accustomed to existing levels of disturbance due to traffic and agricultural activities in the area, and there is ample suitable habitat for these species within the SPA/Ramsar in the wider area.
- Robust containment and pollution prevention measures throughout the works will be implemented, including full encapsulation of the working area during hydro-demolition and treatment of water used for hydro-demolition prior to discharge.
- The 'Birds' Toolbox Talk will be included in the SEMP and provided to all staff prior to works commencing.

No cumulative or in-combination effects of the works are expected on the qualifying features of the designated sites. Similarly, no significant negative impacts have been identified on the Lower River Conon SSSI as a result of works.

Consultation has been undertaken with NatureScot who have granted consent for the proposed works to be carried out within the Lower River Conon SSSI. A copy of the consent will be kept on site, and no further consultation is required.

Although no protected species were identified in proximity to the scheme during the site visits, the environment in the vicinity of the works provides suitable habitat for a variety of protected species. Activities undertaken on site could potentially have temporary adverse impacts on biodiversity in the area as a result of increased vehicle presence and the potential for disturbance to protected species and pollution of habitats.

Himalayan balsam is present throughout the entire survey area, including beneath the bridge and above the wingwalls. Working near INNS will be avoided and strict biosecurity measures will be employed to prevent the spread of INNS. If working within 7m of INNS or removal of INNS is required, an INNS plan will be prepared prior to works, and the INNS will either be buried on site, or removed to a suitable waste disposal site.

Works are restricted to the A835 trunk road boundary and the number of construction vehicles and construction operatives required on site is low given the scale and scope of works. Any species in the area are likely to be accustomed to noise and visual disturbance pertaining to vehicle, pedestrian and NMU movements on the A835 and nearby cycle/footpath. Furthermore, the scheme is of relatively short duration (16 weeks) and will be undertaken during a daytime working pattern. The potential for significant species disturbance within the area of construction is therefore considered to be low.

Pollution controls and good practice measures to reduce impacts of the works on the local environment will be detailed in the SEMP and adhered to on site. The following mitigation measures will be put in place to minimise impacts on biodiversity features in the area:

- A pre-works check for protected species will be undertaken at least four weeks prior to the start of refurbishment works. If permanent resting sites for these species are found, additional consultation and licencing will be obtained from NatureScot prior to the works taking place.
- An Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) will attend site regularly during works to monitor sensitive ecological receptors and mitigation measures to reduce impacts.
- Works are to take place outwith the breeding bird season (March to August inclusive). If works are delayed into breeding bird season, vegetation removal at the wingwalls will be supervised by an ECoW.

- Working near areas of INNS will be avoided and strict biosecurity measures will be employed to prevent the spread of INNS. If working within 7m of INNS or removal of INNS is required, an INNS plan will be prepared prior to works, and the INNS will either be buried on site, or removed to a suitable waste disposal site.
- 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, the 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. If required, NatureScot will be contacted for advice.
- 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.
- Any artificial lighting required during periods of low light levels will be directed at the area of works as far as is safe and reasonably practicable. Light spillage will be reduced as much as possible (e.g. via use of shades).

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

Wastewater created as a result of hydro-demolition is considered by SEPA to be a trade effluent and must have authorisation to be discharged to the surrounding

environment (even following treatment). Details are provided in the Road Drainage and the Water Environment section below.

Investigation works have been undertaken in July 2026 to determine the road make up and presence of asbestos, however the results have not yet been determined. The waterproofing layer on the bridge deck may contain asbestos material within a bitumen matrix. This type of asbestos material is non-friable and bound within a bitumen matrix. If asbestos is confirmed to be present, licensed contractors will use small hand tools to remove the waterproofing layer. Small amounts of water will be sprayed during use of hand tools to suppress any dust created during removal of the waterproofing layer. This and any other material produced during asbestos removal will be collected and removed from site as special waste by a licensed special waste carrier.

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:

- A specialist contractor will carry out removal of asbestos material with appropriate containment measures in place. All asbestos material will be removed from site as special waste.
- A SWMP is required due to the scheme value exceeding £350,000.
- 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, including full encapsulation of the working area during hydro-demolition works.
- 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.

- Any felled vegetation material will be disposed of appropriately in line with the NMC (Schedule 5, Appendix 0/1, 3010SR Maintenance of Established Trees and Shrubs).
- 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, and the proximity of road space suggests that residents within the local area will have a degree of tolerance to noise and disturbance. Works will also be completed over 16 weeks, and works will be conducted utilising a daytime working pattern. There is potential for noise due to the use of hydro-demolition, however due to the low number of human receptors (one property within 300m of the scheme), the potential to induce worst-case scenario noise and vibration will also be intermittent, temporary and short-lived.

The following mitigation measures will be put in place:

- Local residents that are likely to be affected by the works will be notified of the works in advance, likely by letter drop, which will contain details of the proposed timings and duration of the works, in addition to contact details for the Site Supervisor.
- 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 may have temporary adverse impacts on local residents, vehicle travellers, and non-motorised road users (NMUs) as a result of construction presence, and associated noise and delays due to TM measures. TM for works will involve single lane closure with two-way temporary traffic lights. One property lies 250m southeast of the scheme and is screened by woodland. In the event of local access restrictions to residential properties, access will be granted as requested. A section of the closed cycle path will be redirected. Access to any NMU facilities located within 300m of the scheme will be maintained. However, no significant congestion issues are noted during the proposed construction hours and, although increased journey times may occur, these are considered insignificant considering the relatively low traffic count on this section of the road.

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 residents and local public transport operators prior to commencement of the works, advising of any proposed works and expected restrictions.
- Local access will be granted as required.

- Any changes of schedule will be communicated to local residents throughout the programme.
- Given the proximity of the works to a commercial property, the toolbox talk 'Being a Good Neighbour' will be briefed prior to works commencing.
- 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'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, wastewater from hydro-demolition, 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.

Although no in-water works are planned, the A835 Canon Bridge spans the MHWS boundary. As works on the bridge will be over an area seaward of MHWS and could potentially impact the marine environment, they are subject to authorisation under the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010, and a marine licence is required to permit the works. BEAR Scotland has applied for a marine licence, which is yet to be issued. Once granted, all conditions of the licence will be adhered to and a copy of the licence will be retained on site.

Where hydro-demolition is required, the working area will be encapsulated and the wastewater will be contained, collected and treated through a treatment system (such as a Siltbuster) before being discharged (under SEPA authorisation) to a nearby area on land. The wastewater must meet certain parameters before it can be discharged: a pH level of between 4-9, a suspended solids limit of 80mg/l and volume of discharge must not exceed 10m³ per day. Wastewater from hydro-demolition will not be discharged within areas of any of the designated sites. An EASR Permit (EAS/P/6100508) has been issued by SEPA to permit discharge of treated hydro-demolition water on site. The contractor will be responsible for providing an ECoW for water monitoring.

The following mitigation measures will be put in place to reduce the risk of pollution incidents as a result of the works:

- All conditions of the SEPA EASR permit (EAS/P/6100508) permit will be adhered to during works.
- All conditions of the marine licence and variation will be complied with. A copy of the licence will be present and kept on site for inspection.
- Standard working practices to comply with EASR for works near water are detailed in the SEMP and will be 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.
- A toolbox talk on silt and sediment containment will be delivered to all site staff as part of the site induction.
- An incident response (contingency) plan will be put in place to reduce the risk from pollution incidents or accidental spillages. All necessary containment equipment, including suitable spill kits (for oil and chemicals) will be available on site, quickly accessible if needed, and staff trained in their use.
- All spills will be logged and reported. In the event of any spills into the water environment, all works will stop and the incident will be reported to the project manager and the BEAR Scotland Environmental Team. SEPA will be informed of any such incident as soon as possible using the SEPA Pollution Hotline.
- All plant and equipment will be regularly inspected for any signs of damage and leaks. A checklist will be present to make sure that the checks have been carried out.
- Storage of hazardous material, oil and fuel containers will be distanced more than 10m away from any watercourses.
- If required, a designated refuelling area will be identified. Fuel bowsers will be stored on an impermeable area and be fully bunded. This will be distanced more than 10m from any watercourses.
- During refuelling of smaller mobile plant, a funnel will be used, and drip trays will be in place. Care will be taken to reduce the chance of spillages. 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 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

During the works there is potential for impacts such as a result of the emission of greenhouse gases through the use of equipment, vehicles, material use, and production and transportation of materials and wastes. Considering the nature, short-term duration, size and scale of the scheme, and the mitigation detailed below, the risk of significant impacts to climate are considered to be low.

Proposed climate mitigation measures:

- 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 gases emitted as part of the works.
- Warm mix asphalt will be used as standard for resurfacing.
- Where possible, materials will be sourced locally to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with materials movement, and waste will be disposed at local facilities.

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 are no surface water flooding issues noted at the A835 carriageway within the scheme extents. Works will be programmed as far as is reasonably practicable to avoid periods of adverse weather or heavy rainfall.

Works are restricted to areas of made/engineered ground of the A835 trunk road boundary, with access to the scheme gained via the A835. TM will involve single lane closures with two-way temporary traffic lights. A section of NCN route 1 will be closed with NMUs redirected. Local residents will be notified of working hours and provided with appropriate contact information. Pedestrians or other NMUs will be accommodated within the TM setup where possible.

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.

The works will not result in any change in vulnerability of the A835 carriageway or active travel route to risk, or in severity of major accidents/disasters that would impact on the environment.

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](#) did not identify any planning applications within 300m of the scheme within the last six months. No overlap or cumulative effects are anticipated with this scheme.

A search of the Scottish Roads Works Commissioner website ([Map Search](#)) has identified that there are no roadworks planned for the same period as the proposed works and no cumulative effects are anticipated with any other developments in the vicinity.

BEAR Scotland programme all of their proposed works in line with appropriate guidance and contractual requirements. All schemes are programmed to take into account existing and future planned works, with a view of limiting any cumulative effects relating to traffic management. As a result of this exercise, where a potential for cumulative impacts is identified, BEAR 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 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 the Record of Determination, there are no significant effects anticipated on any environmental receptors as a result of the proposed works.

An HRA (AA) was conducted due to the ecological connectivity with the Conon Islands SAC, Cromarty Firth SPA and Ramsar site, Inner Moray Firth SPA and Ramsar. With appropriate measures in place, the proposed works will not result in AESI on the qualifying features.

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) are situated in whole or in part in the Conon Islands SAC and Lower River Conon SSSI which are sensitive areas 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 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, reference to consultations undertaken 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 the refurbishment of the bridge deck and minor maintenance works, with all works restricted to the man-made ground on the A835 trunk road boundary. No in-water works are required.
- Construction activities are restricted to a 120m long stretch along the A835, with a working area under 1ha.

- The works will be temporary, transient, localised, and completed during daytime hours on a rolling programme over 16 weeks and one day total.
- Considering the ecological survey data, the works are not expected to result in significant disturbance to protected species that may be present in the wider area.
- Himalayan balsam, an INNS, was identified in proximity to the scheme. Working near areas of INNS will be avoided and strict biosecurity measures will be employed to prevent the spread of INNS. If working within 7m of INNS or removal of INNS is required, an INNS plan will be prepared prior to works and the INNS will either be buried on site or removed to a suitable waste disposal site.
- No in-combination effects have been identified.
- The risk of major accidents or disasters is considered to be low.
- Addressing defects noted on the bridge and carriageway will provide these parts of the A835 with another life cycle, and significantly improve the quality which will result in safer conditions for road users.
- Residual impacts are considered to be beneficial for the travelling public which may use this stretch of carriageway. In addition, the refurbishment and maintenance works will improve road safety following the works.

Location of the scheme:

- The scheme lies fully within the existing A835 trunk road boundary. The works have hydrological connectivity with the Conon Islands SAC, Cromarty Firth SPA, Cromarty Firth Ramsar Site, Inner Moray Firth SPA, Inner Moray Firth Ramsar Site, Lower River Conon SSSI and Cromarty Firth SSSI. The proposed works will not result in AESI on the qualifying features.
- Measures will be in place to ensure appropriate removal and disposal of waste, including wastewater from hydro-demolition (a permit has been granted by SEPA (EAS/P/6100508)). Wastewater from hydro-demolition will not be discharged within areas of any of the above designated sites.
- Works will take place on a bridge spanning the area seaward of the MHWS boundary. A Marine Licence has been applied for and once granted, all conditions of this licence will be adhered to.
- NatureScot has granted consent for the proposed works to proceed within the Lower River Conon SSSI boundary.
- The scheme will be located within the existing trunk road boundaries and as such, no land take will be required.
- The works will not restrict access to any nearby residential/commercial properties.

Characteristics of potential impacts of the scheme:

- All relevant licences and consents will be in place prior to works all conditions of these licences/consents will be adhered to during works.
- Any potential impacts of the works are expected to be temporary, short-term, non-significant, and limited to the construction phase.
- Works are not expected to result in significant disturbance to nearby receptors or protected species that may be present in the wider area, outwith those detailed in the HRA.
- Working near areas of INNS will be avoided and strict biosecurity measures will be employed to prevent the spread of INNS. If working within 7m of INNS or removal of INNS is required, an INNS plan will be prepared prior to works.
- 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.
- Measures will be in place to ensure appropriate removal and disposal of waste, including asbestos if present.
- No impacts on the environment are expected during the operational phase as a result of works. The works are expected to result in positive impacts on road users during the operational phase.
- As the works will be limited to the like-for-like replacement of the structural bridge components, there is no change to the vulnerability of the road to the risk or severity of major accidents/disasters that would impact on the environment.

References of supporting documentation

'F565 HRA A835 Conon Bridge' (BEAR Scotland, September 2025).

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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