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Environmental Impact Assessment Record of Determination

A9 Dalwhinnie Junction Approaches

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Project Details

Description

Bear Scotland has been commissioned by Transport Scotland to carry out resurfacing works on a stretch of the A9 carriageway; A9 Dalwhinnie Junction Approaches. The works include milling and replacing bituminous material to mixed-depth inlay and reinstatement of road markings following completion of resurfacing works.

The scheme comprises of a length of 481m, with an approximate area of 0.510ha.

The main plant will include pavers, planers and rollers. A welfare unit with generator may be required on site and heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) will be required for transport of materials and wastes.

The resurfacing procedure is as follows:

- Set up traffic management (TM) and mark out site.
- Mill out old surface course to various depths.
- Lay and roll new surface course.
- Roll surface and allow it to set.
- Mark out lining schedule on site
- Carry out lining/studding
- Remove TM and open road.

The works are scheduled to be completed within the 2026-27 financial year, currently due to be completed in October 2026. The works will be completed during nighttime hours (19:00-06:00) for a total duration of 2 nights.

TM will consist of lane closure with three-way temporary traffic lights and a convoy system in place. No TM will be required during non-working hours (06:00-19:00). Access to nearby laybys and parking areas will be maintained as far as is practicable. Site access and plant storage will be located within TM. If there are changes to the programme, this could result in amendments to the exact TM requirements.

Location

The scheme is located on the A9 carriageway (northbound and southbound) at the A9 junction with the A889 in proximity to the village of Dalwhinnie in the Highland Council administrative area (see Figure 1).



Figure 1: Scheme location

Description of local environment

Air quality

For baseline air quality information regarding residential, community and commercial receptors in the area, refer to 'Population and Human Health' section below.

There are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA); Air Quality Monitoring Stations (AQMS); and no records on the Scottish Pollutant Release Inventory (SPRI) within 10km of the scheme extent.

Baseline air quality is likely to be primarily influenced by traffic along the A9; with secondary sources likely derived by the nearby land management activities.

Cultural heritage

A search of the PastMap mapping tool identified the following Listed Buildings within 300m of the scheme:

- Dalwhinnie, Wade Bridge Over River Truim (Reference: LB7665) is a Category B Listed Building is located approximately 85m west of the scheme extent.

Of lesser Cultural Heritage value, a number of Historic Environment Records (HERs) and National Records of the Historic Environment (NRHE) lie within 300m of the scheme extents. The closest of these is River Truim NRHE (ID:117360) Period unassigned, located approximately 75m west of the centre of the scheme extent.

There are no Garden and Design Landscapes, Conservation Areas, Battlefields, World Heritage Sites, Historic Marine Protected Areas, and Protected Military Remains within 300m of the scheme extent.

As the works are restricted to the engineered ground of the A9 trunk road boundary and there are no significant cultural heritage features within proximity to the proposed works, there is negligible potential for cultural heritage impacts as a result of the proposed works and this receptor is not considered further in this RoD.

Landscape and visual effects

The scheme extents are located within Cairngorms National Park (CNP) (Site ID: 8623). The CNP is designated for the following General Special Qualities:

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

There are no National Scenic Areas, or sites designated for its landscape and visual character within 300m of the scheme (SiteLink).

The scheme is located within the 'Upland Glen - Cairngorms' Landscape Character Type (LCT 126). Key characteristics are as follows:

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

Land use (HLA map) within 300m of the scheme extent is classified as:

- Plantation
- Rough grazing
- Reservoir

The A9 Trunk Road, within the North West Network Management Contract (NMC), 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

There is a total of 3 European sites designated for biodiversity features within 2km which have ecological connectivity to the scheme:

- The Drumochter Hills Special Protection Area (SPA) (NatureScot Site Code: 8491) is located approximately 270m east of the scheme extent.
- The River Spey Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (NatureScot Site Code: 8365) is located approximately 20m west of the scheme extent.
- The Drumochter Hills SAC (Site Code: 8243) is located approximately 270m east of the scheme extent.

Due to the ecological connectivity between the scheme and the River Spey SAC, and the Drumochter Hills SAC and SPA a Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) has been undertaken. Refer to the relevant assessment section below for details.

The Drumochter Hills Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (Site Code: 541) is located approximately 30m east of the scheme extent and overlaps with both the Drumochter Hills SAC and SPA.

There are no other locally or nationally designated sites for biodiversity features (e.g. Local or National Nature Reserves) within 300m of the scheme (SiteLink).

The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas holds multiple records of bird species within 2km of the schemes, including those listed as qualifying features of the nearby designated European sites (the search criteria included only records in the last 10 years and which have open-use attributions OGL-CC0-CC-BY). Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), all wild birds and their active nests are protected, with certain species receiving additional protections.

The following invasive and injurious weeds (as listed in the Network Management Contract (NMC)) were identified in proximity to the scheme extent, using the same search criteria:

- Rosebay willowherb (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*)
- Common ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*)
- Spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*)

The Transport Scotland's Asset Management Performance System (AMPS) holds no records of any invasive or injurious weeds (as listed in the NMC) along the A9 within 300m of the scheme.

The habitats surrounding the scheme extent on the A9 are comprised of rough grassland, heathland, coniferous woodland / upland birchwood plantation and riparian habitat associated with the River Truim. These habitats have the potential to support a range of species out with features within the designated sites. Nesting birds may use plantation woodlands and Peatlands between March and August inclusive.

There are no ancient woodlands listed on the Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) within 300m of the scheme extent.

There are no individual trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) by the Highland Council, within 300m of the scheme extent.

The BEAR Scotland NW Environment Team conducted an Ecological Constraints Survey (ECS) in August 2026 to inform environmental assessment of the resurfacing works. The survey was undertaken in accordance with relevant species-specific best practice guidance and covered the scheme and a maximum survey buffer of 300m.

Geology and soils

There are no Geological Conservation Review Sites (GCRS) within 300m of the scheme (SiteLink).

The Drumochter Hills SSSI (NatureScot Site Code: 541) is located approximately 30m east of the scheme extent. The SSSI is designated for the following geological feature:

- Fluvial Geomorphology of Scotland

Soil composition around the area of the scheme extent is rated as class 2 by the Carbon & Peatland Map 2016, indicating nationally important carbon-rich soils, deep peat and priority peatland habitat. The soils surrounding the scheme extent are classified as peaty gleyed podzols and peaty rankers with lithosols (Scotland's soils).

Bedrock Geology (BGS Geology Viewer) within the scheme consists primarily of Gaick Psammite Formation-Psammite, with a small area of Scottish Highland Ordovician Minor Intrusion Suite-Pegmatite located in the centre of the scheme extent. Superficial Deposits (BGS Geology Viewer) within the scheme consists of Till, Devensian-Diamicton.

Material assets and waste

The resurfacing works will use the following materials:

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

The scheme is 481m long and consists of general maintenance of carriageway resurfacing to replace the worn surface. Wastes are anticipated to be primarily planings from the carriageway surface course.

Coal tar has not been identified on site and there is no requirement for a site compound. Storage of plant and equipment will be within TM on the A9 carriageway.

The scheme is currently valued at £200,000. This is below the threshold of £350,000 needed to trigger a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP). As such, it is not required.

Noise and vibration

For 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 Transport Scotland's Transportation Noise Action Plan (TNAP) 2024-2028.

Modelled noise data for the A9 at the scheme extent shows that the day, evening and at night (Lden) fall between 60-70dB (Scotland's Noise Map).

Due to the rural location of the scheme, baseline noise levels are likely to be primarily influenced by traffic travelling along the A9, with secondary sources derived from land management activities.

Population and human health

There are no residential or commercial properties within 300m of the scheme extent.

National Cycle Network Route 7 (National Cycle Routes) runs parallel to the scheme extent, approximately 45m west at its nearest point.

Core Path UBS28 utilises a section of National Cycle Network Route 7 and lies parallel to the A9 approximately 45m west of the extent.

There are no walking routes designated by WalkHighlands within the scheme extent.

A junction to the A889 lies within the scheme extents which connects Dalwhinnie and other settlements with the A9 northbound carriageway. There are two bus stops, located either side of the A9 in proximity to the A9 junction with the A889. One layby lies adjacent to the A9 southbound carriageway 200m south of the scheme.

According to Scottish Road Works Commissioner, there are no other roadworks within 300m of the scheme extent.

In 2025, the Average Daily Traffic (ADT) count was calculated (via automatic counter) on the A9 trunk road at the closest site to the scheme extent approximately 4.5km south (Count point: 50748) and accounted for 10,815 motor vehicles, with 13% of these heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) (Transport Scotland Traffic Count Data).

Road drainage and the water environment

The scheme is underpinned by the Strathnairn, Speyside and Cairngorms groundwater body (ID: 150709), in the Scotland river basin district. It is 3,726 square kilometres in area. It was given an overall status of 'Good' in 2024 by the SEPA under the Water Framework Directive (WFD).

The River Truim (from source to Allt Cuaich confluence) is a river (ID: 23638), in the River Spey catchment of the Scotland river basin district and lies 20m east of the scheme at its nearest point. The main stem is approximately 15.6 kilometres in length. The water body has been designated as a heavily modified water body on account of physical alterations that cannot be addressed without a significant impact on water storage for hydroelectricity generation. The river was given an overall status of 'Moderate Ecological Potential' in 2024 by SEPA under the WFD.

The SEPA Flood Map records areas on the A9 within the scheme extents as having a medium to high likelihood of river and surface water and small watercourse flooding (e.g., 0.5% to 10% likelihood of flooding each year).

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

During the construction phase of works, activities undertaken on site have the potential to cause minor localised and temporary air quality impacts in proximity to the works. The primary sources of pollutants are likely to be dust generated by the

road planing works, in addition to exhaust emissions from vehicles and ancillary plant. Subsequently, there are potential emissions of dust, particulate matter and exhaust emissions into the atmosphere.

However, taking into account the following mitigation measures, the risk of significant air quality impacts is 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.
- Ancillary plant, vehicles and NRMM will have been regularly maintained, paying attention to the integrity of exhaust systems and 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.
- Where practicable, if powered generators are required, the use of mains electricity or battery powered ancillary plant will be considered in place of diesel or petrol alternatives.
- Regular monitoring (e.g., by engineer or Clerk of Works) will take place when activities that can generate air pollution are occurring. In the unlikely event that high 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) minimising cutting and grinding on-site, (b) reducing the operating hours, (c) changing the method of working, etc.

With the above mitigation measures in place, it is anticipated that any effects to air quality 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 temporary, short-term impact on the landscape character and visual amenity of the site due to the presence of construction plant, vehicles, and TM. However, works will be restricted to the A9 carriageway boundary and will be limited to the like-for-like replacement of the carriageway surface. Following completion of the works, the new road surface will be the only discernible changes. The works are of short duration and will be undertaken on a rolling programme.

Land use will not change as a result of the works, and no obvious residual change to the visual amenity of the local landscape is anticipated. However, the National Park Authority will be notified, and additional mitigation measures will be incorporated where required.

In addition, the following mitigation measures will be put in place during works:

- Throughout all stages of the works, the sites 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 sites 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 ‘Roads and Bridges Maintenance Activities within the Drumochter Hills, River Spey and River Spey - Insh Marshes European Sites, Highland Region’ HRA has been completed in 2023 which covers a variety of maintenance activities, including resurfacing schemes.

In line with the HRA, the proposed maintenance activities are not expected to result in Likely Significant Effects on the qualifying features of the Drumochter Hills SAC or Drumochter Hills SPA. The works would be highly localised to the section of the A9, with the works taking two nights to complete. No works are proposed within the SAC or the SPA boundaries, which are separated from the A9 by a buffer of undesignated land. Consequently, no direct effects are anticipated on the qualifying habitats or typical species of the SAC, nor on the qualifying features, their supporting habitats, or food resources within the SPA.

Additionally, The HRA covers the River Spey SAC, concluding that there is no potential for the proposed works to result in Likely Significant Effects on its qualifying features. No works will take place within the boundary of the SAC and no in-water works are required; as such, no direct impacts will occur. Given the minor and localised nature of the works, the lack of requirement for in-water works and adherence to good practice measures for pollution prevention, no risk of significant

pollution impacts to the watercourse or nearby feeding grounds was identified. During the construction phase, there will be a temporary use of artificial lighting and localised increase in noise. This is unlikely to significantly impact the qualifying features of the SAC due to the short-term nature of the works and the implementation of best practice measures.

The habitat surrounding the works indicates the potential for presence of protected mammal species. However, works are restricted to the A9 carriageway and the number of construction vehicles and construction operatives required onsite is low given the scale and scope of works.

The ECS completed in August 2026 identified rosebay willowherb and common ragwort along the A9 verges within the scheme. There are no earthworks or vegetation clearance associated with the scheme and the scheme does not require permanent (or temporary) land-take, accommodation works, site clearance or locally gained resources, with no requirement to import topsoil. Additionally, as per the NW Annual Landscape Management Plan, any invasive or injurious flowering plant species within the trunk road corridor is treated by cultural methods and/or chemical weed control. As such, there is limited potential to spread or introduce INNS, invasive native perennials, or injurious flowering plant species.

Taking into account the following mitigation measures, the risk of significant impacts to Biodiversity is considered to be low.

- No in-water works will be permitted. Works will be limited to areas required for access and works. Unnecessary encroachment onto terrestrial or aquatic areas will not be tolerated.
- No discharges into any watercourses or drainage systems will be permitted. Measures will be implemented to protect the aquatic environment and are detailed in Section: Road Drainage and the Water Environment.
- All site workers will have received adequate training relevant to their role prior to working on the site, including specific environmental inductions and ‘toolbox talks’ as required, which will be included in the Site Environmental Management Plan (SEMP).
- Site personnel will remain vigilant for protected species and will not approach or touch any animals seen on site. Any sightings of protected species will be reported to BEAR’s Environmental Team. Should a protected species be encountered or move within 50m of the active works (including laydown areas), works will be temporarily halted until the animal(s) move at least 50m away from the construction site, or until BEAR’s Environmental Team can provide advice.
- The Contractor will employ ‘soft-start’ techniques for all noisy activity to avoid sudden and unexpected disturbance during works. Each time the activity is

started up after a period of inactivity, the noise levels will be gradually increased over a period of 30 minutes to permit animals (including birds) to move away from the disturbance.

- Where possible, artificial lighting used during low light levels will be sufficiently screened and aligned so as to ensure that there is no direct illumination of neighbouring habitat (e.g., locations adjacent to tree shelterbelt, woodland, waterbody etc.) to ensure minimal impact on nocturnal species.
- All equipment stored onsite will be checked at the start of each workday to ensure mammal species are not present. Any storage containers/plant will also be secured when not in use to prevent exploration by mammal species. Any areas where an animal could become trapped (e.g., storage containers) will also be covered when not in use, to avoid mammals falling in.
- People, ancillary plant, vehicles, NRMM and materials will be restricted to areas of made/engineered ground (as much as is reasonably practicable). If during works unforeseen access to the surrounding environment is required, works will cease in this area and BEAR Scotland's Environmental Team will be contacted to allow consideration of potential environmental effects.
- BEAR Scotland's Environmental Team will be contacted to allow consideration of potential environmental effects if:
    - Unforeseen site clearance is required.
    - Unplanned works must be undertaken out with the carriageway boundary.
    - There is any deviation from the agreed plan, programme and/or method of working.
- BEAR Scotland's Control Room will be contacted if there is a pollution incident.
- Guidance on working with INNS will be detailed in the SEMP and followed by all on-site personnel.

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

Geology and soils

The scheme extents lies within 30m of the Drumochter Hills SSSI (Site code: 541), which is designated for Fluvial Geomorphology of Scotland. During the construction phase, there is a potential for accidental pollution incidents for example, fuel, oil, hydraulic fluid, or bitumen spills.

Additionally, the construction phase will require a range of ancillary plant, vehicles and non-road mobile machinery (NRMM) which present the potential to compact

soils if placed outside engineered ground. However, works are confined to the existing A9 carriageway and do not involve disturbance of geological strata, superficial deposits, or geomorphological features due to their nature, particularly considering the lack of ditching or excavation works.

Taking into account the following mitigation measures, the risk of significant impacts to Geology and Soils is considered to be low.

- The parking of machinery/ vehicles and storage of equipment on road verges/un-made ground will be minimised as far as reasonably possible.
- Upon completion of the works, any damage to the local landscape will be reinstated as much as is possible.
- Mitigation measures to prevent contamination of soils through loss of containment will be strictly adhered to.
- Additional pollution prevention measures as outlined in 'Road Drainage and the Water Environment' will be adhered to during construction.

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

Material assets and waste

There is potential for adverse impacts to material assets and waste during the construction phase 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 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.
- All waste stored on site will be adequately protected against the elements.
- 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.
- All road planings will be managed in accordance with SEPA Position Statement WAS-PS-07 (LRWA 3) and recycled in line with SEPA Guidance WAS-G-DEF-05 on End-of-Waste for Recycled Aggregates. The Contractor will be responsible for ensuring full compliance with these requirements.
- 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

Activities undertaken on site could potentially have some localised and short-term noise impacts in proximity to the works. The road works will, for example, require a range of ancillary plant, vehicles and NRMM for cold milling in preparation for carriageway resurfacing. Noise may also be generated by using breakers (jackhammers), chipping hammers, use of rollers, etc. As a result, there is potential for adverse noise and vibration impacts. There are no residential or commercial properties located within 300m of the scheme and it is not located within a CNMA. Additionally, works will move progressively along the scheme extent and will be of a short duration. Therefore, works with the potential to induce worst-case scenario noise and vibration will be intermittent, temporary, transient and short-lived.

The current conditions of the A9 within the scheme extents is in poor condition with a series of defects. Replacing the life-expired surface course introduces benefits of reduced mid-to-high frequency traffic noise and reduced ground vibrations. Consequently, post-works, noise associated with the movement of vehicles on the A9 should decrease.

With the following mitigation measures in place the impact is expected to be low.

- The Highland Council Environmental Health Officer will be informed of night-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 staff will receive the 'Being a Good Neighbour' toolbox talk.
- The noisiest works (e.g. planing) will be programmed to be completed by 23.00 where possible.
- Where possible, inherently quiet plant will be selected for construction works.
- 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 the construction the phase, site activities have the potential to have temporary adverse impacts on vehicle travellers and Non-Motorised Users (NMUs) as a result of construction presence and associated noise and delays associated with TM measures. The works will require a single lane closure and operate a

convoy system with three-way TTLs to allow the flow of traffic. The medium-to-high average daily traffic count on the A9 at the scheme extent, suggest the potential for temporary (but minor) adverse impacts to the vehicle travellers and access to Dalwhinnie via the A889. However, the works will be undertaken at night time (19:00 – 06:00), when traffic is at its lowest.

No significant congestion issues are noted during the proposed construction hours; however, increased journey times may occur due to TM measures. Road users will be informed of the works through a media release which will provide details of construction dates and times.

There is no requirement for land take or and / or use of a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO).

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 the commencement of works, advising of any proposed works and expected restrictions.
- Local access will be granted where required.
- Construction lighting will consider the need to avoid illuminating the surrounding environment to avoid a nuisance at night; and non-essential lighting will be switched off when not required.
- The works are currently programmed as night-works. The works schedule and any changes to this will be communicated to local residents and the Local Authority prior to and throughout the programme.
- Appropriate provisions / measures will be implemented within the works area to allow the safe passage of NMUs of all abilities through the site (if required).
- Journey planning information will be available for drivers online at the trafficscotland.org website. Journey planning information will also be available for drivers online through BEAR's social media platforms.

Taking into account the nature, duration and scale of the works and the good site practice measures to be adopted during the works (outlined in the SEMP), it is anticipated that any population and human health effects associated with the works are unlikely to be significant. This receptor is not considered further in this RoD.

Road drainage and the water environment

During the construction phase of works, there is potential for temporary adverse impacts on the water environment. Potential changes to water quality e.g. from pollution events (either by accidental spillage of sediments, particulate matter,

chemicals, fuels or by mobilisation of these in surface water caused by rain) present the potential for direct or indirect impacts to nearby watercourses, particularly given the works proximity to the River Spey SAC (NatureScot Site Code: 8365).

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. In addition, standard containment measures will be in place. As such, the potential for a direct pollution incident within a waterbody is unlikely; experience gained from BEAR maintenance schemes elsewhere on the network has shown that where standard best working practice is adopted (e.g., adherence to SEPA good practice guidance), water quality is protected.

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

- No in-water works or discharges into any watercourses or drainage systems will be permitted.
- Standard working practices to comply with the Environmental Authorisations (Scotland) Regulations (EASR) 2018 for works in or near water will be detailed in the SEMP and adhered to on site.
- Appropriate containment measures will be in place to prevent any loss of construction materials into the water environment.
- Appropriate measures will be implemented during resurfacing operations to limit the potential for wastes (i.e. road planings) and materials (i.e. new asphalt) to enter any gullies present on site. On completion of resurfacing operations, any gullies present on site will be visually checked to ensure that they have not become blocked as a result of the works.
- 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%.
- All storage of hazardous materials utilised on site is required to undergo assessment under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002. These assessment(s) will contain a section on environment which highlights any precautions and mitigation requirements.

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 localised air quality impacts as a result of the emission of greenhouse gases by vehicles and machinery, material use and production and transportation of materials to and from site. However, considering the nature, short-term duration, size and scale of the works, the risk of significant impacts to climate are considered to be low.

The mitigation measures detailed below will be put in place.

- BEAR Scotland will adhere to its Carbon Management Policy.
- If appropriate, warm mix asphalt will be used.
- Local contractors and suppliers will be used as far as practicable to reduce fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions as part of the works.
- Where possible, materials will be sourced locally to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with materials movement, and waste will be removed to local waste management 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 will be no change to the likelihood of a flooding event on the A9 within the scheme extent upon completion of the works and works are programmed to avoid periods of adverse weather or heavy rainfall when reasonably practicable.

Works are restricted to the made ground of the A9 trunk road boundary and TM will be designed in line with existing guidance. Where required, alternative NMU provisions / routes will be included in the TM setup to minimise impacts of works on NMUs.

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 or access routes.

The works will not result in any change in the vulnerability of the A9 carriageway to risk, or in severity of major accidents/disasters that would impact on the environment.

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 Scottish Road Works Commissioner website was undertaken to identify any recent or proposed development within the vicinity of the scheme that may result in any cumulative environmental effects. There are no additional road works planned within 300m of the works as recorded on website that will coincide with the proposed works. In addition, a search using the Highland Council 'Simple Search' for Planning identified that there are no planning applications within 300m of the scheme extents in the last 2 years. Due to the timing and nature of the proposed works, no cumulative effects are anticipated with any other developments in the vicinity.

BEAR Scotland programme all of their proposed works in line with appropriate guidance and contractual requirements. All schemes are programmed to take into account existing and future planned works, with a view of limiting any cumulative effects relating to TM. 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 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.

The scheme is covered under the existing HRA 'Roads and Bridges Maintenance Activities within the Drumochter Hills, River Spey and River Spey - Insh Marshes European Sites, Highland Region' Habitats'. The HRA concluded that the proposed resurfacing activities are not expected to result in Likely Significant Effects on the qualifying features of any of the sites in proximity to the scheme.

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

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

The project has been subject to screening using the Annex III criteria to determine whether a formal Environmental Impact Assessment 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 like-for-like replacement of worn road surface along the A9 carriageway.
- Construction activities are restricted to a 481m long stretch of the A9 carriageway covering an area of 0.510ha.
- Works will be temporary, transient, localised and completed during nighttime hours on a rolling programme, with the aim being to complete the noisiest works by 23:00.
- Works are not expected to result in significant disturbance to nearby receptors or protected species that may be present in the wider area.
- The risk of major accidents or disasters is considered to be low.
- Any potential impacts of the works are expected to be temporary, non-significant, and limited to the construction phase.
- By removing the carriageway defects this will provide this part of the A9 carriageway with another life cycle and significantly improve the ride quality which will result in safer conditions for road users.
- No impacts on the environment are expected during the operational phase as a result of the works. The works are expected to result in positive impacts on road users during the operational phase.

Location of the scheme:

- The works are located within the existing A9 trunk road boundary and as such, no land-take is required.
- The scheme is located wholly within CNP. However, works entail like-for-like resurfacing. No change to the visual landscape or adverse impacts are expected. The CNP Authority will be notified of works and any advice provided will be followed.
- The scheme is not located within any areas of ancient woodland or Conservation Areas and does not require felling of trees protected by a TPO.
- There is no requirement for a site compound, with materials and plant stored within TM.
- Local access will be granted as much as reasonably practicable.

Characteristics of potential impacts of the scheme:

- Measures will be in place to ensure appropriate removal and disposal of waste.
- As the works are restricted to like-for-like replacement, there is no change to the vulnerability of the road or the risk or severity of major accidents/ disasters.
- 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.

References of supporting documentation

Habitats Regulation Appraisal (HRA) 'Roads and Bridges Maintenance Activities within the Drumochter Hills, River Spey and River Spey - Insh Marshes European Sites, Highland Region' (June 2023 BEAR Scotland).

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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