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Record of Determination

A887 Blairidh Wind Farm

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Project Details

Description

The proposed works involve carriageway resurfacing and reinstatement of road markings.

The resurfacing procedure is as follows:

- Set up traffic management (TM) and mark out site
- Mill out old surface course
- Lay new surface course
- Roll surface and allow it to go off
- Mark out lining schedule on site
- Remove TM and open road
- Lining/studding will be carried out at a later date under mobile TM or lane closures

The works are proposed to be carried out in summer 2021 between the hours of 7am and 7pm and will take four days to complete.

Traffic management for the scheme will involve daytime lane closures with a 10mph convoy system and two-way temporary traffic lights in place.

Location

The Blairidh Wind Farm scheme lies on the A887 trunk road in the Highland Council region, west of Invermoriston. The length of the scheme is 1,412m (approximately 0.85 ha).

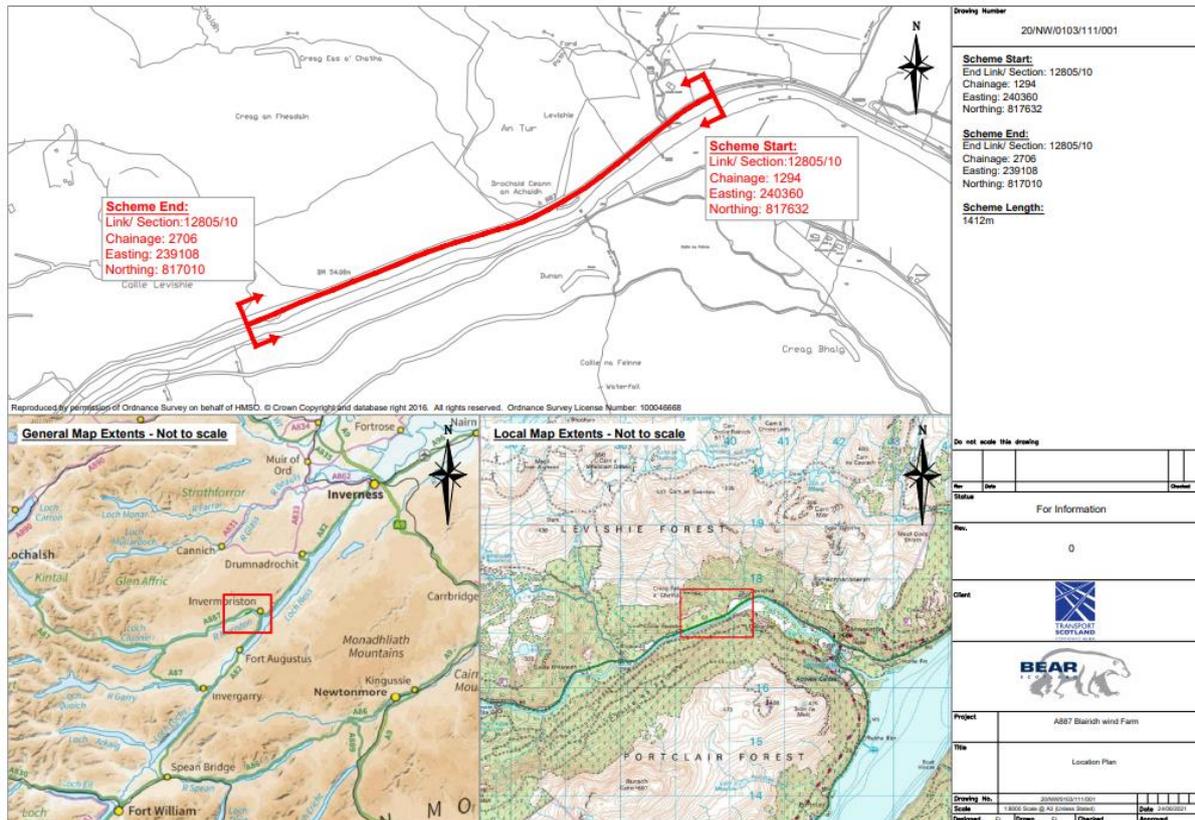


Figure 1 - Location Plan

Description of Local Environment

Population and Human Health

The scheme lies in a remote area on the A887 trunk road in Glen Moriston. There are a few properties on Levishie Estate that lie between 65m and 140m north of A887 at the eastern end of the scheme extent. There are no other residential or commercial properties within 300m of the scheme, although the entrance road to Blairidh Wind Farm is located near the western end of the scheme extent.

There are no formal [cycleways](#), [core paths](#), or walking paths recorded on [WalkHighlands](#) on the A887 within the scheme extent. There is one walking route listed on WalkHighlands that follows a gravel road on the southern bank of the River Moriston, which is also listed as a core path. This route is on the opposite bank of the River from the A887. There are no paved footpaths or pedestrian facilities on the A887 within the scheme extent.

Noise and vibration levels in the surrounding area are likely to be primarily influenced by vehicle travellers on the A887 trunk road. There are no [designated Candidate Noise Management Areas](#) (CNMAs) or Candidate Quiet Areas (CQAs) within proximity to the works location.

The A887 trunk road links the A82 at Invermoriston with the A87 near the east end of Loch Cluanie in the west of Scotland. It is important for commercial, commuter, tourist and local traffic. The national speed limit applies throughout the scheme.

Biodiversity

Baseline data has been obtained from the [National Biodiversity Network \(NBN\) Atlas](#), NatureScot (NS) [Sitelink](#), and [Scotland's Environment web \(SE\)](#) online mapping tools. A site visit was not undertaken.

The scheme is adjacent to the River Moriston Special Area of Conservation (SAC). A high-level Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) screening was undertaken and consultation with NatureScot was carried out to determine the risk of potential impacts on the SAC as a result of works.

The scheme is also adjacent to Levishie Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for a short distance near the eastern end of the scheme extent. The SSSI is designated for upland birch woodland.

The scheme does not lie wholly or partially within any other SAC, SSSI, Special Protection Area (SPA), or Ramsar site.

The NBN Atlas does not hold records for any INNS of plants or injurious weeds using the same search criteria.

Large stretches of woodland listed as Ancient (of semi-natural origin) on the Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) are present both north and south of the A887 throughout the scheme extent. The A887 lies within the boundary or adjacent to AWI woodland north of the road for most of the scheme extent. Another area of AWI woodland is located south of the River Moriston, approximately 50m to 70m from the scheme extent.

The area surrounding the scheme is dominated by woodland habitats (both deciduous and coniferous), with the freshwater habitats of the River Moriston present to the south of the A887. There are also small pockets of grassland present within 300m of the scheme, with larger areas of heathland further north and south.

Land

The works do not lie within any area of land designated as a National Park or National Scenic Area (NSA). Land cover in the scheme is recorded as a mixture of woodland habitats to the north and south, with inland surface waters (River Moriston) present to the south of the scheme.

Soil

The scheme does not lie within a Geological Conservation Review Site (GCRS).

Bedrock within the scheme extent is comprised of Achnaconeran Striped Formation – Psammite and Semipelite, which is a metamorphic bedrock of sedimentary origin.

Superficial deposits within scheme extent are comprised of Glaciofluvial Sheet Deposits, Devensian – Sand, Gravel and Boulders, which are sedimentary deposits of glaciofluvial origin.

Soils within the scheme extent are recorded as mineral alluvial soils and humus-iron podzols.

Water

The River Moriston runs parallel to the A887 trunk road within the scheme extent and is located between 50m and 70m south of the trunk road. The River Moriston (Loch Ness to Dundreggan Dam) was classified by SEPA in 2018 as having 'moderate ecological potential'. 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 scheme is located within the Northern Highlands groundwater body which was classified by SEPA in 2018 as having good overall condition.

Air

The works are not wholly, or partially, located within an [Air Quality Management Area](#) (AQMA).

No air quality monitoring stations are located within proximity to the scheme. The nearest AQS monitoring station is located approximately 38km northeast of the scheme in Inverness. The pollution level on 25/06/2021 was classified as Low (Index 1). It is considered that pollution levels in the general vicinity of the scheme will be lower than those at the AQS monitoring station in Inverness due to the remote nature of the scheme location. Baseline air quality in the area of the scheme is likely to be primarily influenced by traffic along the A887 trunk road.

Climate Change

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 creates mandatory climate change targets to reduce Scotland's GHG emissions. BEAR Scotland have a Carbon Management Policy in place with the core aim of reducing out carbon footprint which we measure and report annually.

Material Assets

The following materials will be used during the works:

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

The following plant will be used during the works:

- Paver
- Planer
- 2CX JCB
- Roller 120 and 161
- Circular saw
- Bitumen cooker
- Roller dead weight
- Bowser
- Sweeper lorry
- Emulsion sprayer

- Welfare unit/van
- Pickup
- Crew bus
- Company car
- Tipper lorries

Waste

Asphalt planings produced as a result of these works will be fully recovered for re-use under a SEPA paragraph 13 waste exemption. Construction records from IRIS indicate that surface dressing was undertaken on this section of the A887 in 1997. As this is after the period when coal tar ceased to be widely used in road construction, and as the core report for this section of road showed no evidence of tar, coal tar is not expected to be present within the milled off road planings.

Cultural Heritage

According to [Pastmap](#), there is one feature of local cultural heritage listed on Historic Environment Record (HER) and the Canmore database located 190m south of the scheme. This feature is a possible dun located out with the A887 carriageway south of the River Moriston. There are no other features of cultural heritage interest located within 300m of the scheme.

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

Vulnerability of the Project to Risks

The following environmental factors were identified as potential risks to the project:

- Unidentified ecological constraints
- Disturbance of protected species

Description of Main Environmental Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

Population and Human Health

During road resurfacing, activities undertaken on site may have temporary adverse impacts on local residents and road users as a result of vehicle noise and delays due to traffic management measures. However, works will be carried out during daylight hours, are of short duration, and will move progressively along the full scheme extent. With the following mitigation measures in place, the risk of significant impacts on population and human health is considered to be low.

- Traffic management will consist of a single lane closure with a 10mph convoy and two-way temporary traffic lights in place and will take account of the needs of motorised and non-motorised road users.
- Works will be carried out during daylight hours over a period of four days and will move progressively along the full scheme extent.

- Measures to reduce impacts of works will be detailed in the Site Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) and adhered to on site.

Biodiversity

During road resurfacing, activities undertaken on site could potentially have a temporary adverse impact on biodiversity in the area as a result of an increased vehicle presence and the potential for disturbance to protected species and pollution of habitats. Although the scheme is adjacent to the River Moriston SAC, there will be no in-stream works and pollution controls will be in place to comply with The Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 (as amended) for works near watercourses. The high-level HRA assessment and consultation with NatureScot concluded that the works would not result in Likely Significant Effects (LSE) on the SAC due to the lack of in-stream works, short duration, and localised nature of the scheme.

Although the scheme is adjacent to Levishie Wood SSSI along part of the extent and also to large stretches of AWI woodland, works will be restricted to the A887 carriageway boundary and will not entail any tree felling. Pollution controls will be in place to ensure there is no loss of containment to the local environment. Therefore, the works will not result in LSE on the qualifying woodland habitat of the SSSI and will not impact the adjacent AWI woodland.

Pollution controls and good practice measures to reduce impacts of works on the local environment will be detailed in the SEMP and adhered to on site. Any protected species in the area are likely to be accustomed to road noise on the A887 and the scheme is of short duration. Therefore, with the following mitigation measures in place, the risk of significant impacts on biodiversity are considered to be low.

- No in-stream works will be undertaken.
- No tree-felling will be undertaken.
- Works will be carried out during daylight hours over a period of four days.
- Toolbox talks for relevant protected species will be delivered to site staff and included in the SEMP.
- Pollution controls and good practice measures to reduce impacts of works will be detailed in the SEMP and adhered to on site.

Land

During road resurfacing, activities undertaken on site are not expected to have an adverse impact on land as the works involve like-for-like replacement of the road surfacing material. There is some potential for minor impacts as a result of damage to roadside verges or littering. Land use will not change as a result of the works and no land take is required. Therefore, with the following mitigation measures in place, the risk of significant impacts to land are considered to be low.

- Throughout all stages of the works, the site must be kept clean and tidy, with materials, equipment, plant and wastes appropriately stored, reducing the landscape and visual effects as much as possible.

- Where applicable, upon completion of the works, any damage to the local landscape (i.e. damage to grass verges or hardstanding of the A887) should be reinstated as much as is practicable.
- Works are to avoid encroaching on land and areas where work is not required or does not have permission to do so. This includes general works, storage of equipment/containers and parking.

Soil

During road resurfacing, activities undertaken on site are not expected to have an adverse impact on soils as the works will be restricted to made ground within the A887 carriageway boundary. There is some potential for minor impacts as a result of damage to roadside verges or littering; however, with the following mitigation measures in place, the risk of significant impacts to soils are considered to be low.

- The parking of machinery/personnel and storage of equipment on verges will be minimised as far as is reasonably practicable.
- Upon completion of the works, any damage to the local landscape (i.e. damage to grass verges) should be reinstated as much as is practicable.

Water

During works, there is the potential for temporary impacts on water quality. Any construction work has an inherent risk to surface waters and groundwater as a result of pollution. Potential contaminants include fuel and oils from mechanical plant and dirty water run-off from the construction site. However, taking into account the nature and scale of the works and the following mitigation measures, the risk of significant impacts to water are considered to be low.

- The scheme will not entail any in-stream works.
- Pollution control measures will be detailed in the SEMP and adhered to on site to prevent sediment or other materials entering the water environment (e.g. roadside drainage).

Air

During works, there is the potential for temporary impacts on air quality. Activities undertaken on site may cause dust and particulate matter to be emitted to the atmosphere. However, taking into account the nature and scale of the works and the following mitigation measures, the risk of significant impacts to air are considered to be low.

- All plant, machinery and vehicles associated with the scheme must be maintained to the appropriate standards and must switch their engines off when not in use.
- 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.

- All construction activities will operate in line with good practice measures for construction as outlined in the SEMP.

Climate Change

During works there is potential for impacts as a result of the emission of greenhouse gasses through the use of vehicles and machinery, material use and production, and transportation of materials to and from site. However, taking into account the nature and scale of the works and the following mitigation measures, the risk of significant impacts to climate are considered to be low.

- BEAR Scotland will adhere to their Carbon Management Policy.
- BEAR Scotland undergo annual CEEQUAL Assessment.

Material Assets

The works comprise like-for-like replacement of the existing road surfacing material and will not involve construction of or alteration to any roadside infrastructure. Therefore, material assets are not considered further.

Waste

During works, there is potential for impacts as a result of improper storage or disposal of waste. However, taking into account the following mitigation measures, it is unlikely that the works will have a significant impact as a result of waste.

- The waste hierarchy (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Dispose) will be employed throughout the construction works.
- Road planings will be re-used or recycled under a SEPA Paragraph 13(a) waste exemption and in line with BEAR Scotland's Procedure 126: The Production of Fully Recovered Asphalt Road Planings.

Cultural Heritage

During road resurfacing, activities undertaken on site are not expected to have an adverse impact on any features of cultural heritage as the works involve like-for-like replacement of the road surfacing material. All recorded sites of cultural heritage lie outside of the work footprint; therefore, with the following mitigation measures in place, it is unlikely that the works will have a significant impact on cultural heritage.

- There should be no storage of vehicles, plant, or materials against any buildings, walls or fences.
- People, plant, and materials should, as much as is reasonably practicable, only be present on areas of made / engineered ground (i.e. A887 carriageway). Where access out with these areas is required for the safe and effective completion of the scheme, it should be reduced as much as is reasonably practicable and ideally be limited to access on foot.

Vulnerability of the Project to Risks

There is potential for minor impacts on the project as a result of environmental risks such as discovery of a protected species on site. However, taking into account the nature and scale of the works and the following mitigation measures, the vulnerability of the project to risk is considered to be low.

- A SEMP has been produced by BEAR Scotland which sets out a framework to reduce the risk of adverse impacts from construction activities on sensitive environmental receptors. The subcontractor will comply with all conditions of the SEMP during works and may be subject to audit throughout the contract.

Cumulative Effects

The works are required to maintain the safety of the A887 trunk road for use by vehicle travellers. No significant impacts on environmental receptors as a result of the proposed works have been identified.

The proposed works will be limited to the like-for-like replacement of the road surfacing material and potential impacts are short-term and localised to within the scheme extent. There is potential for short-term impacts on vehicle travellers as a result of delays due to traffic management for multiple or consecutive schemes. However, due to the localised nature of the potential impacts and the short duration of any proposed works and with the following mitigation measures in place, it is unlikely that the works will have a significant cumulative impact.

- Network restrictions as set out in Appendix 1/17 Restrictions – North West Unit of the 4G North West Term Contract will be adhered to.

Assessments of the Environmental Effects

This assessment has not identified any significant effects on any environmental receptors as a result of the proposed works. No further assessment of environmental effects or consultation with statutory bodies is required.

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)—

have connectivity to 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:

- The works comprise like-for-like replacement of the road surfacing material.
- The works are temporary, localised, and short-term and will be completed over four days during daylight hours.
- Pollution controls will be in place to contain debris and wastes produced during works and to comply with The Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 (as amended) for works near watercourses.

Location of the scheme:

- There will be no in-stream works within the River Moriston SAC boundary.
- There will be no works within the boundary of Levishe Wood SSSI and works will not entail any tree felling of adjacent woodland.
- Resurfacing works will be restricted to made ground within the A887 carriageway boundary and no land take will be required.
- There are no pedestrian facilities (e.g. footways) within the scheme extent.

Characteristics of potential impacts of the scheme:

- The potential for impacts as a result of the scheme are minor, temporary, localised, and not significant.
- The high-level HRA assessment and consultation with NatureScot has confirmed that there will be no LSE on the qualifying features of the River Moriston SAC as a result of resurfacing works.
- Measures will be in place to ensure appropriate removal and disposal of waste. Road planings will be re-used or recycled under a SEPA Paragraph 13(a) waste exemption and in line with BEAR Scotland's Procedure 126: The Production of Fully Recovered Asphalt Road Planings.
- The SEMP will include plans to address environmental incidents.
- Mitigation measures detailed above and in the SEMP will ensure no significant negative impacts on sensitive receptors.

Annex A

“sensitive area” means any of the following:

- land notified under sections 3(1) or 5(1) (sites of special scientific interest) of the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004
- land in respect of which an order has been made under section 23 (nature conservation orders) of the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004
- a European site within the meaning of regulation 10 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994
- a property appearing in the World Heritage List kept under article 11(2) of the 1972 UNESCO Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage
- a scheduled monument within the meaning of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979
- a National Scenic Area as designated by a direction made by the Scottish Ministers under section 263A of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997
- an area designated as a National Park by a designation order made by the Scottish Ministers under section 6(1) of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000.



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