



**TRANSPORT
SCOTLAND**
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

Environmental Impact Assessment Record of Determination

A76 Blackwood to Whitespots Farm

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Project Details

Description

The scheme is required to remove the defects identified in the visual condition survey and coring investigation. These predominately consist of fretting and crazing throughout the scheme with sacrificial patching and longitudinal cracking present. By removing the defects and providing this section of the A76 with another life cycle, the ride quality of the carriageway will be significantly improved which will result in safer conditions for road users.

The proposed construction activities are likely to involve the following:

- Set up traffic management (TM) and mark out site;
- Milling of existing bituminous material by road planer;
- Jackhammer and compressor for breaking up surfaces not accessible by planer (e.g. around gullies);
- Loader/excavator used to collect and move excess material;
- Sweeper to collect loose material and provide clean laying surface;
- Milled out/excavated materials all taken off site;
- Tack/bond coat laid;
- Binder material laid and compressed by paver (where required);
- Material compacted using a heavy roller;
- New bituminous surface course material laid by paver;
- Material compacted using a heavy roller;
- Mechanical sweeper to collect loose material;
- Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) for removal and replacement of material;
- Road markings and studs applied where necessary (in accordance with Chapter 5);

The works are currently due to commence on 13th February 2023 and will take place over 12 nights. The works area is approximately 19,000m².

Traffic Management (TM) will be required during the entirety of the construction activities. TM will consist of a closure of the A76 in both directions. The diversion route will be via the A702 and B729.

Location

The scheme is located to the north of the village Auldgirth, between Blackwood and Whitespots Farm within Dumfries and Galloway. The start/end co-ordinates are detailed below and the scheme extents are illustrated in Figure 1.

Start: 290861,587389

End: 290140,589457

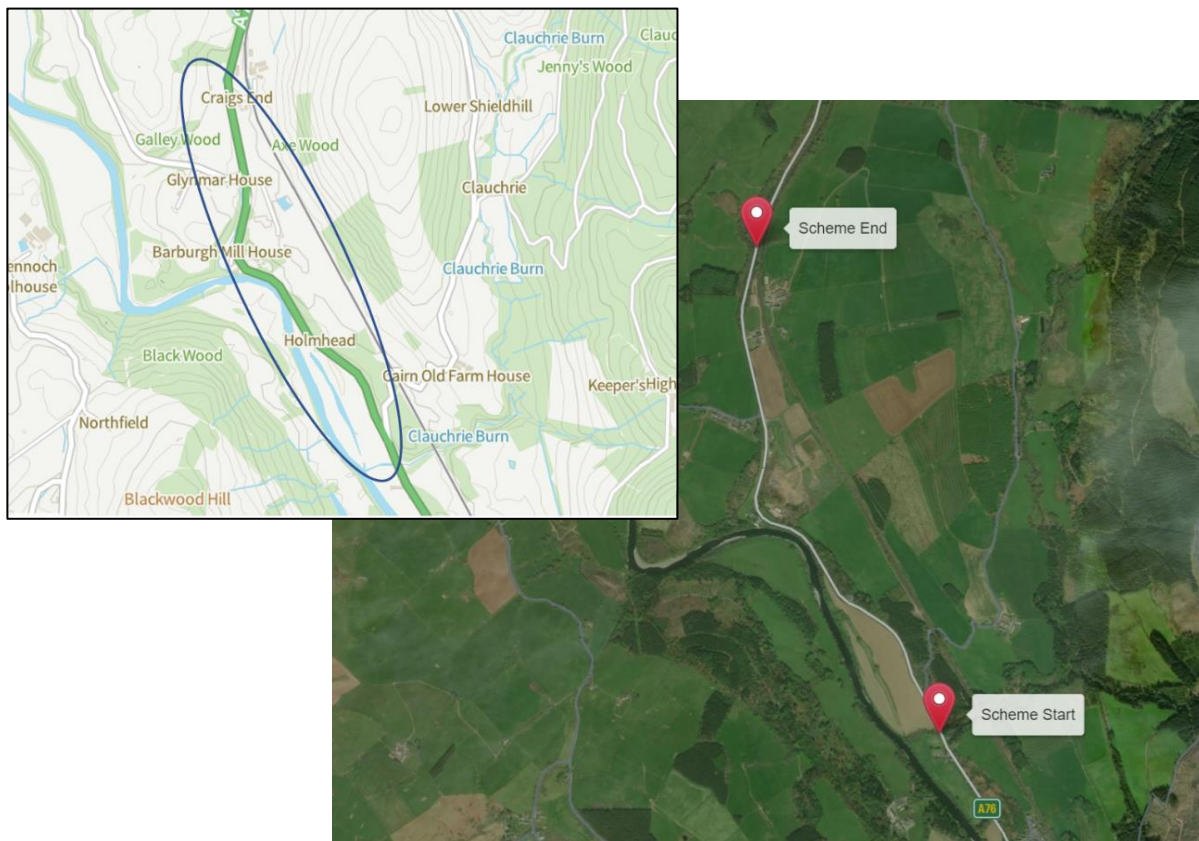


Figure 1: Scheme location (Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO. © Crown Copyright and database right 2022. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey License number 100046668)

Description of local environment

Air quality

The scheme lies in a rural location along the A76 to the north of Auldgirth, between Blackwood and Whitespots Farm. This stretch of the carriageway is predominately surrounded by agricultural land. A small number of residential properties are located sporadically throughout the countryside surrounding the scheme. The closest properties lie immediately on the roadside of the A76.

The Average Annual Daily Flow (AADF) in 2020 for the A76 carriageway south of the site is 5,050 vehicles, with 11.7% heavy goods vehicles (HGVs).

The scheme does not lie within an [Air Quality Management Area](#) (AQMA), as declared by Dumfries and Galloway Council.

Cultural heritage

A desktop study using [Pastmap](#) has identified a number of designated cultural heritage features within 300m of the works:

- Enclosure, 120m NE of Whitespots Cottages (Ref SM3297), Scheduled Monument, approximately 80m to the east.
- Balloch Linn Railway Viaduct (Ref LB3968), Listed Building Category B, approximately 180m to the east.
- Whitespots (Farmhouse) (Ref 65797), Canmore, immediately adjacent to the A76 within the scheme extents.
- Whitespots (Track) (Ref 65794), Canmore, approximately 100m to the east.
- Stepends (Cropmarks) (Ref 144497), Canmore, approximately 100m to the east.
- Stepends (Enclosure) (Ref 144500), Canmore, immediately the A76 roadside at Stepends.
- Whitespots (Pits, rectilinear enclosure) (Ref 65778), Canmore, approximately 80m to the east.
- Barburgh Mill (Roman Forlet) (Ref 65789), Canmore, approximately 70m to the east.
- Barburgh Mill House (House) (Ref 299566), Canmore, approximately 50m to the west.
- Barburgh Smithy (Smithy) (Ref 152772), Canmore, approximately 40m to the west.
- Barburgh Mill (Woollen Mill) (Ref 65804), Canmore, approximately 10m west.

- Mo-Daidh (Building) (Ref: 179214), Canmore, approximately 170m to the east.
- Blackwood Schoolhouse (Schoolhouse) (Ref 65796), Canmore, immediately on the A76 roadside.

The works will be restricted to the existing A76 carriageway and will have no impact to the nearby cultural heritage features. All works will be located within the existing carriageway boundary (including verges) and will not impact any areas of land that have not previously been subjected to engineering activity.

Landscape and visual effects

A desktop study using [NatureScot Sitelink](#) and [Pastmap](#) online interactive map has not highlighted any areas designated for landscape character within 300m of the works.

Historic Environment Scotland's [HLAMap](#) has highlighted the surrounding landscape to consist of a combination of fields, farmland, urban areas and managed woodland.

Works will be restricted to the existing carriageway boundary and will not impact upon the surrounding landscape. Views of, and from, the road will be temporarily affected during construction due to the presence of works, traffic management and plant. As the works are operating on a like-for-like basis, no permanent changes to landscape features are predicted.

As such, impact to local landscape has been assessed as being 'no change' and has been scoped out of requiring further assessment.

Biodiversity

The scheme is located in a rural area to the north of the village of Auldgirth. The surrounding area is primarily made up of agricultural land and woodland.

A desktop study using [NatureScot Sitelink](#) indicates that there are no Natura 2000 sites located within 2km of the scheme extents. There are no nationally important ecological sites within 2km.

Amey's Invasive Non-native Species (INNS) Database has identified two records of Himalayan Balsam within A76 verge within the scheme extents.

Geology and soils

The [National Soil Map of Scotland](#) has identified the local soil type as brown soils.

A desktop study using the [British Geological Survey Map](#) identifies the local geology types as the following:

Bedrock Geology

- Gala Unit 7 - Wacke. Sedimentary bedrock formed between 440.8 and 438.5 million years ago during the Silurian period.

Superficial Deposits

- Kilblane Sand and Gravel Formation - Sand, gravel and boulders. Sedimentary superficial deposit formed between 116 and 11.8 thousand years ago during the Quaternary period.
- River Terrace Deposits - Sand and gravel. Sedimentary superficial deposit formed between 2.588 million years ago and the present during the Quaternary period.
- Alluvium - Sand, silt and clay. Sedimentary superficial deposit formed between 11.8 thousand years ago and the present during the Quaternary period.

The works will be restricted to the existing highway boundary which has been subject to previous engineering activity. Minor excavations will be required for the resurfacing, however this is not expected to result in any impacts on geology and soils. As such, impact to geology and soils has been assessed as being ‘no change’ and has been scoped out of requiring further assessment.

Material assets and waste

Table 1: Key materials required for activities

Activity	Material Required	Origin/ Content
Site Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road surfacing (aggregate and binder); • Bitumen; • High friction surfacing; • Road paint; • Lubricant; • Vehicle fuel; • Oil. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A proportion of reclaimed asphalt pavement (RAP) is used in asphalt production. Typical RAP values for base and binder are 10% - 15% with up to 10% in surface course.

Table 2: Key waste arising from activities

Activity	Waste Arising	Disposal/ Regulation
Site Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road planings • Road paint/studs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-site investigations of the carriageway (including coring and testing) have been undertaken and did not highlight the presence of any coal tar.

Activity	Waste Arising	Disposal/ Regulation
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Road planings generated as a result of the works will be recovered in accordance with the criteria stipulated within SEPA document 'Guidance on the Production of Fully Recoverable Asphalt Road Planings'

Noise and vibration

The works are located on a rural stretch of the A76 carriageway north of Auldgirth, between Blackwood and Whitespots Farm. The works are surrounded primarily by agricultural land. There are numerous residential properties located within 300m of the scheme, the majority of which lie sporadically in the countryside surrounding road. The closest properties to the scheme are those which lie directly on the roadside of the A76 and have little or no screening from the road.

The AADF in 2020 for the A76 carriageway south of the site is 5,050 vehicles, with 11.7% HGVs. Baseline noise level is likely to be primarily influenced by vehicle traffic from the carriageway, with secondary sources likely deriving from nearby agricultural and urban activities.

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

Population and human health

There are a number of minor roads accessed from the A76 within the scheme extents, including: unnamed road leading to B731, unnamed road leading to the Park and unnamed road leading to Berscar House.

There are no Walker, Cyclist or Horse Rider (WCH) routes located within the scheme extents. There is a minor section of footway located along the southbound carriageway within the southern scheme extents.

There are two bus stops located within the scheme extents; one on the SB carriageway at Stepends Road end, and one on the NB carriageway opposite the Breedon Aggregates entrance point. These bus stops have services from Stagecoach and Houston Coaches.

Road drainage and the water environment

A desktop study using the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) [River Basin Management Plan Map](#) has identified that the following watercourses flow within 300m of the scheme:

- Clauchrie Burn (Nith catchment); flows directly under the A76 within the scheme extents. Overall Water Framework Directive (WFD) status of good.
- River Nith (Dumfries – Sanquhar); flows immediately to the west of the A76 at the scheme extents. Overall WFD status of Moderate ecological potential.
- The Lake; flows immediately adjacent to the A76 within the scheme extents. The watercourse has not been classified under the WFD.

The following groundwater bodies lie below the scheme:

- Auldgirth: WFD status of good.
- Lower Nithsdale Sand and Gravel: WFD status of good.

SEPA [Indicative River & Coastal Flood Map](#) has highlighted that there is a high risk of fluvial flooding within the scheme extents (10% chance of flooding in one year).

Road drainage is provided by a combination of side and top entry gullies and filter channel drainage throughout the scheme, likely out falling into the adjacent River Nith.

Climate

Carbon Goals

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act sets out the target and vision set by the Scottish Government for tackling and responding to climate change. The Act includes a target of reducing CO₂ emissions by 80% before 2050 (from the baseline year 1990).

The Scottish Government has since published its indicative Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to set out how it will instead reach net-zero by 2045, working to reduce emissions of all major greenhouse gases (GHG) by at least 75% by 2030. By 2040, the Scottish Government is committed to reduce emissions by 90%, with the aim of reaching net-zero by 2045 at the latest.

Transport Scotland is committed to reducing carbon across Scotland's transport network, this commitment is being enacted through the Mission Zero for Transport. Transport is the largest contributor to harmful climate emissions in Scotland. In response to the climate emergency, TS are committed to reducing their emissions by 75% by 2030 and to a legally binding target of net-zero by 2045.

Amey's Company Wide Carbon Goal is to achieve Scope 1 and 2 net-zero carbon emissions, with a minimum of 80% absolute reduction on our emissions by 2035. Amey is aiming to be fully net-zero, including Scope 3 emissions, by 2040.

Amey are working towards a contractual commitment to have carbon neutral depots on the SW NMC network by 2028. Amey have set carbon goals for the SW NMC contract as a whole to be net-zero carbon by 2032.

Monitoring, Management and Opportunities

To support our journey towards carbon neutral and zero waste we include potential opportunities for enhancement utilising circular economy principals within assessment of material assets.

Amey (working on behalf of Transport Scotland) undertake carbon monitoring. Emissions from our activities are recorded using Transport Scotland's Carbon Management System.

Further information identifying how Amey will obtain the above Carbon Goals can be viewed within the Carbon Management and Sustainability Plan Roadmap to net-zero: STRNMC – South West.

Description of main environmental impacts and proposed mitigation

Air quality

Impacts

- The TM for this scheme will involve a full overnight closure of the A76 within the scheme extents with a diversion route in place. There will likely be a temporary adverse impact on local air quality along the diversion route during the works. As night works will take place, traffic levels will however be lower and so no significant effect is anticipated.
- Construction activities such as planing, carry a potential to produce airborne particulate matter which could lead to a temporary decrease in local air quality.
- Emissions from construction plant and machinery also have the potential to contribute to a temporary decrease in local air quality.

Mitigation

- All works shall operate in accordance with current best practice as outlined in the [Guidance on the assessment of dust from demolition and construction](#), published by the IAQM, which includes the following mitigation relevant to this scheme:
 - When not in use plant and vehicles will be switched off; there will be no idling vehicles.
 - All plant and fuel-requiring equipment utilised during construction will be well maintained in order to minimise emissions, as per manufacturing and legal requirements.
 - Green driving techniques will be adopted, and effective route preparation and planning will be undertaken prior to works.
 - Planing operations will be wetted to reduce dust arising.
 - Drop heights to haulage vehicles and onto conveyors will be minimised.
 - Lorries will be sheeted when carrying dry materials.
 - Surfaces will be swept where loose material remains following planing.

Providing all works operate in accordance with current best practice, the residual impact for air is considered no change.

It has been determined that the proposed project will not have direct or indirect significant effects to local air quality.

Biodiversity

Impacts

- In the event of night-time programming, misdirected site lighting could cause disturbance to any surrounding nocturnal species.
- In the event of night-time programming, additional noise from construction activities could cause disturbance to any surrounding nocturnal species.
- Due to the rural surrounding, it is possible that protected species will be active in the works area. There is potential for these species to be disturbed by the construction works.
- Lighting is not present throughout the scheme extents. As such, temporary site lighting has the potential to affect the foraging or commuting routes of nocturnal protected species which may be active in the surrounding area.
- Himalayan balsam is present within the verge of the A76 within the scheme extents and there is potential that this invasive weed species could be spread.

Mitigation

- If a protected species is seen on or near the scheme, all works will be stopped until the animal passes by. Protected species moving around close to works will not be approached and the area isolated temporarily (if possible) until the animal has moved on.
- Amey's environmental briefings on protected species will be briefed to operatives prior to the start of construction.
- The E&S team will be contacted for any guidance if required, and the control room will be contacted for environmental record.
- When in use, any artificial light will be pointed and directed at the area of works as far as reasonably practicable, reducing any light spill into the wider surroundings, and potentially sensitive habitat (e.g. woodland).
- When not in use, light sources will be switched off to reduce impact on nocturnal species.
- The scheme is not expected to include vegetation removal. Should the scope of the works change, the environment team shall be notified.
- No work within the verge will take place. Materials and plant will not be stored in the verge as this increases the risk of the spread of invasive weeds.
- All site operatives will be briefed on the location of the invasive weed species. Works will not disturb locations of INNS to prevent spread. Operatives will keep a 7 metres distance from the INNS. Where appropriate, visual barriers will be placed to indicate distance.
- If any further INNS are identified on site, the works will cease and the environment team will be contacted.

On the condition that best practice is adhered to, residual impact to local biodiversity is considered no change as a result of the works.

It has been determined that the proposed project will not have direct or indirect significant effects to biodiversity.

Cultural heritage

Impacts

- Any work outwith the highway boundary has the potential to encounter unrecorded buried archaeology assets.

Mitigation

- All work will remain within the existing highway boundary at all times. If the scope of the works changes, the environment team will be notified.
- Site operatives will be notified of the designated cultural heritage sites located within the vicinity of the scheme prior to construction.

Temporary impact during construction is considered negligible adverse, with residual impact considered no change.

Material assets and waste

Impacts

- The works will result in contribution to resource depletion through use of virgin materials.
- Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions will be generated by material production and transporting to and from site.
- Transportation and recovery of materials/waste will require energy deriving from fossil fuel, a non-renewable source.

Mitigation

- It is Amey policy to re-use or recycle as much waste as practicable. The waste hierarchy will be followed where possible. Materials will be derived from recycled, secondary or re-used origin as far as practicable within the design specifications to reduce natural resource depletion and associated emissions.
- Waste will only be disposed of at suitably licenced waste management site. All waste will be transported by a suitable licenced waste carrier and will be accompanied by a correctly completed waste transfer note.

- Waste will be stored in suitable containers and covered. Any waste produced will be removed from site as soon as possible.

Temporary impact during construction is considered negligible adverse, with residual impact considered no change.

It has been determined that the proposed project will not have direct or indirect significant effects to the consumption of material assets or creation of waste.

Noise and vibration

Impacts

- Residential properties in close proximity may experience temporary disturbance due to an increase in baseline noise and vibration levels. Night works are expected to take place.

Mitigation

- Due to the potential for night works, Dumfries and Galloway Council will be notified in advance of the works. This will be undertaken by the E&S Team.
- Residential properties in proximity of the works will be notified prior to commencement of the works. This notification will contain details of expected nature, timings and duration of the works, in addition to any access restrictions.
- Effects from noise will be kept to a minimum through the use of appropriate mufflers and silencers fitted to machinery. All exhaust silencers will be checked at regular intervals to ensure efficiency.
- Operatives will avoid extraneous noise on site (i.e. shouting, music, slamming of doors etc.)
- Operatives will be briefed with the Noise and Vibration toolbox talk before starting works.
- Where possible, the noisiest work activities will be completed before 23:00.

Provided that best practice measures are followed, it is predicted that residual impact from noise will be negligible beneficial, with temporary minor adverse impact predicted during construction.

It has been determined that the proposed project will not have direct or indirect significant effects to local noise and vibration.

Population and human health

Impacts

- TM will involve night time closures of the A76 carriageway within the scheme extents and a diversion route in place along the A702 and B729. This TM arrangement may have the following impacts:
 - Longer journey times for road users and local residents may experience access disruption.

Mitigation

- Advance traffic signs will be placed prior to works in an effort to minimise disturbance to vehicular travellers, and will inform road users of expected duration, timings, and any temporary traffic management arrangements/restrictions.
- All residential properties within 300m of the scheme will be notified of the proposed works and the works programme. All access points to surrounding residential properties will remain open.
- Bus stops will remain open. If this not possible temporary bus stops will be in place and service operators informed.
- The minor footway along the southbound carriageway will not be obstructed during the works.
- Effects from noise will be kept to a minimum through the use of appropriate mufflers and silencers fitted to machinery. All exhaust silencers should be checked at regular intervals to ensure efficiency.

Provided that best practice measures are followed, it is predicted that residual impact to population and human health will be no change, with temporary minor adverse impact predicted during construction.

It has been determined that the proposed project will not have direct or indirect significant effects to local population and human health.

Road drainage and the water environment

Impacts

- If not adequately controlled, debris and runoff from the works could enter the surrounding watercourses; River Nith and Clauchrie Burn. In the event of a flooding incident, this debris may be mobilised and could enter the road drainage having a detrimental effect on the surrounding local water environment.

- Potential for spills, leaks or seepage of fuels and oils associated with plant to escape and reach drainage systems and watercourses if not controlled, which may negatively affect the water environment.

Mitigation

- All debris which has the potential to be suspended in surface water and wash into the local water environment will be cleaned from the site following the works.
- Debris and dust generated as a result of the works will be prevented from entering the drainage system. This will be via the use of drain covers or similar.
- Appropriate measures shall be implemented onsite to prevent any potential pollution to the natural water environment (e.g. debris, dust and hazardous substances). This will include spill kits being present onsite at all times, and the use of funnels and drip trays when transferring fuel etc.
 - The control room will be contacted if any pollution incidences occur (24 hours, 7 days a week).
- Visual pollution inspections of the working area will be conducted in frequency, especially during heavy rainfall and wind.
- Weather reports shall be monitored prior and during all construction activities. In the event of adverse weather/flooding events, all activities will temporarily stop, and only reconvene when deemed safe to do so, and run-off/drainage can be adequately controlled to prevent pollution.
- Best practice, as detailed by SEPA Guidance for Pollution Prevention (GPPs), will always be followed onsite. This will ensure that any potential sediments/spills are not allowed to enter road drainage unchecked.

Providing all works operate in accordance with site control measures and SEPA Guidance for Pollution Prevention (GPP), the residual impact for water is considered neutral.

Climate

Impacts

- GHG emissions will be emitted through the use of machinery, vehicles and materials used (containing recycled and virgin materials) and transporting to and from site.

Mitigation

- Local suppliers will be used as far as reasonably practicable to reduce travel time and GHG emitted as part of the works.

- Vehicles/plant will not be left on when not in use to minimise and prevent unnecessary emissions being emitted.
- Further actions and considerations for this scheme are detailed in the above Material assets and waste section.

It has been determined that the proposed project will not have direct or indirect significant effects to climate.

Vulnerability of the project to risks

As the works will be limited to the like-for-like replacement of the carriageway structure, there will be no change in vulnerability of the road to risk, or in severity of major accidents/disasters that would impact on the environment.

It has been determined that the proposed project is not expected to alter the vulnerability of the existing trunk road infrastructure to risk of major accidents or disasters.

Assessment cumulative effects

The [Scottish Road Works Commissioner](#) Interactive Map does not highlight any other works in the area at the time of construction.

[Dumfries and Galloway's Planning Portal](#) does not highlight any proposed developments or planning applications on the A76 carriageway within proximity to the scheme.

Amey's current [programme of works](#) has not highlighted any other works on the A76 carriageway at the proposed scheme location at the time of writing (January 2023).

No other nearby schemes which may result in a combined effect on nearby receptors have been identified.

Any future schemes will be programmed to take into account already programmed works, and as such any effect (such as from TM arrangements and potential construction noise) will be limited.

Assessments of the environmental effects

Following assessment as detailed within this Record of Determination, and provided that mitigation measures are in place and best practice is followed, the residual impact is deemed neutral and there will be no significant effects on the environment.

The following environmental surveys/reviews have been undertaken:

- A design Initial Environmental Review of the scheme, undertaken by the Environment and Sustainability Team at Amey in January 2023.

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

This is a relevant project in terms of section 55A (16) of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 as it is a project for the improvement of a road and the completed works (together with any area occupied by apparatus, equipment, machinery, materials, plant, spoil heaps, or other such facilities or stores required during the period of construction) exceed 1 hectare in area.

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:

- Construction activities are restricted to the existing carriageway boundary, including verges.
- At end of life, components can be recycled or reused, reducing waste to landfill.
- As the works will be limited to the like-for-like replacement of the structural 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.

Location of the scheme:

- The scheme will be confined within the existing A76 carriageway and as a result will not require any land take and will not alter any local land uses.
- The scheme is not situated in whole or in part in a “sensitive area” as listed under regulation 2 (1) of the Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 1999 (as amended).

Characteristics of potential impacts of the scheme:

- No significant residual impacts are predicted. Disruption due to construction activities are not expected to be significant and will be mitigated as far as is reasonably practicable.
- The successful completion of the scheme will afford benefits to road users due to the improved surface of the A76 carriageway.

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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