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Environmental Impact Assessment Record of Determination

**A835 120 Torran Dhu –
Scour repairs**

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Project Details

Description

BEAR Scotland has been commissioned by Transport Scotland to carry out scour repair works and bridge maintenance works at the A835 120 Torran Dhu bridge on the A835 carriageway, near Loch Glascarnoch. The bridge is a single span concrete structure with parapets, wingwalls and training walls.

The scheme will involve the following works:

- Establishment of laydown area and access arrangements via area to the southeast of the bridge.
- Set-up of dry working area.
- Removal of previous temporary works.
- Concrete repairs to bridge soffit.
- Installation of concrete toe and rip-rap rock armour along southern embankment.
- Repairs to bridge parapet.
- Installation of edge protection fencing.
- Removal of dry working area and site demobilisation.

Repairs are required on the structure to rectify scour damage and ensure that the bridge is structurally safe for road users. Scour repairs and bank reinforcement will prevent further undermining of the structure and reduce the risk of future scour damage.

In-stream works will be carried out in a temporary dry working area and are required to complete scour repairs, which are aimed to be completed by 30th September. However, consultation with the Cromarty District Salmon Fishery Board (DSFB) in previous years advised that instream works could continue until 15th October where required.

Works will take place on the structure over a length of approximately 50m. Additional works will take place on the adjacent watercourse banks. The total working area is less than 1ha. Traffic management (TM), if required, will be set up prior to any works starting and will be removed once the works are completed. It is envisaged that this will be a single lane closure with temporary traffic lights.

The works are currently programmed to be completed within this financial year and are expected to be carried out between September and October 2023. Works are expected to be completed over 2 weeks, operating between the hours of 07:00 and 19:00. If the programme changes, this may result in amendments to the exact TM requirements and working hours.

Location

The works are located on the A835 carriageway between Loch Droma and Loch Glascarnoch, within the Highland Council area (Figure 1). The bridge is located at the following approximate National Grid Reference: NH 27839 74195.

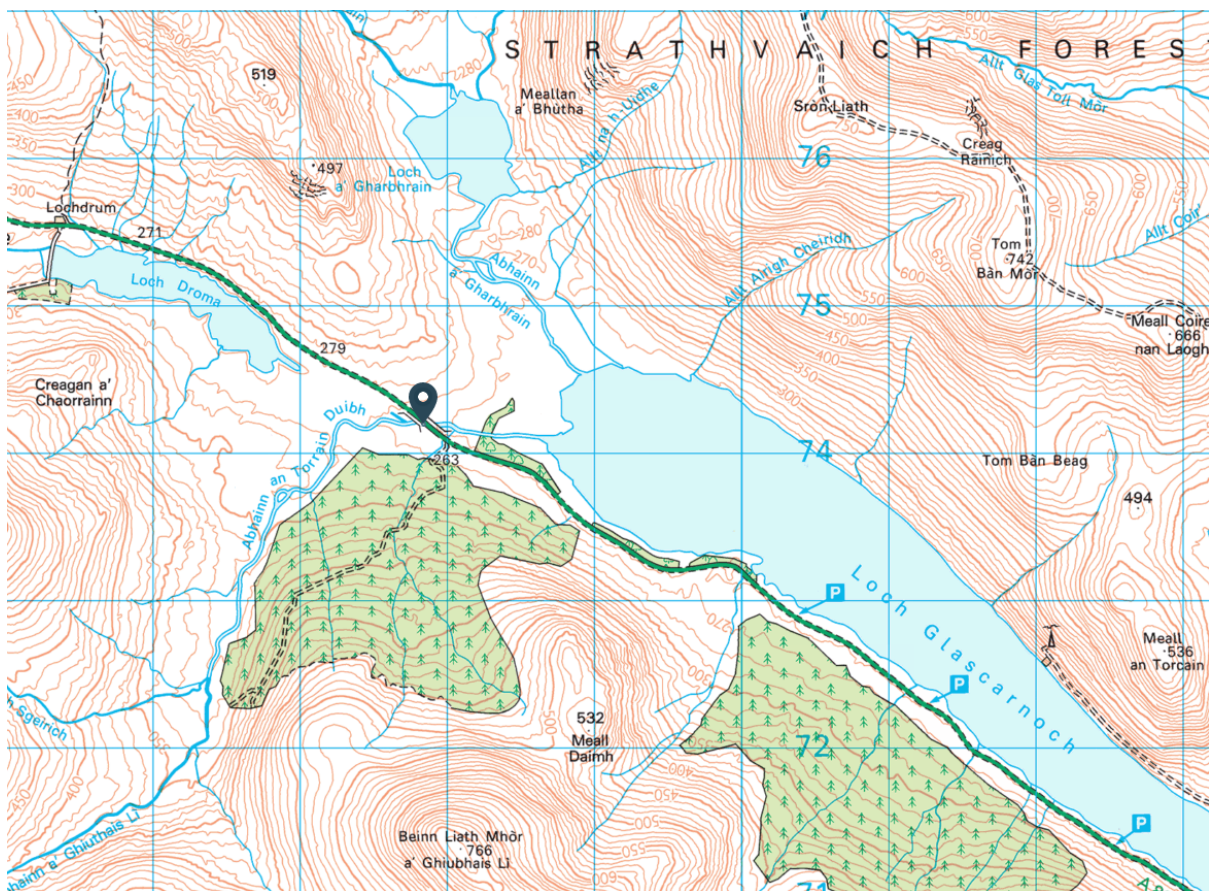


Figure 1. Location and scheme extent of the proposed repair works at A835 Torran Dhu. Source: BEAR Scotland. F108 – Environmental Assessment Request (Scheme ref: 22/NW/1201/07).

Description of local environment

Air quality

The scheme does not fall within any Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) ([Air Quality Scotland](#)) and no Air Quality Monitoring Stations are located in the vicinity of

works ([Air Quality Scotland](#)). The nearest air quality monitoring station (Strath Vaich) is located at Vaich Dam, approximately 7km northeast of the scheme ([Air Quality Scotland](#)).

Pollution levels in the general vicinity of works are anticipated to be similar to those at the monitoring station due to the remote nature of the scheme location. Baseline air quality at the scheme location is likely to be primarily influenced by traffic along the A835 trunk road.

No sites are registered on the Scottish Pollutant Release Inventory (SPRI) ([Scotland's Environment](#)) for air pollutant releases within 1km proximity of the scheme.

The nearest traffic count point on the A835 carriageway is located approximately 8km east of the scheme. In 2021, the Average Annual Daily Flow (AADF) for this area was recorded as 1,514 vehicles, of which 11% were heavy goods vehicles (HGV) ([Road traffic statistics](#)).

Cultural heritage

A desktop study using PastMap ([PastMap](#)) identified two records of cultural heritage interest as listed on the Historic Environment Records (HERs) and Canmore database within 300m of the scheme extents. The records refer to 'Torrando Bridge', the remains of a building, which are noted at the same location outside the A835 trunk road boundary, approximately 170m east of the bridge, and as such set back from the trunk road and working area.

All works are restricted to the bridge structure and therefore the works do not include any alterations that would affect the historic and architectural character of the above-mentioned features.

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

Construction of the A835 road corridor at the Torran Dhu structure is likely to have encountered and removed any archaeological remains that may have been present within the existing footprint. Though works will include soil excavations to allow for installation of edge protection fencing, the excavations are highly localised and of small scale as well as within and/or adjacent to the trunk road verge. Best practice measures as outlined in the Geology & Soil Assessment section will be followed. Therefore, the risk of encountering features of cultural heritage value has been assessed to be negligible.

The works are not expected to result in direct or indirect impacts to features of cultural heritage importance. As such, the impact has been assessed as being 'no change' and has been scoped out of requiring further assessment.

Landscape and visual effects

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

The Landscape Character Type (LCT) at the scheme extent is categorized as 'Rounded Hills and Moorland Slopes – Ross & Cromarty' (no. 330) ([Scottish Landscape Character Types](#)), which is characterised by:

- Broad, rounded hills and upland moorlands with smooth, gentle slopes down to broad straths, creating an undulating skyline.
- Occurs in a large tract which weaves around and between the adjoining *Rounded Mountain Massif* and *Rugged Mountain Massif – Ross & Cromarty* and unifies the mountain groups.
- Large areas of uniform moorland vegetation with occasional surface detail of rivers, lochs, riparian woodland, woodland patches, and regenerating trees.
- Large coniferous forests on accessible lower slopes.
- Broad straths with natural, meandering rivers and occasionally highlighted by green, unenclosed, improved pastures and riparian trees.
- Occasional major trunk roads curve through the lowest major straths, with very little associated service development.
- Small groups of mainly traditional buildings around road junctions and at rail stations.
- Man-made structures of pylons, wind farms and reservoirs occur as occasional features within a large-scale landscape.
- Many archaeological features on lower ground from prehistoric, medieval and later periods.
- Large, remote interior areas of vast scale with wildness characteristics.

The scheme is surrounded by a primarily open landscape with vegetation dominated by heather and rough grassland. Hills are present to both sides of the trunk road in the wider area. Historic Environment Scotland's HLAMap ([HLAMap](#)) has highlighted that forms of land use include conifer plantations and a reservoir. The A835 carriageway forms an engineered linear corridor in the landscape.

Biodiversity

A desktop study using NatureScot's SiteLink ([SiteLink](#)) has noted that the A835 Torran Dhu bridge lies near a number of sensitive areas designated for biodiversity and geological features, including:

- Beinn Dearg Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which is adjacent to the northwest corner of the A835 120 Torran Dhu bridge.
- Beinn Dearg Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) shares the boundary and area with Beinn Dearg SAC.

- Fannich Hills SAC is adjacent to the southwest corner of the bridge, including the watercourse which is spanned by the structure.
- Fannich Hills SSSI overlaps with Fannich Hills SAC, but does not include the watercourse.

Consultation with NatureScot was carried out in 2021 and 2023 to assess potential impacts of the proposed works on the above-mentioned designated sites. A Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) Proforma was undertaken in line with the advice received by NatureScot. In addition to best practice measures, site specific working methods and access restrictions need to be followed as outlined in the mitigation section for biodiversity below. Further details will be included in the Site Environmental Management Plan (SEMP). Please refer to geology and soil sections for information on geological features.

The NBN Atlas ([NBN Atlas](#)) holds no records of invasive non-native species (INNS) of plants, as listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA), injurious weeds, as listed under the Weeds Act 1959, or invasive native perennials, as listed in the Trunk Road Inventory Manual.

Transport Scotland's Asset Management Performance System (AMPS) noted no records of INNS or injurious weeds within 300m of the scheme.

No areas of woodland listed as Ancient (of semi-natural origin) on the Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) ([Scotland's environment](#)) were identified within 300m of the works.

Habitats in the surrounding area are dominated by heathland and bog, generally presenting an open structure with a lack of tree cover and are less suitable for terrestrial protected mammal species.

The most recent PEA and Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) at Torran Dhu were carried out in April 2023.

Geology and soils

The scheme falls within the two following SSSIs which include features of geological interest ([SiteLink](#)) (refer to above section for biodiversity features).

The proposed works include the installation of edge protection fencing, which will require localised soil excavations at the approaches of the bridge. Consultation with NatureScot in 2023 confirmed that SSSI consent is not required for the works. The works do not lie within 300m of a Geological Conservation Review Site (GCRS).

Bedrock within the scheme extents is comprised of psammite of the Glascarnoch Psammite Formation, which is a metamorphic bedrock ([BGS Geology Viewer](#)).

Sedimentary superficial deposits have been recorded as River Terrace deposits at the scheme location and include gravel, sand, silt and clay ([BGS Geology Viewer](#)).

Soils within the scheme extent are recorded as peaty gleyed podzols ([Scotland's Soils](#)).

Material assets and waste

Please note that this list is not comprehensive at this stage but materials required will likely consist of:

- Concrete.
- Masonry material, with coping stones similar to those found in the structure.
- Joint sealant.
- Stainless steel dowels and sleeve.
- Material for edge protection fencing including timber fences.
- Rip-rap rock armour.

Additional materials (e.g., sandbags to establish the dry working area) will be used temporarily during the works and removed upon completion of the scheme.

Waste materials will consist of old mortar and concrete, damaged stonework removed from the parapet and training wall, vegetation removed from joints and temporary materials from previous works like sandbags. Some materials will be reused on site where possible, including undamaged stonework. Otherwise, waste materials will be contained and removed off site to a licensed facility.

A Site Waste Management Plan is not required for this scheme. Waste will be processed and disposed of appropriately.

Noise and vibration

The works are located in a rural setting with open habitat in the surrounding area. No residential receptors are located within 300m of the scheme.

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

There is no noise modelled data available for the scheme extent ([Scotland's Noise](#)). However, given the rural nature of the area and the low AADT flow, it is considered likely that noise levels will be low, with noise mainly influenced by vehicles travelling along the trunk road.

Population and human health

There are no residential properties located within 300m of the scheme and no footpaths or other pedestrian facilities have been identified within the scheme extent or adjacent to it. There are no National Cycle Network (NCN) routes ([OS Maps](#)) or

core paths ([Scotland's Environment](#)) crossing the Torran Dhu bridge. However, the area is popular for hill walkers, and starting points for routes are listed on WalkHighlands ([Walkhighlands](#)) within the scheme extents.

A parking area, connected to the access track to the nearby hydro scheme, is located immediately northwest of the scheme. Another track diverges from the A835 approximately 150m south of the scheme.

If required, TM will likely consist of daytime single lane closures with temporary traffic lights. Full road closure is not expected.

The A835 Trunk Road, including the A893, connects Tore with Ullapool. It commences at (but excludes) the A9 Tore Roundabout leading generally north-westwards for a distance of 80 kilometres to (but excludes) its junction with the ferry terminal at Ullapool. The A835 is a single carriageway along its length.

Road drainage and the water environment

The Abhainn an Torrain Duibh river, which is spanned by the Torran Dhu bridge at the scheme location, was classified by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) under the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC (WFD) as having a 'high' overall status. The river discharges 700m downstream from the scheme into Loch Glascarnoch, a loch which was assessed by SEPA to have 'moderate ecological potential'. Multiple tributaries the Abhainn an Torrain Duibh are located in the surrounding area, but these have not been classified by SEPA ([SEPA water environmental hub](#)).

The scheme falls within the 'Northern Highlands' groundwater body, which was classified by SEPA in 2020 as having 'Good' overall condition ([SEPA water environmental hub](#)).

Consultation with SEPA, which was most recently carried out in April 2023, has determined that installation of rock armour along the concrete toe at the southern embankment over a length of approximately 18m will require a Registration level of authorisation to comply with The Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 (as amended) whereas other parts of the works will be permitted under SEPA's General Binding Rules (GBRs). The works have therefore been registered and authorised by SEPA under Activity O Grey bank reinforcement (CAR/R/5005262). All conditions of the registration will be followed.

The riverbanks of Abhainn an Torrain Duibh within the scheme extents are noted as having a high likelihood of river flooding, described as a 10% chance of flooding each year, with surrounding areas assigned a medium likelihood of flooding. No risk of surface water flooding was identified for the scheme extent ([SEPA Flood Map](#)).

Climate

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 sets out the target and vision set by the Scottish Government for tackling and responding to climate change ([The Climate](#)

[Change \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#)). The Act included a target of reducing CO₂ emissions by 80% before 2050 (from the baseline year 1990). The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 amended the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 to bring the target of reaching net-zero emissions in Scotland forward to 2045 ([Climate Change \(Emissions Reduction Targets\) \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#)).

The Scottish Government has since published its indicative Nationally Determined Contribution (iNDC) to set out how it will reach net-zero emissions by 2045, working to reduce emissions of all major greenhouse gases by at least 75% by 2030 ([Scotland's contribution to the Paris Agreement: indicative Nationally Determined Contribution - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)). By 2040, the Scottish Government is committed to reducing emissions by 90%, with the aim of reaching net-zero by 2045 at the latest.

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

Policies and plans

This Record of Determination (RoD) has been undertaken in accordance with all relevant regulations, guidance, policies and plans, notably including the Environment and Sustainability Discipline of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges ([Design Manual for Roads and Bridges \(DMRB\)](#)) and Transport Scotland's Environmental Impact Assessment Guidance ([Guidance - Environmental Impact Assessments for road projects \(transport.gov.scot\)](#)).

Description of main environmental impacts and proposed mitigation

Air quality

Construction activities associated with the proposed works have the potential to temporarily cause local air quality impacts. 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 will be maintained to the appropriate standards and will be switched off when not in use.
- Green driving techniques will be adopted, and effective route preparation and planning will be undertaken prior to works.
- 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.
- Cement bags will remain closed when not in use to prevent cast-off to the surrounding environment.
- Material stockpiles will be reduced as far as is reasonably practicable by using a 'just in time' delivery system. All material will also be stored on made ground.
- Any stockpiled material on site will be monitored daily to ensure no risks of dust emissions exists.
- Materials will be removed from site as soon as is practicable.
- Good housekeeping will be employed throughout the work.

With the above mitigation measures in place, it is anticipated that any air quality effects associated with the proposed works are unlikely to be significant. This receptor is not considered further in this Record of Determination (RoD).

Landscape and visual effects

There is potential for minor, temporary visual impacts to the local landscape during the construction phase as a result of littering or obstructed views due to vehicles and machinery. However, proposed works will be highly localised on the A835 carriageway boundary and immediate areas upstream and downstream of the structure, and will require limited plant and machinery only. Land use will not change as a result of the works. Furthermore, the scheme does not lie within an area of land

designated as an NSA or NP. In addition, the following mitigation measures will be put in place during works:

- Throughout all stages of the works, the site will be kept clean and tidy, with materials, equipment, plant and wastes appropriately stored, reducing the landscape and visual effects as much as possible.
- Works will avoid encroaching on land and areas where work is not required or does not have permission to do so. This includes general works, storage of equipment/containers and parking.
- Where applicable, upon completion of the works, any damage to the local landscape will be reinstated as much as is practicable.
- The site will be left clean and tidy following construction.

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

Biodiversity

Activities undertaken on site could potentially have a temporary adverse impact on biodiversity in the area as a result of an increased vehicle presence and the potential for disturbance to protected species and pollution of habitats. However, a range of standard good practice measures will be in place to reduce the risk of pollution in the surrounding environment as well as the risk of disturbance to protected species that may be present on site or in the vicinity of works. The below measures would be in place regardless of the presence of the nearby designated sites and will be detailed in the Site Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) and adhered to on site:

- Works will be strictly limited to areas required for access and scour and refurbishment works. Unnecessary encroachment onto terrestrial or aquatic areas will not be tolerated.
- All works will be completed over approximately 2 weeks by utilising daytime working pattern (negating requirement for artificial lighting). As works will take place during the day only, a quiet period for the rest of the day will allow species to forage without potential noise or disturbance from the works.
- No discharges will be permitted to the water environment and appropriate containment measures will be in place during works.
- In-stream works will be completed outside of the sensitive period for salmonids to reduce the potential impacts on local fish populations.
- The scour repair works will be carried out in a dry working area outside of the sensitive period for salmonids.

- Should works commence within the breeding bird season, nesting bird checks will be carried out approximately 2 weeks and within 48h prior to works. If required, protected species licences will be sought to permit works and all conditions will be adhered to.
- An Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) will be provided by BEAR Scotland and will attend site to supervise activities with the potential to impact protected species. The ECoW will advise site staff on appropriate working methods and/or mitigation measures.
- Site personnel will remain vigilant for the presence of any protected species throughout the works period. Should a protected species be noted during construction, works will temporarily halt until the species has sufficiently moved on. Any sightings of protected species will be reported to the BEAR Scotland Environmental Team.
- Relevant protected species Toolbox Talks will be included in the SEMP and provided to all site staff prior to works commencing.
- Site personnel will remain vigilant for the presence of potentially unrecorded instances of INNS or injurious weeds in road verges throughout the works period. Should any INNS be identified in working areas, no works will take place within 7m of these areas until the BEAR Scotland Environmental Team can provide further advice on additional mitigation measures.
- A 'soft start' will be implemented on site each day. This will involve switching on vehicles and checking under/around vehicles and the immediate work area for mammals prior to works commencing to ensure none are present and that there is a gradual increase in noise.
- Any excavations, exposed pipes/drains, or areas where an animal could become trapped (e.g., storage containers) will be covered over when not in use, at the end of each shift, and following completion of the works to avoid animals falling in and becoming trapped.
- If fencing is utilised at any point during the works, a gap of 200mm from ground level will be provided, allowing free passage for mammals and preventing entrapment.

Designated sites

The scheme is located within four designated sites, which have qualifying features that include a range of aquatic and upland habitats, plant communities, bird assemblage and invertebrates. BEAR Scotland carried out a Habitat Regulations Appraisal (HRA) to assess potential impacts of proposed works on the designated sites and completed the HRA Proforma document in line with NatureScot's advice. The HRA assessment concluded that, due to the reasons listed below and with the above measures in place, the works would not result in any likely significant effects (LSE) upon the qualifying features of the Fannich Hills SAC and the Beinn Dearg SAC. No likely negative change has been identified for the features of the two accompanying SSSIs.

- Though works will take place within the Abhainn an Torrain Duibh watercourse, and as such within the boundary of the Fannich Hills SAC, no qualifying feature is directly associated with habitat within this waterbody and qualifying features such as 'Clear water lakes or lochs with aquatic vegetation and poor to moderate nutrient levels' are located upstream of the Abhainn an Torrain Duibh. Therefore, in-stream works will not result in direct effects on any of the qualifying features of Fannich Hills SAC.
- Works are planned to be carried out during summer, outside the salmonid spawning season and when water levels are likely to be low.
- Pollution prevention measures will be in place and adhered to during all works to ensure that there is no loss of containment to qualifying habitats within the designated sites.
- The works are highly localised and mainly located on engineered ground.
- Features which are immobile in nature are not susceptible to noise disturbance and will therefore not be disturbed by the works.
- No vegetation removal, tree felling or permanent modification of habitat are associated with this scheme.
- No significant dust, particulate matter, and exhaust emissions (DPMEE) sources will be introduced by the works. Therefore, the potential for construction dust deposition or pollution of the habitats is considered unlikely.
- Noise originated by the proposed works is not considered to significantly deviate from the existing baseline noise levels generated by traffic flow on the A835 at the scheme location. It is considered that birds of the feature 'breeding bird assemblage' are habituated to existing levels of road noise.

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

Installation of edge protection fencing requires localised soil excavation to place the foundation for the fence. The works will take place within the boundaries of the designated sites and within 10m of the Abhainn an Torrain Duibh watercourse. Though excavation is assessed to have a minor impact on soil, it will not significantly affect the soil or the geological features noted as part of the above mentioned SSSI sites. This was concluded due to the minor and highly localised extent of the required excavations which take place adjacent to the road where soil is influenced by previous engineering activities, gritting and run-off from the road. NatureScot confirmed that SSSI consent is not required for the works.

Access to the watercourse for scour works will be taken via the vegetated area at the south-eastern corner of the bridge. Much of the ground at this location has been

previously modified; however, bog mats will be placed on the ground prior to plant or vehicle access to protect existing vegetation and reduce any damage or soil compaction to boggy pockets of ground.

The following measures will be applied to on site:

- The parking of machinery/personnel and storage of equipment on road verges and adjacent habitats 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) will be reinstated as much as is practicable.
- Best practice measures to prevent contamination of soils through loss of containment will be strictly adhered to.
- Topsoil and subsoil reused on site will be spread evenly in a single layer less than 200 mm in height to ensure the soil profile is maintained across the works location.
- Multiple handling of soil derived from excavations will be minimised. The extent and duration of exposed soil will be kept to the minimum required for the works.

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 impacts as a result of resource depletion through use and transportation of new materials. However, materials will be sourced locally where possible and the following mitigation measures will be put in place:

- Materials will be sourced from recycled origins as far as reasonably practicable within design specifications.
- Care will be taken to order the correct quantity of required materials to prevent the disposal of unused materials.
- Where possible, minimal packaging will be requested on required deliveries to reduce unnecessary waste and production of packaging materials.

There is potential for impacts during works as a result of the improper storage or disposal of waste. The following mitigation measures will be put in place:

- The waste hierarchy (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Dispose) will be employed throughout the construction works.
- The subcontractor will adhere to waste management legislation and ensure they comply with their Duty of Care.
- Containment measures will be in place to prevent debris or pollutants from entering the surrounding environment.
- 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 will be available for inspection. A copy of the Duty of Care paperwork will be provided and filed appropriately in accordance with the Code of Practice (as made under Section 34 of Environmental Protection Act 1990 as amended).
- Re-use and recycling of waste will be encouraged, and the subcontractor will be required to fully outline their plans and provide documentary evidence for waste arising from the works (e.g., waste carrier's licence, transfer notes, and waste exemption certificates).
- Staff will be informed that littering will not be tolerated. Staff will be encouraged to collect any litter seen on site.
- Where applicable, all temporary signage will be removed from site on completion of the works.

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

Noise and vibration

Construction activities associated with the proposed works have the potential to cause noise and vibration impacts through the use of equipment and construction vehicles for the proposed activities. The works will employ a daytime working pattern, and no residential receptor was identified. The proposed scheme is anticipated to result in temporary minor noise impacts. The following mitigation measures will be put in place:

- The Best Practice Means, as defined in Section 72 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974, will be employed at all times to reduce noise to a minimum.
- On-site construction tasks will be programmed to be as efficient as possible, with a view to limiting noise disruption to local sensitive receptors.
- All site personnel will be fully briefed in advance of works regarding the need to minimise noise during works and of the site-specific sensitivities.
- All plant, machinery and vehicles will be switched off when not in use.
- All plant will be operated in such a way that minimises noise emissions and will have been maintained regularly to the appropriate standards.
- Where fitted, and where permitted under Health and Safety requirements, white noise reversing alarms will be utilised during construction.
- Where ancillary plant such as generators are required, they will be positioned so as to cause minimum noise disturbance. Where deemed necessary, acoustic screens will be utilised.

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

Population and human health

During construction, activities undertaken on site may have temporary adverse impacts on local residents, vehicle travellers, and non-motorised road users (NMUs) as a result of vehicle noise and delays due to traffic management measures. The works will require limited plant and machinery and are highly localised. Road users will be informed of works through a media release, which will provide details of construction dates and times. With the following mitigation measures in place, the risk of significant impacts on population and human health is considered to be low:

- Appropriate provisions / measures will be implemented within the traffic management to allow the safe passage of NMUs of all abilities through the site.
- Journey planning information will be available for drivers online at the trafficscotland.org website. Journey planning information will also be available for drivers online through BEAR's social media platforms.

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

Road drainage and the water environment

There is potential for temporary impacts on the water environment. Potential changes in water quality from pollution events (either by accidental spillage of sediments, particulate matter, chemicals, fuels or by mobilisation of these in surface water caused by rain or tidal movements) during works have the potential to have a direct or indirect effect on the surrounding waterbodies. In addition, consultation with SEPA has confirmed that a Registration level of authorisation is required under the Controlled Activities Regulations (CAR) legislation to permit some of the proposed works. The works have been authorised by SEPA as Activity O Grey bank reinforcement. All conditions of the Registration and relevant GBRs will be adhered to during works. The following mitigation measures will be put in place to reduce the risk of pollution incidents as a result of works:

- All in-stream works are aimed to be completed by the 30th of September, and no in-stream works will be carried out beyond 15th October, following previous advice from the Cromarty DSFB regarding the sensitive period for freshwater fish for this scheme.
- In-stream works will be carried out within a dry working area. The contractor is responsible for designing and implementing the dry working area and will provide a method statement for review prior to works commencing.
- The works will be carried out following SEPA Guidance for Pollution Prevention (GPP), including for example GPP1, 5, and 21.
- All relevant SEPA GBRs will be followed, including GBR 6, 9 and 10B.
- All conditions of the CAR Registration (CAR/R/5005262) will be adhered to on site.
- Standard working practices to comply with The Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 (as amended) for works in or near water are detailed in the SEMP and will be adhered to on site.
- No discharges into any watercourses or drainage systems will be permitted. Appropriate containment measures will be in place to prevent any loss of construction materials into the water environment.
- Concrete batching will be carried out on an impermeable surface at least 10m away from drains and water bodies.
- 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 will 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 must also be supplied beneath the equipment with a capacity of 110%.

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

Climate

Construction activities associated with the proposed scheme works have the potential to cause local air quality impacts as a result of the emission of greenhouse gases through the use of vehicles and machinery, material use and production, and transportation of materials to and from site. The following mitigation measures will be put in place:

- BEAR Scotland will adhere to their Carbon Management Policy.
- Works will be undertaken utilising a daytime work pattern to reduce the requirement for additional lighting.
- Local contractors and suppliers will be used as far as practicable to reduce fuel use and greenhouse gas emitted as part of the works.
- The waste hierarchy (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Dispose) will be employed throughout the construction works.
- Where possible, materials will be sourced locally to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with materials movement.

- Where possible, local waste facilities will be used to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with transport of waste (if reuse or recycling of materials is not possible).

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.

Major Accidents and Disasters

The trunk road within the scheme extents is not at risk of river flooding or surface water flooding, though the banks of the watercourse are at risk of river flooding. However, the scheme is scheduled to be carried out during the summer, when water levels are expected to be lowest.

Works are restricted to the engineered ground and immediate surrounding of the A835 carriageway and TM will be designed in line with existing guidance. The proposed works are anticipated to last two weeks. If required, TM will consist of single lane closure facilitated by temporary traffic lights. Where required, alternative pedestrian routes will be included in the traffic management setup, to minimise impact of the works on NMUs.

These measures, along with mitigation measures and standard working practices, will be detailed in the SEMP and adhered to on site. The vulnerability of the project to risks of major accidents and disasters is considered to be low.

Assessment cumulative effects

The proposed works are not anticipated to result in significant environmental effects. A search of the Highland Council Planning Portal ([Map Search](#)) identified no active planning applications within 2km of the scheme.

A search of the Scottish Roads Works Commissioner's website ([Map Search](#)) has identified that no other roadworks are currently ongoing, or noted as being planned at the same time as this scheme, on the trunk road at the schemes location and within 2km of the scheme. Due to the nature of the proposed works, and absence of other developments in the vicinity or the works, there are no cumulative effects anticipated.

BEAR Scotland programme all proposed works in line with appropriate guidance and contractual requirements. All schemes are programmed to take into account existing and future planned works, with a view of limiting any cumulative effects relating to TM. As a result of this exercise, where a potential for cumulative impacts is identified, BEAR Scotland will reprogramme schemes to avoid / limit any cumulative effects or will utilise existing TM to complete multiple schemes at once. This approach allows BEAR Scotland to effectively manage the potential cumulative effects as a result of TM, resulting in minimal disruption to users of the Scottish trunk road network.

Overall, it is unlikely that the proposed works will have a significant cumulative effect with any other future works in the area.

Assessments of the environmental effects

As detailed in the Description of Main Environmental Impacts and Proposed Mitigation section within this Record of Determination, there are no significant effects anticipated on any environmental receptors as a result of the proposed works.

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

This is a relevant project in terms of section 55A(16) of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 as it is a project for the maintenance and improvement of a bridge structure as part of the road network (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) with works located partly within two SACs and two SSSIs, which are sensitive areas within the meaning of regulation 2(1) of the Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 1999.

The project has been subject to screening using the Annex III criteria to determine whether a formal Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 (as amended by The Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017). Screening using Annex III criteria and review of available information has not identified the need for a statutory EIA.

The project will not have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as:

Characteristics of the scheme:

- The total working area does not exceed 1 ha.
- The works will be temporary, localised, and completed during daytime working hours.
- Any potential impacts of the works are expected to be temporary, short-term, non-significant, and limited to the construction phase.
- No impacts on the environment are expected during the operational phase as a result of works. The works are expected to result in positive impacts on road users during the operational phase.
- Works are not expected to result in significant disturbance to protected species that may be present in the wider area.

- No in-combination effects have been identified.
- The risk of major accidents or disasters is considered to be low.

Location of the scheme:

- Although the works take place within the boundary of multiple sensitive areas, the HRA assessment confirmed that the works will not result in LSE on the qualifying features of the SACs. NatureScot is in agreement with this assessment.
- The scheme will not have a significant impact on the two SSSIs and NatureScot confirmed that SSSI consent is not required to permit works.
- The scheme is not located within any areas designated for landscape interests.
- The scheme is not located within a densely populated area.
- The scheme does not lie within any sites of historical, cultural, or archaeological significance.
- The majority of the works will be carried out within the footprint of the Torran Dhu structure. Temporary access and works immediately upstream and downstream of the structure are required, however, will result in an improvement for health and safety for road users.
- Any impacts to the local landscape during the construction phase will be minor, temporary and not considered significant. In addition, no operational impacts are anticipated.

Characteristics of potential impacts of the scheme:

- No works will take place until the water vole licence is in place and all conditions of the licence will be adhered to. A water vole exclusion zone will be established prior to works commencing.
- An Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) will be provided by BEAR Scotland and will attend site to supervise activities with the potential to impact protected species.
- The works will follow all conditions of the CAR Registration (CAR/R/5005262) issued by SEPA and relevant GBRs will be adhered to during works.
- Containment measures of the working area will be in place to prevent debris or pollutants from entering the surrounding environment.
- In the event that INNS are found on site, measures to prevent potential INNS spread will be implemented.
- Measures will be in place to ensure appropriate removal and disposal of waste.

- The SEMP will include plans to address environmental incidents.
- Mitigation measures detailed above (and in the SEMP) will be put in place with the objective to prevent and, if required, subsequently control any potential impacts on sensitive receptors.

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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