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Environmental Impact Assessment Record of Determination

A830 Kinlocheil – Glenfinnan (Phase 2)

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Project Details

Description

BEAR Scotland has been commissioned by Transport Scotland to carry out a second phase of vegetation management works along the A830 trunk road, following completion of Phase 1 works in 2025. Phase 2, which is split into 10 sections, covers 7.7km, and will include works on both the northbound (NB) and southbound (SB) verges.

Phase 2 works will clear vegetation and trees to 5m from the road edge. Approximately 33,010m² of vegetation will be removed, entailing 3,250 trees within various size categories. The works are required to clear vegetation encroachment onto road signs, laybys, safety barriers, and the A830 carriageway, and to improve forward visibility for trunk road users.

Key plant and equipment to be used on site include a tractor with mulching head, Hiab lorry, chainsaws, pole saws, woodchipper, fuel and oil for machinery.

Phase 2 works are currently programmed to commence within the 26/27 Financial Year with a start date of 28/09/2026. Works will be carried out over approximately 5 weeks within daytime hours. Traffic Management (TM) will consist of temporary traffic lights (TTLs) and verge working where possible. The scheme is located on a section of the trunk road with no pedestrian facilities present; however, non-motorised users (NMUs) will still be accommodated within TM. A site compound is not required.

Location

The scheme is located on a 7.7km stretch of the A830 trunk road within the Highland Council administrative area (Figure 1). The scheme is split into 10 sections with National Grid References (NGRs) listed in Table 1 below and location maps of each section illustrated in Figures 2, 3 & 4. The full scheme is located between the following NGRs: **Start:** NM 95977 79354; **End:** NM 89408 81181.

Table 1. Individual sections are located between the following NGRs:

Section	Start NGR	End NGR	Carriageway
Section 1	NM 95866 79313	NM 92793 79607	NB
Section 2	NM 92793 79607	NM 92302 79491	NB
Section 3	NM 92234 79578	NM 90746 80631	NB
Section 4	NM 90359 80889	NM 89703 81023	NB

Section 5	NM 89530 81129	NM 89408 81181	NB
Section 6	NM 89765 80990	NM 90351 80905	SB
Section 7	NM 90373 80896	NM 90559 80843	SB
Section 8	NM 90749 80654	NM 92226 79627	SB
Section 9	NM 92325 79491	NM 92759 79552	SB
Section 10	NM 92762 79586	NM 95977 79354	SB

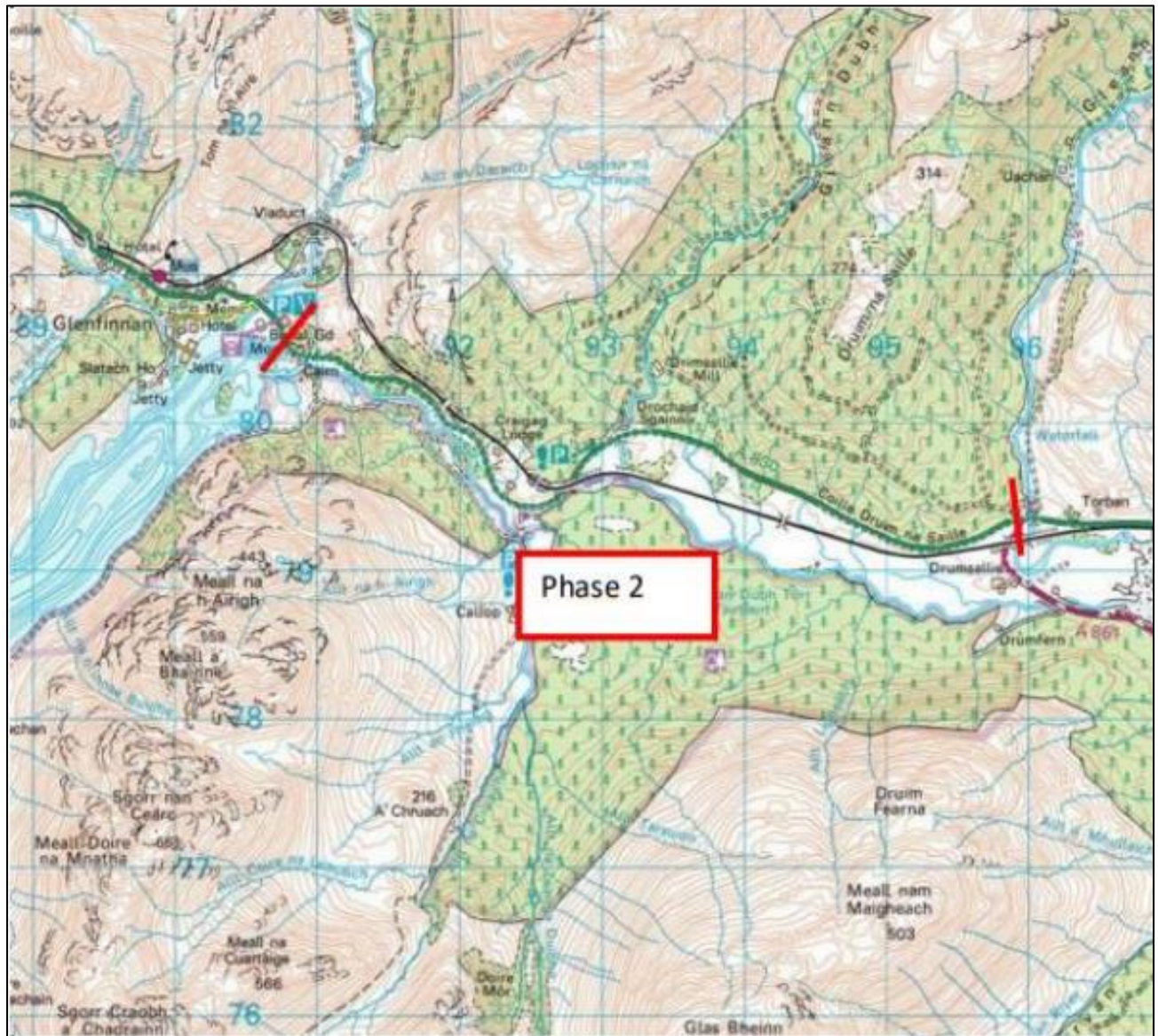


Figure 1: Complete scheme extent. Source: Asset Management Performance System (AMPS). © Europa Technologies Ltd. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2018.

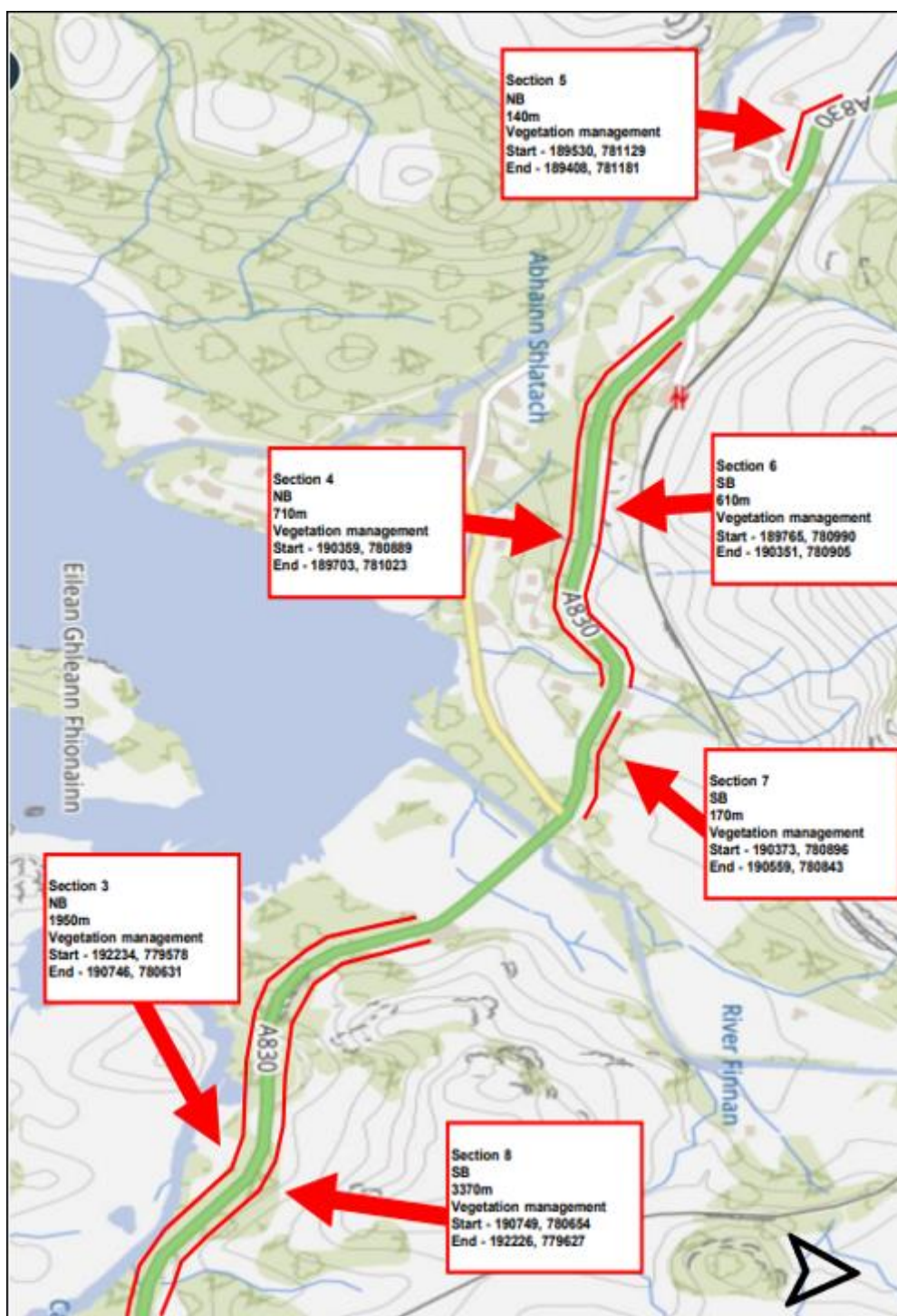


Figure 2: Sections 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8. Source: Asset Management Performance System (AMPS). © Europa Technologies Ltd. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2018.

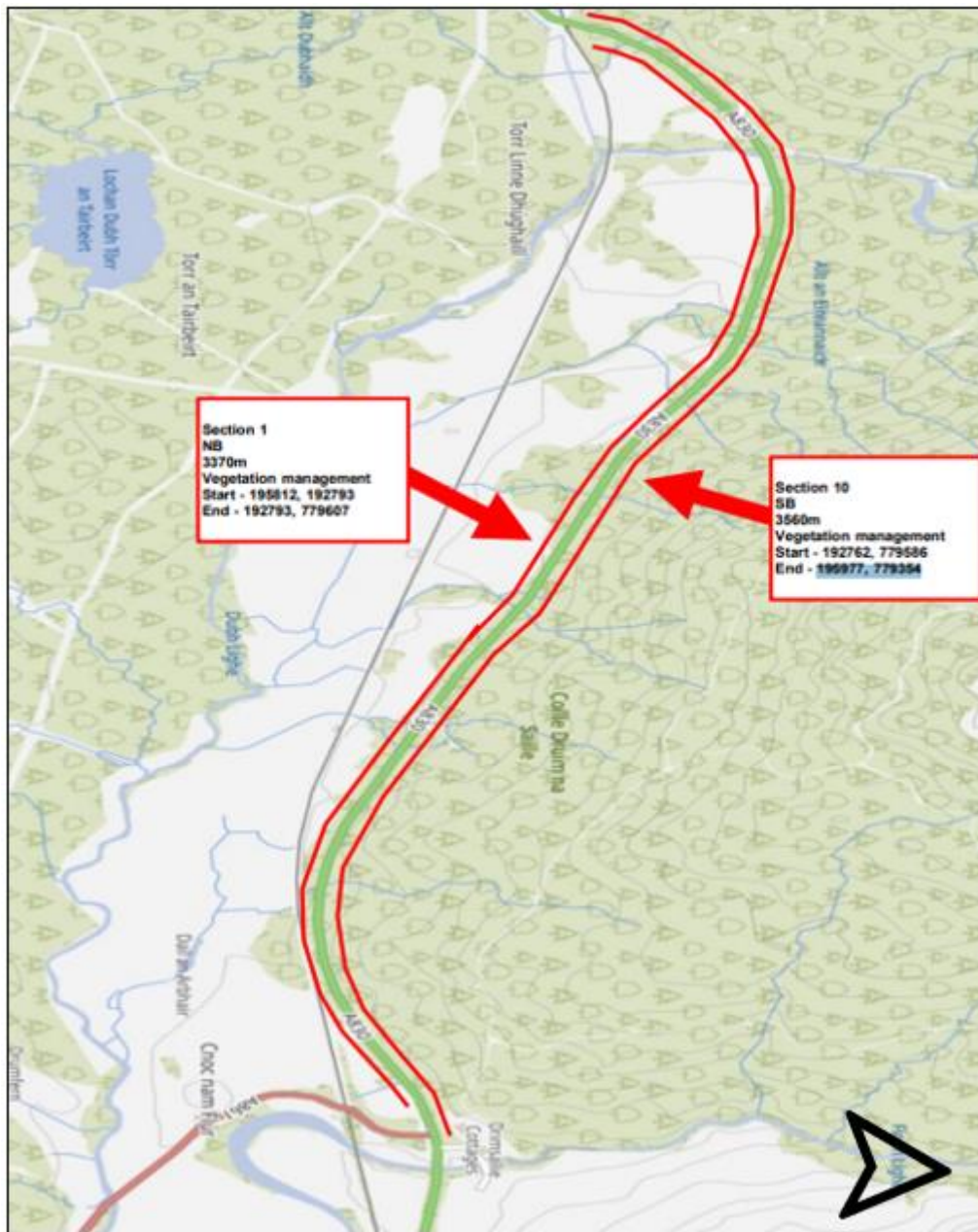


Figure 3: Sections 1 & 10. Source: Asset Management Performance System (AMPS). © Europa Technologies Ltd. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2018.

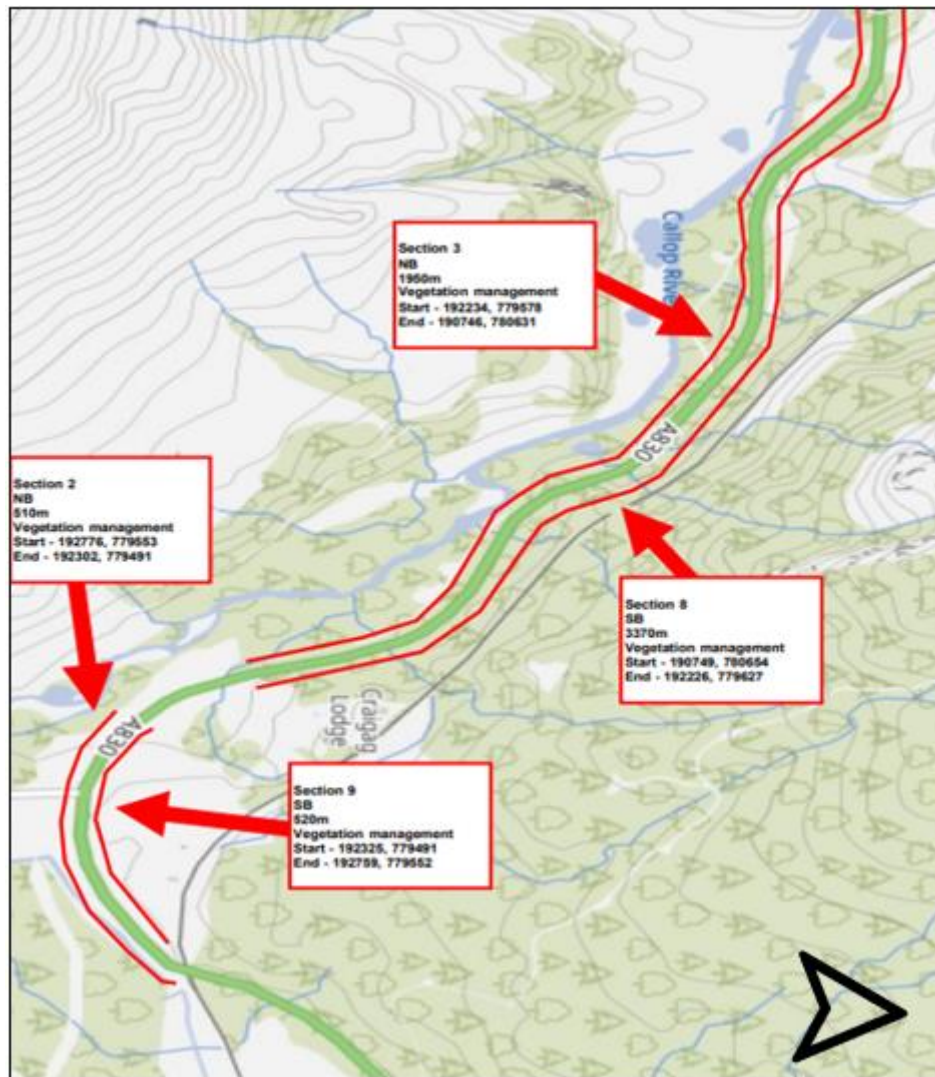


Figure 4: Sections 2, 3, 8 & 9. Source: Asset Management Performance System (AMPS). © Europa Technologies Ltd. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2018.

Description of local environment

Air quality

The scheme does not lie within 10km of an Air Quality Management Area ([Scottish Air Quality](#)) or within 10km of any Air Quality Monitoring Stations ([Scottish Air Quality](#)).

There are no records on the Scottish Pollutant Release Inventory ([SPRI](#)) within 10km of the scheme.

Baseline air quality for this scheme is likely primarily influenced by traffic along the A830 trunk road. Secondary releases are likely delivered by agricultural activities within the surrounding area.

Cultural heritage

A search of the [PastMap](#) online cultural heritage mapping tool revealed that there are several Historic Environment Records (HERs) and National Historic Environment Records (NRHEs) within 300m of the scheme. The closest feature is a hotel recorded on both HER and NRHE and lies directly adjacent to the scheme extent:

- Glenfinnan, Stage House Inn (HER Reference: MHG22157; NRHE Reference: 106619)

Two category B Listed Buildings lie within 300m of the scheme. 'Glenfinnan Railway Station, Ticket Office/ Waiting Room and Signal Box' (Reference: LB312) lies approximately 56m north of the scheme. 'Kinlocheil, Druim Na Saille Bridge Over Fionn Lìghe River' (Reference: LB7072) lies approximately 65m southeast of the scheme.

No Scheduled Monuments, Garden & Designed Landscapes, Conservation Areas, Battlefield or World Heritage sites were recorded within 300m of the scheme.

The construction of the A830 trunk road is likely to have exposed any potential items of cultural heritage interest present within the upper engineered layers; as such, the likelihood of presence of undiscovered features is considered to be low.

Landscape and visual effects

The scheme does not lie within any National Parks (NPs) ([SiteLink](#)).

However, six of the ten sections of the scheme extent (section 3-8) are located within Loch Sheil National Scenic Area (NSA) (Site code: [9138](#)), which has the following special qualities:

- A fine, long loch, leading into the heart of remote and rugged mountains
- A rich cover of woodland, forest and trees
- Variety and interest from the ever-changing topography and shoreline
- The hidden glens
- One of the largest undisturbed lochs in Scotland and a haven for wildlife
- Nationally recognisable landmark and enduring cultural icon.

The scheme lies within two Landscape Character Types (LCTs):

- The east end of the scheme lies within LCT [234](#) 'Lochs with Settled Edges'
- The west end, and majority of the scheme, lies within LCT [238](#) 'Rugged Massif – Lochaber'

Lochs with Settled Edges (LCT 234) has the following key characteristics:

- Flat landscape contained between steep loch sides and open water.
- Extensive agriculture and settlement confined within a narrow lochside fringe, whose foreshore is subject to tidal influence.
- Loch heads and river mouths that permit more extensive farming and built development, including housing and small industrial estates.
- Communications confined to narrow loch edges where shingly beaches, rocky headlands, wooded banks and marshy platforms form a diverse water's edge.
- Extensive tracts of oak-birch woodland climbing from the lochside up into the foothills, often engulfing the settled edge and providing an enclosed microlandscape.
- Dense commercial forests descend to loch shore in some locations.
- Occasional policy grounds of big houses along the loch edge give rise to a proliferation of rhododendron and other ornamentals in some places, providing a lush and sheltered character.
- Linearly arranged crofting communities with vivid green croft fields contrast with the more subdued duller colours of surrounding hills.

Rugged Massif - Lochaber (LCT 238) has the following key characteristics:

- Rugged character, a crinkled skyline and a landform accentuated by rocky outcrops and glacial debris.
- Large rocky masses drawing the eye upwards to ice-scoured rounded summits.
- Often a transitional landscape with indistinct boundaries with other Landscape Character Types.
- Often in remote, unsettled and inaccessible locations which, combined with the rugged relief, accentuates the wild character of these areas.
- Thin soils supporting sparse cover of grasses and heather on higher, drier slopes.
- Birch scrub and some oak woodland on lower slopes and within burn gullies and hanging valleys.
- Extensive sheep and deer grazing with stalking and hill walking as popular activities.
- Forestry occurring over small areas on flatter, lower slopes.

Land use surrounding the scheme is comprised of multiple land uses, as follows ([HLA map](#)):

- Rough grazing
- Plantation
- Managed woodland
- Urban area

However, the majority of the scheme lies within 'Rough grazing'.

The A830 Trunk Road connects Fort William with Mallaig. It commences at the A828 / A82 junction in Fort William leading generally westwards for a distance of 70 kilometres to (and including) the B8008 Station Road Roundabout in Mallaig. The A830 is a single carriageway along its length. The scheme lies approximately 15km west of Fort William.

Biodiversity

Loch Shiel Special Protection Area (SPA) (NatureScot site code: [8539](#)) and overlaps with the scheme on a small section on the eastern end of the scheme.

Ardgour Pinewoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (NatureScot site code: [8189](#)). The boundary of the SAC lies within the scheme extents in the middle section of the scheme (primarily within section 3).

Moidart and Ardgour SPA (NatureScot site code: [10115](#)) lies approximately 140m south of the scheme on the eastern end of the scheme (within section 4).

Loch Moidart and Loch Shiel Woods SAC (NatureScot site code: [8300](#)). The SAC lies approximately 1.8km south of the scheme.

A Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) has been undertaken to assess the potential effects of the works on the qualifying features of all sites listed above. Refer to the Biodiversity Impacts and Mitigation section below.

Ardgour Pinewoods SSSI slightly overlaps the scheme within the middle section, however, the large majority of the SSSI lies approximately 140m south of the scheme.

Loch Shiel SSSI overlaps the scheme boundary at numerous points within the middle section of the scheme.

No other SSSIs are located within 300m of the scheme.

Numerous bird species were also recorded on NBN Atlas within the same search criteria and under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), all wild birds and their active nests are protected.

Under the same search criteria, the NBN Atlas holds no records of invasive non-native species (INNS) or injurious weeds.

Transport Scotland's Asset Management Performance System (AMPS) holds numerous records of the following injurious weeds within the scheme extent:

- Common ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*)
- Rosebay willowherb (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*)

Habitat surrounding the scheme is dominated by woodland, agricultural areas, sporadic urban areas, Loch Shiel just south of the scheme, and tributaries to Loch Shiel culverted beneath the scheme.

Numerous areas of woodland within the Ancient Woodland Inventory ([AWI](#)) lie within 300m of the scheme; the following overlap with the scheme extent:

- No site name (Wood ID: 13968) – Within Sections 1 and 10
- No site name (Wood ID: 13976) - Within Sections 1 and 10
- No site name (Wood ID: 13972) - Within Sections 1 and 10
- No site name (Wood ID: 13970) - Within Sections 1 and 10
- No site name (Wood ID: 40) - Within Sections 4 and 6

[Highland Council](#) do not have any records of Tree Preservation Orders within 300m of the scheme.

The BEAR Scotland Environment Team undertook surveys of the scheme extent between 28/07/2026 and 29/07/2026.

Geology and soils

The entire scheme lies within the Geological Conservation Review Site (GCRS) Fassfern to Loch Ailort Road Cuttings (Site code: [9581](#)).

Bedrock Geology within the scheme extent is recorded as ([BGS](#)):

- Druim Na Saille Pelite Formation-Pelite
- West Highland Granite Gneiss Intrusion-Gneissose granite
- Beinn An Tuim Striped Formation-Psammite and pelite

Superficial Deposits within the scheme extent are recorded as ([BGS](#)):

- Hummocky (Moundy) Glacial Deposits-Diamicton, sand and gravel

- Peat-Peat. These sedimentary deposits are lacustrine and palustrine in origin

Component soils within the scheme extent are classed as Peaty gleyed podzols with peaty gleys with peaty rankers, and peaty gleyed podzols with dystrophic semi-confined peat with peaty gleys ([Scotland's Soils](#)).

The surrounding area lies within the following Carbon and Peatland classes ([Scotland's Soils](#)):

- 5 - peat soil with no peatland vegetation
- 2 – peat soil with potential to be restored
- 1 - peat soil
- 4 - predominantly mineral soil with some peat soil

Material assets and waste

The vegetation works are necessary to ensure public safety by removing encroaching vegetation that is obscuring forward visibility and obstructing signs, junctions, and laybys.

No materials are required for this scheme.

The value of the scheme does not exceed £350,000; therefore, a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) is not required and will not be completed as part of these works.

A site compound is not required for this scheme.

As the majority of trees will not be fit for sawn timber, they will be chipped for biomass or removed from site to a licenced waste contractor for shredding to be repurposed as chipboard. Where possible, some felled vegetation may be left in 'habitat piles' to improve habitat quality of designated sites and associated invertebrates.

Noise and vibration

Works are not located within a Candidate Noise Management Area (CNMA) or Candidate Quiet Area (CQA) ([TNAP](#)).

L_{DEN} or 'day, evening, night average noise levels' are modelled within the scheme extent. Noise levels are recorded as being between 65-75dB on the A830 carriageway ([Noise map | Scotland's Noise](#)).

Given the semi-rural nature of the area, it is considered likely that the baseline noise will be low, with noise mainly influenced by the traffic travelling along the A830 carriageway. Secondary noise influences are likely to arise from local agricultural and tourism activities.

Population and human health

Numerous properties lie within 300m of the scheme, the closest of which lies approximately 5m north of the scheme.

Public assets within the scheme extent are primarily concentrated towards the western end of the scheme (excluding laybys), with the majority of the route otherwise bordered by woodland that provides both visual and acoustic screening. The southbound carriageway contains five access ways, four junctions and five laybys, while the northbound carriageway contains nine access ways, four junctions and two laybys. There are no bus stops or street lighting located within the scheme extent. A pedestrian pathway is present along sections of the scheme; however, it does not extend continuously throughout the full length of the works.

A railway line runs parallel to the A830 along the entirety of the scheme and passes directly beneath the scheme.

There are no National Cycle Network routes ([OS Maps](#)) within the scheme extents.

There are numerous [Core Paths](#) within 300m of the scheme, the closest of which are two that run directly adjacent to the scheme

- 'Car park to Callop' (Reference: LO10.03)
- 'Pavement on A830' (Reference: LO10.05)

There are three routes listed on [WalkHighlands](#) that lies within the scheme extent:

- 'Glenfinnan Viaduct trail'
- 'Fort William to Glenfinnan'
- 'Sgurr Thuilm and Sgurr nan Coireachan'

The latest vehicle traffic counter recording the Average Daily traffic (ADT) count on the A830 nearest to the scheme lies approximately 16.35km west of the scheme (Site ID: 000000001070) and counted an ADT of 9,308 vehicles in 2025 with 7% of these being Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs).

Road drainage and the water environment

The scheme is underpinned by Fort William groundwater (ID: 150696), in the Scotland river basin district. It is 2,274.7 square kilometres in area and was given an overall status of 'Good' in 2024 by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency ([SEPA](#)) under the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC (WFD).

Fionn Lìghe river (ID: 20382), in the Ardgour Coastal catchment of the Scotland river basin district is spanned by the scheme. The main stem is approximately 11.2km in length and was given an overall status of 'Good' in 2024 by SEPA.

Dubh Lìgh river (ID: 20383), in the Ardgour Coastal catchment of the Scotland river basin district is spanned by the scheme. The main stem is approximately 12.9km in length and was given an overall status of 'Moderate' in 2024 by SEPA.

River Finnan river (ID: 20413), in the River Shiel catchment of the Scotland river basin district is spanned by scheme. The main stem is approximately 8.6km in length and was given an overall status of 'Moderate' in 2024 by SEPA.

Callop River is a river (ID: 20418), in the River Shiel catchment of the Scotland river basin district lies 13m south at the nearest point. The main stem is approximately 8.5km in length and was given an overall status of 'Poor' in 2024 by SEPA.

Loch Shiel Lake (ID: 100208), in the River Shiel catchment of the Scotland river basin district lies approximately 123m south of scheme at the nearest point. It is 19.9km² in area and was given an overall status of 'Good' in 2024 by SEPA.

There are numerous watercourses (unclassified by SEPA) that are culverted below the A830 and discharge into Loch Shiel.

Throughout the scheme, there are numerous areas that have a high likelihood (10% chance each year) of flooding due to river flooding and surface water and small watercourses ([SEPA Flood Maps](#)).

Climate

The [Climate Change \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#) ('The Act'), and its subsequent amendment under the [Climate Change \(Emissions Reduction Targets\) \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#), sets the framework for the Scottish Government to address climate change. The Act has an ambitious target to reach Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045, with any residual emissions balanced by removing carbon

dioxide from the atmosphere. This is five years earlier than the rest of the UK due to the greater potential for carbon sequestration in Scotland.

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

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

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

Policies and plans

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

Description of main environmental impacts and proposed mitigation

Air quality

Activities associated with the proposed works have the potential to temporarily cause local air quality impacts. Activities will require a range of ancillary plant, vehicles, and non-road mobile machinery (NRMM) which will contribute to local dust and air pollutants. The main sources are likely to be sawdust generated by the felling of trees, as well as exhaust emissions from ancillary plant and vehicles. However, taking into account the nature and scale of the works and the following mitigation measures, the risk of significant impacts to the air are considered to be low.

- Materials that have potential to produce dust will be removed from site as soon as possible, and vehicles that remove waste from site will have sheeted covers.
- Ancillary plant, vehicles, and non-road mobile machinery (NRMM) will have been regularly maintained, paying attention to the integrity of exhaust systems.
- Ancillary plant, vehicles and NRMM will be switched off when stationary to prevent exhaust emissions (e.g., there will be no idling vehicles).
- Cutting, grinding, and sawing equipment (if required) will be fitted or used in conjunction with suitable dust suppression techniques e.g., local exhaust ventilation system that fits directly onto tools.
- Regular monitoring (e.g., engineer or Clerk of Works) will take place when activities generating air pollution are occurring. In the unlikely event that unacceptable levels of air pollution are emanating from the site, the operation will, where practicable, be modified and re-checked to verify that the corrective action has been effective. Actions to be considered include: (a) minimising cutting and grinding on-site, (b) reducing operating hours, (c) changing the method of working, etc.
- All delivery vehicles carrying material with dust potential will be covered when travelling to or leaving the site, preventing the spread of dust beyond the work area.
- Material stockpiles will be reduced as far as is reasonably practicable by using a 'just in time' delivery system. All material will also be stored on made ground.
- Any stockpiled material on site will be monitored daily to ensure no 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).

Cultural heritage

The works are not located within any protected cultural heritage sites, and no change will occur to nearby Listed Buildings. Although there is one cultural heritage feature within the works area, it is undesignated and is unlikely to be affected by vegetation removal works. In addition, construction of the A830 trunk road and adjacent commercial forestry works are likely to have removed any archaeological remains that may have been present within this road corridor, and no excavation is required as part of the works.

As standard, the following good practice measures will be in place to reduce the risk of impacts to undiscovered features of cultural heritage interest:

- There will be no storage of vehicles, plant, or materials against any buildings, walls or fences.
- Should any unexpected archaeological evidence be discovered, works will stop temporarily in the vicinity and the BEAR Scotland Environment Team contacted for advice.
- Historic Environment Scotland will be consulted with as required, in the event of any discovery/exposure of suspected archaeological features.
- People, plant, and materials will, as much as is reasonably practicable, only be present on areas of made / engineered ground (including forestry tracks). Access required out with these areas will be reduced as much as is reasonably practicable and will utilise as few access points/tracks as possible.

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

Landscape and visual effects

There will be a short-term impact on the landscape character and visual amenity of the site as a result of the presence of construction plant, vehicles, and TM. In addition, there will be a long-term visual impact upon completion of works due to the removal of trees and vegetation from the corridor of the A830.

Works are not located within any NPs but the western part of the scheme extent, including sections 3-8, are located within Loch Shiel NSA. The extent of any vegetation clearance will be highly localised and limited to the minimum necessary to achieve the required road safety objectives. The majority of works comprise removal of young self-seeded trees and branch trimming rather than felling of larger trees. Furthermore, vegetation clearance will take place at an existing woodland edge and surrounding woodland will be retained; therefore, the impact of visual changes as a result of works is considered to be low.

It is expected that all tree removal will take place within the trunk road boundary. If any tree clearance is required on third-party land, landowner consent will be obtained. If more than 5m³ of timber will be removed from third-party land, a felling licence from Scottish Forestry will be required, which is likely to include compensatory planting as a condition of the licence.

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.
- Tree felling and vegetation clearance will be kept to the minimum amount necessary to ensure the safety of the relevant infrastructure (i.e. A830 trunk road boundary).
- Works will avoid encroaching on land and areas where work is not required or not permitted. This includes general works, storage of equipment/containers and parking.
- Where applicable, upon completion of the works, any damage to the local landscape will be reinstated as much as is practicable.
- The site will be left clean and tidy following construction.

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

Biodiversity

The scheme lies within 2km of Loch Moidart and Loch Shiel Woods SAC and Moidart and Ardgour SPA. The scheme verges are located within Loch Shiel SPA and Ardgour Woods SAC. Furthermore, scheme verges are located within Loch Shiel SSSI and Ardgour Pinewoods SSSI. A Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA)

was completed to assess impacts of the proposed works on these sites (including the two component SSSIs).

No Likely Significant Effects (LSE) were identified on the qualifying habitat features of Loch Moidart and Loch Shiel Woods SAC due to distance from works and adherence to good practice measures to prevent pollution. LSE could not be ruled out for species within Loch Moidart and Loch Shiel Woods SAC, the Loch Shiel SPA, the Moidart and Ardgour SPA, or Ardgour Pinewoods SAC. However, with appropriate mitigation measures in place, the works are not anticipated to result in Adverse Effects on Site Integrity (AESI) due to the following considerations:

- Works have been programmed to be completed outside the breeding season.
- The works will not result in removal of breeding habitat.
- Measures to reduce noise and lighting will be implemented during works.
- Hydrological connectivity is limited between the scheme extent and nearby watercourses.
- Vegetation clearance will be limited to the minimum extent necessary to maintain safe conditions and suitable forward visibility for trunk road users.
- Vegetation removal will occur at an existing woodland edge at the A830 road verges, where habitat conditions are likely to be sub-optimal for qualifying woodland habitat due to increase salt and emissions from traffic on the A830.
- Trees will be retained wherever practicable, with selective branch trimming undertaken in preference to tree removal where this is compatible with road safety requirements.
- Trees to be removed will be recorded so that compensatory planting can be carried out in an appropriate area in future.
- Habitat piles of dead wood will be left within the designated sites, where possible, to improve habitat conditions for invertebrates within the designated sites.
- Standard good practice measures to prevent pollution will be implemented during construction.
- The surrounding area to the scheme is located within a highly disturbed area by humans, and no suitable habitat was found within the designated buffers.
- The works do not require excavation.

NatureScot has been consulted for SSSI consent to permit works within Loch Shiel and Ardgour Pinewoods SSSI. No response has been received, however; if SSSI consent is required, the works will not commence until consent has been obtained.

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. There will also be a residual impact following

the completion of works due to the felling of trees which may be used as habitat for protected species.

No INNS or injurious weeds were identified within the scheme extents during the site visit. Works will not require excavation of soil, so there is limited potential to spread or introduce INNS, invasive native perennials, or injurious flowering plant species. However, a relevant Toolbox Talk will be included within the SEMP in case any INNS are found in working areas.

The scheme lies partially within areas of ancient woodland. However, vegetation clearance in these areas will be limited to the trunk road boundary, which is at the edge of the ancient woodland. Furthermore, trees and vegetation growing in the trunk road boundary are likely subject to sub-optimal habitat conditions due to the proximity of the trunk road and runoff from the road. Therefore, felling of trees and vegetation clearance along the edge of ancient woodland areas is unlikely to significantly affect the overall 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 A830 and the high level of human disturbance that exists in proximity to the works. The scheme is of short duration (five weeks of daytime works) and will be undertaken on a rolling programme. Therefore, with the following mitigation measures in place, the risk of significant impacts on biodiversity are considered to be low:

- Works will avoid the nesting bird season (March to August inclusive).
- If works are delayed and will take place during the nesting bird season (March to August inclusive), a nesting bird check will be undertaken within 48 hours prior to the works.
- Vegetation clearance works will be limited to the minimum area necessary to improve road safety.
- Trees will be retained wherever practicable, with selective branch trimming undertaken in preference to tree removal where this is compatible with road safety requirements.
- Trees to be removed will be recorded so that compensatory planting can be carried out in an appropriate area in future.
- Works will be strictly limited to areas required for access and to carry out the works. Unnecessary encroachment onto terrestrial or aquatic areas will not be tolerated.
- All construction operatives will be briefed through toolbox talks prior to works commencing, which will be included in the SEMP. The toolbox talks will provide

information on the legislation, general ecology, and best practice measures for relevant protected species.

- Site personnel will remain vigilant for the presence of any protected species throughout the works period. Should a protected species be noted during construction, 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.
- Artificial lighting will be directed away from areas of woodland and waterbodies as far as is safe and reasonably practicable.
- Personnel will remain vigilant for the presence of INNS or injurious weeds in road verges throughout the works period. Should any INNS be identified in working areas, works will be restricted to a 7m buffer of any growth where reasonably practicable.
- 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.
- Plant, machinery and equipment must be fitted with effective silencers where possible. Where fitted, and where permitted under Health and Safety requirements, white noise reversing alarms will be utilised during construction.
- Where possible, inherently quiet plant will be selected for construction works.
- All plant, machinery, and vehicles will be switched off when not in use

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

Geology and soils

The scheme is located within the Fassfern to Loch Ailort Road Cuttings GCRS, which has been designated for earth sciences/geological features. Due to location within the GCRS boundary, there is potential for the proposed works to result in

impacts to the qualifying features of the site. However, it is not anticipated that any changes to the GCRS will occur by the virtue of the following factors:

- There is no requirement for land take (or resources) or excavation, and the works are limited to engineered ground within the existing A830 carriageway verges.
- Works will follow best practice and will not promote the known negative pressures on the features; no development or dumping/storage of materials will occur outside of the existing engineered carriageway boundary.
- Standard good practice measures to prevent water and soil pollution will be detailed in the SEMP and adhered to on site.

All works are confined to the A830 carriageway boundary. Although excavation is not required, the vegetation clearance and tree felling may result in localised and minor soil exposure or disturbance. The following measures will be applied on site:

- The parking of machinery/vehicles and storage of equipment on road verges will be avoided.
- Upon completion of the works, any damage to the local landscape (i.e., damage to verges) will be reinstated.
- Mitigation measures to prevent contamination of soils through loss of containment will be strictly adhered to
- Additional pollution prevention measures as outlined in Road drainage and the water environment will be adhered to during construction.

With the above mitigation measures in place, it is anticipated that any geology and soils effects associated with the proposed works are unlikely to be significant, and no changes are anticipated to the designated features of the GCRS as a result of proposed works. 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 of machinery and transportation. However, the use of machinery will be limited to chainsaws, a pole saw, a Fastrac, wood chipper (if required) and a Hiab lorry and machinery will not be left idling when not in use.

There is potential for impacts during works as a result of the improper storage or disposal of waste. As the majority of trees will not be fit for sawn timber, they will be chipped for biomass or removed from site to a licensed waste facility for shredding to be repurposed as chipboard. Where possible felled vegetation may be left in 'habitat

piles' on site to improve local biodiversity. The following mitigation measures will also be put in place:

- Felled vegetation material will be disposed of appropriately in line with the NW Network Management Contract (NMC) (Schedule 5, Appendix 0/1, 3010SR Maintenance of Established Trees and Shrubs).
- 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 will be removed from site in a safe and legal manner by a licensed waste carrier upon completion of the works. The appointed waste carrier will have a valid SEPA waste carrier registration, a copy of which will be provided to and retained by BEAR Scotland as early as possible.
- All appropriate waste documentation will be present on site and be available for inspection. A copy of the Duty of Care paperwork will be provided and filed appropriately in accordance with the Code of Practice (as made under Section 34 of Environmental Protection Act 1990 as amended).
- Vegetation arisings will, where practicable, be left in habitat piles as deadwood to benefit invertebrates or otherwise be removed from site by a licensed waste contractor.
- Staff will be informed that littering will not be tolerated. Staff will be encouraged to collect any litter seen on site.
- Where applicable, all temporary signage will be removed from site on completion of the works.

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

Noise and vibration

Activities associated with the proposed works have the potential to cause noise and vibration impacts through the use of equipment and plant for the proposed activities. The works will employ a daytime working pattern, for a period of five weeks.

A high number of residential properties lie within 300m of the scheme, the nearest of which is located 5m north of the scheme. As such, the proposed scheme is

anticipated to result in temporary minor noise increases for nearby residential properties during the construction programme. However, felling works have been programmed during daylight hours, and the following mitigation measures will be put in place:

- The Best Practicable Means, as defined in Section 72 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974, will be employed at all times to reduce noise to a minimum.
- On-site 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 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 have the potential to have temporary adverse impacts on local residents, vehicle travellers and NMUs. No significant congestion issues are noted during the proposed construction hours. Increased journey times may occur, but these are considered insignificant considering the low traffic counts and works being undertaken outwith the peak tourist season. No NMU facilities are present within the scheme.

With the following mitigation measures in place, the risk of significant impacts on population and human health is considered to be low:

- The works schedule and any changes to this will be communicated to local residents prior to and throughout the programme.
- Non-essential lighting will be switched off at night.
- 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](https://www.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 due to operation of plant within and within proximity to various watercourses and Loch Sheil, which may lead to 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).

No in-water works will take place and there is no requirement for the abstraction or transfers of water from, or discharges to, a waterbody. As such, the potential for a direct pollution incident within a waterbody is unlikely. Experience gained from BEAR maintenance schemes elsewhere on the network has shown that where standard good working practice is adopted (e.g., adherence to SEPA good practice guidance, utilisation of drain covers or similar, etc.), water quality is protected.

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

- The scheme will not entail any in-stream works.
- Standard working practices to comply with the Environmental Authorisations (Scotland) Regulations 2018 (EASR) for works in or near water will be detailed in the SEMP and 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.
- 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 bowzers will be stored on an impermeable area and be fully bunded. This will be distanced more than 10m from any watercourses.
- During refuelling of smaller mobile plant, a funnel will be used, and drip trays will be in place. Care will be taken to reduce the chance of spillages. Spill kits will be quickly accessible to capture any spills should they occur. The ground / stone around the site of a spill will be removed, double bagged and taken off site as special contaminated waste.
- Generators and static plant may have the potential to leak fuel and / or other hydrocarbons and will have bunding with a capacity of 110%. If these are not bunded then drip trays will also be supplied beneath the equipment with a capacity of 110%.

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

Climate

Activities associated with the proposed 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, plant use, and transportation of waste from site. Although works will involve cutting down a large number of trees, the majority are of a small size, and the impact on climate and local carbon storage is considered minimal. Additionally, trees to be felled will be recorded to inform future compensatory planting, which will help offset any loss of carbon storage resulting from the scheme. The following mitigation measures will be put in place:

- BEAR Scotland will adhere to their Carbon Management Policy.
- Local contractors and suppliers will be used as far as practicable to reduce fuel use and greenhouse gas emitted as part of the works.
- Vegetation arisings will, where practicable, be left in habitat piles as deadwood to improve local biodiversity or otherwise be removed from site by a licensed waste contractor.

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

Vulnerability of the project to risks

There will be no anticipated change to the likelihood of flooding on the A830 within the scheme extents upon completion of the works.

Works are being carried out to improve road safety and to give clearer visibility to travellers on the A830. Therefore, the works will result in a beneficial impacts on road users.

A Traffic Management Plan (TMP), which includes measures to avoid or reduce disruption to road traffic, will be produced in accordance with the Traffic Signs Manual (Department of Transport 2009). The TMP will ensure that there is no severance of community assets, access routes or residential development.

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

Assessment of cumulative effects

Although this is the second phase of tree felling works on the carriageway in two years, the works are limited to the A830 road corridor to remove encroaching vegetation from existing forest edges. Extensive areas of woodland remain a dominant habitat feature in the wider area; therefore, the proposed works are not considered to result in significant cumulative impacts on a landscape scale.

A search of the Highland Council Planning Portal ([Map Search](#)) did not identify any approved planning applications within 300m of the scheme extents over the last two years. Therefore, due to the nature of the proposed works, no cumulative effects are anticipated with any other developments in the vicinity.

A search of the Scottish Roads Works Commissioner website ([Map Search](#)) has identified that no other roadworks are currently ongoing, or noted as being planned, within the area of works at the same time as this scheme. No other large-scale tree felling or vegetation clearance schemes are planned on the A830 in the current financial year.

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

Overall, it is unlikely that the proposed works will have 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.

The HRA assessment concluded that the works would not result in AESI on the qualifying features of the designated sites.

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, and are situated in whole or in part in Loch Shiel NSA, Loch Shiel SPA, Ardgour Pinewoods SAC, Ardgour Pinewoods SSSI and Loch Shiel SSSI which are sensitive areas within the meaning of regulation 2(1) of the Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 1999.

The project has been subject to screening using the Annex III criteria to determine whether a formal Environmental Impact Assessment is required under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 (as amended by The Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017). Screening using Annex III criteria, reference

to consultations undertaken and review of available information has not identified the need for a statutory EIA.

The project will have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as:

Characteristics of the scheme:

- Construction activities are restricted to an area of approximately 7.8ha, covering 7.7km on both the NB and SB carriageway of the A830 trunk road.
- The works will be temporary, transient, localised and completed during daytime hours on a rolling programme.
- Measures will be in place to ensure appropriate removal and disposal of waste.
- Works are not expected to result in significant disturbance to protected species that may be present in the wider area.
- Works have been programmed to avoid the breeding bird season.
- The risk of major accidents or disasters is considered to be low.
- Works will include the clearance of vegetation and trees to 5m from the road edge and will result in improved safety for road users by improving forward visibility.

Location of the scheme:

- The works will be carried out within the existing A830 road boundary and as such, no land take is required.
- The HRA assessment concluded that the works would not result in AESI on the qualifying features of the designated sites.
- No significant negative impacts have been identified on the qualifying features of Loch Shiel SSSI or Ardgour Pinewoods SSSI. However, NatureScot have been consulted regarding SSSI consent. If consent is required, the works will not commence until consent has been obtained.
- Although the scheme is located within Loch Sheil NSA, works will be limited to the minimum amount of vegetation required to achieve road safety objectives. Vegetation to be removed consists of primarily young trees and scrub at an existing woodland edge along the A830 road corridor.
- The scheme is not located within a NP, or any other sites designated for landscape character or quality.
- Part of the scheme passes through five areas listed on the AWI. If any trees are removed from within the AWI woodland, it is likely to be from the trunk road verges and on the edges of sections of the AWI woodland. These sections are subject to suboptimal habitat conditions due to the proximity of the trunk road, and any loss of marginal habitat is not considered to be significant.

Characteristics of potential impacts of the scheme:

- The works are expected to result in positive impacts on road users and human receptors during the operational phase.
- No protected species resting places were identified within working areas or relevant disturbance buffers.
- As the works will be limited to vegetation clearance, there will be no change to the vulnerability of the road to the risk or severity of major accidents/disasters that would impact on the environment.
- The SEMP will include plans to address environmental incidents.
- Mitigation measures detailed above and in the SEMP are put in place with the objective to prevent and, if required, subsequently control any potential impacts on sensitive receptors.
- In the event that INNS presence is located on site, measures to prevent potential INNS spread will be implemented.
- Extensive areas of woodland remain a dominant habitat feature in the wider area; therefore, the proposed works are not considered to result in significant cumulative impacts on a landscape scale.
- Trees to be felled will be recorded to inform future compensatory planting.
- No in-combination effects have been identified.

References of supporting documentation

'Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) Proforma A830 Kinlocheil to Glenfinnan Phase 2' produced by BEAR Scotland Environmental Team.

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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